



## ‘Rugby United’ – North 19 South 54



“Thunderous tackling at Twickenham” – North hooker Andy Titterrell stopped in his tracks by committed South defence.

Eighty minutes of blistering action, not one penalty kick at goal and nothing remotely resembling a rolling maul. This wasn't about winning; it wasn't about enhancing reputations, although a few claims for international recognition were certainly advanced. This was about the rugby community uniting in a common cause, and how magnificently both sides responded to the occasion.

Eleven tries were scored during a match of sustained pace and movement. That eight of the tries were scored by the South confirmed them as the markedly superior side, and although the North showed commitment and determination, they simply had no answer to the individual brilliance of Gregan, Lima, Burger, Sیتی and Man of the Match, Chris Latham. For the North Lawrence Dallaglio, as always, led by example, Italy's Bortolami was a mountain of strength and in the centre Ollie Smith was full of pace and invention.

were still knocking opponents over as if their lives depended on it, in the closing stages when the South were out of sight.

**“I think we were all deeply affected by the tsunami disaster and this match gives rugby and us as rugby players a unique opportunity to do something very special, to raise a lot of money for an incredibly worthwhile cause.”**

Lawrence Dallaglio, England & Lions

It was exhibition stuff of course, but there were some thunderous tackles, none better than Brian Lima's 'specials' on Mirco Bergamasco or Gregan's flattening of David Humphreys when the North were enjoying their best spell midway through the first half. And Schalk Burger and Phil Waugh, for whom a missed tackle is a mark of shame,

Honour was satisfied all round – an afternoon of rich entertainment for the crowd of over 40,000, Chris Latham considered it to be the most enjoyable time he had ever spent on the rugby field and the IRB's cause of Rugby Aid, helping to rebuild after the tsunami, had been well and truly served.

## RWC Sevens 2005 – kick-off!



The draw for the three-day RWC 7s 2005 tournament last month was attended by IRB Chairman, Dr Syd Millar, Donald Tsang, Chief Secretary of the Hong Kong SAR, Timothy Fok, President of the Hong Kong Sports Federation and Olympic Committee, Brian Stevenson, SBS, and John Molloy, President and Chairman of the Hong Kong Rugby Football Union (HKRFU).

performance in the IRB Sevens series and in the RWC7s 2005 qualification tournaments.

With eight of the teams qualified directly as quarter-finalists from the RWC 2001, the 24 competing nations were drawn in four pools of six, based on their performance in the last six IRB Sevens series

events. The eight seeded teams are New Zealand, England, Fiji, Argentina, South Africa, Australia, Samoa and Scotland. The remaining 16 teams were grouped in four tiers of four teams, each based on their

On day one and two (18/19 March), each team will play five pool matches, with three points for a win, two points for a draw, one point for a defeat and zero points for a walkover. No extra time will be played in the pool stage. On Sunday, 20 March, the winners and the runners-up from the four pools will enter the knockout stage of the Melrose Cup. The third and fourth placed teams from each pool will contest the Plate while the fifth and sixth placed teams in each pool will contest the Bowl Competition. See page 4 for tournament preview and in-form guide. More information on the tournament website at [www.rwcsevns.com](http://www.rwcsevns.com)



Pool A	Pool B	Pool C	Pool D
New Zealand	England	Fiji	Argentina
Scotland	Samoa	Australia	South Africa
Tonga	France	Canada	Kenya
Ireland	Italy	Portugal	Tunisia
Korea	Georgia	Japan	Russia
USA	Chinese Taipei	Hong Kong	Uruguay

Northern Hemisphere 19  
Southern Hemisphere 54



**“That was one of the best games of rugby I’ve ever been involved in. It was the whole coming-together of the build-up through the week, and then getting to the game and onto the pitch and seeing it all come together, it was just an enjoyable experience.”**

Man of the Match, Chris Latham, Australia

#### Scorers:

**North:** Tries – Titterrell, Sanderson, Bergamasco. Cons – Humphreys, Sweeney.

**South:** Tries – Sיתי 2, Latham 2, Umaga, Lima, Burger, Fourie. Cons – Mehrtens 6, Latham.

**North:** C Paterson (Scotland) (repl M Tait, England, 56), M Bergamasco (Italy), O Smith (England), C Sweeney (Wales), B Cohen (England), D Humphreys (Ireland) (repl M Taylor, Wales, 54), G Cooper (Wales) (repl M Phillips, Wales, 42), J Yapp (Wales), (repl C Soulette, France, 49-66), A Titterrell (England) (repl R Ibanez, France, 56), C Horsman (Worcester), M Bortolami (Italy), D O’Callaghan (Ireland), L Dallaglio (England), P Sanderson (England) (repl J Thomas, Wales, 46), S Taylor (Scotland) (repl E Miller, Ireland 46).

**South:** C Latham (Australia), B Lima (Samoa) (repl M Rauluni, Fiji, 73), J Fourie (South Africa), T Umaga (New Zealand) (repl T Delpont, South Africa, 23), S Bobo (Fiji) (repl S Drahm, Queensland 68), A Mehrtens (New Zealand), G Gregan (Australia), C Hoefft (New Zealand), J Smit (South Africa) (repl E Taukafa, Tonga, 75), K Visagie (South Africa) (repl E Guinazu, Argentina, 73), O Palepoi (Samoa) (repl M Mustchin, New Zealand, 76), V Matfield (South Africa), S Burger (South Africa), P Waugh (Australia), T Kefu (Australia) (repl S Sיתי, Samoa, 46).

**Referee:** Paddy O’Brien (New Zealand). **Touch judges:** Paul Honiss (New Zealand) and Joel Jutge (France), 4th official Chris White (England) and TV Match Official Nigel Whitehouse (Wales).

## World of Rugby united

**On Boxing Day the world watched in horror as communities on the rim of the Indian Ocean were devastated by a catastrophic tsunami. Tens of thousands of people lost their lives and millions were left homeless. The public response was truly outstanding as millions of pounds were raised for the victims and the charities operating in the devastated area. Rugby’s global family has joined the efforts to help those affected by the tragedy.**

Immediately the IRB donated £100,000 to its humanitarian aid partner the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) while the Unions, clubs and individuals around the world launched various aid programmes to raise funds for the victims.

“It was heartening to know that the people of the world including the international rugby community reacted swiftly and contributed generously to the relief effort,” said Dr Syd Millar, IRB Chairman. “The initial £100,000 contribution from the IRB to our humanitarian partners, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), has been mirrored by donations from Unions, clubs and individuals to a range of international charity organisations,” added Dr Millar.

The Welsh Rugby Union organised a fund-raising concert at Millennium Stadium, which raised over one million pounds for the Tsunami Appeal, while in Wellington at the IRB Sevens the New Zealand Rugby Union and Save the Children New Zealand joined forces to raise funds. “It is important that the New Zealand Rugby Union plays a part in trying to lend some help to the

relief and re-building efforts and we have invited Save the Children New Zealand to partner with us in raising awareness and funds around the International Sevens event,” said NZRU Chairman Jock Hobbs. The Australian Rugby Union has donated \$50,000 to the Australian Red Cross Asia Quake and Tsunami Appeal. “The scale of the destruction and devastation caused by the Asian earthquake and tsunami has shocked us all,” said ARU Managing Director & CEO Gary Flowers. In addition a substantial amount was raised by the New South Wales Rugby Union at a 7s tournament at the Waratah Rugby Stadium at the end of January. In the UAE a day of matches at the Dubai Exiles RFC raised over Dhs 40,000 with local businesses offering a wide range of prizes to boost interest, while HKRFU made a donation for every try scored in their domestic league to help bolster the aid funds. Countless individuals, players, fans and referees contributed to the effort: Springbok Andre Venter auctioned his jersey to raise funds to send a doctor to the area, while Kevin Instance, an RFU referee and police inspector, led a team of 27 UK specialist officers to Thailand, to help identify the victims of the disaster.

In fact, to thank Kevin for his efforts, the RFU Elite Referee Development Officer Ed Morrison arranged for him to join the North v South IRB Rugby Aid Match ‘Rebuilding After The Tsunami’ as a special Fifth Official in charge of replacements.

“The North v South match is an opportunity for the rugby family to collectively express our support for those most affected by the disaster. This match is an important statement to the outside world that rugby can pull together in times of need and help those who have suffered through

“We’ve come from the other side of the world and a lot of different people from different countries. We’ve got five captains in the side and I think, right from day one, there was quite a resolve amongst the players, particularly for the reason of the Tsunami disaster. In fact I think it is a very good thing and I would like to see if we could make something happen like this more regularly.”

Rod Macqueen – coach South.

“First and foremost, it’s for a fantastic cause. People, after the initial disaster, have a tendency to forget about the rebuilding process that’s going on for months and years afterwards.”

Brian O’Driscoll Ireland & Lions.



Australia and South captain George Gregan congratulates Samoan captain Semo Sיתי, scorer of two tries.

no fault of their own,” Mike Miller, IRB Chief Executive said.

“Despite the fact that millions of pounds of donations have already been raised the aid efforts are far from completed. The WFP expect that their emergency relief requirements (for both food and operations) may extend for another six months in the region. This will require significant funds and WFP, which is feeding over one million people in the affected regions, estimates the area will remain a primary focus of their operations for a further three years,” Mr Miller added.

It was two years ago at the Rugby World Cup in Australia that the IRB first teamed up with the UN World Food Programme. The partnership brought together the world’s largest humanitarian agency with the international body representing rugby, creating a powerful formula for highlighting the plight of 800 million hungry people around the world through the marketing muscle of rugby as a global spectator sport.

“The charity match at Twickenham presented an opportunity for the world of rugby and its supporters to play their part in assisting the hundreds of thousands of people affected by the tsunami in December last year,” said Greg Barrow, Senior Public Affairs Officer, World Food Programme.

“The IRB North v South Rugby Aid match at Twickenham is a great idea and it is wonderful that the rugby community can come together to raise money for such a worthy cause and the relief efforts of the UN World Food Programme. The devastation we all witnessed on Boxing Day was something we will never forget and the IRB, RFU, the coaches and players should be congratulated for the time and effort they have put into the match.”

Jonny Wilkinson, England & Lions



Although no team from Ruhunu RFU took part in the schools competition of Air Sri Lanka 7s in Kandy (above), this year, the organisers are likely to invite at least a school from the Southern province of Galle, devastated by the tsunami - in the photo: Colombo- Royal College, St. Thomas College, St. Peter's College Isipathana School (Winners of the Bowl), Wesley College, Ananda College and Kandy - St. Anthony's College, St. Sylvester's College (winners of the Plate), Kingswood College (winners of the Cup), Trinity College, Dharmarajah College, Vidyartha College - Kandy

## After Tsunami – Sri Lankan rugby in mourning

By Chris Thau

**The boys who died, or lost their beloved ones, were very much like those in the above picture, carefree, easygoing, gentle teenagers - your average Sri Lankan rugby player. All the victims came from the Southern rugby stronghold of Galle, the third after Kandy and Colombo, which bore the brunt of the tsunami's devastating impact. "Ruhunu Rugby Union suffered worst," said Sarath Ranveera, the SLRFU National Recruiting Manager, who lost his house and all his belongings in the disaster.**

"The Ruhunu Development Programme was launched in 1999 at St. Aloysius grounds in Galle, with over 500 children turning out for the occasion. The progress we have made was quite astonishing. In a short while the Ruhunu team, was able to compete with schools and clubs from Colombo.

Finally in 2000 our team qualified for the Sri Lankan International 7s Tournament. Now, the sad story is that most of the rugby playing schools down south, from Bentota up to Hambantota have been destroyed."

In his report compiled on the floor of Closenbergh Hotel, where he took refuge thanks to the generosity of the owner, the Ruhunu RFU President Kumar Abeywardena, Sarath has listed the victims, with meticulous, almost painful attention to detail.

There are 62 names on his list: four players were killed by the wave while several other lost their parents and siblings. Many more have lost their houses and belongings.

Hundreds more are traumatised and displaced, in camps and makeshift accommodation, with the total of displaced people reaching a

staggering 2.5 millions. The lists compiled by Sarath make painful reading.

The first player on the list is Tuan Nirosh Sharif Deen of 157 Tangalle Road, Hambantota who died, together with his mother Niya Nadeen, sister Hirosh Shahibdeen, one of his brothers TS Musaffer and his grandmother Lily Nona. Persons to be helped (says Sarath's list) : brother Nirosh Shahibdeen (at the same address), and father Tuan Nihan Dsamadani, address unknown-displaced.

Three other players SK Suresh Nilantha, JS Pradeep Suranga and Mohamed Imran were also killed, while WN Hashan Janaka Kumara, Ashraf Naleef, Sanji Pasanna Kumara, Friran Mohamed, Nizar Deen lost their parents, brothers and sisters.

Nizar Deen, orphaned and left homeless by the disaster, has had

surgery on both legs and the surgeons opened his abdomen to remove the sand he had ingested. He and his surviving siblings have been given shelter by a relative in Hambantota, and, as Sarath noted, he was particularly distraught by the loss of his trophies and rugby boots.

In addition to the schools that lost all their rugby facilities, all rugby grounds in Koggala, St. Aloysius, Samanala, Matara and Hambantota have been washed out with the facilities completely destroyed.

And he concluded: "All our equipment including good posts padding, balls etc were washed away. Therefore we are not in a position to organise our tournaments," concluded Mr Sarath.

*Report compiled with the help of Dilroy Fernando - the recently elected Secretary of the SLRFU.*

# The talent scout

By Seb Lauzier

**Tunisia has never experienced the pressure and the pleasure of attending a RWC tournament final, either in the 15s or 7s. When they missed out on RWC 2003 qualification by a whisker against Namibia, everyone in the Federation feared the worst.**

How different then to see Tunisia enjoy a fine unbeaten run – including a crucial win over Morocco – in front of a small but passionate Tunis crowd, to secure the one remaining place for the 2005 Rugby World Cup Sevens in Hong Kong. So how did they defy the odds and self-doubt to book their place in Rugby Sevens' flagship event? To start with, without the financial aid of President Fathi Hachicha, who personally bankrolled the 7s team campaign, this would have not been possible. But money, while an indispensable crutch, does not simply buy success.

It is about something else, called talent, an ingredient Tunisian rugby has always had in abundance – witness the countless players of Tunisian origin littering the various French leagues from top to bottom. The other factor is something called rugby expertise and Tunisia decided to use the services of Claude Saurel, development coach emeritus, one of the hard men of the great Bezier's team of the 1970s.

Saurel's drive for getting the best out of developing rugby nations is well known, as is his track record. He coached Morocco to the 1997 RWC Sevens finals. Although he failed to repeat the performance with the 15-a-side Moroccan team, he managed to develop the limited resources of Georgian rugby to such an extent that the team reached the last 20 in Australia. More significantly the Georgians, although defeated, did not disgrace themselves

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# RWC Sevens 2005

## Hong Kong: Pace, skill and character

By Greg Thomas



**As Hong Kong makes the final preparations to host their second Sevens World Cup, the fourth since its inception 12 years ago, one recalls that, paradoxically, it was the short game which tested the viability of an international tournament, long before RWC was launched in 1987. It was in 1973 when the Scottish Rugby Union, looking for an event to celebrate its centenary, felt that an event of proven Scottish ancestry would be suitable. So it was decided that 7-a-side rugby, invented in the Scottish Border town of Melrose 90 years previously (in 1883) by a group of players which included the town butcher, David Sanderson, and his apprentice, Ned Haig, the respective captain and vice-captain of the local club, got the ball rolling. The Scots invited six other member Unions of the then IRB: England, Ireland, Wales, France, New Zealand and Australia, to attend the one-day tournament on April 9, 1973. South Africa, unable to enter for political reasons, sent a token representation in the shape of its most famous breakaway duo, Piet Greyling and Jan Ellis, playing for a team called 'President's 7s'.**

Until then Sevens had remained very much a Scottish pastime, played with almost religious devotion in the Scottish Borders and with a great deal of fun elsewhere, including in London where the Middlesex 7s had been gathering England and Wales' finest since its launch in 1926. However, it was Scotland again who, inspired by the success of the first two World Cups, proposed that the IRB hold a 7-a-side international tournament, which they offered to host. By then, thanks to the Hong Kong RFU, who had launched the Hong Kong 7s in 1976, international Sevens rugby had become firmly established as one of the game's most attractive and indeed entertaining formats.

And so it was that in 1993 the first Sevens Rugby World Cup took place in Scotland where it had originated over 100 years earlier in 1883. The second tournament four years later was in Hong Kong,

home to the largest and best-known Sevens tournament, while Mar del Plata in Argentina hosted the third tournament in 2001.

Hong Kong, the former British colony now under Chinese sovereignty, has the honour of hosting the Sevens World Cup for the second time in March 2005. Remarkably the tournament celebrates 30 years of Hong Kong Sevens.

For a rugby fan there is nothing quite like the last evening of the Hong Kong Sevens, sitting under floodlights in the 40,000 capacity Government Stadium, nestled in the So Kon Po hills, awaiting with anticipation the final. And there have been some epics.

The 1997 World Cup final between eventual winners Fiji and South Africa, the then reigning fifteen-a-side champions, is among the best. Fiji, the sentimental favourites with Waisale Serevi, Marika Vunibaka,

Manasa Bari and the imposing figure of Leveni Duvuduvukulu in their midst, took to the field with the biblical reference PHL 4:13 scrawled in ink across the chests of their jerseys. Philippians 4:13 simply says, "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength," and perhaps inspired by this, Fiji rose to the occasion to deliver one of the game's truly historic matches.

South Africa, led by Joost van der Westhuizen and with Boks Andre Venter, Andre Snyman, Pieter Rossouw, Breyton Paulse, Jacques Olivier and Bobbie Skinstad in their midst, had shown that they were serious contenders by sweeping aside New Zealand in the semi-finals 33-7. The final, the 69th match of a mammoth tournament was a roller coaster as the South Africans first took the initiative to grab a 14-7 lead at the interval following a dominant display of possession and territory. But that all changed in the second



England, 7s World Champions 1993, Edinburgh.



Fiji, 7s World Champions 1997, Hong Kong.



New Zealand, 7s World Champions 2001, Mar del Plata.

half as the Fijians cut loose with their own unique style of free-flowing, basketball-style rugby that saw them sweep past the Africans to take a 24-14 lead.

Digging deep, Westhuizen's side retaliated with another try to bring them within three points, but time was ultimately against them and the final whistle sounded to give Fiji the title of world champions that they so richly deserved. To this day Serevi says that the words of "Philippians 4:13" have given Fiji the strength to go all the way, inspiring them to overcome the disappointment of Edinburgh in 1993, with the God-fearing Pacific islanders returning home as heroes.

Four years earlier in Scotland, Andy Harriman's England had surprised everyone by winning the inaugural RWC Sevens at Murrayfield in Edinburgh when they defeated Australia in the final. Fiji had been favoured to win following their dominance of Sevens around the world at the time, but the cold and wet conditions were not to their liking and they bowed out in the semi-finals to England.

The 2001 event in Mar del Plata, Argentina, saw several teams such as Chile, Kenya, Georgia and Russia make their debuts but it was the two arch-rivals New Zealand and Australia who made it to the final. Unfortunately the Aussies encountered Jonah Lomu in top form and he scored three of his side's five tries in the Kiwis' 31-12 victory, to leave Australia the bridesmaids once again. Ever since, the Kiwis have dominated world Sevens and have won all five IRB Sevens titles since 1999/2000. However, form in this year's IRB Sevens indicates that the RWC Sevens 2005 will be the closest and most competitive tournament to date.

The teams will compete in four pools of six with the first and second placed teams progressing to the World Cup quarter-finals. The third and fourth teams will play in the Plate Championship while the fifth and sixth teams will enter the Bowl championship.

## Asian status quo maintained

By Neil Wijeratne

**The RWC 7s qualifying process involving the Asian zone contenders ended as predicted, with the top three Asian nations making it to Hong Kong after two days of sizzling rugby action at Sri Lanka's premier Sevens tournament in Kandy.**

Japan showed their prowess when they defeated a very competent and well-drilled Chinese Taipei 38-19 in the final of the tournament. Playing before a vociferous crowd in a packed stadium, they steamrolled the hosts Sri Lanka 47-5 in the quarter-finals and Korea 22-0 in the semi-final, in their quest for the first Asian berth in the RWC 7s. Japan's Ashley Nathan who planted two spectacular tries in the final was adjudged the most valuable player of the tournament. It looked as if the Japanese team's ten-day camp in Sri Lanka prior to the tournament had paid dividends when they scored 17 tries in three matches on day two of the 'Singer Sri Lankan Sevens' tournament.

In the first semi-final Japan beat Korea 22-0 with Ryuta Kakizaki and N Kilive showing good hands and exciting speed. The second semi-final between Chinese Taipei and Thailand turned out to be a thrilling contest with the score tied at 17-all only seconds before the final whistle, when a late Chinese Taipei try propelled Tamasi Cama's team to Hong Kong and into the tournament final, while sending the brave Thais into the third place play-off. "It's great to reach the final, it is great to make it to Hong Kong," said thrilled Chinese Taipei coach Cama after the match. In the play-off, Asian Games champions Korea beat Thailand 31-7 to win the bronze and with it secured a starting berth in the Hong Kong line-up.

RWC Sevens 2005 has its own web site: [www.rwcsevens.com](http://www.rwcsevens.com)

The 24 qualifiers for Sevens RWC in Hong Kong are: Host Union, Hong Kong; eight automatic qualifiers [quarter-finalists] from RWC Sevens 2001 (Argentina): New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Argentina, Canada, England, South Africa and Samoa; and 15 [out of 77] qualifiers from 14 regional qualifying tournaments: Portugal, Ireland, Scotland, France, Italy, Georgia, Russia, Japan, Chinese Taipei, Korea, Kenya, Tunisia, Tonga, Uruguay and USA.

### Past Winners

Year	Venue	Winner	Runner-Up
1993	Edinburgh, Scotland	England	Australia
1997	Hong Kong	Fiji	South Africa
2001	Mar del Plata, Argentina	New Zealand	Australia

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## The talent scout

continued

against formidable opponents of the likes of England and South Africa.

Now it was the turn of Tunisia to sample Saurel's perfectionist streak. And in order to prepare them for the North African qualifying tournament, Saurel took them to Fiji where they spent a gruelling six weeks in training camp, which also saw them play more than 50 competitive matches against quality Fijian opposition. The Tunisians were always going to be hard to beat, but the camp in Fiji turned them into a formidable outfit that demolished their opponents with astonishing ease and panache.

"Reaching Hong Kong

is the result of a lot of work with the team. It is satisfying for me because working in this way we get to unearth a lot of talent, which brings immense pride," Saurel said.

"My secret? Work! Hard work. They're talented players and we're getting the most out

of that - more than would normally be the case. The metamorphosis we underwent in Fiji was impressive, but it had to be.

Saurel does not have a contract, and as a result he sees his lot in life as fairly simple. He goes where he wants and works where he sees an exciting project, one that allows him to continue in his role as 'révélateur de talent' (talent scout and developer).

The Tunisian Union is under no illusion as to the scale of the challenge in Hong Kong. "It was a fantastic honour for us to be invited to play in those first two tournaments in Dubai and George," said Union President Fathi Hachicha. "We greatly looked forward to representing North Africa, and to

seeing at first hand the fantastic standard we will need to reach for the World Cup."

"The players worked very hard for three months together, away from their families. Most of them are fairly young - 19, 20 or 21 - so there have been difficult times. We did, though, have the expert guidance of Claude Saurel, who is not only a great man but also a great coach. His work ethic has been unbelievable. He simply works all the time and has driven the players on to newer and greater heights."











The captains of the teams who competed in the North Africa section of the RWC 7s. Left to right: Nigeria, Cameroon, Tunisia, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, Senegal.



Talent Scout Claude Saurel.

## RWC SEVENS 2005 – IN FORM GUIDE

	Argentina 	Australia 	Canada 	Chinese Taipei 	England 	Fiji 
Best-ever RWC Sevens finish	Semi-Final 2001	Runners-up 1993, 2001	Quarter-final 2001	Bowl Quarter-final 2001	Winners 1993	Winners 1997
RWC Sevens win %	63	74	29	0	71	87
RWC Sevens avg. pts. scored per game	19.8	25	14	5.8	21.3	32.2
Best finish IRB Sevens 2004/05	Cup Final NZ, USA	Cup Semi-final USA	Bowl Winner USA	–	Cup Winner Dubai	Cup Runners-up Dubai, SA
IRB Sevens 2004/05 win rate	70%	64%	45%	–	81%	70%
IRB Sevens 2004/05 total points scored	512	510	371	–	535	535
IRB Sevens 2004/05 total points conceded	263	310	407	–	239	328
	Kenya 	Korea 	New Zealand 	Portugal 	Russia 	Samoa 
Best-ever RWC Sevens finish	Bowl Semi-final 2001	Quarter-final 1997	Winners 2001	Bowl Final 2001	Plate winners 2001	Semi-finalist 1997
RWC Sevens win %	14	35	86	23	63	75
RWC Sevens avg. pts. scored per game	10.3	14.7	31.7	13.9	16.9	28.7
Best finish IRB Sevens 2004/05	Plate Semi-final South Africa	–	Cup Winners SA, NZ, USA	Bowl Winners Dubai	–	Plate Winners Dubai
IRB Sevens 2004/05 win rate	45%	–	96%	42%	–	52%
IRB Sevens 2004/05 total points scored	263	–	756	177	–	439
IRB Sevens 2004/05 total points conceded	435	–	160	161	–	327

In the Plate semi-finals, Sri Lanka beat an injury-ridden Malaysia 29 points to 7 with skipper Radhika Hettiarachchi and winger Sanjeeva Jayasinghe excelling, while Arabian Gulf defeated China 26-7. In the Plate final, although the Arabian Gulf team were in front 14-12 at half-time Sri Lankan skipper Radhika Hettiarachchi's try, followed by Sanjeeva Jayasinghe's touchdown, put the match beyond the reach of the Gulf, in front of the jubilant home crowd.

