



## **VANCOUVER COUGARS WIN US NATIONAL TITLE. Division One Champions Brings Trophy North for the First Time.**

The Vancouver Cougars Australian Rules Football Club is the winner of the 2008 Division 1 US Nationals Championships which took place this weekend at the US Air Force base fields in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The Cougars took a list of 44 players to Colorado and competed in both Division 1 and division 4.

The Division 1 team won all 3 Pool A qualifying games to advance directly to the Grand Final against the Baltimore/Washington Eagles.

Vastly underestimated by the US Teams, the Cougars played strong, direct football and appeared to be the fitter team in all games despite playing at altitude for the first time.

The feathers were ruffled on Saturday, when Vancouver defeated favourites Denver Bulldogs (winners of 5 of the last 6 Nationals) in the first game, and followed it up by beating the other fancied team, the New York Magpies.

Sunday saw the Cougars easily win their third game to go directly into the Grand Final.

Under National rules, teams must consist of no more than 50% Australian players. This proved to be a bonus for Vancouver who boasts a wealth of non-Australian talent, including 3 Canadians who recently returned from Australia where they represented the Canadian team at the International Cup tournament in Melbourne, and some exceptional Irish talent who have made the transition from Gaelic Rules to Australian Rules Football with ease.

The Grand Final was a hard fought affair against Baltimore/Washington, with Vancouver prevailing in the cold and windy conditions to win 4.4-28 to 2.0-12.

The trophy was presented by Mark Thompson, current coach of the Geelong Cats in the professional Australian league.

The Division 4 team lost narrowly, by a goal, to the Seattle Grizzlies in the semi-final.

In the context of Australian Rules Football in North America this is a stunning result for a Canadian team to win the championship and bring the trophy North for the first time. This result promises the continued growth of football in Canada, and in particular British Columbia.

For more information contact [press@vancouvercougars.com](mailto:press@vancouvercougars.com).

**[www.vancouvercougars.com](http://www.vancouvercougars.com)**

*The Vancouver Cougars compete in the NWP AFL (North West Pacific Australian Football League). The season runs from early April through to mid September. Everyone is welcome, both players and non-players. For details please contact Tony Cooper (President) at: [ajcworldwide@hotmail.com](mailto:ajcworldwide@hotmail.com) or Stuart Grills: [stu\\_grills@hotmail.com](mailto:stu_grills@hotmail.com)*