

It's all happening to the Dollar Dazzlers, Richie

THE Dollar Dazzlers have brought a touch of big-match professionalism to the world's largest amateur cricket competition.

At each game they play at this year's Goldfield Ashes the predominately Townsville-based team set up their own commentary box, complete with camera, microphone, and a miniature television set for instant replays.

Player Shannon Dowling said the 'Dazzlers' commentary team recorded all their batting action, filmed the toss and pitch reports and interviewed opposing players after the game.

He said fellow players often liked to take on the persona of their favourite professional match callers.

"It depends on how many beers you've had first," he said.

"I like to do Richie (Bernardi) of course."

Team captain Craig Cornish said all the footage

and interviews would be put online at dazzlers.com.au.

"We have our own website and everything. We've got some very talented blokes in that department," he said.

Mr Cornish said the team also picked their player of the tournament with a reality TV-style voting system.

"It's like Big Brother, you go into the chair and name who you pick for three votes, two votes and one vote," he said.

"Then we watch it back on TV."

The baggy red caps worn by each Dollar Dazzlers player are made by the same company who provide the Australian cricket team with their famed baggy greens.

The cost of \$900 for 20 caps displays their commitment to the cricketing cause.

Mr Dowling said the Goldfield Ashes had become a tradition for the side.

"I think it's the third or fourth year for the boys now. It keeps getting bigger and bigger every year."



GOT HIM . . . Craig Cornish, with the microphone, cameraman Jason Miller and the Dollar Dazzlers.

Partying a priority

Cricket comes second as 208 teams hit the Towers

By CHRIS QUAGLIATA

THEY came with their bats and balls and their pads and gloves, but most importantly they came with their sense of fun.

The world's largest amateur cricket competition, the Charters Towers Goldfield Ashes, again provided cricket fans with a chance to celebrate their love of the game.

The population of Charters Towers swelled as 208 teams, with players from the local area and interstate converged on the town on Saturday.

But cricket was a close second behind partying at most of the 67 grounds around Charters Towers.

There were men in women's clothes, women wearing fake plastic breasts, a multitude of cakes and even quad-bike drink narts.

Townsville team Outcasts even had a homemade beer dispenser to use while waiting to bat, and a child's pushbike to run the drinks out on to the field.

A boom box protected by a chicken-wire cage was placed behind the wicket-keeper to provide some in-match entertainment.

A team comprised mostly of deaf players proved that anyone can play at the Goldfield Ashes.

Deadly silent captain Bradley James said his team had been coming to the Ashes about five years.

Although friend Glenn Sheils did the talking, Mr James gave a thumbs up and mimed a swag of a stubby to show what a good time his team was having.

Mr Sheils said Mr James had just decided to round

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HUMBLE TRANSPORT . . . Chris Devine on Outcasts' drink cart

up a group of his friends to enjoy the Ashes with.

"Most of the deaf guys are mates (with each other) from Townsville," he said.

"Some are from Mackay and Cairns but 80 per cent are from Townsville."

The women's competition

was strong this year, with eight teams registered.

Black Dream player Megan Kwong said she had returned to the Ashes after 15 years and celebrated with 10 net out on Sunday.

"I was actually in the first women's team that played in the Ashes, and it was be-

Going quackers in the hot sun

WINTER pyjamas and the Charters Towers summer sun just don't mix.

But someone sense runs a distant second to fun and frivolity at the Goldfield Ashes.

Most teams have rules to encourage their players to take their catches and score at least one run when they bat and they usually involve getting dressed up in ridiculous clothing. The Farrago side is no exception but they have taken their ride to the extreme.

David Hartley was forced to play on Saturday with Donald Duck pyjamas over his whites and a homemade hat with duck decorations.

"I got out without scoring a run," he said. "It's extremely hot out there in this!"

The duck theme continued last night with the presentation of the Best Dressed Duck. Travis Schmidt from The Strand Motel team was rewarded with \$700 cash from the Townsville Bulletin. Runner-up Darrell Blackford of the Light Brigade team won \$200.



DUCK SEASON . . . David Hartley



LEFT: driver Katie O'Keefe, 14, with Georgia Peterson (seated), 14, and Shayne Thorn, 12, on board

can we put a team into the Ashes this year?"

"We've supported them with the uniforms and cricket gear, and they've been training pretty well over the last few weeks when it hasn't rained."

Mr Small said the Ashes were a great way to develop spirit within a group.

"They're a great group of lads and they work well together," he said. "They display this team spirit when they're out working together too."

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CDEP manager Geoff Small said most of the players were involved in preparing the grounds for last year's Ashes.

"We hopped in last year and mowed a heap of grounds," he said. "This year they said, 'Hey boss