In the Bowl, Guam, a newcomer to Asian rugby, dished out a pleasing display when they got the better of Singapore 24-12 in the first semi-final, with Kazakhstan defeating India 44-12 in the second. One of the main features of the Guam team was the overall ability and composure of the Claros twins, Paul and Ryan. In the final of the Bowl competition, Kazakhstan beat Guam 20-5 after leading 10-

5 at the break. "This is our maiden appearance in an IRB competition and of course apart from a tour to Fiji, this tournament is also our first tour abroad. It was a wonderful experience for the boys who are simply ecstatic," said Guam manager Joshua Walsh.

"Certainly this is a very special tournament. Great atmosphere and one of the biggest crowds in an

IRB Sevens tournament in the region" said IRB's Sevens Manager Mark Egan. "More competitions of this nature would certainly help teams like Guam to improve their standard. At the same time Thailand's entry into the top four in Asia in Sevens rugby is something good for the future of the game in the region".



Captains of the competing nations in the RWC qualifying round in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Standing left to right: Rong Jing Xiang (Singapore), Teina Rongo (Guam), Chaiyan Yamklad (Thailand), Paul Austin (Arabian Gulf), Wu Zhen Ling (China), Tomohiro Yamaguchi (Japan). Seated left to right: Rezuhan Chan (Malaysia), Radhika Hettiarachchi (Sri Lanka), Pichugin Dima (Kazakhstan), Yong Hwan Myung (Korea), Chang Wei Cheng (Chinese Taipei), Supratik Sen (India).

## The newcomers

### Uruguay – déjà vu



Uruguay has already sampled the unique distinction of winning a RWC 7s gold medal in 2001, when reserve player Benjamin Bono was summoned to replace injured New Zealand captain Eric Rush in Mar del Plata. Although Bono was not required to play, he did receive a winner's medal, together with Te Nana and Jonah Lomu. In Hong Kong, Los Teros, who qualified at the expense of Chile, will find the going tough in Hong Kong as their lack of international experience is likely to tell. Yet, coach Felipe Puig has learned a thing or two in Los Angeles, and will try to inspire his veterans, skipper Ignacio Conti, Marcelo Gutierrez, Alfredo Delgado and Juan Beyhaut to a place in the knockout stages of the Plate, if not the final of the Bowl. **FD**

### Tunisia – team ethos



Tunisia celebrate qualification.

By the time Tunisia arrive in Hong Kong they will have undergone a second intensive training camp in Fiji. With wins over France and Kenya in their first two IRB Sevens tournaments, this organised and committed group should not be taken lightly. Skipper Mohamed Ali and playmaker Kais Issa are players of genuine ability and Ben M'Sallem Lotfi has pace to burn. Besides the bullocking Bouhleh they may lack a bit of size and physical presence against the top teams, but Saurel has carved out a team ethos that makes them genuine challengers for the Plate competition. **SL**

<b>France</b> 	<b>Georgia</b> 	<b>Hong Kong</b> 	<b>Ireland</b> 	<b>Italy</b> 	<b>Japan</b> 
Quarter-final 1997	Plate Final 2001	Plate final 1997	Semi-final 1993	First round 1993	Plate Quarter-final 2001
47	50	28	17.6	20	45
17.6	14.4	13.2	41	8.2	14.3
Plate Semi-final USA	–	–	Bowl Semi-final South Africa	–	Shield Final New Zealand
32%	–	–	18%	–	17%
337	–	–	192	–	84
364	–	–	267	–	165
<b>Scotland</b> 	<b>South Africa</b> 	<b>Tonga</b> 	<b>Tunisia</b> 	<b>Uruguay</b> 	<b>USA</b> 
Plate Semi-final 1997	Runners-up 1997	Plate Winners 1997	–	–	Plate Quarter-final 2001
54	81	60	–	–	39
20.8	28.1	22.3	–	–	15.6
Plate Final New Zealand	Cup Semi-final Dubai, NZ	Bowl Final New Zealand	Plate Semi-final South Africa	Bowl Semi-final USA	Shield Semi-final USA
43%	67%	50%	36%	20%	0%
344	494	245	94	54	79
407	254	189	207	129	255

## 'Total Rugby'... on air!



'Total Rugby' Editor Chris Rea interviews Melrose 7s stalwart Jack Dunn at Greenyards.

**The new IRB Television series 'Total Rugby' commenced on February 9, with the first programme broadcast by Sky TV in the UK three days after the opening round of the RBS Six Nation matches. The programme, sponsored by the international catering and support services organisation Sodexho will be distributed world wide and will run from February to November.**

In addition to coverage of the IRB's own tournaments and events - the Rugby World Cup 2007 and the qualifying rounds, the Women's RWC, the Under 19 and Under 21 World Championships, the RWC 7s, the IRB Sevens Grand Prix, the Intercontinental Cup and the Superpowers Cup - the programme will contain action, news, features and profiles from around the world. IRB Chief Executive Mike Miller

said, "The launch of Total Rugby is the cornerstone of a proactive IRB communications strategy for the game worldwide, utilising traditional and new media platforms."



"Total Rugby will provide the game with a powerful, weekly promotional vehicle that will colourfully supplement the existing coverage of the game's major tournaments and matches," he added.

The Head of IRB Communications and Broadcasting, Chris Rea, whose experience in rugby broadcasting spans over 25 years, is the editor of the new series, while IRB's Publications Manager, Chris Thau, a former Romanian TV and BBC director and producer is the

executive producer. Trans World International, better known for their acronym TWI, the broadcasting arm of International Management Group (IMG) are producing the 30-minute programme. TWI Head of Production, Graham Fry, is responsible for the weekly show alongside other weekly TWI productions such as Futbol Mundial and Trans World Sport.

The young and talented TWI production team includes 38-year old producer Rhodri Evans, who has been with TWI for 10 years after stints with European Tour Weekly and ESPN Sportscenter, 33-year old producer Daniel Prior, who worked for Trans World Sport and the Open Golf Official Film, before joining TWI eight years ago, 35-year old assistant-producer Martin Cross, a former Kenyan international scrum-half, and producer for TWI Mobile and Now TV and 31-year old Kate Robinson, a former Wales Youth rugby player, who produced the latest Superstar series for the BBC.

Beth Weatherstone (33) is the production manager and Ailsa Caine (30) is the production coordinator of the weekly show. Beth, a former producer of BA Sportsworld, has now switched to production managing and has already taken

charge of Masters Tennis events and TWI's snooker coverage for the BBC, while Ailsa has left Trans World Sport, the world's most widely broadcast sports TV show to join Total Rugby. Finally, Lewis Gunn (25), the Rosslyn Park outside-half, is the Total Rugby librarian.

Programme Editor Chris Rea, who oversees the project, observed, "This is an exciting and important initiative. Rugby on television is vital not only for the promotion of the game, but also for its development. With the IRB's contacts and Sodexho's generous sponsorship, we will be seeking to make a significant impact in those territories where rugby is played and watched and, even more important, in new markets and in countries where there is presently little or no coverage of the game."

'Total Rugby' Broadcast Territories		
Territory	Broadcaster	Home Reach
Middle East	Showtime	250,000
India	Ten Sports	25,000,000
Spain	Canal+	1,900,000
South Africa	Supersport	1,269,000
France	Eurosport	6,367,000
Serbia/Montenegro	Yu Oval Agency TV Krusevac (Serbia)	2,000,000
In-Flight	Cathay Pacific	
Romania	TV Sport	2,400,000
United Kingdom	BSkyB	11,145,000
Canada	Fox	800,000
Middle East	Fox	623,111
Poland	Polsat	1,400,000
Georgia	TV & Radio Broadcasting of Georgia	1,224,000
Italy	Sport Italia	18,000,000
South America (Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Chile)	ESPN Sur	4,704,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>77,082,111</b>

## IRB Strengthens its Team

**In January the IRB announced that the second phase of its modernisation programme had begun with an internal management restructure. This move represented the next step in the implementation of the new strategic plan and governance structure adopted by the organisation last November.**

As part of this restructure Mark Egan has been appointed Acting Head of Rugby after the Tournament and Development departments merged. Egan's previous roles at the IRB were as IRB Sevens Manager and



Mark Egan  
Acting Head  
of Rugby.

acting Head of Tournaments. He worked before in Japan for Kobe Steel and for the Irish Government inward investment agency in Tokyo and New York. Egan represented

the Barbarians, Ireland U21 and U25 levels and captained Oxford University in 1990. Former International referee Steve Griffiths, currently the Referee Manager, is taking up the new role of Operations Manager, Strategy. The position has been created to ensure the key elements of the strategic plan, including the development of the organisation's operation plan and a staff development programme, are delivered. The IRB will advertise for a new Referee Manager in the near future.

David Carrigy has moved to the Council & Member Services

Department from the Development Department to take up the role of Operations Manager, Council & Member Services. He will manage the IRB Trust investment programme and approvals processes regarding rugby equipment and playing surfaces.

Simon Jelowitz rejoined the IRB as Tournaments Manager after a two-year stint with ERC as an operations manager with specific responsibility for the running of the European Cup and Shield competitions. His primary responsibilities will be the management of the Under 21 and Under 19 competitions.



## £30 million investment

At its November Interim Meeting the IRB Council unanimously approved a new strategic plan for the IRB incorporating a new governance structure, and the Chairman, Dr Syd Millar, described it as the most important meeting of the IRB Council since 1995 when the game of rugby went open. IRB Vice Chairman Bob Tuckey, Chairman of the Governance Working Party established by Council in 2003, said, "In consultations with Member Unions and other stakeholders a common message was prevalent, that the IRB needed to review the way in which it conducts its business to ensure that it remains relevant to the changing needs and imperatives of all Member Unions."

Key features of the strategic plan include a £30 million investment commitment over the next three years to new development initiatives for Tier One and Tier Two Nations, a move to greater democracy and enhanced decision-making capabilities.

"The IRB recognised the need for change for the future prosperity of the game and the new governance is focussed on working together, trust, integrity and an understanding of our values and traditions. However, this is not a race and today's meeting, while historic in laying key foundations for the future, is the beginning of the future development of the game," added Dr Millar.

The five major goals identified by the strategic plan are:

- Strong and effective leadership by the IRB
- Maximise the profile, profitability and value of Rugby World Cup
- Increase the number and competitiveness of Unions at Tier 1
- Increase participation in Rugby Union worldwide
- Rugby Union rejoining the Olympic Games.

## RWC 2011 bid

Japan, New Zealand and South Africa officially confirmed their intention to tender for the right to host Rugby World Cup 2011, the IRB announced.

"This is tremendous news for Rugby World Cup 2011. The fact that three Member Unions have signalled their intention to tender for the same tournament reflects the growing prestige of Rugby World Cup," IRB Chairman Dr Syd Millar said.

"Japan, New Zealand and South Africa represent three of our five Rugby World Cup regions: Africa, Oceania and Asia. The growing development and popularity of rugby is highlighted in Japan being the

first Asian country to tender for the tournament," he added.

On May 13 the three Unions will have to submit their tournament tenders to Rugby World Cup Limited (RWCL) and in June/July a team of RWCL personnel will visit each of the Unions to review the respective tenders and proposed venues and facilities.

"The IRB Council will ratify and announce the RWC 2011 Host Union in November, six years prior to the tournament. This timetable reflects the scale and nature of the preparatory work in delivering this world class tournament," Dr Millar concluded.



## IRB General Meeting



IRB General Meeting 2003. In the foreground Spain's representative, Juan Manuel Moreno (left), FER secretary and his President, Alfonso Mandado.

The IRB General Meeting, held in Dublin at the beginning of April, provides representatives from all Member Unions and Regional Associations with an opportunity to meet and discuss major issues related to rugby's development around the world. As well as the various clinics and workshops, delegates will this year hear presentations from IRB staff on a variety of topical issues. IRB CEO Mike Miller will provide an update on the Olympic situation ahead of the all-important decision and vote to be made by the IOC in July. Training Manager Bruce Cook will talk on 'Improving IRB Services in Regional Development' while Communications department staff will give updates on recent developments in media. The strategy to make the new 'Total Rugby' television programme, launched in February, a crucial element in the IRB's remit to develop and promote the game worldwide, as requested at the previous General Meeting, will also be discussed. The launch of the IRB Syndicated Radio News Service providing exclusive round-ups to stations around the world will also be presented.

representatives. Future trust funding for Unions and tournaments will be allocated in line with the strategic plan and Executive Committee members will become Directors of the IRB Services company in this regard.

Commenting on the changes, IRB Chief Executive Mike Miller said, "The adoption of the new strategic plan is an important milestone for the organisation. The IRB Council will remain the ultimate legislative body and will include for the first

time all six Regional Associations."

### IRB Executive Committee

IRB Chairman, Dr Syd Millar (independent)  
 IRB Vice Chairman, Bob Tuckey (independent)  
 Bill Beaumont (England)  
 Jock Hobbs (New Zealand)  
 Carlos Tozzi (Argentina)  
 Bill Nolan (Scotland)  
 Bernard Lapasset (France)  
 David Pickering (Wales)  
 Brian van Rooyen (South Africa)  
 Mike Miller (Chief Executive Officer)

## 2005 Global Anti-Doping Programme

This year the IRB will run over 1,000 tests in and out of competition, in addition to the testing carried out by national Unions. The 2005 IRB testing programme will be expanded to include the IRB's regional and Tier Two tournaments and RWC 2007 qualifying matches and 7s international rugby. An extensive global out-of-competition testing programme to support its already rigid anti-drugs regime was launched last October in conjunction with 27 Member Unions. Over 1000 players have been placed in a registered testing pool managed by the IRB.

Under the programme individual player 'whereabouts' information, including where they live, which club they play with, where they train and their national training/playing commitments has been sought through the Member Unions. The IRB is working with Anti-Doping International (ADI), a company specialising in coordinating this type of testing programme, and WADA, to ensure the tests are conducted around the rugby world. The IRB's Anti-Doping Manager Tim Ricketts said, "The move towards increasing the size of the IRB's out-of-competition testing programme and the decision to include 7s players shows the IRB's commitment to keeping the game drug free. It sends a strong message to all international players about the IRB's zero tolerance to doping in rugby".

The IRB's Member Unions also jointly conduct around 3000 tests a year across various levels of the game, which provides strong, additional support to the IRB's Anti-Doping Programme.

In 2004 the IRB conducted a total of 829 anti-doping tests (379 in competition and 450 out of competition) and a total of four anti-doping rule violations were recorded, two for cannabis by players from France and Morocco and two for Salbutamol\* by players from Namibia and Zimbabwe.

\* Salbutamol is permitted via inhalation for the treatment of asthma or exercise induced asthma/broncho spasm when an abbreviated Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) form is submitted.

## New Executive



As part of the modernisation drive and new governance structure, the IRB Council has elected an Executive Committee of 10 members. The newly constituted Executive Committee will meet on a regular basis and was established to improve efficiency and to speed up the decision-making process. It will comprise the Chairman and Vice Chairman and seven Council

# 2012 Olympics

## A natural progression

by Andy Ripley

**“Want of money made us rack our brains as to what was to be done to keep the Club from going to the wall, and the idea struck me that a football tournament might prove attractive, but as it was hopeless to think of having several games in one afternoon with fifteen players on each side, the teams were reduced to seven men.”**

This is a quote from an article, ‘An Old Melrose Player’s Recollections’, written most probably in 1907/1908, by Ned Haig (1858-1939), an apprentice butcher in Melrose – a small town in the Borders area of Scotland – who, in 1883, when looking for a way to improve the club’s finances, hit on the idea of fitting a knockout miniature rugby tournament into an afternoon of athletic sport. So our friend and his butcher, one David Sanderson, at the time captain of the local club, ‘invented’ the seven-a-side game, or the short game as it is called. Haig’s idea caught on, and soon the example of Melrose was followed by other towns in the area – Hawick, Selkirk, Jed Forest, Kelso, Gala etc – and the autumn and spring sequence of Sevens became hugely popular in the Borders.

Sevens is like no other game, it is typically played as a knockout tournament and on the same size of pitch as the fifteen-a-side game, each

half lasting seven minutes. The idea of the game is similar to the fifteen-a-side game, but the tactics are very different, as the emphasis is on the running game.

I can well remember participating in a number of those Border Sevens tournaments in the 1960s and early 70s, when a couple of guest sides usually from London (since the Middlesex Sevens competition, always held on the first Saturday in May, had bred teams that could almost compete with the Border clubs) or Loughborough College or St Luke’s College (Exeter), where the game was also strong, were invited. There was a huge Borders traditional gathering for the Sevens tournaments in Hawick, Selkirk, Melrose, Galashiels, Jedburgh, Peebles or Kelso, where large crowds quite often double the size of the population of those towns.

In the 1920s the ‘Sevens bug’ spread across the border into England, with the Middlesex 7s launched



Melrose originals: Winners of the Ladies’ Cup at Greenyards in April 1883. Standing from left: J. Tacket, A. Haig, J. Simpson and J. Riddell. Seated from left: T. Riddell, G. Mercer and Captain D. Sanderson with the ball.



‘Olympic 7s dream’ in the vision of artist Cecilia Huthmacher.

in 1926, and overseas. In 1973, as part of the Scottish Rugby Union centenary celebrations the first World Tournament was held at Murrayfield. The Scottish Union, founded in 1873, was intensely conservative and determinedly protective of amateurism. It is therefore somewhat surprising that the first international match (1871) was played in Scotland, the first televised match (1938) was between Scotland and England and the first 7s international competition was played in Murrayfield in 1973. I played in the England side that won the tournament, which surprised us particularly as we had performed poorly in the Five Nations that year. It surprised us even more when a couple of months later the nucleus of that Sevens team became the only Home Union to beat the All Blacks in New Zealand in the 20th century.

Legend has it that a canny overseas-based Scot was in the crowd at Murrayfield on that day of April 7, 1973 and that the idea of an international 7s competition was born then and there. Whatever the

truth, three years later in 1976, in far-off Hong Kong, the HKRFU launched the Hong Kong 7s, unremarked and unremarkable at the time and outside the hand of the International Board. Thus the creation of Ned Haig from Melrose was permanently hoisted onto the international stage.

The weekend festival featuring teams from all parts of the world, with their exciting brand of play in front of packed houses, quickly stole the global heart of players and spectators alike. I played in the 1981 Barbarians team which won the competition that year but it was the Pacific brand of rugby and the Australian and New Zealand teams that raised the whole game onto a new level, although the exploits of newcomers of the likes of Oman, Kenya or Japan would always be rewarded with a mighty cheer from the bursting and jolly stands. If Ned’s objective had been to raise a few bob, then his game was succeeding beyond his wildest dreams, particularly in light of the report following the first Sevens



tournament at the Greenyards in Melrose in 1883, "The events began at 12.30 and concluded at 7.30. The day was not very favourable being cold during the forepart and wet long before the close."

In 1993 a World Cup of Sevens was held, appropriately in Scotland (110 years since Ned Haig's extraordinary exploit), then again in 1997, this time in Hong Kong, and in Mar del Plata (Argentina) in 2001. Sevens has been a regular feature in the South Pacific Games and in 1998, it was also included in the Commonwealth Games for the first time, New Zealand taking Gold then and again in 2002 in Manchester. Since then, Sevens rugby has taken another huge leap forward, with the creation of a World Sevens Series – a truly international Grand Prix of tournaments involving dozens of nations. Should the International Olympic Committee see the light, the natural progression in the international expansion of 7s is the 2012 Olympics.

The paradox of course was that Ned's objective in 1883 was to raise a few pounds for the club, whereas according to the Rev H. Almond, the headmaster of Loretto and the referee (then called an umpire) at the after-match dinner at the first ever international between Scotland and England in 1871, "the objective of rugby football was to produce a race of robust young men with active habits and manly sympathies." Maybe if we are smart those words that cascade down the years can be adapted to fit the game in the 21st century and we can see Ned's gift to us all play its part in the greatest of sporting arenas – the Olympics.



"The one and only Andrew Harriman" the first winner of the Melrose Cup.

## 7s Heaven A global game

By Dick Best

**Quite where seven-a-side rugby stands in the wider scheme of things will always be a contentious issue with the rugby coach. Depending on his persuasion, if he has played the abbreviated game to any level of success, then he will be a convert. If not, then rather like the overweight kid at school he may well have a strong aversion to this kind of self imposed masochism deeply ingrained within and nothing will change the thought process of not promoting the game. And whilst Sevens exponents can sing the praises of the short game until their hearts' content, your diehard coaches simply will not be moved and will find any reason in the book to avoid logical debate.**

It has taken England a considerable amount of time to actually buy into the Sevens concept, which has been surprising, as Sevens has done a great deal in the past for the identification of talent for its selectors and coaches of national teams. One has only to cast their minds back to the 1993 World Cup Sevens held at a very cold and windy Murrayfield. A team of virtual unknowns was selected to represent England in this prestigious event, drawing savage criticism from all corners of the media, as the heroes from back-to-back Grand Slams, the likes of Carling, Andrew, Guscott or Underwood, were all excluded from the squad of ten. We, the then selectors, were on the receiving end of a brutal hiding from the previously supportive media, having actually selected players that most of the journalists had never heard of. I think the then fireman from Wakefield, Dave Scully, was the straw that broke the camel's back!

Unperturbed by this vicious onslaught, we the selectors had driven the length and breadth of the country in search of the best Sevens players rather than the best names. A young man called Lawrence Dallaglio was plucked out of Wasps' second team, Tim Rodber had just broken into Northampton's first team, Matt

Dawson was not that long out of school along with his classmate Nick Beal, Damien Hopley had been on an England tour before, which meant he was a senior pro, Chris Sheasby was his usual self, there were Adebayo Adedayo, Justin Cassell and Dave Scully, at the time just finding their feet in the senior game, and then there was the one and only Andrew Harriman, the Cambridge and Harlequins winger who made the most remarkable captain.

Of course the long-term benefit to English rugby was quantifiable and deemed as a tremendous success, yet English seven-a-side teams were then placed firmly on the back burner and the title of World champions was hung onto for grim death. It was without doubt the best form of development that anyone had stumbled upon for years, which made the whole situation that much more galling to see it shoved under the carpet. What we witnessed were young English players afforded the opportunity to express themselves on a world stage against the very best, with the time and space that was available a decade ago and they demonstrated a wonderful array of skills.

Nowadays Sevens has finally come of age and is considered to be the perfect environment for fast tracking and developing players for further honours and I am sure that each and every country could reel off those names that have come through the system. Not surprisingly there is still that question mark in some coaches' minds about the abbreviated game, but irrespective of these myopic views, there can be no denying that Sevens has to rank as the most enjoyable aspect of Rugby Union today. The globality of Sevens reflected in the IRB 7s series, with the likes of Kenya, Morocco, Zambia, Chile, Portugal and Tonga able to play on equal terms with the established powers in the 15-a-side game, the spectacular nature of the short game and the compact format of 7s make its inclusion into the Olympics a must. I can imagine the phenomenal success a 7s tournament would have in the 2012 Olympics as high quality Sevens has to take the biscuit in terms of sheer excitement. The sooner Sevens becomes an Olympic sport with a truly global audience, the sooner Rugby Union will really take off!

# Notes about Foot-ball\*

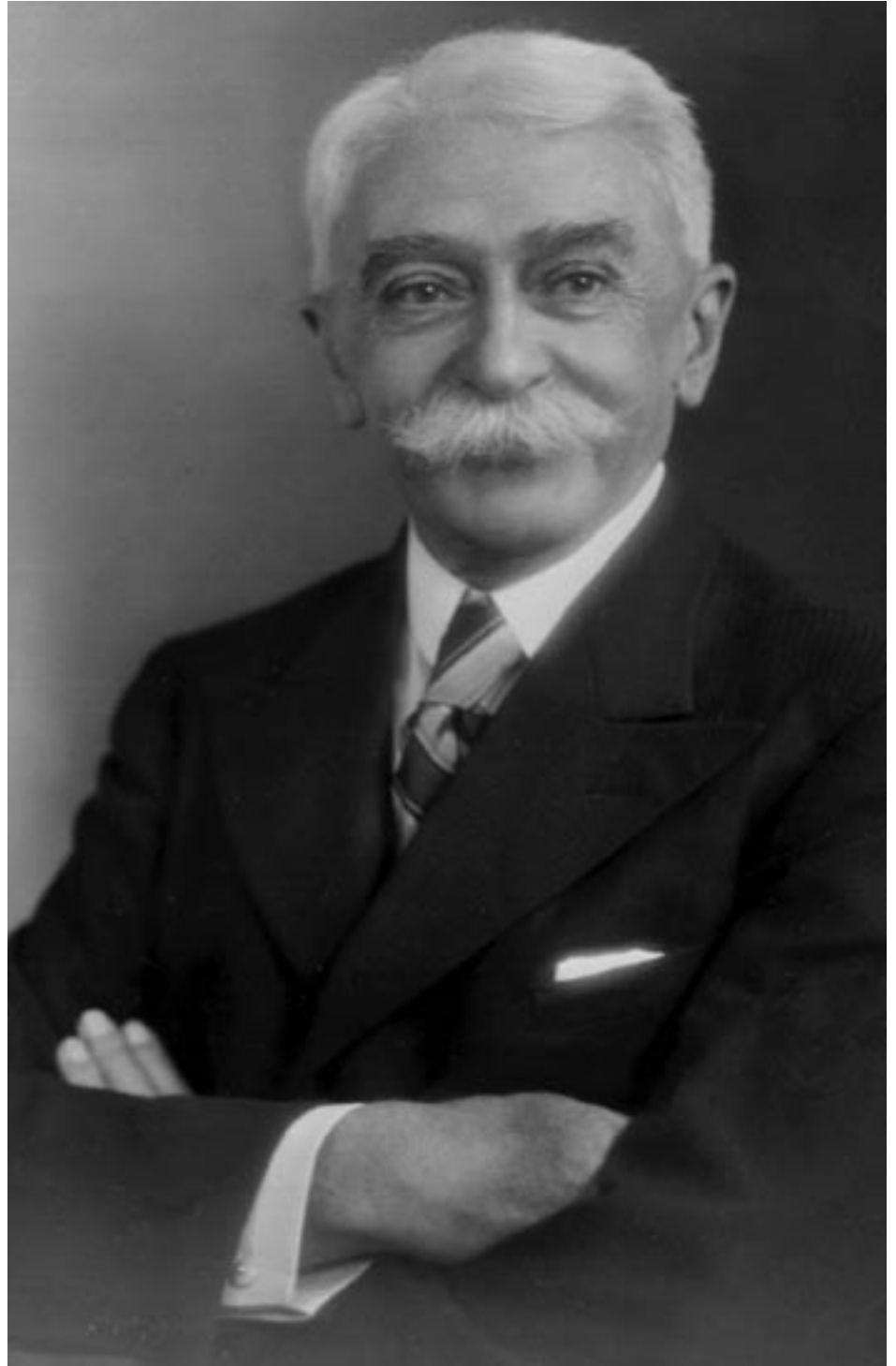
By Baron Pierre de Coubertin

Baron de Coubertin wrote the essay 'Notes about Foot-ball' in 1897 – a year after the first Olympics in Athens, and five years after the first French Championship final in 1892 – at a time when foot-ball was a generic term used to describe all ball games: football Association (or soccer), football Rugby (or rugby football), or the American version, American Football, still in its formative years as an organised team sport. The 'Notes' as such were incorporated in a number of volumes of collected works and writings, but few researchers read them through. After spending several days in the IOC archives, I was better able to understand not only what de Coubertin had done in order to promote rugby in France and in the Olympics, but also why.

The Baron was in his early twenties when he visited Rugby School for the first time, for a research project on British education on behalf of the French Government. By that time the young French aristocrat had already read both the works of Thomas Arnold, Rugby's great headmaster and educationalist, and Thomas Hughes' novel, 'Tom Brown's Schooldays'. He returned to Rugby several times in the late 1880s, during which time he learned the intricacies of rugby football. By that time the Home Unions were playing each other on a regular basis, but it is not known if de Coubertin went to see any international matches at this time. However, reports in Parisian publications make it clear that de Coubertin and his companions from Stade Francaise and Racing Club de France were playing rugby in the forests around Paris, and in the Bois de Boulogne in particular.

There is virtually no information about le Baron's rugby prowess, though it is quite clear that his knowledge was well respected by his peers, who elected him to referee the 1892 match between the two clubs, now regarded as the inaugural French championship final. After returning from his first visit to Britain, and during the subsequent visits, de Coubertin became an active promoter of football rugby in France, as the impassioned plea which follows suggests. Though originally the sport competitions of the 1900 Paris Universal Exhibition were not acknowledged as the Games of the 2nd Olympiad, rugby made its maiden Olympic appearance in Paris in 1900, no doubt due to de Coubertin's drive and interest. An active rugby player, referee and administrator, the Baron wrote extensively on the football code he loved and played. Interestingly, most researchers believed that the text below was a diatribe in support of soccer, rather than a plea for rugby. It was some time before the IOC archivists realised that, in de Coubertin's parlance, football meant rugby, not soccer. It is perhaps significant that the decision to discontinue rugby as an Olympic sport following the 1924 Games was taken the next year when le Baron de Coubertin stepped down as the President of the IOC.

Chris Thau



**There are unexpected conquests in life, as there are in history. The triumphal march of football through the lives of our French youth, until then so sedentary, is a recent example. Every obstacle was placed in the path of football. Its first fault was to be an English game. We are constantly being told that we are anglophiles. This is not the case, because with the exception of a small group of Parisian snobs who only want to wear and display London-washed linen, as soon as a pastime comes from the other side of the Channel, it triggers off "patriotic reactions" in the press or the public. Moreover, the arrival of football was preceded by a reputation for violence: French mothers who fear colds and chilblains were opposed to it. And there were other factors against its introduction. Football is a collective game: its needs two teams of eleven or fifteen players each; these teams need a large, flat and grassy place on which to play. Reasons enough for teachers to be disinclined towards a sport, which might, on the one hand, undermine discipline and, on the other, might increase their responsibilities.**

But we have to point to another obstacle which has passed unnoticed and about which I was myself, for a long time, unaware. It is impossible for the spectator who is not steeped in the game, to understand anything that is happening. He sees a scrum, with arms and legs flailing, with bodies colliding and fists clenched; physical effort which, if he were a painter or a sculptor would fascinate him, but which would horrify the teacher or the sensitive soul. How could he imagine, faced with such muscular activity, that intellectual and psychological qualities are also needed?

We cursed football before we knew it. And the more we knew of the game, the greater the curse. Horrified journalists wrote frightening descriptions... headmasters decided to prohibit the sport in their schools... but their efforts came to nought: the tide of the game's popularity swept on with unstoppable force. The youth, now smitten by the game, were determined and committed. They played on hard-packed surfaces, on sandy pitches, risking broken bones and serious injury. I remember epic games on the Saint-Cloud meadow in the Bois de Boulogne, where a tree grew in the middle of the pitch; at any moment, a player could be thrown on it and be badly injured. It was a stunted, ugly oak. And I tried at least ten times to get a permit to remove it, but we know how difficult it is to remove a single leaf in the Bois de Boulogne.

In the provinces, the ground problem was not difficult to solve. With some ingenuity and perseverance, it was easy to find open fields, which their owners agreed to lend or rent at low price; either the military authorities, the local race society, or the railway company gave the schoolboys and the athletic clubs the use of their land. But there was another problem: the lack of competition. Competition is the essence of football. Playing among friends who have been living in local communities together for years is uninteresting. The game was in danger of withering because of a shortage of participants and competition. And this has blighted all sports in the last ten years. There



The pioneers of French Rugby: Baron Pierre de Coubertin and his friends at Bois de Boulogne, by painter Florin Fota.

have been rushes of enthusiasm, but always followed by spells of lethargy and inactivity.

Rowing didn't grow as expected, boxing has suffered, as have athletics, fencing and equestrianism. Yet, despite its early problems, football has survived and flourished. Why should this be? It must be put down to the intrinsic value of the game itself, and the emotions it generates amongst the participants. If the football rules are complex, we nevertheless can retain four or five, which are basic and simple.

What is the player looking for? To gain the ball and carry it to the opposing try-line and touch the ball down behind the try-line as near as possible to the goal, which is made of two big posts linked together at half height by a transverse bar. If he manages to do that, he scores a try which means a certain number of points for his team; the ball is then placed on the ground on a perpendicular line to the try-line starting from the place where the try was scored. The ball is placed on any point on this line and a player tries to place the ball between the two posts and above the transversal bar with an accurate kick. The try is then converted in goal, which adds more points to the team score, and the total of all these points will decide the winner. If either team scores no points, it's a draw.

This is the basic framework to which are added some more sophisticated rules, which are the true genius of the game. The best way to reach the opposite try-line is, without a doubt, running with the ball and avoiding would-be stoppers. It is within the rules to stop the man running with the ball by catching him, except by the neck or the legs, which could be dangerous. We stop him by catching him at the middle of his body. A player who has been stopped can release the ball by 'passing' it to a team mate. But he can't pass it forward. He only can pass on the same line or behind. It begins to look like draughts. In order to gain ground you must first move back. On the other hand, the player is offside if he is in front of the ball at the moment when his team mate passes to a colleague. Confusing perhaps to the uninitiated but what can be easily understood is the degree of physical and mental skill required to play the game. A player needs strength and power to stop his opponents and resist when they try to stop him. But flexibility and suppleness are far more important. He has to be very fast and be able to change his speed and angle of running while at full run, to burst right or left, slip between two opponents or run at them to elude them at the moment he has just passed the ball to a team mate.

So many decisions require an agile mind and self control, not the least

of which is being able to pass to a team mate who is better positioned than oneself. Discipline is the key to success. No team can see the whole battle. That is the job of the captain who knows the strengths and weaknesses of his players and who must have the vision to anticipate the moves and cover the mistakes.

The English think that a dense or slow-witted man will never become a good footballer. Many distinguished British Army officers believe that in each successful football captain lies a true strategist. Such praise says much about the game's values.

"What is admirable in football is the perpetual mix of individualism and discipline, the necessity for each man to think, anticipate, take a decision

and at the same time subordinate one's reasoning, thoughts and decisions to those of the captain. And even the referee's whistle stopping a player for a 'fault' one team mate has made and he hasn't seen, tests his character and patience. For all that, football is truly the reflection of life, a lesson in experimenting the real world, a first-rate educational tool."

But speaking about all that, I only mentioned the game of football Rugby: football is also played under other rules for a game named football Association. The Association is an elegant game, very subtle but which can't be compared to Rugby. Touching the ball with the hand, or carrying it is forbidden... it's a 'ball to foot', cleverly regulated, but which doesn't offer Rugby's combinations and incidents.

If the French truly understood sport and saw it in terms of cleverness, dedication, spirit and character, they would tell their children to play it. But the French are great sceptics with Saint Thomas as their holy patron. The Frenchman must see it to believe it. We can't make football compulsory for all the fit men above 30 to enable them to better appreciate its virtues and benefits. What we have to do is to wait until today's players become fathers. It will be a long but worthwhile wait.

# Colour, flair and carefree charm

## Olympic spirit at its best in South Pacific

By Jeremy Duxbury

**In the quest for Olympic glory by the thirteen South Pacific National Olympic Committees: American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, (the other two, New Zealand and Australia, are true Olympic giants) one man stands out as the only athlete representing the nation islands of the area so far who has won an Olympic medal. He is Tonga's Paea Wolfgramm, who famously ignored his fractured hand and broken nose and fought his way to an Olympic silver in boxing at the Atlanta Games in 1996.**

Amongst the pile of congratulatory messages was one from King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, who told Wolfgramm: "Go into the next fight with a stout heart and, no matter what the result, it doesn't matter. You've already achieved a tremendous amount for Tonga." Such was the enormity of Wolfgramm's achievement that on his return home, he became the first commoner to be granted full royal honours, and the Royal Mint had a coin made to commemorate the region's first-ever Olympic medal.

It was not only a proud moment for Tonga, but for the entire South Pacific, as athletes in these small countries drew inspiration from Wolfgramm's achievement. However, one must accept that overall this is a pretty bare cupboard for such a sport-mad region. For most South Pacific nations "taking part" is what matters, though winning would be a nice bonus.

Their limited aspirations are clearly expressed by Sir John Dawanincura, secretary general of the PNG National Olympic Committee, who believes his nation's best Olympic placing is Dika Toua's sixth place in the 53kg division of women's weightlifting in Athens. "This result was an Oceania and PNG national record," Sir John says. "The effort



Fiji – winners of the South Pacific Rugby Tournament.

of our swimmer Ryan Pini in the 100m backstroke was also a great achievement as he was ranked 18 overall out of 59."

Geographically, the South Pacific is not dissimilar to the Caribbean. Yet Jamaica with less than half the population of PNG's 4 million has a chest-load of Olympic medals – more than 40 at last count – while many others have been on the winners' podium.

"Ah, yes," points out Dr Robin Mitchell, secretary general of Oceania NOC, "but the Caribbean nations are in close proximity to an athletics superpower. Many of their Olympians are on scholarships at universities in the United States."

Dr Mitchell also notes that Australia's South Pacific programme, which began in 1996, currently injects some A\$1million a year into Pacific Islands sport.

"But in Olympic terms, the South Pacific region is hardly noticeable," he says. "I don't just mean on the medals table, but all around. All thirteen NOCs took athletes and officials to Athens, yet from all of

these, there was only one accredited journalist – a girl from the Cook Islands."

"Naturally, this is partly due to the fact that our medal hopes are virtually non-existent. I think it's fair to say that rugby's admission would change all that. Rugby is the national sport of nearly every nation in this region – the people here live and breathe rugby. If rugby became an Olympic sport, the whole region would sit up and take notice."

Dr Mitchell pointed out that the success of the South Pacific Games should boost rugby's chances of making it into the Olympic fold. Indeed, eleven of the 22 participating nations (4000 athletes) at the 2003 South Pacific Games in Suva entered teams in the rugby 7s tournament.

Atma Maharaj, Fiji's chef de mission for Athens 2004, believes that having rugby 7s at the Olympics would show the world what Fiji is capable of and give the region great exposure.

"We know we have great athletes but it just doesn't show at the Olympics," Maharaj said. "Rugby's inclusion

would not only give several nations here a real medal possibility but it would also give a boost to the minor sports. Overall in the Oceania region, all sports complement each other. Having rugby players – who are heroes in their own countries – in the Olympic delegations, would lift the status and pride of each group, inspiring the other athletes."

At the South Pacific Games, rugby has usually been the centrepiece since the first SPG in 1963. Though athletics, boxing, swimming and soccer enjoyed strong followings throughout the Pacific, rugby attracted the core public support, accounting for almost one third of the 59,694 total ticket sales.

Once rugby 7s became part of the Commonwealth Games in 1998, the major nations pulled out all the stops and threw in their big name players to boost their chances of a medal. The Olympics would be no different – the greatest rugby players in the world would be coming together for three days; and among them would be the warriors from the South Pacific with all their colour, flair and carefree charm to remind us what the true Olympic spirit is all about.

# Mohamed Hadj Benjeloun a Builder of Bridges

By Chris Thau



**Morocco's astonishing advent on the Olympic and world sports stage and the emergence of uniquely talented sporting heroes of the likes of Said Aouita, Nawal el Moutakel, Mohamed el Goueruj or Abdelatif Benazzi became possible due to a number of factors in which the passion, perseverance and toil of a visionary sports administrator, Mohamed Hadj Benjeloun (1912-1997), played a significant part.**

I met this distinguished gentleman, at the time in his 80s, at a rugby match at Casablanca Olympic Club in 1995. He was treated by all present with a kind of regard and reverence usually reserved for people of unusual pedigree or achievement. "He is the founding father of rugby in Morocco and a member of the International Olympic Committee," I was told then by Abdelazizi Bougja, at the time the treasurer of the Moroccan Rugby Federation.

We spoke about rugby in post-colonial Morocco, the days of transition from a game of the French to a sport of the Moroccans, when together with a group of friends Frej, Jourdan, Driss Benjeloun, Bougrine and Allal Tarrusson, Duvigneau, Maclou and Barber, he formed the Moroccan Rugby Federation in 1956. Amongst his memories were the first time the

number of Moroccan players in the FRMR books outnumbered the French in 1960, Morocco's first ever international against Spain in 1967 (although a team of French settlers had played under the name of Morocco a couple of times against Spain in the 1930s) and the days when Morocco were strong enough to beat Italy.

"I never played rugby, but the game is an excellent sport for young people," he said. "Rugby educates the participants in discipline and respect, human qualities that make sport such an important part of our lives, as well as the physical qualities required: strength, speed, resistance, stamina. Besides it forces them to think because the game is so complex and fast changing. It teaches the young the values of sport and I am genuinely disappointed that it is not in the Olympics, as it embodies

everything the Olympic movement stands for. I really hope one day it will rejoin the Olympics," he said, and his words were recalled at a ceremony at his tomb in Casablanca attended by the then IRB Chairman Vernon Pugh in 1998.

Born in Casablanca into an affluent family from Fez in January 1912 and after taking his degree in business administration in Paris, Hadj Benjeloun became a successful businessman, which enabled him to devote time and energy to his passion, the creation of a sporting infrastructure in Morocco. In 1937, at the age of only 25, he managed to convince the French colonial authorities to allow the launch of the first sports club for Moroccans, Wydad Athletic Club (WAC), open equally to Moroccans of all faiths: Muslims, Christians or Jews. By the time of his death in 1997 the list of achievements by the man variously described as "Morocco's de Coubertin" or "the baobab of African sport" was breathtaking.

An active track and field athlete, swimmer, handball, football and basketball player in his youth, in addition to the Rugby Federation he founded and chaired in 1956, he was one of the founders and then vice-president of the Football, Handball and Basketball Federations. In 1957 he became a senior vice-president of FIRA and in 1959 he founded and eventually chaired the Moroccan Olympic Committee. In 1957 he founded and chaired the Moroccan Sports Council and 1961 he was elected a permanent member of the International Olympic Committee, serving the Olympic movement until his death in 1997. He became a senior government official in the Ministry of Education and Sport and founded the International Federation of Islamic sport.

"Sport was his mission and rugby his passion - and he believed in the value of sports as a builder of bridges and healer of wounds. We will always miss his wisdom and support. It is perhaps symbolic that only two weeks before his death, he attended the 106th session of the IOC in Lausanne, where he voted in favour of Athens to host the 2004 Olympics," said Aziz Bougja, the President of African Confederation of Rugby and former President of Moroccan Rugby Union.

# Cameroon's journey of discovery

By Seb Lauzier

**Kenya have established themselves as the 'standard bearers' of seven-a-side rugby in Africa, and captain Oscar Osir Osula, who has impressed the pundits with his mesmerising skill, pace and rugby nose, is aware of the continent's huge potential.**



Kenya celebrate another win

"We have set the pace in Africa and as a result other African countries have realised that it is possible to excel in Sevens rugby. The admission of Sevens into the Olympics is impossible to quantify. It would simply be massive. Rugby has become an important sport in Africa and the boost it would receive by the inclusion of Sevens in the Olympics would be huge."

It was against this backdrop that six African teams arrived in Tunis for the final qualifying competition for this year's Rugby World Cup Sevens in Hong Kong. The presence of the unsung newcomers, Nigeria, Senegal and Cameroon,

*continued on page 16*

at their first ever RWC, with their yet-to-be-told stories of promise and potential, added a flavour of unknown to the otherwise exciting event.

“There is massive potential in all these countries. Take Cameroon, for example, where there are some really exceptional players,” said Jean-Luc Barthes, the IRB’s Regional Development Manager for French-speaking Africa.

“Their budgets are limited, so are their opportunities to develop those players. So we thought it was a good opportunity to send in a good quality coach to help them prepare for this tournament and see what their true potential is and what they could do. That’s why I approached Philippe Vila, through one of my colleagues in Europe, Michel Arpaillange.”

Vila’s appointment proved effective, with Cameroon rising out of obscurity to finish second overall. By Vila’s own admission the team arrived in Tunis with no real expectations after the two rushed weeks of preparation. “The raw potential of these Cameroon players is phenomenal,” Vila said. “They are big, strong, shrug off pain and care immensely about their rugby. I’ve been delighted to work with them.”

A delighted Cameroon Captain, Ndjekoua Tchouffa Jacquillard, paid tribute to the work Vila had done with his side. “We worked hard with the new coach for two weeks, and in the end we were confident that we could be the surprise package here, and beating Morocco on the first day was probably the surprise result we were looking for.

These words must surely ring as sweet music in the ears of the other African nations out to emulate Kenyan success, but actions can speak louder still and if rugby’s so-called smaller nations continue to match the sport itself on its remarkable journey of discovery, they may just make the Sevens game’s irresistible appeal impossible to ignore. If that happens, the Olympic dream could come to life.

## Ameland 7s – Olympic seal of approval

By Chris Thau

**The fact that Gert van Langen, the managing director of the ferryboat company ‘Wangenborg’ and veteran rugby player from the North Sea island of Ameland, was chosen by the Netherlands Olympic Committee to carry the Olympic torch as it crossed the Dutch territory on its way to Athens last year, is as significant for the remarkable story of rugby in Ameland as it is for the man’s passion for sport.**

“It was a great honour to carry the torch and when I thought that people like Nelson Mandela and Pele had carried the same flame it made me feel tremendously proud,” said van Langen.

“As soon the torch is handed over you realise all the things the Olympic Games stand for: friendship, sportsmanship and peace. As a rugby man to be a part of the Olympic torch relay made me proud and humble. Rugby definitely must rejoin the Olympic family again. After all, the game stands for the same principles the Olympics stand for,” he added.

The 49-year old Langen together with his friend Peter Bus, a former executive director of the Dutch Rugby Union and a dynamic and innovative sports administrator, and Peter Verhoven, the mayor of the island of Ameland, – a strip of sandy beaches 25 km in length and 4 km wide, with 3,500 inhabitants – are the founders of the Ameland Rugby Festival, arguably the largest competition of its kind in the Netherlands.



Ameland children sample the pleasure of “team sport”.



Dutch NOC Chairperson Erica Terpstra welcomed by the Dutch women’s team.

“The tournament has several sections: open men and women, veterans and social rugby and is played on 80 pitches spread over 2 km of beach. There are also competitions for families and children, to make it a genuine community and family event. Given the difficulty of kicking on sand we modified the laws slightly and also created a system of scoring that takes into account the fact that there are no goalposts,” explains Peter Bus.

The international tournament, gathering over 100 teams from all over Europe, is preceded by the week-long Ameland schools rugby tournament, a competition that has taken the island by storm.

“We in Ameland believe that it is important for children to play in team sports that teach team ethos and values, rather than individual sports. When you invest in sport you invest in the future of your children and this vision, I am pleased to say, is shared by the opposition in the Town Hall,” Mr Verhoven said.

Indeed the amazing story is not the way the Ameland tournament has blossomed in four years, but the way the community has become hooked on the game, with virtually the entire youth population on the island playing rugby. So successful is the Ameland community programme that the new President of the Netherlands Rugby Bond, Gerards Kemps, intends to use the blueprint to develop the game throughout the country.

So intrigued was the President of the Dutch National Olympic Committee, Erica Trepstra, herself an Olympic medallist in swimming, about the all-inclusive nature of the Ameland tournament, that she turned up on the island to the delight of the local women’s team and the organisers.



Gert van Langen, with the Olympic torch on the Javakade in Amsterdam, last year.

“The NOC\*NSF stands for Dutch sport as a whole – past, present and future. This is why we support sports events such as the Ameland Beach Rugby Festival, which ends the Dutch rugby season in an appropriate manner. Both Dutch rugby people and their friends and competitors from all over Europe attend this annual event, in which competing is more important than winning. The tournament is one of the finest examples of how sport should help people to gather socially. This is why the Ameland Beach Rugby Festival is in my opinion an example of what sport is all about.”



# IRB 7s – Taking the game to the world

By Seb Lauzier

**The 2004-2005 IRB Sevens has taken the game far and wide – so far four tournaments, in four cities, on four continents – with the added excitement of a much desired and essential Olympic seal of approval in July. After Los Angeles, the new IRB 7s series has taken a well deserved break before the fireworks hit the stage in Hong Kong – the host of the 4th RWC 7s – the jewel in the short game's crown.**

The events of the Grand Prix provided the familiar thrill that goes hand-in-hand with the growing familiarity, competitiveness and energy of international Sevens rugby, a genuine contender for admission among the competitive sports of the Olympic Games. 126 million television viewings in 120 countries, radio reports on a global radio network, masses of photographers and journalists, millions of hits on the World Wide Web, all combining to propel this wonderful sport into the minds and souls of the 118 International Olympic Committee members who will decide on whether rugby will regain Olympic status in July.

From the searing heat of sophisticated Dubai the Grand Prix made its now familiar way to the dewy humidity of parochial George, a gem in the garden route of South Africa. Then, Wellington's annual fancy dress party and a quick hop across the Pacific to Hollywood for the USA Sevens, the final event before the Rugby World Cup Sevens in Hong Kong.

In fact, in the main there seems to have been only one constant throughout the season's voyage of discovery and excitement so far: New Zealand. The team may change, but the mantra doesn't. Win.

The last two seasons of IRB Sevens saw an undeniable and much-needed shift in the balance of power with England, South Africa and Argentina all closing on New Zealand and Fiji, traditionally so strong. In 2003 England's Cup win in London took them to within four points of Gordon Tietjens' men in the final standings with Fiji and South Africa also enjoying Cup success. A year later the gap at the top was only six and Argentina had joined the elite as Cup winners.

But this year Gordon Tietjens' men have reclaimed the cloak of

invincibility, three straight Cup wins in George, Wellington and LA taking them 20 points clear of nearest rivals Fiji with three events to go. Most impressive of all was the Los Angeles success, which came without their captain, natural born leader Liam Messam, and the Herculean Roy Kinikini.

"These things don't win themselves," said Tietjens, after watching his victorious side perform three hakas for the intoxicated American crowd in Los Angeles. "We've beaten what I believe to be a very strong Argentina side here. But our guys are very fit, they work very hard, they make a lot of sacrifices and they're a pleasure to coach.

"We were missing a couple of crucial players here in LA so I brought in some younger guys and they stood up which is all you can ask. We're one big family really, no stars. The players all get in with the same objective, make their tackles, pass and score. Sevens is a fickle game, a missed tackle or dropped ball will cost you a tournament. Consistency is the key." And haven't they have proved it?

## Dubai – a 7s Heaven

The Emirates Airline Dubai Sevens again provided the season's curtain raiser at the Dubai Exiles Rugby Club and what a festival of rugby it was. A sell-out 26,000 crowd for the main event and 13 other Sevens tournaments played at the same time – including an international invitational featuring the likes of Waisale Serevi and Ben Gollings, the top two point-scorers in IRB Sevens history. Not bad for a supporting act.

On the main pitch South Africa arrived as defending champions, but it was England who seized the initiative to win their first Dubai crown, much to the delight of the largely ex-pat following. Captain Simon Amor led superbly and



Dubai – the spectacular launch for IRB 7s 2005.

received all the help he needed, notably from Pete Richards, voted player of the tournament, Pat Sanderson and Ugo Monye.

New Zealand had looked strong favourites early on, but a Nanuku-inspired Fiji robbed them of their customary final place against England, and what a final it was. An early Ratuvo try saw Fiji lead 7-0, but Sanderson brought the scores level. England then capitalised on a man advantage with two tries from Horstman and Tait to lead 19-5 at the break. A further Rob Thirlby try took them well clear, but Fiji rallied to within five points. Thirlby then caused coach Mike Friday's heart to stop beating when he missed a penalty from in front of the posts, but England's defence held out against

the subsequent Fiji attack for a 26-21 win.

David Lemi, meanwhile, announced himself as poacher supreme on Samoa's bone-crunching path to Plate success, his eight tries and quick feet instrumental. He now sits at the top of the try-scoring table after four events, with 24.

Among the lesser-known nations, Tunisia's qualification for the RWC Sevens in Hong Kong also earned invitations to the first two events of the season, and how they took their chance in their first IRB Sevens adventure. Claude Saurel's men looked drilled and organised and in Issa, Mohamed Ali and Lotfi, the veteran coach has unearthed real gems.





Leslie Mango of Kenya toppled in full flight.



Fiji's Moses Yabakitini in action against Samoa in George.

"We have to be proud of what we've achieved," Saurel told the IRB after their 17-5 Shield final victory over Ireland. "Every time we work with these smaller nations we achieve something and I think more work needs to be done with them. I revel in the label of 'révélateur de talent'.

"Of course there are limits to what can be done, but I've been at the top level for 10 years, I know the level you need and these players are almost there. We work very hard."

So do Portugal, and from meagre resources the amiable Tomaz Morais has also built a side of genuine class.



Lucas Borges of Argentina gets the ball away against Scotland in Wellington.

First place in the European qualifying event for RWC Sevens promised much, and the fact that Bowl success was accepted ruefully shows just how high their expectations go. In David Mateus, Antonio Pinto and Antonio Aguilar they possess real game breakers and the 17-7 final win over Kenya was well constructed.

## George – New Zealand bounce back

With Fiji and England in particular looking so strong in Dubai nobody could have guessed on the flight down to the Emirates South Africa Sevens in George that New Zealand were about to embark on an 18-game unbeaten run. In his mind Gordon Tietjens' men had granted enough of a head start for the series ahead, but his players still had to deliver on the pitch.

For Fiji, George was to bring a second successive final – a first Cup success since 2002 still eludes them – but England were weakened. As it happened New Zealand were in no mood to lose to any side, however strong, and a 33-19 final victory over Fiji was ample evidence that they were well and truly back. Fiji had the likes of Gonewai, Luveitasau and Nanuku scoring tries for fun and propelling them back to the kind of form that made them such a potent force for so long, but the day belonged to New Zealand.

Hayden Reid scored first in the final before a brace each for Josh Blackie and Sosene Anesi took the score out to 33-19. With Kinikinilau and Anesi emulating the likes of Tuitevaki and Te Nana before them, and captain Liam Messam again outstanding, New Zealand dovetailed attack and defence perfectly.



Emotions run high among the sell-out crowd in Wellington.

"We knew it would be a tough match against the Fijians," said a proud Messam, "but we soaked up pressure and broke well on the counter. The defence was immense."

Arriving in George, home coach Paul Treu had faced the toughest challenge of all with a host of front line players missing. Juries and Schoeman were still recovering and captain Marc de Marigny had picked up a nasty injury in Dubai. Anton Pitout's horrible leg break had put a certain end to his season. And yet the Plate final brought home cheer, van Heerden and van Rensburg powering South Africa to a much-needed start against Samoa, before the crowd strained on the edge of every seat as the hosts held on for a 12-7 win. Australia won the Bowl against Canada, largely thanks to a four-try final performance from pace man Nick Reily who scored nine in all and 23 this season – a real find.

Earlier Portugal had again proven too strong for France to win the Shield, live-wire Pinto opened the scoring as Tomaz Morais' men secured their second trophy in two weeks with a 17-12 win.

"We're delighted to go back to Portugal with two trophy wins under our belts," said team manager Rui Alvarez. "The players are very tired, not mentally but in the legs. Our preparation wasn't ideal for these two events, and the guys are obviously amateur. But two final wins against France does a lot for our confidence and in boosting rugby in Portugal."

## Wellington – Lomu's return

And so on to New Zealand, where one of the abiding memories in

Wellington – quite apart from a moment of sublime genius by Amasio Valence to set up the first try in the final – will forever be the sell-out 37,500 crowd's reaction to local hero Jonah Lomu.

Only in New Zealand could a rugby player not currently active in the game be held aloft with such adulation. Lomu is still on the path to full recovery and may not be the sharp physical specimen he once was, but when he led the Parade of Nations late on day one in the Westpac Stadium the cheers were deafening, the emotion palpable.

"It was pretty amazing leading the parade out in front of a packed Westpac," he said. "The atmosphere gets you, but I held the tears back and it's just pretty special, especially with the reaction of the crowd."

He even had to turn on the odd burst of speed to stay at the front, such was the demand for handshakes and photos. "Yeah, I had to put a bit of a spurt in a couple of times – otherwise I was going to be overtaken by Argentina!"

On the pitch New Zealand were simply irresistible in the AXA New Zealand International Sevens, Kinikinilau turning in a Lomu-sized performance, his 10 tries leading the way to another Cup final marred by the sending-off of Argentine



Jonah Lomu is back – his handshake was in demand.

Santiago Gomez Cora for biting, but won comfortably in the end by the men in black 31-7 to put them eight points clear at the top of the overall IRB Sevens standings.

Nick Reily again grabbed a brace as Australia outclassed Scotland 32-0 to win the Plate in front of Eddie Jones and, with captain Oscar Osir Osula at the heart of much of their best work, Kenya snatched victory deep into stoppage time of the Bowl final against Tonga 19-12.

The first final of the day, though, had brought the kind of result and achievement that makes Sevens rugby's hopes of Olympic readmission so tangible.

For every one person living in Niue, the tiny coral island community known for its fishing and gum trees, there are almost 97,000 living in Japan. In fact, at 1,300, Niue's population could fit 30 times inside the Westpac Stadium. So when rugby's 'super minnows' overcame Japan (population 126,000,000) 29-19 to win the Shield final the result brought the house down. Only Kenya's now famous warm-down routine brought a bigger cheer until the home side performed their victory haka.

### Los Angeles – a Hollywood script

When the players arrived in Los Angeles for the USA Sevens there was a touch of the familiar about things. Not only were they living the same day again after travelling 21 hours back in time, but New Zealand had again metamorphosed.

Messam and Kinikinilau were rested, making way for more new talent in the form of Jason Hona and Brent Wilson. Little matter; with Tafai Ioasa playing like a man possessed and Orene Aii, mischievous playmaker-in-chief and stand-in captain, in the form of his life, not to mention a reinvigorated Amasio Valence, no-one really stood a chance at the Home Depot Center. For the first time in the series New Zealand looked truly unbeatable and the 34-5 final win over Argentina – a reverse of last year's final outcome – took them 20 points clear of Fiji in the standings.

For their part the Fijians ran out Plate winners, beating Samoa 24-21, and an aggressive Canadian performance saw them run out convincing Bowl winners over Kenya, but the real Hollywood story came in the Shield.

That a 'cricket-style' combined West Indies team arrived to compete was exciting enough. That an American by the name of Dave Guest 'guest-starred' and scored as a reserve pool player for injury-stricken Tonga was another, yet the story of Mexico reaching the final of the Shield at their maiden IRB tournament appearance must stand out. The final against Tonga proved a step too far for coach Jamie Johnston's men, but the semi-final victory over the West Indies in their first IRB Sevens event provoked scenes of boundless jubilation.

"The tears and emotion after the semi showed how much it meant to us," said Johnston. "I just can't yet put into words how much this will have done for Mexican rugby. To play in

a tournament of this magnitude is huge for us. In about two weeks we'll realise what we've achieved."

Earlier in the day former USA captain Dan Lyle presented England's Ben Gollings with a trophy to recognise his new status as the leading all-time points scorer in IRB Sevens history. Gollings passed Fiji's Waisale Serevi in Wellington.



New Zealand's Orene Aii, celebrates in Los Angeles.



Mexican celebrations in Los Angeles



England's Ben Gollings became the IRB 7s all-time record points scorer.

## Women show the way in Americas

by Frankie Deges

The success of the first ever women's international seven-a-side tournament in Venezuela will surely raise a few eyebrows among the sports administrators of the South American and for that matter, Pan-American sport. This is because Rugby Sevens has yet to become an official sport in the Pan-American Games, though its spread through the lands of both North and South America has bewildered even the most optimistic rugby fans. The success stories of Punta del Este in Uruguay, Mar del Plata in Argentina, and more recently the inclusion of Los Angeles among the events of the IRB 7s Grand Prix, are well documented.

In fact Los Angeles 7s is the pinnacle of a widespread and intense Sevens activity throughout the US and Canadian territory. For many American and Canadian players the summer months are synonymous with Sevens, an activity they look forward to with great excitement and expectation. And there is plenty to choose from among the over 100 tournaments spread across the entire US territory. The tournament in Barquisimeto, Venezuela was a great success, not only because it enabled the women athletes from eight South American countries: Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay, Paraguay, Venezuela, Peru, Argentina and Chile, to compete and enjoy themselves, but also because it gave the idea of an All America competition, involving all nations in the North and South Americas, a great deal of credibility.

"That the CONSUR region has now established an international women's competition is something we are all proud of. Hopefully, it will become an annual event, which will help promote the game and help the development of women's rugby in South America," IRB Regional Development Manager for South America, Jorge Bracerias, said.

OVERALL STANDINGS after 4 rounds					
	1	2	3	4	Overall
New Zealand	12	20	20	20	72
Fiji	16	16	12	8	52
Argentina	6	12	16	16	50
England	20	12	4	12	48
South Africa	12	8	12	4	36
Australia	4	2	8	12	26
Samoa	8	6	4	6	24
Scotland	4	0	6	0	10
Kenya	0	4	2	0	6
France	0	0	0	4	4
Tunisia	0	4	0	0	4
Canada	0	0	0	2	2
Portugal	2	0	0	0	2

# World Students premiere

By Jarrod Gallagher

The launch of the inaugural Student World Rugby 7s championship tournament in Beijing was wisely scheduled to coincide with the opening day of the new academic year last September. An inspired decision that filled the stands of the picturesque rugby stadium in the campus of China's leading rugby nursery, the China Agricultural University (CAU), with 5000 enthusiastic freshmen, who wildly cheered the participants.



Enthusiastic freshmen.

The significance of the tournament, in the highly structured Chinese society, was underlined by the presence at the fabulous opening ceremony of two Ministers from the Ministry for Education, Deputy Minister Zhao Quiping and Deputy Minister Zhang Xinsheng – also a vice-president of FISU and President of China's Students Sports Federation. Beijing Deputy Mayor Fan Boyun, the Executive President of China's National Students Union Bai Yunfeng, the President of the Chinese Rugby Federation Lou Dapeng, as well as

a host of officials from the Youth Communist League, All China Students Federation, representatives of the other stronghold of Chinese rugby, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and various departments of the Education Ministry and Sports Youth Federation were also among the large numbers of senior officials attending the first day of the competition.

The host, the dynamic chairman of the organising committee, Chen Zhangliang, the President of China's Agricultural University, must have been pleased with the outcome of the tournament, with both Chinese teams, men and women, largely formed by his own students, displaying remarkable potential. Significantly for the future of the student game in China, the chairmen of the leading Beijing Universities attended the two-day event. In the opening match, a lively and fast moving feast of tries and action, the Chinese students defeated their



Malaysian counterparts 36-10, with Zhongliang scoring the first try of the tournament.

But a powerful France, the holders of the Students title in the 15-a-side game, managed to upstage the hosts in a highly entertaining and competitive game, whose quality defied the seemingly unbridgeable gap in playing resources and numbers between the two nations. The women's rugby section of the tournament saw some hard fought encounters, with the favourites, Canada and Kazakhstan, looking dominant. However, both teams were tested on several occasions by the

Chinese students, who seem to grow in strength every time they take the field.

To go all the way, the French had to overcome a spirited response from the winners of the other pool, the Chinese Taipei students, who had dispatched both Spain and Russia on their way to the knockout stages.

In a thank you note to the tournament chairman, Chen Zhangliang, the ARFU secretary Jamie Scott, wrote: "This was a tremendous

success and you and your committee are to be congratulated for putting together such a well-run and professionally organised tournament, which will set the standard for all of the others to follow."



## 7s as Peacemaker

By Neil Wijeratne

The second edition of the Isipathana International Schools U19 Rugby Sevens Tournament, sponsored by Air Sri Lanka, held in Colombo, not only provided a classy rugby carnival enjoyed by all, but also provided a bridge of understanding and reconciliation amongst schoolboys from northern and southern parts of the island, divided by years of civil war and strife. Jubilant schoolboys from Jaffna's leading schools, Jaffna Central and Jaffna Hindu College in the North and Mahinda and Richmond Colleges in the South, arrived in Colombo – possibly for the first time in their lives – full of enthusiasm for the novel rugby experience.

In addition, schoolboy teams from Australia, England, Chinese Taipei, India, Thailand, Fiji and Doha-Qatar joined the local schools, including hosts Isipathana College, for two days of exciting action at the tournament, graced by the presence of Hon. Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse, Secretary General of the

Asian Rugby Football Union, Jamie Scott, IRB's Regional Development Manager for Asia, Jarrad Gallagher, and the Chairman of NSW Rugby Union, Dilip Kumar.

The National TV station, Rupavahini, showed day one of the tournament live followed by edited highlights on



Thai U19s in attack against St Thomas' College from Colombo.

day two. It was Nawaka Schools team from Fiji, on their first trip abroad, who defeated a strong Thai U19s schools 43-10 in an exciting and less

one-sided final than the score may suggest, to clinch the Cup. Patrick Davenport of India's Tamil Nadu RFU, who entered two teams in the tournament said, "The professionalism of the event really opened our eyes as it has done a world of good for Indian rugby." The Fijian team manager added, "Although we in Fiji were on top of Sevens rugby for years, we were yet to organise a Sevens tournament of this calibre."

Preparations are underway already for the third Isipathana Tournament, the biggest 7s schools tournament in Asia, with more Asian nations expected to send teams to participate in the two day event, sponsored by Air Sri Lanka.

## Benidorm – fun in the sun

By Peter Williams

**A rather heartening story demonstrating the irresistible attraction of 7s is the way Benidorm Sevens in Spain, one of the biggest and best attended international events in the calendar in the early 1990s, managed to overcome the loss of international superstars following the onset of professionalism ten years ago. In fact, under the sensible management of La Villa Rugby Club President Ignacio Davilla, the tournament, celebrating its 19th anniversary this year, has grown in size and diversified into several sections, establishing itself as a quality event for the smaller and aspiring nations unable and unwilling to compete**

**on the very demanding IRB 7s or FIRA-AER circuits.**

Last year, three days of quality festive Rugby 7s were brought to an exciting close on Sunday 30th May, when the tactical experience of the favourites in the international section, Welsh Wizards from Swansea eventually proved too much for Côte d'Ivoire, the surprise package of the tournament. But it was a close run thing in the end. The Ivorians



had already shaken more experienced opponents with their fitness, athleticism and sheer pace.

They surprised the Wizards with an early long range try and the prospect of another defeat in the final (the Wizards had lost to a spirited

Russia the previous year) triggered off a revival, with skipper Richard Johnson to the fore. That enabled the Welshmen to win 26-14 after an electric encounter and secure the main international trophy. In the semis they dispatched Tunisia 41-7 (at the beginning of their build-up that led to Hong

Kong), while Côte d'Ivoire battled all the way to overcome their fellow Africa arch-opponents from Zimbabwe 19-15. Some consolation for Zimbabwe as their fleet-footed speedster, Gus Mberi, was voted the best player of the three-day tournament. The trophy was well merited as reward for Mberi's searing pace, bewildering sidestep and host of tries as he destroyed opposition defences.

## Gold for young Wallabies

**The introduction of 7s as a competitive sport in the Youth Commonwealth Games is a thoroughly promising development after the success of the 7s tournaments in the senior games in Kuala Lumpur and Manchester and the young Wallabies responded in kind by winning the trophy for the first time ever. Although defeated by England 17-12 in an earlier pool game and grimly tested by the tenacious Scots in the quarter-finals (won 10-7), the Australian Youth managed to defeat an ambitious and resourceful England 26-24 in a dramatic final.**

"This team came to Bendigo with the aim of winning a medal and that it's the gold medal makes the win even sweeter," said Australian coach Scott Bowen. He added, "These games have given some of our rising stars the chance to play representative rugby at the national level for the first time and I'm sure we're going to see more of them in the future."

Fiji, one of the pre-tournament favourites, succumbed 24-19 to Australia in the semi-finals, but redeemed themselves by defeating arch-rivals Samoa 37-35 to win the bronze medals after a dramatic encounter. South Africa beat Scotland 12-5 for the fifth place, and Cook Islands had the better of Singapore winning 35-10 for the seventh place.

## Africa's call to 7s

By Eric Odanga

**Following in Kenya's footsteps, several African countries have decided to use the short game to rub shoulders with the best. Ranked second to South Africa, Kenya has leapfrogged Zimbabwe and has Namibia, Uganda, Zambia and Madagascar hot on her trail.**

Such is the confidence in Kenya's ability that the International Rugby Board has this season given this East African country the nod to play in all the IRB Sevens Series tournaments!

It has been a gradual process, which was re-awakened in 1996 with the start of the premier Africa Sevens tournament, Safari Sevens, usually held in June in Nairobi.

Kenya's giant killing instincts, honed for a while on its home ground, were on display long before the 28-20 win over Samoa in the 2002 Commonwealth Games. At the 2001 World Cup Sevens in Argentina, Kenya caused the biggest upset by beating France 12-7!



Rugby in the shadow of Mount Kilimanjaro.

The Sevens fraternity were made to sit back and take notice when Kenya added Australia, Wales and Scotland to their prestigious list of scalps. All this has been achieved under coach Bill Githinji, a hard taskmaster who has been in charge for the past four years. "It has been a long road to recognition. Initially our goal was to cross the try line before scoring some wins. It is hard for any team to take us lightly now," he explains.

Githinji believes that Sevens has given African countries a chance to act on the bigger stage. "In Africa, we are naturally athletic and love running into open spaces. The Sevens game has given us this opportunity. Look at countries like Zambia, Uganda, Madagascar and all they need is an opportunity before Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria wake up," the Kenyan coach warns.

# Rugby World Cup 2007: A crucial year for aspiring nations

by Greg Thomas

The Rugby World Cup 2007 qualifying stages step up a gear this year with qualification starting in Asia, Oceania and Africa to join Europe and Americas where matches began last year.



The "Holy Grail" of rugby - the Webb Ellis Trophy, pictured here ahead of the opening match of RWC 2007 between Andorra and Norway in September 2004.

Over 60 countries will take to the field in qualifying matches and countries like Spain, Cote d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe, that have played in the previous Rugby World Cup finals tournaments, will enter the action hoping once again to reach the world's third largest sporting event that will kick off in France in September 2007.

"The qualification process for 2007 really starts in earnest this year. From the Caribbean to the Pacific Islands, from North Africa to South Asia the action will be fast and furious with all Rugby World Cup aspirants looking to qualify for the later stages of the qualification process in 2006," said IRB Chairman, Dr Syd Millar. "There will be 65 qualification matches in total and through our

communications and publication programmes, including the website [www.rugbyworldcup.com](http://www.rugbyworldcup.com) and the newly named Total Rugby bulletin and TV show, the IRB will endeavour to keep everyone up to date with the progress of qualification," added Dr Millar.

Traditionally, it is the European federation FIRA-AER - with over 40 Unions in membership and the biggest of the IRB's regions - that kicks off each Rugby World Cup. For RWC 2007 the long qualifying process involving the entire IRB membership commenced on 4th September 2004 at the Molt Illustre Conseille General (MICG) ground, in Andorra la Vella, the capital city of the Principality of Andorra, a territory sandwiched between France

and Spain in the Pyrenees region. The match between visiting Norway and hosts Andorra kicked off the 86-match European qualifying saga that will end with the play-offs for the third European qualifier- Europe 3 - in November 2006.

Andorra proved far too quick and strong for Norway and comfortably won the match 76-3. The replay in Bergen two weeks later was a much closer affair and Norway acquitted themselves far better but still lost at home 23-9. Andorra's victory saw them through to Round 2a as a Round One winner.

Other Round One match-ups based on home and away matches saw: Austria qualify by winning both its matches against Bosnia &

Herzegovina; Bulgaria win through comfortably against Finland; and Lithuania qualify with two wins over Israel.

In Vilnius, Lithuania's Kestutis Marcisauskas scored 22 of his team's points including seven conversions from eight attempts during their 60-7 victory over Israel. Despite being down 34-0 at the break Israel rallied and Ranan Pen scored a deserved try midway through the second half.

In Round 2a Andorra find themselves in Pool A with Spain, Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary. Austria face Germany, Denmark, Moldavia and Luxembourg in Pool B, while Lithuania face Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium and Latvia in Pool C. In Pool D Bulgaria will challenge

Poland, Switzerland, Malta and Serbia and Montenegro for a place in Round 3.

Round 2 action started in Gdynia Poland where the home side beat Switzerland 20-15. The Poles also won their second match against Malta 38-13 to post their credentials in Pool D.

Meanwhile Germany showed their form in Pool B with a convincing 96-0 victory over Luxembourg at the Fritz-Gruenebaum Stadium in Heidelberg. In front of 2000 spectators the home side rushed to a 53-0 half-time lead, scoring 14 unanswered tries all told. Full-back Mathias Pipa grabbed a brace of tries, a penalty and seven conversions for a personal tally of 27 points.

It was Germany's second victory after they beat Moldova 27-18 away in Chisinau.

Spain are the favourites to top Pool A and they started strongly against Round 1 winners Hungary, winning 63-9 in Madrid. Then in mid-February they cemented their favouritism by beating close neighbours Andorra 36-14, in a hard fought contest in Andorra La Vella.

The big match in this pool will be Spain versus Croatia, the Croatians looking Spain's biggest rival after beating Slovenia 27-6 in Zagreb and Andorra 18-7 in Sisak.

The home victory against Slovenia saw wing Ivan Resetar score 12 of his team's points including a last minute try to seal the match. The win saw Croatia remain 37th in the rankings but move less than one ranking point behind Brazil.

Pool C looks more open however. Sweden have started strongly with excellent wins against Lithuania in Stockholm and away in Latvia. The win over Latvia included a dramatic comeback. Down 15-6 at half-time the Swedes managed to produce a much stronger second half and ran out winners 20-18. Christopher Lundell scored the key try after 70 minutes to tie the game at 18-all and Shannon Notley added the conversion to seal the win.

The victory saw Sweden jump from 52nd to 47th in the IRB World Rankings. Belgium won their

opening match 23-16 against Latvia in Brussels.

In October the four pool winners and four runners-up will enter Round 3a. They will be joined by two of the third-placed teams following a series of play-off matches between the four third-placed teams. The 10 teams will be split into two pools with matches concluded by April 2006.

## Americas

Americas qualifying started in late 2004 with Brazil, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela competing for qualification from Round 1b to Round 2. The four-team South American 'B' Championship doubled as a preliminary RWC qualifying event, with three of the matches counting as qualifiers. In Sao Paulo, Brazil, the home team easily beat Peru 73-3 and Colombia 74-0. Peru then beat Colombia 15-10.

In the next series of matches last November, Venezuela entered the RWC qualifying competition and beat Peru away before downing Colombia 31-27 in Bogota. These victories set up a winner-takes-all match between Venezuela and Brazil.

It was Brazil who triumphed 11-5 in the heat of Barquisimeto in Central Venezuela to win qualification through to the Americas Round 2 stage against Chile and Paraguay.

Played in sweltering heat despite an 8.30 pm kick-off, it was a scrappy match as both teams made plenty of mistakes. With the stakes so high it was perhaps understandable that they both felt the pressure and in the end it was the more experienced visiting side that managed to exert control.

"I am not happy with the way we won, but a win is always a win in international rugby.

After beating Peru and Colombia and losing to Paraguay in Sao Paulo a month ago we only had two training sessions as a squad and that showed," said Jonathan Lowe, the English-born Brazilian coach.

Round 1a of Americas qualification starts in 2005 with a nine-team tournament between the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Grenadines, Guyana, Jamaica, St.



RWC 2007 Croatia in attack against Andorra



RWC 2007 Brazil win the lineout against Venezuela



RWC 2007 With the ball Spain No.8 Ivan Criado Garrachana in the match against Hungary.

Lucia and Trinidad & Tobago, at a location to be determined.

## Africa

The opening round in Africa (CAR) starts in March this year with six nations divided into two geographical pools - Cameroon, Nigeria and Senegal in the north, and Botswana, Swaziland and Zambia in the south.

The winners of the two pools will then play a home and away series to determine who moves forward to Round 1b Pool A to join Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe. In Pool B will be Madagascar, Kenya and Uganda. Awaiting the successful teams from Round 1b (the two pool winners and a runner-up) are places in Round 2 and competition against Namibia, Morocco and Tunisia.

## Asia

Asia (ARFU) qualifying also starts in 2005, with 13 competing nations divided into four pools in three divisions. The first to enter the fray are Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand in Division 3 pool A, with Kazakhstan, Malaysia, India and Guam in pool B of the third division. The winners of the two pools are to play each other home and away, for a place in Round 2, involving the likes of Chinese Taipei, Arabian Gulf and People's Republic of China.

## Oceania

Finally in Oceania (FORU) Round One of the qualifying process starts in 2005 with two regional pools: Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands in the west Oceania pool, and Cook Islands, Niue and Tahiti in the eastern pool. The winners of the two pools progress into Round Two.



RWC 2007  
Successful Austrian  
Team in Vienna.



RWC 2007 Luxembourg v. Denmark



RWC 2007 Brazil advance into round 2.



RWC 2007 Poland defeat Switzerland in Gdynia



RWC 2007 Brazil in attack against Peru.



RWC 2007 Sweden score against Lithuania

## RWC QUALIFYING RESULTS

Venue	Date	Result
<b>Americas Round 1b</b>		
Caracas	20/11/04	Venezuela 5 Brazil 11
Bogota	13/11/04	Colombia 27 Venezuela 31
Peru	6/11/04	Peru 22 Venezuela 32
Sao Paulo	16/10/04	Peru 15 Colombia 10
Sao Paulo	13/10/04	Brazil 74 Colombia 0
Sao Paulo	10/10/04	Brazil 73 Peru 3
<b>Europe Round 1</b>		
Sofia	30/10/04	Bulgaria 50 Finland 3
Vilnius	23/10/04	Lithuania 60 Israel 7
Tel Aviv	16/10/04	Israel 0 Lithuania 53
Vienna	16/10/04	Austria 12 Bosnia 7
Zenica	25/09/04	Bosnia 10 Austria 29
Oslo	18/09/04	Norway 9 Andorra 23
Helsinki	18/09/04	Finland 3 Bulgaria 42
Andorra	4/09/04	Andorra 76 Norway 3
<b>Europe Round 2a</b>		
Andorra	12/02/05	Andorra 14 Spain 36
Heidelberg	27/11/04	Germany 96 Luxembourg 0
Madrid	21/11/04	Spain 63 Hungary 9
Sisak	20/11/04	Croatia 18 Andorra 7
Belgrade	13/11/04	Serbia & Montenegro 33 Bulgaria 10
Cessange	13/11/04	Luxembourg 5 Denmark 6
Chisinau	13/11/04	Moldova 18 Germany 27
Slovenia	6/11/04	Slovenia 41 Hungary 0
Malta	6/11/04	Malta 13 Poland 38
Stockholm	30/10/04	Sweden 32 Lithuania 20
Brussels	30/10/04	Belgium 23 Latvia 16
Copenhagen	30/10/04	Denmark 11 Moldova 20
Zagreb	23/10/04	Croatia 27 Slovenia 6
Budapest	23/10/04	Hungary 16 Andorra 29
Valmeira	23/10/04	Latvia 18 Sweden 20
Geneva	16/10/04	Switzerland 8 Malta 17
Gdynia	2/10/04	Poland 20 Switzerland 15



# RWC07 Venue Inspections Completed

In December, representatives from Rugby World Cup Limited, IMG (RWCL commercial agents) and the Fédération Française de Rugby RWC07 Organising Committee, visited both Murrayfield and the Millennium Stadium as part of the preliminary venue inspection programme for RWC 2007.

The visit to the two UK venues concluded the first stage of the inspection programme, which also included the ten French venues, visited last October. The following ten stadia were visited in France by the RWC organising team: Stade Felix Bollaert, Lens; Stade Louis Fonteneau, Nantes; Stade Chaban Delmas, Bordeaux; Stadium de Toulouse; Stade de la Mosson, Montpellier; Stade Velodrome, Marseille; Stade Geoffrey Guichard, St Etienne; Stade Gerland, Lyon; Stade de France and Parc des Princes in Paris.

The aim of the inspections was to assess the range and the quality of the

facilities for the various tournament programmes: rugby, media and commercial, at the 12 stadia, in order to confirm the suitability of the venues for detailed planning.

Following the report the venues have now been confirmed and the tournament schedule was released early this month (see back page). It is anticipated that the second round of venue inspections will take place in October this year, when further planning will lock down the operational spaces and match day accreditation zones, and identify any necessary building programmes for media and corporate hospitality facilities.



RWC 07 - Inspection team hosted by the Mayor of St. Denis, near Paris.

## The Host Union team

**Claude Atcher** - Tournament Manager

**Martine Nemecek** - Events & Operations Manager

**Cédric Sire** - Marketing & Communication Manager

**Henri Blanc** - Public Affairs Manager

**Stéphane Desprez** - Project & Team Services Manager

**Rémi Leonetti** - Ticketing Manager

**Jean-Luc Lemarchand** - Administration & Finance Manager

## RWC07 constant IRB focus

The build-up for RWC07 is a long-term, labour-intensive operation involving a dedicated team of professionals, under the control of RWC Managing Director, Mike Miller. Ross Young, the IRB/RWCL man in France, and Kit McConnell, with the help of Alex Hennessy in Dublin, control the daily operation. Young, a former business manager with Harlequins RFC, who provided the day-to-day interface with the Australian Union in the 18 months running up to the 2003 RWC, is fulfilling a similar role with the French organising committee. McConnell, formally at the IOC in Lausanne, ensures a centralised management of the Rugby World Cup project from Dublin.

# RWC07 in good hands

By Chris Thau

Most of the nuts and bolts of the RWC 2007 tournament are already in place, as the management team, headed by RWC07 General Manager, Vincent Roux-Trescasses, is moving ahead at pace. Roux-Trescasses, a graduate of the famous Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) - the French equivalent of the London School of Economics - was handpicked for the job by the FFR President and Chairman of the Organising Committee, Bernard Lapasset.



Vincent Roux-Trescasses

The youthful general manager - 42 this year - is a former consultant and vice-president of the giant French software company, Cap Gemini, with whom he spent more than six years. He joined the RWC Organising Committee at the request of Lapasset, who was impressed by his intellect and business pedigree. In the 16 years since he finished university, Roux-Trescasses, driven by his incessant desire for novelty and intellectual challenges, has changed jobs four times, having served his apprenticeship in the highly unionised French public sector.

After a brief stint with Procter and Gamble, Roux-Trescasses became General Manager for Marketing and Administration of the French Post Office, Médiapost, which, with 15,000 employees is one of the largest companies in France. Médiapost were losing some 50 million euros/year at the time Roux-Trescasses joined them. In two years, he managed the restructuring process and the merger with another company, and negotiated a new collective agreement with the trade unions, turning the loss-making company around by making a "modest" profit of 10 million, and as he proudly pointed out, "without one single redundancy."

Married to Isabel, a civil servant, he has three children and regards family life as the balance to his high-intensity professional career. Rationality and intellect are the driving forces of this rather eclectic career, which took him from the

Post Office to the high profile architecture design and consultancy firm of Ricardo Bofill, and then to Rugby World Cup.

"Basically, there is no difference between running a public company in France and the RWC business; the same rational processes apply, the same sound principles of management, the same team effort mentality. Of course everything is different about RWC, with its culture, history and glamour, but as a business it is the same, and should be the same. I had no previous experience of rugby when I joined the RWC, and I had not had any experience of IT when I joined Cap Gemini. Managing a business, whether you have 15,000 people or 150, as I had in Bofill's consultancy, is about enthusiasm, competence, transparency and punctuality. The specifics come later," he said.

Roux-Trescasses is heading a powerful interdisciplinary team of experts with strong backgrounds in organisation and management of large-scale sporting events. He described his right-hand man, Tournament Director and a former French international Claude Atcher, as "the right man for the right job. He is a doer, pragmatic and determined. His substantial experience and understanding of rugby culture and traditions make him uniquely qualified for the job. And so is everybody in our team, from Marine Nemecek, the operations manager, to Stéphane Desprez, our planning man." he added.

## RWC Host Broadcaster appointed

Rugby World Cup Ltd (RWCL) has appointed leading French broadcasting organisation TF1 as the Host Broadcaster for RWC 2007 in France. This is the result of a competitive tender process conducted on its behalf by RWCL commercial advisors IMG/TWI. TF1 have also won the broadcasting rights for RWC2007 and RWC 2011.

RWCL Managing Director, Mike Miller said, "RWCL is delighted to be working with TF1, France's biggest broadcaster. TF1 has vast experience in the broadcasting of major world sporting events. The appointment is wonderful news for French rugby fans who will be able to see every match live from RWC 2007 and RWC 2011, either on TF1 or on Eurosport France."

A minimum of 20 live matches will be shown free-to-air for both RWC 2007 and RWC 2011. In addition, the other 28 matches will be shown live on TF1's fully owned Eurosport France channel – the country's largest satellite sports channel. There will also be dedicated prime time news coverage on both TF1 and LCI, TF1's dedicated satellite news channel. Etienne Mougeotte, TF1's senior vice-president in charge of broadcasting said, "TF1 remains the leading broadcaster in France and actively seeks to broadcast big global sporting events in which the French national team has a genuine competitive interest. The Rugby World Cup fits perfectly with the programming we wish to offer to our viewers and we will do our very best to ensure the Rugby World Cup is given the widest coverage and the greatest exposure possible."

TF1, France's largest terrestrial (free-to-air) broadcaster with 34 % of the nation's TV audience, was the official French broadcaster for the 1991, 1995 and 1999 Rugby World Cup tournaments.

## RWC Communications manager

RWCL has appointed media professional Jayne Pearce as a Communications Manager. Her primary responsibility will be to liaise with the French media in the build-up to RWC 2007 and to assist in the management of the media facilities operation.

She will initially work on a part-time basis and will provide her services full-time in the lead up to the tournament in 2007. A former media director of the International Association of Athletic Federations she has worked in varying media roles on: four Olympic Games, two World Athletics Championships, 2001 World Indoor Championships, four FIFA World Cups, and was venue press chief for the rugby Sevens at the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games.

## Lansdowne Road pull out

RWC Ltd have confirmed that Ireland's own ground Lansdowne Road will not be available to stage matches in the RWC 2007 as a result of development work between 2006-2008. At the request of the Host Union, FFR the three pool matches scheduled for Lansdowne Road have been switched to France.

## Fijiana

### Winning the battle in South Pacific

By Jeremy Duxbury

Imagine Fiji rugby and one's mind immediately turns to thoughts of giant players with electrifying pace who could run off with the gazelles then tackle an elephant. But what of Fijian women? Are they built with the same to-die-for physiques? Can they outrun the city women and throw a double cut-out pass to the wings? The simple answer is yes. A more complicated one: is yes but...only when they get the chance.

Whilst the growth of women's rugby continues around the world at an astonishing rate opening up the game to a whole new audience, in many developing nations the women still struggle to have their sport accepted. Seeing females hit each other with bone-crunching tackles or raking a player lying offside in the ruck just doesn't seem to appeal to the traditional male audience, particularly so in Pacific Island nations like Fiji, where the culture of the male warrior remains strong.

But as with other nations that have witnessed the exponential growth in women's rugby, the Fiji women are also planning to get their day in the sun. Despite the critics, the knockers and discrimination, women's rugby in Fiji is turning rapidly into an irresistible force.

Two years ago, Fiji had just one active women's rugby team who trained forever amongst themselves and waited patiently for any teams passing through these shores to give them a game. In 2003, Fiji had six clubs, and this year that figure has doubled to 12.

But all these new players are not starting from scratch. Most Fijian girls grow up playing touch rugby in the village with their brothers and cousins so they already have good ball-handling skills. The rural aspect of life also gives them a natural strength ideally suited to the sport. And they all absolutely adore the game – rugby in Fiji is akin to soccer in Brazil.

The only thing that had been missing was the chance to play in an organised competition. Now, those involved in taking the game forward have sorted this out to enable all women to get out onto the field and actually play the game they have loved to watch for so long. Teams are

now sprouting up across the country as the positive media exposure begins to silence the previously outspoken critics.

New national coach Wayne Pivac and his assistant Paul Feeney were impressed enough by what they saw at one training session to offer up their services of a weekly coaching clinic to the newly formed Fiji women national squad. Former Fiji centre Sale Sorovaki, who skipped Fiji when they defeated Scotland 51-26 in 1998, has taken over the women national squad coaching duties and concluded that "it was the most rewarding coaching position I've ever had."

And up-and-coming Suva referee Tevita Atalifo now spends three evenings a week sharing his knowledge of the rules with the women's clubs that train daily at Albert Park. Fiji Rugby Union CEO Pio Bosco Tikoisuva, is another staunch supporter of women's rugby.

"I believe I started women's rugby in Fiji back in 1979 when I introduced them to the Marist 7s competition," Tikoisuva said. "There was a lot of criticism in the newspapers and on the radio but I always supported them. I can confidently say that I'm happy with the progress and skills they're now developing; it's very encouraging."



Fiji prop Sunia Koto with sister and fellow international Koini Vuli.



History in the making – Fijian Barbarian Melini Vuniwai and Fiji's Makareta Baravilala at the National Stadium in Suva on 6 November, 2004.

Tikoisuva's daughter Salote plays centre for the Teivovo Gals club and was part of Fiji's team to last year's Hong Kong 7s where they finished a very creditable fifth out of 14 teams. Salote talks openly about the verbal abuse she has had to endure whilst on the rugby field with chauvinists shouting at her to "get back to the kitchen and cook dinner."

"It's embarrassing and degrading," she says. "And it's not only the men who shouted abuse. I heard a radio talkback show where women callers criticised the players, saying they looked ugly. No matter how much we try there'll always be people who oppose women playing rugby. But we don't let these things deter us from moving forward; we just turn a blind eye."

Her father insisted that the Fiji women play the main curtain-raiser when the New Zealand Divisional XV took on Fiji at Suva's National Stadium in November.

"One of the reasons I wanted them to play in front of the big crowd was for educational purposes," he said. "The public came and watched and could see that the women were serious and had improved so much."

On that day, a crowd of some 8,000 saw the Fiji National team defeat a determined Fiji Barbarians team 39-20. Moreover, the brother and sister Sunia Koto and Koini Vuli, made their respective debuts for the national team, surely a first ever in the world of international sport. Koini Vuli, a second Dan karate expert turned full-back, started playing rugby, her first love, as soon as the chance presented itself.

"I always, always wanted to play rugby," Vuli stated firmly. "But I never had the chance. Sure, when I was young I used to play touch rugby in the village with my brother, but when puberty kicked in and my body changed shape, he didn't like me playing anymore."

Her brother, Sunia Koto, one of

seven siblings, made his Fiji debut a couple of hours after his sister when he came on as replacement prop against the NZ Divisional XV.

"At the beginning, I didn't want her to play rugby," Koto said. "It's because of the Fijian mentality, you know where it's not appropriate for women to play a physical game like rugby. I have changed my opinion after I watched one of her training sessions. I realised that she really was good and she's better off playing rugby than practising karate. I was so impressed. Now I'm proud that she's playing. It was a big achievement for my family when we were both selected for the national team at the same time."

While women's rugby in Fiji wins converts each day, many still oppose the concept. The first person chosen to coach the Fiji women's national squad this year had to step down when the principal at the school where he taught advised him that "his coaching of women's rugby is embarrassment to the school."

And financially, the women haven't had wonderful success. The South Africa Rugby Football Union invited the Fiji women's side to tour in November, offering full hosting and a Test match as long as they could get there. Requests for financial assistance from the Fiji Government, Fiji Rugby Union, and Rakavi Trust (set up to aid rugby development in Fiji) fell on deaf ears with no funds available from any of these bodies. So the tour had to be cancelled.

Unperturbed, Wayne Pivac has put the Fijiana squad on off-season training programmes so that when



FRU CEO Pio Bosco Tikoisuva and his daughter Salote.

they regather in January, they'll begin preparing in earnest for some Test matches in 2005. Fiji is fortunate to be located in a convenient stopping-off spot for teams travelling to New Zealand and Australia from the United States, Canada and Japan.

"We are working hard to be able to host one or two Test teams in 2005," Fijiana secretary Eleina McDonald said. "And, funds permitting, we'll look to make a tour overseas as well."

So the building blocks are falling nicely into place to allow the Fijiana to take the next step onto the international stage – good basic skills, strong physique, world class coaching, increasing public acceptance, and a huge love of the game.

"We aim to break into the world's top 10," McDonald says, "then overtake the Fiji men in the world rankings!"



# Canada to host Women's World Cup in 2006

by Ian Kennedy.

In November the IRB granted Canada the privilege of hosting the third Women's World Cup in 2006 and planning is already underway for the twelve-team tournament. Edmonton, Alberta, will serve as the principal host city but Ottawa, Ontario and Montreal, Quebec will also host pool games.

"We want to spread the event around and give as many Canadians as possible the opportunity to see games, and also to give the participants an opportunity to see some of Canada," says Rugby Canada's President, Roger Smith, who lives in Edmonton.



The four WRWC trophies

His city possesses the 20,000 seat Commonwealth Stadium, a grass-surfaced legacy of the 1987 games, where 14,000 fans - one of the biggest crowds ever to watch a rugby match in Canada - crammed in last June to watch the finals of the Churchill Cup. With France as one of seeded nations, because of its semi-final status from the 2002 WWC, Smith sees a golden opportunity to play France's, and one other group's, pool games in Montreal.

# Women's rugby gets better in East Africa

By Andrew Jackson Oryada

Uganda's Thunderbirds Yellow beat Kenya's Mwamba Invaders 10-0 to win the first ever East African women 7's tournament in Kampala last October. This was a sweet revenge for the Ugandans who had lost twice to the Kenyans last year, at the Safari 7s in Nairobi and the Kabeberi 7s, also in Kenya. The tournament attended by teams from Burundi and Rwanda proved a tremendous success.



Yellow Thunderbirds celebrate

Paul Sigombe, the Ugandan Rugby Union chairman said he was very impressed with the standard of women's rugby in the region now. "This tournament has shown what we have in store around East Africa and we hope Tanzania will also come on board," he said. He added that he hoped that the tournament would attract teams from SA and Zimbabwe next year.

"Rugby among women is still new in our country, but with more tournaments and exposure the support will definitely come from all corners," said Burundi coach Marie Clare Kayange.

"This tournament has opened our eyes and we have been able to assess our standards and now know where to put more effort," Rwanda coach Janvier Ugeziwe added.

Brendan Stanbury, vice-president of the Rwanda Rugby Union commented that although Rwanda women had only managed to beat Burundi 22-0, he was impressed with the progress of their game. "We started with touch rugby a year ago before getting down to tackle rugby; and the girls improve all the time," said Stanbury who added that the region has huge potential in women's rugby.

# South American premiere

By Frankie Deges

To many, the development of women's rugby in Venezuela might come as a surprise. But the women's game is growing fast, proof of which came recently when the country hosted the first ever South American international Sevens tournament.

Venezuela women started playing the game more than ten years ago, but according to captain Marisell Méndez, "getting eight nations playing in an international tournament at home was a dream come true." The fact that the guests reached the final against Brazil, arguably the better of the eight participants, added a great deal of excitement to the proceedings. Despite the closeness of the 15-12 final scoreline, the Brazilians never looked like losing. Paula Ishibashi, the Player of the Tournament, tormented every side from scrum-half with quick feet, slick hands and a wonderful change of pace,



Player of the Tournament Paula Ishibashi on the break for Brazil in the final against Venezuela.



Tournament winners Brazil.

and in captain Maria Mikaela, Marcia Muller and the Futuro sisters, Cristiana and Beatriz, Brazil had quality players to support her.

Venezuela never gave up and they fought back from 15-0 down in the final to make a game of it. Ably led by skipper Méndez and with centre Adriana González in great form they reached the final unbeaten.

Colombia were delighted to win the bronze medal, with team coach and Federation President Bill Paul saying before the tournament that he would be happy with two wins out of the five games. After winning 5-0 the bronze medal play-off against Argentina he added, "This is great for us.

These girls are extremely passionate about rugby and I hope that when we get back home, thanks to this success, more girls will take up the game."

The fact that Argentina finished fourth was not surprising, as the women's game is officially celebrating its first birthday this year. The tournament, observed captain Ximena Santillán, was a great opportunity to "find out where we stand with regards to the other nations. In this respect I have to thank our Union, who treated us exactly the same way they treat other national teams and we feel proud to be nicknamed Las Pumitas."

# 'Total Rugby' Bookshelf

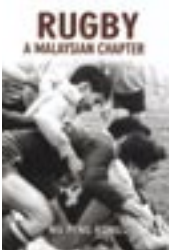
**Paddy O'Brien**  
- **Whistle While**  
**You Work**  
By **Bob Howitt**



This is Bob Howitt's 15th book on rugby, books which included some of the gender's bestsellers, such as biographies of Graham Henry, Bryan Williams, Laurie Mains, Sid Going, Frank Bunce and Walter Little, not to mention his three-volume NZ Rugby Greats epic. But while most of his other books dealt with players or coaches, this is Howitt's first attempt to write the biography of a referee – individuals notoriously tight-lipped about their trade. The fact that larger-than-life O'Brien has chosen Howitt to write his life story is justified by the measured tone of the biography and the overall balance between anecdotal and narrative. The honesty of O'Brien, a man of principles and dignity, and his great sense of humour shine through thanks to Howitt's ability to mix the spectacular with the mundane and put events into perspective. O'Brien, to his eternal credit, is prepared to deal with the demons of his life and career, including what the book calls "the disastrous refereeing performance" in RWC 1999 in the match France v Fiji in Toulouse. A lively RWC 2003 diary completes this most readable book, which is highly recommended not only to the would-be referees but also to players, administrators and indeed fellow rugby writers.

Published by Hodder Moa Beckett

**Rugby -**  
**A Malaysian**  
**Chapter**  
By **Ng Peng**  
**Kong**

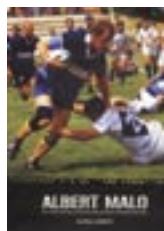


Passionate and highly partisan accounts like this one give rugby its unique flavour. The book is not only a good read, but also a fascinating look into the growth of rugby from a pastime of "gentlemen colonialists" as its author Ng Peng Kong calls the 'orang puteh' (the white man), into a popular Malaysian game. Undoubtedly, Peng Kong's 'Malaysian Chapter' is a welcome addition to the game's rich literature and we must be grateful to the former

Cobra, Selangor and Malaysia wing forward and captain, for this act of rugby culture. In his customary defiant style Ng Pen Kong (whose stint in the administration of the Malaysian game includes several terms as Cobra Club and MRU Secretary, MRU Director of Development, President of Selangor RU and Chairman of the world famous Cobra 10s) describes the battle for the mind and soul of rugby in Malaysia since 1893, when the Selangor Journal of January 13 mentions rugby for the first time, to the early 1990s, when he stepped down after 18 years in the game. During his days as MRU Secretary, Peng Kong promoted what he called "a temporary isolationist policy with an incremental international exposure," which was a controversial attempt to go back to grass roots to secure the growth of the domestic game at the expense of international activity chasing "elusive Asian and World Cup glories", which he believed would invigorate the dormant Malaysian game. It is difficult to say whether he was right or not, suffice to say that in this exceedingly honest account he acknowledges that he "won only a few converts to his cause so he remains to this day a strident voice in the Malaysian rugby wilderness, still advocating a reformed MRU".

Published privately the book retails for £25. Orders to Ng Peng Kong, at: 29 Jalan Setia Kasih, Bukit Damansara, 50490 Kuala Lumpur, or by e-mail at npk8723@pd.jaring.my

**Albert Malo**  
**Un catalán en la**  
**élite del rugby**  
**internacional**  
By **Gloria**  
**Llorente**



Alberto Malo has an established reputation as a fiery, no-nonsense member of the forward fraternity on the playing fields of the world, from Sydney to Murrayfield, and from Punta del Este to Madrid. Good enough to be called into the Manawatu Development team after a couple of months in Palmerston North, part of that remarkable Spanish team that for a brief while, under Gerard Murillo, threatened the established order on Continental Europe in the early 1990s, a foraging forward of the Spanish 7s team, who put England to sword in Sydney in

the NSW world 7s in 1986, he bowed out after RWC 1999, to take over as general manager of his beloved Santboiana club in Barcelona. There are not many bigger names in Spanish rugby than that of Malo, the ginger-haired terrier, who terrorised defences with his ferocious, relentless forward drives, or made oppositions suffer with his menacing and occasionally over-vigorous defensive work. His biography, written by Catalan writer Gloria Llorente and published in Sant Boi, is a tribute to the man and a fascinating account of Spanish rugby's attempt to break into the elite of the game. A one-club player, he played for Unió Esportiva Santboiana RFC – the cradle of rugby in Spain – from his early teens until retirement in 1999. During his 15-year career he won 74 caps and established himself as a great ambassador of Catalan and Spanish rugby. Former Catalonia Generalitat President, Jordi Pujol, and RWC director, Marcel Martin, add their voices to the those of countless opponents, team mates, coaches and administrators celebrating a great man of rugby.

Published in Spanish by Far East, SL. Sant Boi de Llobregat the book retails for 15 euros (excluding p&p) and can be ordered by e-mail c/o Santboiana club at uesantboiana@suport.org

**SA Rugby**  
**Annual**  
Edited by **Andy**  
**Colquhoun**



The epic 'Springboks' Vodacom Tri-Nations title and Schalk Burger's rise to international fame feature prominently in the 34th South African Rugby Annual, the 'Bible' of rugby in South Africa, published last month. The 544 pages record every moment of the 2004 season from Coca-Cola Craven Week to ABSA Currie Cup and on to the end of season Springbok tour, with detailed reviews, analysis and statistics on the game at all levels. The Annual also includes the births, deaths and playing records of all 767 Springbok players since 1891; full biographies of the 658 players who made a first class appearance in 2004; scores, scorers and team sheets from more than 300 first class matches played in the Vodacom Super 12, Vodacom Cup, Absa Currie Cup and by national teams, as well details of club, Craven Week and women's rugby.

Published by SA Rugby  
The 2005 Annual costs 120 Rand and can be obtained by contacting the distributors on bookmark@bookpro.co.za or calling + 27 21 706 0949

## A Pride of Lions

By **Jed Smith**

**The British Isles side (Lions) have a tradition and history like no other international team. These traditions are highlighted and examined at the Museum of Rugby, Twickenham, in a special exhibition, 'A Pride of Lions', presented by Genesis Publications. The exhibition, which opened on March 8, will be open for six months, until September 4, 2005.**

Lions tours are always eagerly anticipated and have provided some of the most memorable clashes ever seen. Off the field of play their influence has been just as strong. To produce a full history of the Lions in a single exhibition would be impossible. Instead, 'A Pride Of Lions' will pick out and examine the elements that make the Lions so very different and so very special.

The Lions played a vital role in spreading rugby football around the world during the game's infancy and once it was established, the Lions helped to sustain and nurture its further development. There was also a 'missionary' role to play in Argentina, where the Lions toured in 1910, 1927 and 1936. Controversies have plagued Lions tours and some of these (professionalism, The Boer War, on-field violence and South African Apartheid laws) will also be examined. The Lions are the last team to retain the traditional touring schedule and ethic and they remain the only side from these islands ever to win a test series in the rugby strongholds of New Zealand and South Africa. The exhibition will feature some wonderful and extremely rare Lions memorabilia, interactive elements and recently unearthed, and never before seen, footage of the 1950 Lions training and socialising in New Zealand.

Jed Smith is the curator of the Museum of Rugby at Twickenham

For further information:  
Museum telephone: 0870 405 2001  
Email: museum@rfu.com  
Website: www.rfu.com/microsites/museum

# Indian Ocean island rugby: Madagascar

By Jean-Luc Barthes



For whatever reason, rugby is the main team sport in the island of Madagascar, the 'grand island' as it is called, in the Indian Ocean. No rugby historian has come up with an explanation as to why the game has taken such a hold of the Malgache people, nor has anybody been able to explain why rugby thrives in islands, be they in the South Seas, the Indian Ocean or in the North Sea.



Rugby's popularity in Madagascar has been difficult to explain as thousands of people gather to watch their favourite team every weekend.

The playing population of Madagascar - with 592,000 square kilometres of territory, nearly twice as large as Britain - is about 20,000, out of about 15 million inhabitants, of which 7,000 or more are not even in the books of the Malgache Federation of Rugby. I visited Madagascar for the first time in 1999 with a team from the neighbouring island of Reunion.

After about a week of preparations, we arrived at the legendary stadium of 'Malacam' - built in 1940 by the French Railway engineers, and undergoing repairs ever since - for the first match against the youth team of Madagascar. The first surprise was the size of the crowd. Over 4,000 enthusiastic, noisy and competent supporters had crowded the little stand, by far the biggest crowd we had ever had for our matches. The second surprise was the size of the Malgache players. As we talked amongst ourselves after the warm-up, they were not going to be a problem given their size and bodyweight - not taller than 175 cm and heavier than 70 kilos. How wrong we were in our assessment was to be the third and the biggest surprise of a rather emotional day.

The velocity and the strength of the Malgache players defied their slight frame, while their tackling was ferocious to say the least. They counter-attacked every time they laid their hands on the ball and their unorthodox style and enthusiasm

made us watch in utter amazement. Then, a few minutes before the end of the match, which we were winning narrowly, the crowd left the stand to surround the playing surface. The spectators were very loud and agitated, chanting slogans in support of their team. I feared the worst as the referee blew the whistle to end an entertaining match.

But nothing unpleasant happened. Amazingly, the public calmed down instantly and joined the players on the field chatting amicably, shaking hands, exchanging congratulations and clapping the two teams to the dressing rooms.

A few days later, we thought we knew what to expect when we played against 'the Makis', the Madagascar national team, at the grand Mamach stadium. A crowd of 20,000 filled the stands and for Reunion players, used to playing in front of their families and friends, this was a bit of a shock. We had experienced already the uncompromising nature of the Malgache players, but the test was another story altogether. We were taken aback by the ferocity of the tackling, the brutal confrontation in the scrum and the total commitment of the Malgache players, running from everywhere at us at 100 miles an hour for the whole duration of the game. The public went positively wild and the entire atmosphere reminded me of the gladiatorial battles in the circuses of ancient Rome.

A few months later I returned to Antananarivo for a coaching course, at which my 'Malgache education programme' continued. The course was an eye opener about competence and pride, about tradition and respect. Attended by 50 passionate and

competent coaches working with the 140 teams in Antananarivo, the course was an outstanding example of international cooperation at its best. The manuals of Pierre Villepreux who has run several courses in the country are read with religious fervour by the knowledgeable and passionate Malgache coaches.

My third visit, this time as an IRB Development official, enabled me to understand that all that has been achieved in Malgache rugby, the ever growing numbers, the commitment of players and coaches and public, everything that makes Madagascar a genuine rugby heaven, has been done against enormous odds, despite shortages and poverty, lack of facilities and playing kit. I visited the training

facilities of the two top teams in the Antananarivo league: one trains on a dirt track, a disused construction site in the middle of a housing estate, which has been cleaned and made playable by the players themselves, and the other on a field covered by 20 cm of water all the time. I have not heard anybody complaining and the commitment in training of the players and coaches had to be seen to be believed. This is why Madagascar is one of my favourite rugby destinations, and like many other African countries where rugby is thriving, a place where poverty, shortages and lack of facilities do not affect the enthusiasm and passion of the practicers. Aren't we privileged to be involved in such a game?!

## Swazi world record

Swaziland set a new world record when the four Takis brothers took the field against Botswana in Africa's newest competition, Super 16, last year. The four Takis (right): back row: (l-r) Dez, scrum-half, 24; Bazil, fly-half, 28; front row: Bud, centre, 22 and David, wing three-quarter, 27. The only other families known to feature four international brothers are Portugal's Cunha and Himmer of Germany, but while three of the Himmers, one is the current German Union Secretary, Volker, played together, only two of the Cunhas played together in the same team at the same time. Another well-known trio were South Africa's Luyt brothers (Freddie, Dick and John), who played during the 1912-13 UK Springbok tour and the Bougja brothers - Abdelrahim, Nasser and Abdelaziz - the latter is the current CAR President - who represented Morocco in the 1980s. The three Ella brothers, Mark, Gary and Glen, though capped during the 1980s, never played together.



Training on water in Antananarivo.

# CAR: Botswana rules Super 16

2004 could be described as the busiest year in the history of African rugby, with no less than 25 nations involved in pan-African competitions and that without taking into account the continental rugby superpower, South Africa, very much part of a wider scene.

After a number of experimental events in 2003, this year the Super 16 African competition was fully launched, with Botswana upsetting the odds to finish top of the table. The Super 16 commenced in June in Dakar with pool A of the North section, in which Mali narrowly defeating Senegal 15-6 in the final of a quadrangular tournament involving Mauritania and Burkina Faso as well.

Nigeria had the better of hosts Togo in pool B of the North zone a few weeks later at the Lome tournament, also attended by Ghana and Benin.



Botswana Vultures winners of Africa's Super 16

Meanwhile in the South Section, Tanzania dispatched both newcomers, Burundi and Rwanda, 57-3 and 53-12 respectively in the first round. A fairy tale of how Rwanda made a three-day journey by coach to tackle

Tanzania last June made headlines especially after the hosts showed great sportsmanship by lending their visitors playing boots! However, the generous and enthusiastic Tanzanians ran into trouble against Swaziland and hosts Botswana in the next round in Gaborone. The Swazi won easily 36-0, but Botswana were made to work to win 38-12. The final between the two arch-rivals was a treat, with Botswana nudging ahead 25-22 against strong Swazi opposition, to secure a place in the final round. The two North pool winners, Mali and Nigeria, and the winners of the South zone, Botswana, gathered in Bamako, Mali for the final Super 16 showdown at the beginning of November. In the end it was Botswana, who had the better of their opponents, playing a game described

by Jean-Luc Barthes, the IRB Development Manager for French-speaking Africa, as "more complete and purposeful".

"Botswana, coached by Jerome Alabu, were by far the better side, though in fairness, they are not quite ready to move into the elite continental competition, the Top 9. They scored nine tries while Mali could score only one and Nigeria none. Mali made very little progress compared to 2003 and I feel that they have to bring in a few younger players, as their older players tend to slow the game down. As far as Nigeria is concerned, they seemed to have lost direction a bit, though their potential is enormous," Barthes added. "The progress of African rugby is there to be seen," CAR President, Abdelaziz Bougja, said. "In Africa, the national team is the locomotive that pulls the game and this is what is happening now. In these countries, rugby is now developing because they have an international presence, which is generating support at government level and among the business community," he added. **By C Thau.**



CAR's President Aziz Bougja (centre) with the IRB Development Managers Jean-Luc-Barthes (left) and Sas Bailey.



Tanzania take on Burundi in Arusha.

## For the love of the game

As an Air France flight attendant, I travel around the world, and one of the recurring themes of my journeys is the passion for rugby of those privileged to play it. The other is their abject poverty. There are places in Togo, Bénin, Mali, Congo, Sénégal and Madagascar where rugby is played with a passion and enthusiasm that defy the shortages and lack of facilities.

This is why after a trip to Togo I decided to launch Rugby Sans Frontières (RSF), a rugby charity, which aims to help develop rugby and the youngsters who practise it in French Africa.

The objective is simple: to help the youngsters, those who attend the junior sections in particular, the so-called écoles de rugby, to enjoy the game that has given us so much pleasure over the years. Their coaches and teachers are equally enthusiastic,

but they are desperately short of funds, kit and materials. So when I next went to Lome, I took several bags with t-shirts and rugby balls, but also books, pens and notebooks for the group of kids coached by my new friend, Hugues Agbanama, a former Togolese international, and student at the university.

A drop in the ocean one may say, but one must see the joy on their faces, their boundless enthusiasm, their remarkable skills and athleticism, to



Togo kids with Olivier Gau (left) and Hugues Agbanama.

understand that it was a worthwhile effort. At least I felt I was doing something. Rugby has given the kids from Djijolé, Agbalbédo, Cavéli hope - a valuable commodity no one can manufacture. Besides, rugby as a school of life and for life, teaches these youngsters the values that

make the game so special: honour and respect, dignity and honesty. Ultimately it is the human values that make a sport great and this is where rugby is winning the battle through its message of solidarity and optimism, ambition and nobility. **By Olivier Gau**

# Mexican Serpents make their debut

By Frankie Deges

**For those Mexicans fortunate enough to attend the 2005 USA Sevens in Los Angeles, the weekend of 12/13 February will never be forgotten. This was their first brush with the elite of world rugby and as true rugby lovers their delight was evident.**

The Mexico Serpents made their much-awaited debut in a full IRB event and they acquitted themselves extraordinarily well. Having failed to cross the line in any of their first four games against established opposition such as France, Argentina, Kenya and Canada, they were chasing their maiden try in the tie against regional neighbours, West Indies. It hadn't started too well. Trailing 12-0, the gap finally opened - a quick pass to Edoaurd Peret and the duck was broken. The celebratory noise from the players and their spirited supporters rose to the roof of Los Angeles' Home Depot Stadium. There was more to follow - fly-half Gastón Ghilardi scored the second try before Peret scored a third to seal their first win 19-12.

When the team flew back to Mexico City, they were able to reflect on an unforgettable week. Nothing could dampen their enthusiasm and delight, and while beaten, sometimes by heavy margins, they were never broken. The win against West Indies was a major bonus because it announced their emergence as a potent force on the world rugby scene.

Jamie Johnston, Mexico's English-born coach, was thrilled, "We always knew this tournament would be a huge step-up from the standard of rugby we had been playing. The challenge was daunting, and the whole squad responded. We can go home with our heads held high." After the win against West Indies, Johnston, a winner with the London Harlequins of the famous Middlesex Sevens in the late eighties, was displaying a huge grin, as were his players.

Here were the Serpents rubbing shoulders, sharing training sessions and the same hotel, with teams representing the best rugby nations



The Serpents celebrate their win against West Indies.

in the world. A handful in the team were not in awe - their short rugby background preventing them from fully grasping the significance of the occasion and the part they were playing in Mexico's rugby history. But now, on calm reflection, they have a better understanding of their achievements at the elite end of the game. Rugby surfaced in the early 1930s in what is today the world's tenth largest economy and a country with one hundred million inhabitants. But once the expatriate community working in the oil industry returned to their countries of origin, rugby withered.

In 1971, the game returned to the Reforma Athletic Club and a year later, at the instigation of one Walter Irvine, the Mexican Rugby Union was formed. A group of English and French ex-pats and their Mexican friends were responsible for spreading the game, but when Irvine's son, Andrés, left the Union in 1982, that interest began to wane again and it took another 18 years for the regeneration to start. "At that time," says President Miguel Carner, "there were only four clubs and five teams so we set about the task of rebuilding the infrastructure in the country. To date we have 12 clubs in seven cities and it is developing fast."

At 42, the recently retired outside centre is delighted with the progress. "I learnt the game at school in Mexico City and in 1978 we

founded the Wallabies Rugby Club, which became one of the leading teams in the country. Rugby at the moment is seen as a middle class game, but we want to take the game to everybody. The values of rugby are so positive that they can help our Mexican culture. Mexican society is not accustomed to working in a team environment; we are too individualistic. We accept that rugby is very much a minority sport at present, but we believe that it has massive potential to develop."

Amongst many initiatives, the FMRU has funded a plan to take the game to street children. German Vismara, born in Argentina, is the prospective Development Officer for the Union. "I have taught kids through rugby to respect their elders and team mates. They love the game," he says. "I am delighted to help others through the game, it is a wonderful feeling to see these kids play rugby." In 2001, after meeting with PARA and NAWIRA officials in Canada, the next step for the Mexican RU was to change its status and become part of the IRB family. Pablo Septién, Vice-President for Development, explains, "After many years of legal work we changed our Union to a Federation in 2003 and thus applied to become part of the Mexican Olympic Committee. In 2004 we became an associate member of the IRB."

IRB Regional Development Manager for NAWIRA, Tom

Jones, said: "The Union President and the majority of the Executive members are Mexican. The Union is clearly well organised and they are business savvy people who have a sound understanding of rugby. The Executive have ambitious but realistic goals for the future. Naturally there are obvious cultural and language links to South America (and Spain), but one look at the map makes clear the logic of being in the North, for competition purposes."

With a playing season that runs from October to June, one of the FMRU goals is to grow from the 400 adults and around 120 youths to 5,000 children playing the game over the next four or five years. Nowadays, rugby is at least recognised as a sport in the country. It has come at a cost, though. The need to prepare the national Sevens side for the Los Angeles tournament meant participation in the New York and Punta del Este Sevens, which put the FMRU in the red by US\$ 30,000. "Money well invested," stresses President Carner. Mauricio Ríos Fernández is the national captain. At 27, he's been playing rugby for the last 13 years and even though he's been on rugby tours to Europe twice, nothing compared to LA. "It is an incredible feeling. We now have the responsibility of sharing our wonderful experience with those who did not come and with the players of the future."



# Uruguay change of track

By Frankie Deges

A year after a World Cup campaign in which they showed the world once again that modest resources do not translate into modest thinking and aspirations, Uruguayan rugby is on the verge of a new dawn. Recent international results and playing numbers confirm this, according to URU President Antonio Vizintín. In his first year in office playing numbers doubled from 2,500 to 5,000, no doubt helped by the sound development work of the previous administration and the brave Los Teros campaigns in the last two World Cups when Uruguay beat both Spain and Georgia, giving a good account of themselves against the likes of South Africa, England, Samoa and Scotland.



Los Teros tame Georgia.

second half and increase their lead with a penalty by Perez de Castillo in the closing stages of an abrasive, yet spectacular match.

Far more satisfying for the new-look Uruguay team was the 26-3 demolition of European Nations Cup winners, Portugal, in the final of the tournament when Uruguay scored four tries in a sizzling display of attacking rugby in the first half. "Maybe they were expecting us to play like what they had seen in the World Cup, but we surprised them as Uruguay instead played an expansive game," Vizintín said.

However, Vizintín insists, the biggest victory is definitely the 100% increase in playing numbers. "Our development department (Covella, César Mosca and Sebastián Perona) has done wonderful work. They've continued work on some good plans, the World Cup last year helped enormously and this year the game boomed throughout the country."

The big increase in numbers has been recorded outside Montevideo, which is very pleasing, observed Vizintín, who added, "We've been successful in giving youngsters an opportunity to come off the streets to play rugby."

Interestingly enough, back in 1999 when Uruguay played in its first World Cup, playing numbers were at around 1,000. Today, Uruguay is preparing for their first Sevens World Cup and in 2004 will play their first test against a top five nation outside of a World Cup, when they travel to Port Elizabeth to play the Springboks. The women's scene is also growing and the national team finished fifth at the CONSUR Sevens. "We need to continue working very hard to consolidate this growth both on and off the field," concluded Vizintín.

Vizintín, a former Old Christian and Uruguay prop and a member of the legendary group of Andes survivors, became president in December 2003, after a divisive election campaign in the aftermath of the most successful RWC in Uruguay's history. He dismissed the coach of Uruguay, the legendary Diego Ormaechea, and the team manager and former coach, Daniel Herrera. Last September, Uruguay rugby endorsed his decisions by re-electing him as president. "Some wholesale changes were made: new coaches, management and players were brought into the national side and the style of play is also different. And this year we managed to do a lot of good and positive things with very few resources," he said.

Under new coaches, Sebastián Piñeyrua, and his assistant, Ricardo Covella, Uruguay changed not only the personnel, but also their playing style, which surprised the likes of Chile, Georgia and Portugal, when Los Teros won the IRB-sponsored inaugural Intercontinental Cup played in Santiago and Montevideo. In their first match Uruguay defeated a never-say-die Georgia 17-7, with all but three points scored in the first half, at the Luis Franzini stadium in Montevideo. Wing Ignacio Crosa and centre Joaquin Pastore scored tries converted by full-back Agustín Pérez del Castillo, with Georgian No.8 David Bolgashvili going for a try converted by Malkaz Urjukashvili for a 14-7 score at the break. Credit to the Uruguayans, they managed to resist a strong Georgian rally in the

# Caribbean Youth Development

by Tom Jones

**An excellent symposium dedicated to Youth Development in North America and West Indies, attended by all NAWIRA member and associate member Unions (with the exception of Bermuda) as well as some non-members, was held in Jamaica, last November.**

It was a first such gathering of Youth Development Officers in the region (conducted in three languages), who took full advantage of the opportunity to share their expertise and experiences and it was a roaring success.

First-class 'best practice' presentations were received from Bahamas, Cayman, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. Unfortunately the Cuban representative was unable to attend. The attendees

were able to watch tag and contact matches played by primary and high school teams, which evidenced the excellent development work of Jamaica Rugby Union. There was a productive sharing of expertise and experience, described by Jacob Thompson, the well-respected chairman of the Jamaican Union and West Indies Rugby Union vice-president, as an opportunity to "learn, know each other, have a laugh and dine together." "It was a very useful meeting, in a word, money well spent," he concluded.



Back row (l to r): Noel Adonis (Guyana), Cristina Flores (Canada, translator), Lisa Williams (WIRU), Mark Parrish (British Virgin Islands), Richard Adams (Cayman), Colin Peters (Trinidad and Tobago), Sean Henry (British Virgin Islands). Third row (l to r): Connie Rodriguez (Mexico), Wernett Wedderburn (Jamaica), Ely Miles (Bahamas), Tom Jones (IRB), Guillermo Rodriguez (Mexico), Jose Bautista (Dominican Republic), Niall Brooks (NAWIRA), Joe Whipple (Barbados). Seated (l to r): Jean-Louis Charpentier-Tity (Martinique), Churine Cross-man Smith (Jamaica), Hervé Buffon (Guadeloupe), Richard Nolan (Jamaica), Patrick Alexander (Jamaica), Jacob Thompson (Jamaica), John Townend (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). Front row (l to r): Dave Campbell (Jamaica), Jason Campbell (Jamaica), Phillip Morgan (Jamaica), Colvis Samuels (St. Lucia), Rohan Stewart (Jamaica). Not in photo: Andy Blackmore (RFU), Anthony Burke (Jamaica), Conroy O'Mally (Jamaica), Andrew Wisdom (Jamaica).

# Setback for Caymans rugby

**The Cayman Islands Rugby Union has suffered a setback owing to the islands' devastation by a hurricane last September. Canadian born Caymans Technical Director, Richard 'Grizz' Adams, reports that the hurricane damaged 95% of the islands' buildings, with similar large scale damage to power and telephone infrastructure.**

"Cayman has been devastated. The rugby pitch is completely ruined with five feet of salt water and raw sewage as well as several homes on it. The school fields are all gone so it will be very tough to continue with the programme," said Adams.

This is very bad news for the Cayman Union as its most dynamic development programme was centred around the schools on the island. In two years, the Union had managed to double the number of schoolchildren involved in the game, from 545 in 2002 to 1,041 at the beginning of 2004, the biggest uptake being among teenagers, from 253 in 2002 to 501 in 2004.



Rugby fields in ruin.

# Past, Present, Future Young and 'Old Armenians'

By Chris Thau

**One of the prevailing myths about rugby in India is that it ceased to exist following the demise of Calcutta RFC in 1876. The official story has it that, with a dwindling membership and no opposition they could measure against, the Calcutta RFC decided to end its activity, sell its assets and, with the funds raised, purchase a cup to be offered to the two Unions playing international football at the time, England and Scotland. While the story of the birth of the Calcutta Cup - the oldest trophy in international rugby - is perfectly true, rugby in fact never died in Calcutta, or Kolkata as the locals call it.**

After a brief gap rugby re-emerged to carry on to this day. Among those who have nurtured the game carefully and passionately over more than a century are the Armenians of Calcutta, or the Old Armenians club, which has been in existence since 1890.

The fortunes of Armenian rugby followed the fate of the Armenian community and the Armenian college in Calcutta. Players came and went, teams formed and disintegrated, trophies were won and lost. The Armenian College and Philanthropic Academy formed in April 1821 has been home to local Armenian kids and Armenian children fleeing persecution in war-torn Armenia. During its centenary history Old Armenians became one of the most respected and successful clubs in the country. They have won India's foremost competition, perversely called the Calcutta Cup - a trophy looking strikingly similar to the one on display at Twickenham, or Murrayfield - no less than 17 times since the 1930s, not to mention the prestigious South Asia Rugby Tournament or the All-India Tournament.

"Those were the heydays when the Old Armenians dominated the Indian scene," recalls Mr Ashram Sookias, Club President, Secretary, Manager and Historian. Ashram Sookias started playing as wing forward in 1947, the year the Armenians, under the captaincy of his older brother, Malcolm, won the Calcutta Cup for the first time. His playing career ended in 1980, after which he carried on as teacher and coach at the college, inculcating in his young students the passion for the game. The Sookias family

association with the game and the club goes back to the turn of the century, with countless Sookias listed as players, coaches and managers of the club.

"For Armenians of Calcutta, rugby football was not a game, but rather a way of life. Rugby became a catalyst for our schoolboys who loved the physical nature of the game. We had great teams and won a lot of trophies, but more importantly, we gave many boys over the years a sense to their lives and a lot of pleasure. When I started playing, the Old Armenians was one of the top teams in the land. The year before my debut in 1946 I watched how we lost in the Calcutta Cup final to the Fifth Indian Division from Ranchi, though the win against the Welch Regiment in the semi-final will always stay in my memory," Mr Sookias recalled.

"The biggest punishment for a student during my time was to be banned from rugby. Nothing could be worse," recalls Emil Vartazarian, a former captain of the Old Armenians and one of the last great players to have emerged from the Armenian rugby nursery, now a player-coach and a development manager in Chennai.

"I arrived in Calcutta in 1987 from Iran when I was 10. In the Armenian college every individual had to play rugby as it was like a religion for us, so I started playing. We had this tradition, which went back for 100 years and Mr Sookias being the manager of the college and the rugby team used to show us a lot of photos and newspaper clippings about the old days. I think it connected very well with us as the boys were hardy



Present and Past: Emil Vartazarian (left) in his National Team jersey and Old Armenians factotum Ashram Sookias with the 1972 All India Cup.



and loved the physical aspect of the game. We found out that this sport, which was so physically and mentally challenging, called rugby, was just perfect for us. And once you play it, of course you can never get separated from it. It is unfortunate that in 1999 we had to stop, as no more Armenian boys came to the college. Mind you, a few of the college old boys met in Chennai some four years ago and we entered a team in the 7s tournament. That was the last time the Old Armenians jersey was worn in a rugby competition," Vartazarian said

But one person did not accept that the death sentence passed on the old club was definitive. Naturally, it was Ashram Sookias, who battled and cajoled, argued and convinced the community, in India and abroad, that the Armenian College must be kept alive and that rugby will always be its lifeblood. And although the number of Armenian children arriving from

Iran had been reduced to trickle, Sookias managed to bring in new recruits and soon rugby balls started bouncing awkwardly on the grounds of the college once again.

"Mr Sookias managed to keep the rugby flame alive and now there are about 60 kids at the college and all are taught and play rugby. My former team mate and colleague, Henrik Terchounian, who is a qualified coach, is teaching them and sooner rather than later the Old Armenians will be at it again," said Vartazarian, who coached the U19 Indian team in its first-ever international tournament last year.



The Future: Armenian school boys (crop 2005) train under the watchful eye of former Old Armenian Henrik Terchounian.



# Cambodia's first scrum machine!

The story began in October 2002 when Mark Foulds, grandson of former England international, Robert T. Foulds, went to Cambodia to take part in the inaugural Ankor 10s. There he was asked by the coach of the Cambodia Youth Team to help by possibly sending a scrummaging machine to the country, as they had none. Back in the UK, Mark joined forces with Kerry Hopkins at DMP Media and the two approached RAM manufacturers.



(left-right) Raphael Ibanez, Mark Foulds and Richard Hill.

RAM's response was magnificent and they simply made one of their scrummaging machines, a RAM Low One, available for the Cambodian project. William Eve, of RAM Rugby said, "We at RAM are delighted to support emerging rugby nations in any way, and to supply the first ever machine to Cambodia has been a great pleasure for us." Foulds and Hopkins approached England's Richard Hill and former

French captain Raphael Ibanez at the Saracens club - who were very supportive and agreed to the project. Richard Hill commented, "It's important that we do all we can to help progress the game of rugby around the world. Using facilities such as scrum machines is something that most of us take for granted in this country. Then we realise how

fortunate we are when you think that this one will be the only machine in the whole of Cambodia."

Thanks to the French freight company, SDV, who shipped the scrummaging machine to Phnom Penn in Cambodia, the Cambodian Youth squad were able to start training at the beginning of October.

# AYAD helps Lao rugby

By Daryl McMahon

**The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD) programme provides an opportunity for young Australians to live and work in a foreign country and share their skills and knowledge with the local people.**

This is how I arrived in Vientiane in Laos, to work for Lao Rugby Federation who had applied to the AYAD Programme for someone to come and assist them in moving the organisation forward and train the

Lao rugby development officers. 2004 was a big year for the Federation with some notable achievements off the field. Last May rugby was formally recognised by the National Sports Council, the governing body of sport in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. This enabled the Federation to gain official status and to move ahead as a government-approved organisation, while in November we were granted IRB Associate Member status. Last year, we formally commenced our schools development programme and made efforts to train

our development officers further. This year we will expand the number of schools playing rugby with the aim of forming a junior competition in 2006. Our main objective at local level has been to raise the awareness of the community about rugby through use of the local and foreign media. We are now looking towards forming our first national team in nearly 30 years, with the first match against Cambodia scheduled for mid-2005. While we only have a small player base at present, our aim is to be competitive in Asia within 5-10 years.



Daryl McMahon surrounded by his enthusiastic pupils at training in Vientiane.

## ARFU

### Championship: Japan back on top

Korea's two-year reign as Asian champions finished in Hong Kong at the end of October, when Japan demolished Korea 29-0 in the final of the ARFU bi-annual Championship to restore the status quo in Asian rugby.

It all started in a low-key fashion, with Sri Lanka crushing newcomers Pakistan 75-3, one of the largest winning margins in their history. In the second match, though India gave a good account of themselves in the first half, their fitness let them down badly in the second with China recording a sizeable 50-15 win. Thailand became the flavour of the day, when they defeated the



big men from Kazakhstan 37-36 in a cliffhanger, and Singapore followed suit with a 32-6 defeat of the Arabian Gulf.

India recorded their first win, by dispatching Pakistan 56-3, while China restated their credentials with a hard fought, yet thoroughly deserved 30-16 win over Sri Lanka. Kazakhstan dispatched the Gulf 19-9 in a tight, low-scoring affair, while Singapore and Thailand provided a thrilling encounter, with the plucky Singaporeans winning 41-34, after being down 29-22 at half time. Macau, emerged on the scene for the first time and defeated Pakistan 55-3.



# North Seas island rugby

By Iain Morrison

The Hebridean island of Orkney is famous for many things. It boasts impressive standing stones, the best preserved Neolithic village in existence and the exquisite produce of Highland Park, the most northerly whisky distillery in the world, of which more later. However in a sport that identifies 'island rugby' with barefoot Fijians, Tongans and Samoans playing on the beach, Orkney Rugby Club is hoping to put 'island rugby' of a very different hue on the map.

Orkney consists of not one but about seventy different islands lying off the north coast of Scotland of which seventeen are inhabited, with agriculture and tourism the main industries. The capital Kirkwall hosts their Pickaquoy ground and here in the unlikely bleak, flat landscape where a blowing gale is almost mandatory, the success of Orkney's rugby club is threatening to make it a template for the Scottish amateur game.

The club was formed back in 1966 and they have made steady rather than spectacular progress ever since, slowly making their way into the National Four. Throughout the intervening years the club has never been relegated, it added a thriving mini/midi section in the mid 1980s and, much more recently, a women's team. The club president, Andy McGinn, puts the current success down to the internal leagues, "We have about 150 players, so everyone in Orkney gets a chance to play rugby." Because of the distance and difficulties in playing mainland opposition regularly the club only sends its first team 'abroad' (Orkney was only ceded to Scotland by Norway about 500 years ago and locals still talk of Orkney and Scotland as separate places).

The rest of the players play in a local league of six teams, which includes Caithness from the mainland. The other sides are: East, Kirkwall, Westray, West and Isles. Each team plays the other both home and away and each team, with the obvious exception of the mainland team, acts as a feeder to the Orkney first team who have to endure marathons to fulfil their fixtures in the national leagues.



Andrew Milne going over for one of Orkney's tries



Orkney Club Squad pose with the Trophies.

The 2003 season saw the island side travel to places as diverse as Hawick, situated near the English/Scottish border and Caithness just across the water. The club's excellent website shows all the trips they made last season, complete with the sound of waves and seagulls. The longest away match was against Newton Stewart, which is literally at the opposite end of the country.

The marathon journey went as follows:

**11 pm** Friday: Catch the Northlink overnight ferry to Aberdeen.  
**6 am** Saturday: Arrive in Aberdeen.  
**7 am** Saturday: Board bus for trip to Lanark in south west Scotland.  
**1 pm** Saturday: Arrive at Newton Stewart.  
**2.30 pm** Saturday: Play match.  
**4.00 pm** Saturday: Match ends too late to catch the evening crossing from Aberdeen.  
**6.00 pm** Saturday: Bus to Edinburgh then a few "quiet beers".  
**9.00 am** Sunday: Bus to Caithness.  
**6.00 pm** Sunday: Catch short-hop ferry from Caithness.  
**7.30 pm** Sunday: Arrive home in Orkney and hope the wife and kids still recognise you.

This is the sort of itinerary that would have Marco Polo sacking his travel

agent and it's worth pointing out that a London team could start at the same time, fly to South Africa for a match and still be back home in time for a game of golf on Sunday morning.

The total travel bill for a season comes in at around £45,000 and this is where Highland Park comes in. The whisky company contributes a significant chunk of that bill in return for having their name splashed across the striking red and white hooped jerseys. In addition the ferry company Northlink gives a discount rate to the club and the SRU also contributes funds to both Orkney and their opposition clubs to ensure that league rugby keeps a toe-hold in the far flung north of the country.

The club runs a strict 'no train, no play' policy which probably means a few from the more remote islands don't get their chance but it hasn't stopped Andy McGill from becoming something of a legend at the club. The big lock has played 148 games for Orkney since they entered the national leagues in 1997, twenty-two more than his nearest rival. The fact that he farms on Gairsty, one of the smaller islands in the archipelago, means his trip to training requires a 1-mile trip by canoe and then a thirteen-mile bus/car journey. The

purchase of a motorboat in recent years has helped McGill maintain his record as the best trainer, his over-riding enthusiasm a microcosm of the entire club philosophy.

There are numerous theories that the club officials use to explain why this rugby outpost on the edge of the world has bucked the current trend in Scotland, with healthy and growing numbers at all levels of the game. Admittedly the island is so far north that football is a summer sport and islanders are resourceful people by nature, but otherwise Orkney's success is nothing out of the ordinary. Rather it is built on those old-fashioned virtues of hard work and heaps of enthusiasm that maintained amateur rugby for a century or more before money entered the equation.

As with many aspects of island life, everyone rolls up their sleeves and gets stuck in with many members doing the job of two men. Club captain, Andy McLennan, also designs the website and helps at training while local minister, the Rev. Fraser McNaughton, doubles up as part-time coach and the only man with sufficient authority to referee the women's section. Pull your weight or pull anchor is the message.

# Ukraine at the crossroads

By Ion Popescu

The turbulent political events in Ukraine forced the Rugby Federation to take the unusual step of scheduling all their matches abroad. President Alexei Tsibko, in an exclusive interview with *Total Rugby* explained that rugby is facing a crisis because of the fast changing political and social circumstances in the country.

"The majority of senior players have left the country in search of contracts in Russia and other East European countries; the economy is in the doldrums and we cannot secure any sponsorship support. The Union simply cannot afford to pay for the flights of its internationals playing abroad, to bring them home for the ENC matches," Tsibko said. "There is good news as well: first is that we have basically reached an agreement with the authorities to take over the old Spartak stadium and hope to be able to turn it into a modern facility exclusively for rugby. The demography of rugby in Ukraine is also changing. Beforehand rugby used to be played in the big industrial cities of the East: Lvov, Harkov, Odessa and Kiev. Nowadays, as the west of the country is developing apace, the environment for rugby is superior in this part of Ukraine, especially since soccer is not very popular over there. We receive support now from IRB Kit Aid and have targeted several large villages (of up to 15,000 inhabitants) in the west of the country, where rugby has started, or is about to start to be played. Last month we had



Alexei Tsibko - Ukraine Federation President

an U13 rugby tournament at Irpeni, to celebrate one year since the launch of the first rugby school in Ukraine. The school, launched at the initiative of two local teachers, Serghei Briuzin and Serghei Ignatenko, is sponsored by two local companies 'Maxi Bud' and 'OAO Nova' and is strongly supported by the local administration. The children in this school attend classes from 8am to 2pm, then have lunch and attend rugby training between 4pm and 6pm. They are the future and we hope to succeed," Tsibko added.

## Rugbyman to chair Romania NOC

The newly elected Chairman of the National Olympic Committee of Romania is former international flank-forward and President of the Romanian Rugby Federation, Octavian Morariu, a 44-year old businessman from Bucharest.

The European Federation FIRA-AER has also elected Morariu as a vice-president responsible for relations with the IOC. Morariu, a cum-laude graduate in engineering of Bucharest University, has succeeded former tennis star Ion Tiriac as Romania NOC chairman. He started playing for the Grivita Rosie club in 1968, coached by his father, former Romanian captain and FFR President, Viorel

Morariu. Octavian Morariu made his international debut in 1984 against Spain and was selected by the Barbarians in 1987, the first Romanian player to be invited to represent the club. He is married to Dana and has two sons. Following his election, Morariu stepped down as FRR president and was replaced by George Straton.



Young Octavian Morariu in 1984 before his first international against Spain

## Deaf Rugby 2005

While deaf players from England, Scotland and Wales have been involved in several international matches (see poster for Wales v England) this season, preparations for the second Deaf Rugby World Championship in Wales this year continue apace.

So far, five countries, Australia, New Zealand, England, Wales and Japan have confirmed that they will attend DRWC 2005, Chief



Executive David Blackburn confirmed. In addition, he said, France, Argentina and Scotland are making efforts to raise funds for the two-week event scheduled for September 2005. WRU President Keith Rowlands is the Chairman of the Organising Committee, while former Wales captain, Paul Thorburn, a special events manager with the Welsh Rugby Union, is helping the organisers.

## Slovakia return to the fold

Rugby is experiencing a revival in the Slovak Republic, following years of neglect. In January last year, 30 players turned up for the first training session of Slovan Bratislava RFC, followed by the launch of a second Bratislava club, both with the benefit of coaching expertise from the neighbouring Czech Republic. This year, in addition to the two Bratislava clubs, a group of enthusiasts from Prešov, in the eastern part of the country, formed a club as well. The help of the Czech Rugby Federation and in particular of the legendary Czech player, coach and administrator, Eduard Krutzner, have proved vital for the success of the Slovak Rugby project.

Interestingly enough, the first rugby club within Czechoslovakia, SK Slavia Bratislava was formed in 1925, and in the following years became the leading team in the Republic. The first rugby match in the country was held at Makkabi ground in June 1926, when SK Slavia Bratislava clashed with AK Zizka from Brno (0-9), and the following year Bratislava also hosted the first ever international of the newly formed Czechoslovak team, with Romania beating Czechoslovakia 23-6 at the CSSK Bratislava ground. **By Erich Sedlak**

## Georgia new coaches



Georgia finished third in the 2003-2004 European Nations Cup (ENC) after Portugal and Romania. They will be desperate to retain that position, or even go one place up, by autumn 2006, when ENC nations play for places in RWC 2007. After the last ENC two of the four coaches, Paata Narimanashvili and Michael Burdzgla, resigned for personal reasons, with the other two, Malkhaz Tcheishvili and David Chavleishvili, confirmed as Lelos coaches for this season. The two played together as half-backs in the late 1980s for Elmavali in the Soviet Championship and won their first caps together against Zimbabwe in 1990.

The duo kept experimenting at the IRB-sponsored Intercontinental Cup in South America, where no less than 10 newcomers won their first Lelo cap. The squad was largely built around home-based players as the French clubs (most of them of Federale 1) refused to release their Georgian players for the tour. Although Georgia lost to both Uruguay (7-17) and Chile (24-30), the tour turned out to be a worthwhile experience. The coaches identified a core of around ten players and complemented the squad with several tried and tested French veterans. As a result, Lelos played the best rugby of the year in Krasnodar where they soundly beat arch-rivals Russia, 27-15 in the first round of ENC 2005.

All in all, Georgia used 62 players (17 in the front row) in the eight tests during 2004. Lelos won 3, lost 4 and drew 1, and at one stage they fell outside the top 20 in the IRB rankings. Now, however, they are back among the top 20 and have a squad capable of reaching the RWC finals once again in 2007.

**By Zaal Guiguidashvili**

# South Seas island rugby

By Jeremy Duxbury



**For those who didn't concentrate during their school geography lessons, the South Pacific nation of Fiji is not a desert island consisting only of sand, palm trees and the odd pretty village with thatched roofs. The Fiji Islands occupy a total landmass roughly equivalent to the size of Wales, but split into more than 300 islands and scattered over an area about 10 times as big. And, like Wales, Fiji has a few mountains too, though most visitors would concur that the climate is a little more agreeable.**

While rugby maintains its spot as the national sport in Fiji with trifling ease, the logistical problems of developing the game when communities have vast stretches of water between them present the Fiji Rugby Union with a continual headache.

Residents of the Lau group to the east, for example, face a two-day boat trip just to reach the main island of Viti Levu (Big Fiji), and the ferryboat only comes past their island once every fortnight. Those in the north may need to travel on foot or horseback for several hours to reach the main track into town, passable only with a four-wheel drive.

Yet these most remote, most rural outposts are among Fiji's most productive rugby nurseries. With no airstrips, no cinemas, no shopping malls, TV or even landline telephones, young men in these villages absolutely thrive on rugby. They play with a passion, a love of the game that seems increasingly scarce in the professional world. And their harsh environment breeds tough men ideally suited to the rugby field.

Big Joeli Veitayaki, the heaviest player at the 2003 Rugby World Cup, hails from Matuku - an island way down south comprising just three villages. His first trip to the capital Suva was as a 21-year old for the 1988 Island Zone tournament, and he ended up playing in Wales, Ireland, Super 12, and at two World Cups.

Superstar Rupeni Caucau, now



The beach is the islands' main rugby field.

playing for Agen in the French League, grew up in the ultra-rural area of Bua on the northern island of Vanua Levu (Big Rural). His fame and fortune on the rugby field has provided his village of Nasau with its first-ever electric generator, while Caucau's cousin Seru Rabeni, the burly inside centre plying his trade with the Leicester Tigers, still lists farming as one of his hobbies.

So, how many more of these wunderkinds are out there in the remote villages? And how can the FRU bring them to the surface and harness their sublime rugby talents? Senior level rugby in Fiji can be divided into three divisions - the major Unions (12), all of which are on Viti Levu; the minor Unions (12) from the smaller provinces, Vanua Levu and some of the other larger islands; and the Island Zone teams, which is everyone else that can't afford the travel expenses involved in playing in the B Division.

Former Canterbury Crusader wing, Marika Vunibaka, also emerged via the Island Zone, which is held in Suva over two weeks each August.

He first turned out for his island of Gau in the Lomaiviti group, east of the capital, before making his name in the Fiji 7s team (he was top try scorer when Fiji won the 1997 World Cup 7s in Hong Kong).

Fiji's national 15s coach, Wayne Pivac, who took over the helm last February, has set himself the arduous task of developing rugby throughout Fiji and leaving no province or district ignored. Starting from the bottom up, Pivac, his assistant Paul Feeney and trainer Vince Kelly have mapped out their schedule two years in advance, with the goal of visiting every province every year. Having already made four trips to the north and laid the foundation for a Northern Sharks team to enter the Colonial Cup Super 5 competition next April, Pivac recently returned from the Yasawa Island chain in the west.

This beautiful archipelago remains a major attraction for both ends of Fiji's tourism business - exclusive island resorts like the US\$4,000 a night Turtle Island and backpacker beach houses in the burgeoning

budget accommodation industry. The area also thrives on rugby and somehow manages to produce international-class players, though there is hardly any flat land fit for a rugby field anywhere in sight.

Yaqeta Primary School, however, has one of the most beautiful rugby fields in the world - 10 metres from a white sandy beach, coconut trees swaying behind the goal line, and the pristine waters of the Yasawas all around. It must be the only pitch in the world where one end (beach) stands about four metres higher than the other end (school) and two large sandbars cut across the top half.

Fiji 7s half-back, Jone Daunivucu, grew up in Vuaki, a short hop across the water to Matakawalevu. And Yaqeta villager, Iliesa Nalawayavi, was in the Fiji U21s squad for 2004. The Nacula Rugby Union, based on Turtle Island, organises regular rugby rallies that involve teams from the seven towns in the area travelling an hour or two by longboat to play a tournament. And when funds permit, the teams take turns to travel to the mainland and play in one of the BP

Oil 7s Series tournaments, which is run by the FRU on the model of the IRB Sevens.

While these players grow up playing rugby on the beach, a group of villagers in the Namosi Highlands have shown that altitude is hardly a factor. The St Peter's Rugby Club was founded in 1956 when they used to compete for the Bishop Foley Cup in the Catholic competition.

In those early days, there was no road from Namosi village to the Queen's Highway that links Suva to Nadi in the west. To be able to participate in Saturday games, players had to walk for some distance to the upper reaches of the Navua River and travel down by boat on the Friday. They would then spend a night at Nakavu village before playing in the morning.

It was like that every weekend for 23 years until 1979 when the Namosi Road was opened. But still today, they face a transportation problem – they must hire a truck (US\$70 each way) just to get to the venue. In these highlands, they share three grounds among seven villages. Before we talk of coaches, clinics, equipment and rulebooks to groom the players, the first thing needed is a flat area of grass. St Peter's doesn't even have one yet, but they have managed to do wonders in the BP Oil 7s series and within the Namosi club competition.

In 1997, Namosi won the B Division and in 2002 many of St Peter's players were involved in Namosi's famous victory over Ovalau for the famed Farebrother-Sullivan Trophy – Fiji's equivalent of the Ranfurly Shield.

Daniele Cakau and Venasio Tokatokavanua, now playing for top Sevens club, Red Rock Quia, also hail from St Peter's. Cakau made it into the Fiji 7s team in 2004. Former Fiji full-back Atonio Nariva is from the same club. According to Namosi Colts loose forward Filipo Nariva, his cousin Atonio has also been a great influence.

"When Toni got selected for the Fiji team, it was a big thing for us. And when he came back he brought what he had learned and shared his experience," Filipo said.

The location of the chiefly village explains much about the people.



Any "flat area of grass" will do.

Namosi lies in the middle of a big crater-like opening surrounded by mountains. The Waidina River runs alongside the village, and their traditional warriors live in the surrounding villages. Almost 100 houses make up Namosi village and a Catholic boarding school is close by, hence all the Catholic names.

Because of the rugged location, finding a suitable place for a rugby paddock is not easy. The small clearing that is currently used doesn't even have rugby posts, making one wonder how they are able to produce a top points scorer like Atonio Nariva, who has racked up more than 350 first-class points since assuming Namosi's kicking duties in 2000.

The villagers hope to build a real field at the end of the year by extending and upgrading this patch of open but very uneven ground. One can only imagine how much better their players would be if they had that luxury.

Fiji, with a population of 800,000 (only half of whom are indigenous), sometimes appears as this giant mass of rugby players all enjoying the sport in their villages with smiles aplenty. The task facing Wayne Pivac and his men is to seek out the best of these men and groom them into disciplined internationals without taking away their natural strengths or carefree spirits. Indeed a very hard, yet fulfilling, objective.

## Tonga's Aoniū



Tonga's Aoniū (Absolute Champion) Rugby Tournament was held in the last two weeks of December with players of Tongan descent from Australia and New Zealand joining their Tongatapu brothers in this unique event. One team from the outer islands was also scheduled to take part in it. The Aoniū tournament was initiated by the TRFU in the 1980s to bring together Tongan players in New Zealand, Australia and Japan as an opportunity to select players for the national teams.

"Toutai Kefu started his international career here, as did Willie O, Peter Alatini, Tevita Taumoepeau and Dan Manu," TRU CEO Sakopo Lolohea said. "This is a major event in our calendar every December. However, in 2000 it was cancelled for financial reasons. The TRU Board has now revived this again and it looks to be back as a major annual event. This tournament is part of our national coaching programme, but you must be eligible to play for Tonga to participate. **By J. Duxbury**

## PNG Super 4



In an attempt to improve the standards of the domestic game, PNG Rugby Football Union have decided to organise for the first time a Rugby Super 4 competition in the capital Port Moresby, explained chief administration officer, Peter Tsiamalili Jnr. The tournament, he said, is basically designed to try to lift PNG's standard at the national level to the much needed competition level and gradually to be competitive at international level. "Developed on the international Super 12 concept, the tournament will serve to give PNG's rugby elite a chance to stage their skills at PNG's highest level," he said. The tournament consists of 4 zones covering the main regions: Northern Reds (Lae/Momase), the Islanders (New Guinea Islands), Southern Traders (Port Moresby/Daru) and the Highlanders (Mt Hagen/Goroka). The Northern Reds won the grand final against Credit Corporation Southern Traders to take the trophy for the first time. **By Christian Banian**

# IRB Awards 2004

## South Africa steal the show

Reigning Tri-Nations champions South Africa capped a fine year of international development and achievement by scooping the top three prizes at the 2004 IRB Awards ceremony, held in London's Royal Lancaster Hotel. The gala dinner was attended by 600 guests, current and former players, senior officials, ambassadors and distinguished guests from the sporting world.

The Springboks took the awards for IRB Player of the Year, Team of the Year and Coach of the Year, just reward for a fine 12 months since what was widely regarded as a disappointing Rugby World Cup campaign for the former World Champions.

Most notably, rampaging flanker Schalk Burger Jr. was named IRB Player of the Year just 18 months after leading South Africa at the IRB Under 21 World Championship in 2003, by all accounts an extraordinary success story.

Burger Jr., the son of former

Springbok Schalk Burger Sr. burst onto the grand scene at the Rugby World Cup in Australia and has since commanded a regular place in the Springbok line-up, particularly excelling in this year's Tri-Nations.

"Schalk's emergence as a major force has meant a lot to South African

rugby, but has also influenced world rugby," said Jack White, Burger's mentor at the Under 21 level and the newly appointed Springbok coach.

"People have looked at the way he springs up so quickly from the tackle, he's like a bouncing ball. He's become to South African rugby what

**Below:** Schalk Burger of South Africa is awarded the Player of the Year by Bill Beaumont. **Opposite from top:** Coach Jake White the 2004 IRB Coach of the Year and skipper John Smit with the award for the Team of the Year.





## List of Award Winners

IRB International Player of the Year:  
**Schalk Burger (South Africa)**

IRB International Team of the Year (*in association with Sodexo*):  
**South Africa**

IRB International Coach of the Year:  
**Jake White (South Africa)**

IRB International U19 Player of the Year:  
**Jeremy Thrush (New Zealand)**

IRB International U21 Player of the Year (*in association with Waterford Crystal*):  
**Jerome Kaino (New Zealand)**

IRB International Sevens Team of the Year:  
**New Zealand**

IRB International Sevens Player of the Year:  
**Simon Amor (England)**

Spirit of Rugby Award:  
**Jarrold Cunningham**

Vernon Pugh Award for Distinguished Service:  
**Ronnie Dawson**

IRB Referee Award for Distinguished Service:  
**Jim Fleming**

IRB International Women's Personality of the Year:  
**Donna Kennedy**

IRB Development Award:  
**Guedel Ndiaye**

IRB Chairman's Award:  
**Marcel Martin**



Jonty Rhodes was to South African cricket," White said.

Fittingly, White himself who became the Springbok coach in the aftermath of a traumatic RWC 2003 campaign, was voted by the IRB's panel - Rob Andrew, Jonathan Davies, John Eales (Chairman), Fabien Galthié, Gavin Hastings, Michael Jones, Dan Lyle, Federico Mendez, Francois Pienaar and Keith Wood - as the 2004 IRB Coach of the Year. White was elected ahead of France's Grand Slam coach Bernard Laporte, New Zealand Sevens coach emeritus Gordon Tietjens and Portugal's young coach Tomaz Morais, who despite his country's limited resources and amateur status, led his team to success in the European Nations Cup and won the European Champions title in 7s.

Central to White's success has been the blending of fresh talent with seasoned stars, which helped them to secure the hard-earned bonus points away from home that proved crucial for Tri-Nations success. Professionals such as Percy Montgomery have once again found their feet in White's set-up alongside new comers such as Fourie du Preez, an Under 21 team mate of Burger.

Not surprisingly, South Africa also beat off Grand Slam-winners France, as well as over-achievers Portugal, to win the IRB Team of the Year in association with Sodexo, and with the autumn fixtures amassed in the northern hemisphere the whole team was in attendance to accept the collective award.

## Sevens singled out

The award for IRB Sevens Team of the Year went to New Zealand, who once again start the new IRB Sevens series as defending champions when the first event kicks off in Dubai in a week's time, and will also be defending their Rugby World Cup Sevens crown in Hong Kong this month. Fittingly England's Sevens captain Simon Amor was named IRB Sevens Player of the Year - given England's growing status in the abbreviated form of the game and his key role in bringing them ever closer to New Zealand's highest standards.

Former international referee, Scotland's Jim Fleming, was

presented with the IRB Referee Award for Distinguished Service, while the Vernon Pugh Award for Distinguished Service went to former Ireland and Lions captain Ronnie Dawson, who coached and managed his country and the Lions, serving on the IRB council for many years.

In recognition of his contribution to the game worldwide, Marcel Martin, a former FFR secretary and vice-president, the first ever IRB treasurer and one of the architects of the financial success of RWC was presented by Dr Syd Millar with the IRB Chairman's Award.

Former Hawkes Bay and New Zealand Maori full-back and All Black trialist, Jarrod Cunningham, whose outstanding career came to an abrupt end in 2002, won the Spirit of Rugby Award. Cunningham was diagnosed with a particular form of Motor Neurone Disease called Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), for which conventional medicine knew no cure. However, helped by his wife Carrie and his friends all over the world he defied his condition and the medical prognosis to survive and carry on battling. The Spirit of Rugby Award, presented by his former London Irish team mate Connor O'Shea recognised Cunningham's indomitable spirit in the face of a life-threatening disease.

Senegalese Rugby Federation President Guedel N'diaye won the IRB Development Award in recognition of his work in building his country's rugby infrastructure. N'diaye, a captain of Senegal and a Carcassonne and French Students Rugby League centre and his team of enthusiasts, supported by the Senegal government, have launched an ambitious development plan in the schools and villages around Dakar.

"I believe that Guedel and his team are doing a fine job concentrating on two main areas: selecting a national team to take part in international competition and developing the game among the young... and of course by training teachers and coaches for these children. I think that at this moment Senegal is an example for the Unions in the region," Jean-Luc Barthes, the IRB Development Manager for French speaking Africa said.

In international age grade



competition, having won both the Under 19 and Under 21 World Championships in 2004, it was hard for the panel to look beyond New Zealand. And indeed, on a night when Gordon Tietjens just missed out on the Coach of the Year accolade, two of his young compatriots were honoured for their outstanding contributions within their peer groups. Second row Jeremy Thrush took the prize for IRB Under 19 Player of the Year, while Super 12 star Jerome Kaino was justly named IRB Under 21 Player of the Year, in association with Waterford Crystal, for his powerhouse performances.

Scotland's Donna Kennedy was named IRB Women's Personality of the Year. With 77 caps to her name, including three Women's Rugby World Cup campaigns and four European Championships, Kennedy played in the first Scottish Women's International, having been a core member of the squad since 1993.

**This page from top:** Senegal Federation President, Guedel N'diaye is awarded the Development Award, Jim Fleming speaks after being awarded the Referee Award for Distinguished service, The Vernon Pugh Award for Distinguished Service is presented by Dorinda Pugh to former Lions captain, Ronnie Dawson and Marcel Martin (L) receives his award from Dr.Syd Millar.





**Clockwise from top left:** Jarrod Cunningham, the winner of the IRB Spirit of Rugby award, Simon Amor (L) of England is awarded the Sevens Player of the Year by Rob Andrew, Fabien Galthie (R) awards the Women's Personality of the Year to Donna Kennedy, Noel Murphy (L) presents the U19's Player of the Year award to Jeremy Thrush, Gordon Tietjens (R) of New Zealand is presented with the Sevens Team of the Year award by Nigel Starmer-Smith and Jerome Kaino (R) of New Zealand is presented with the U21 Player of the Year award by Matt Giteau.

## U19s: Facts & Figures

- 49 points (average) scored per match
- 157 tries – 64% of total points scored
- Ball-in-play time 38%
- 95 rucks/mauls per game (average)
- 198 passes (average)
- 37 kicks in open play (average)
- 68% of tries were converted
- 61% of penalty kicks succeeded
- 1 in 5 tries started from inside the scoring team's half
- 29% of tries were the direct result of lineout possession
- 80% of tries were preceded by 2 or fewer rucks/mauls
- Two thirds of all penalty goals were kicked in the first half
- Most tries were scored in the second half
- 77% of all passing movements contained 2 passes or less
- 27 lineouts per game (average), 64% were competed & retained possession at 79%
- 19 scrums per game (average), with 90% retained possession
- 6 free kicks were awarded for a crooked scrum feed (1 every 80 scrums)
- 24 penalties per game (average)
- 41% of all penalties for ground offences at ruck and tackle
- 4 red cards and 28 yellow cards were issued



2004 Final: NZ v. France

The total number of matches examined was 25, all in the first division. What was particularly noticeable however was the difference between New Zealand and the rest of the field:

- New Zealand scored almost 40% more tries than the next team
- They made 30% more passes than any other team
- They averaged 7 passes per try which was 75% more than the next team
- Unlike almost all other teams, over one third of their tries started from within New Zealand's own half.

By Corris Thomas



New Zealand - World U19 Champions

## Age Grade Rugby

# New Zealand is the benchmark

Alan Lorimer previews the two world championships, the U19s, returning to South Africa, while taking a look at last year's highlights. IRB's own research unit, Corris

## U19s: Durban welcomes the IRB World Junior Championship again



Seemingly endless miles of Indian Ocean beaches, a beautiful April climate, and seafood to delight all palates. Sounds like travel brochure talk but in fact it provides three very good reasons for the IRB World Junior Championship to return to Durban in South Africa for a second consecutive year.

These of course are the backdrop facts. The real reasons for the IRB World Junior Championship returning to the Indian Ocean city are that Durban is passionate about rugby, it has facilities that other countries can only dream about, and it knows how to organise a good tournament.

For the northern countries, April in Durban is the perfect antidote to a winter of wet and windy rugby, and a chance to try out skills in warm weather on dry and firm surfaces. Durban is equally attractive to the southern hemisphere sides, more familiar with faster playing conditions and more attuned to playing in warmer weather.

None of the twenty-four teams who took part in the 2004 championship will forget the wonderful conditions in which they were able to play their rugby and enjoy the final and third/fourth play-off matches in the magnificent ABSA Stadium at Kings Park, home of the Natal Sharks.

But it was not only the ABSA stadium that provided glorious playing conditions. The manicured pitches

of Glenwood High School, the fast surfaces at Durban High School, the intimate feeling engendered at Durban University and the contrast of the out-of-town Woodburn Stadium in Pietermaritzburg, all added up to an unforgettable experience for the many young rugby players taking part in their first global event.

Of course, what made the championship such a memorable event was the rugby – or rather the quality of the rugby, seemingly reaching higher standards on a year-by-year basis. This was confirmation that young rugby players are now honing their skills at an earlier age and that amongst the top countries advanced academy systems are producing the predicted result.

Being at the IRB World Junior Championship is a chance to catch a glimpse of the stars of the future before they sign lucrative contracts with Super Twelve sides, or the big club sides in France or England. For many players the IRB World Junior Championship is the show ring, where they can impress national selectors and professional talent scouts alike.

## U19 World Championship 2005

Division A	Division B
1. New Zealand	1. Italy
2. France	2. Uruguay
3. South Africa	3. Chile
4. England	4. Namibia
5. Wales	5. Tonga
6. Australia	6. Russia
7. Ireland	7. Samoa
8. Japan	8. USA
9. Scotland	9. Spain
10. Argentina	10. Korea
11. Georgia	11. Zimbabwe
12. Romania	12. Paraguay

Several players, however, were already stars in their own right, recognised by their countries, most notably the France outside-half, Lionel Beauxis, who had represented France A prior to competing in Durban. Sadly for France and, indeed, for the championship, Beauxis picked up a leg injury midway through the tournament and consequently could not play in the final against *cont. p46*



New Zealand - World U21 Champions

th Africa for the second year running and the U21s in Argentina for the first Thomas, identifies the trends in the game and explains the patterns.

## U21s: Argentina keen to emulate Scotland's success



Scottish rugby and success are estranged partners these days, but there is little doubt that the staging of the 2004 IRB U21 World Championship in Scotland last year bucked the trend, infusing a new spirit throughout the game in northern Britain and inspiring a new confidence in the ability to host such prestigious events.

Overall the 2004 championship was a huge success, not least because of the marketing effort that resulted in record crowds (47,500) turning out to watch quality rugby and, perhaps, in the process registering a vote for the game at 56 degrees north to be played (and viewed) in summer conditions.

As a pointer to future operations of this nature, the championship was staged through a joint effort involving the Scottish Rugby Union, the Scottish Executive, and three local authorities involved in staging matches, Scottish Borders, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. In the event it was, in both sporting and organisational terms, a massive success and, according to Scottish Borders Tourism, the championship had a positive effect on the local economy.

But it was the effect the championship had on promoting rugby in Scotland and, in particular, in the soccer-orientated west of the country that was the real success. 'Conversion' took on a new meaning. Promoting high profile event rugby in Glasgow was almost akin to taking the world

curling championship to Nigeria. But it worked and the knock-on effect was seen this season in the uptake of the game by many hitherto non-adherents.

Scotland is often likened to New Zealand, more so, of course South Island. It was, therefore, apt that New Zealand emerged as winners, consolidating their win in England a few months after their U19 success in Durban in April. The weather might not have been so warm in Scotland but the performance of this year's New Zealand side was sizzling. New Zealand are now the benchmark against which other aspiring sides must measure themselves.

But even New Zealand had to be at their best, such was the quality of the rugby on view. "The standard has gone up again. There was a big increase last year from the year before but it's even higher this year" admitted Bryce Woodward, the New Zealand U21 coach, who was in charge of a team packed with players already stars in their own right.

The power, pace and panache of their backline made an indelible

impression on the tournament, especially in the final where, despite the wet conditions at Hughenden in Glasgow, New Zealand threatened every time they moved the ball wide. Unforgettable was the midfield combination of Stephen Donald at outside-half, with Luke McAlister at inside centre, and the already capped Ben Atiga in the number 13 position.

Add in the devastating finishing of winger Tony Koonwaiyou and the defence-splitting ability of full-back Glen Horton and the combination was lethal. Then there was the hugely impressive Jerome Kaino at No8, a Super 12 player, who looks destined for higher honours, and hard-working flanker, Jonathan Poff.

Arguably the surprise package in the championship was Ireland. Seeded seventh, Ireland proceeded to contradict the forecasts with a run of four wins - Tonga, Argentina, France and Australia - before losing to New Zealand in the final. Ireland's success was all about synergy. Yes, they had a few players in their side who

## U21s: Facts & Figures

- 54 points (average) per match
- 7.2 tries and 3.0 penalties/game
- 157 tries, 66% of total points scored
- 41% ball-in-play time
- 134 rucks/mauls per game (average)
- 225 passes (average)
- 48 open play kicks (average)
- 60% of tries were converted
- 62% of penalty kicks were successful
- 1 in 3 tries started inside scoring team's half
- 29% of tries were the direct result of lineout possession
- 72% of tries were preceded by 2 or fewer rucks/mauls
- The winning team scored most tries on 73% of occasions
- Two thirds of all penalty goals kicked in the first half
- Most tries were scored in 2nd half
- 82% of all passing movements contained 2 passes or less
- 10% (1 in 10) retention of the ball at restarts
- 32 lineouts/ game (average): 71% were competed; possession retained 78%
- 22 scrums/game, possession retained 87%
- 6 free kicks were awarded for a crooked scrum feed (1 every 66 scrums)
- 25 penalties (average) per game
- 40% of all penalties ground offences at ruck and tackle
- 2 red cards & 30 yellow cards were issued

It was significant that some of the players of the more experienced teams were full-time professionals and some were part-time professionals, while players from the teams that ended at the bottom of the table were totally amateur. It is quite clear that this imbalance affected the final scores, when the better-resourced teams won by large margins. From a statistical viewpoint, New Zealand was by far the highest passing team in the tournament and its rate of passing also comfortably outstripped all other teams. The data also showed that they made 50% more passes than Ireland, the other finalists. This was in sharp contrast to kicks - no team made more kicks than Ireland and no team kicked less than New Zealand. This resulted in New Zealand averaging 7.4 tries per game and 1.8 penalty goals, a ratio of 4:1. Ireland averaged just 3 tries and 3 penalty goals per game, a ratio of 1:1.

**By Corris Thomas**

New Zealand at the ABSA stadium. Worse still, the reserve France outside-half was also injured, requiring the Tricolours to fly in a third replacement.



Whether this affected the ability of the French to tackle the seemingly irresistible New Zealand side is a debatable point, but there was little question that France were a notch below peak condition. However, there was no doubting the worthiness of New Zealand to claim the World Junior crown. This was an exciting young All Blacks side that kept its best to last in a formidable final performance, to achieve a 34-11 win.

Who will forget the mobility and skills of loosehead prop, Jamie MacKintosh, the running of athletic locks, Jeremy Thrush and Michael Paterson, the determined tackling of flanker, Serge Lilo, and the midfield skills of Seminar Tinera-Manu. Tomorrow's All Blacks today.

Arguably the best of the top four final matches was the 3/4 play-off between the hosts South Africa and England. In the event South Africa set the pace to establish a 17-7 advantage but England then scored 24 points without replay to build up what appeared to be a commanding lead of 31-17. The drama continued with South Africa staging a comeback and scoring two converted tries to level the scores at 31-31. Then, in a frenetic finish England tried to break the stalemate with a clever grubber kick from outside-half, Ross Broadfoot, only for South Africa to gain possession and

ship the ball to flying winger, Marius Delpont, whose try sealed the bronze medal position for the baby Boks.

It was perhaps justice in the end for South Africa, who had been denied a place in the final by a controversial try that left them losers by 23-30 in the all-important semi-final at the ABSA Stadium. England, too, had been edged out of the final after losing 12-18 in their semi-final against France. But World Championship rugby is about going the five rounds and no side showed that better than Wales, who secured the fifth finishing position with a 14-10 win over Australia on finals day.

A stage down, Japan outshone a wilting Scotland side after scoring the bulk of their points in the last quarter, emphasising, perhaps, the need for climatic preparation in this tournament, while Argentina overran a ragged Italian side, demoralised after an unnecessarily physical game against Scotland in the pool stages. Then in the last of the play-offs Tonga grabbed glory with victory over Russia, while in division B it was Romania who triumphed over Uruguay to secure the young Oaks a place in the first division this year.

Bubbly and exciting though much



of the rugby was, the early stages of the tournament were overshadowed by the tragic death of the young Ulsterman, John McCall, who collapsed during his side's first round match against New Zealand and was pronounced dead soon after.

John's untimely death had an arresting effect on the tournament but the organisers decided that the show had to go on. Ireland, however, as a mark of respect for John and in recognition

of the effect on his young team mates, took the understandable decision to pull out of the championship.

It was a poignant moment, therefore, when John's mother, who had been flown over from Ireland at the invitation of the International Rugby Board, presented the trophy to the winners, New Zealand. Sadness and elation fused into one and perhaps the most long-lasting memory of the 2004 championship.



Romania: Winners of Division B last year will play in Division A this year.



## Comparison between RWC 2003, U19 World Championships 2004

by Corris Thomas

### SIMILARITIES

	RWC03	U21 2004	U19 2004
Points average per game	59	54	56*
Tries average per game	6.9	7.2	7.2*
Tries preceded by 3 or less passes	50%	51%	52%
Tries preceded by 3 or less rucks/mauls	83%	84%	80%
Lineouts average per game	33	32	31*
Ball in play (average)	42%	41%	38%*
Lineout possession retained	80%	78%	79%
Scrum average per game	21	22	22*
Scrum possession retained	91%	87%	90%
Penalties awarded incl f/k	24	25	27*
Passes average per game	241	225	226

When looking at the three sets of comparative figures, it soon became obvious that there was a high degree of similarity between the data in many – and indeed in most – core areas of the game. The extent of these similarities is shown in the table.

There were, nevertheless, in certain areas, clear differences. These arose almost certainly from the fact that at Rugby World Cup – as opposed to the other two tournaments – all but a few players were full-time professionals.

In the U21s, there was a mixture – the occasional full time professional, a number of semi-professional players, but the majority were amateurs. At U19 level, on the other hand, while there may have been academy players, the vast majority were totally amateur.

When comparing, therefore, the performances of teams of full-time professionals with teams of amateurs, differences in the level of skill and intensity could be expected.

\* An adjustment has been made to the U19 figures, because the U19 game lasts 70 minutes while the other two last 80 minutes. In order to get over this problem and produce meaningful comparisons, a notional adjustment upwards of 1/7th has been made to the total figure.



will make the grade at senior level, number 8 Jamie Heaslip, outside-half Gareth Steenson, who finished as the tournament's top points scorer, lock Dave Gannon, prop Declan Fitzgerald, and centres John Hearty and Glen Telford, but you got the distinct impression that the whole exceeded the sum of the parts by a big margin.

Winners two years ago, South Africa were seeded fourth, but finished satisfyingly one notch up. Many felt that South Africa, with four established Super 12 players in their squad, looked the silver medallist side, but their misfortune of having to play New Zealand twice ended that possibility. South Africa had recognised stars, but a number of others showed up well, among them inside centre Wynand Olivier, lock Andries Bekker, who at 2.08m is the tallest player in South Africa, and outside back Bryan Habana, a player with clever feet and great pace. Runners up last year, Australia dropped to fourth ranking after losing their last two matches to Ireland and South

Africa. Still the exercise was worth it, especially if the talents of centre Chris Siale are honed. Another young Wallaby to watch is flanker Lei Tomiki, whose play is reminiscent of current Australia backrower, George Smith.

The northern hemisphere challenge was expected to be headed by England, the U21 Six Nations Grand Slam champions. In fact the seeding committee got it right when they ranked England fifth, but England might feel aggrieved that they failed to make the top four despite finishing with four wins and only one loss. England lost Sevens star Ugo Monye effectively before the tournament started, but in the event it was a relatively unknown wing, Henry Barratt, who emerged as an impressive performer. Others to catch the eye were Chris Bell, Tom Rees, Geoff Parling, Nick Wood and James Percival.

Chasing England closely were Wales, the eventual sixth finishers after clashing with their UK arch-rivals



twice in the tournament. If England were comfortable winners in the pool stage then the final round match was a much closer affair with each side scoring three tries. Defeat for Wales in their final match, however, was tempered by the knowledge that the bulk of the Welsh side will be back this year, stronger and wiser.

One place behind Wales was Argentina, who failed to live up to their third seeding. The young Pumas were only just defeated by second placed Ireland but setbacks against England and Australia meant that Argentina would be in the middle four. But with some superb skills on view you can bet that a number of the young Pumitas will make it to the top, among them half-backs Alfredo Lalanne and Alfredo Cordone. This year, with the tournament held in Argentina, it is time for the home side to add punch to their traditional display of skill and challenge for higher honours.

Disappointment was the label that could be put on France after an eighth finishing place. The warning signs were there when Italy ran France desperately close in the pool stage but it was the defeats by Ireland and then Wales that torpedoed the French

challenge. But U21 rugby is all about bringing talent through to senior level, in which context the French can be pleased with their Six Nations flanker Yannick Nyanga who led from the front and displayed remarkable qualities.

In the bottom four, two countries exceeded their seeding, while the other two slipped a place. Italy topped the third group of four after comfortably defeating hosts Scotland in the final match at New Anniesland to confirm that the Azzurri are improving year by year in age-group rugby. Of course it helped having senior international Mirco Bergamasco in the squad but with talent like scrum-half Giulio Toniolatti, sharp shooting kicker Andrea Marcato and skilful flanker Robert Barbieri in the side Italy were always going to threaten.

As for the hosts, Scotland, it was a disappointing tournament on the field. Shorn of their top two U21s, Tom Philip and Ally Hogg, and having lost skipper David Callam after the first match, Scotland were never in a position to emulate their seventh finishing position of 2003. But despite a poor team performance the Scots will take much from the progress of scrum-half Mark McMillan, prop Alasdair Dickson, hooker Fergus Thomson and flanker Alasdair Strokosch.

In eleventh position, Russia, who have shown up well in international Sevens and at U19 level, gave further evidence that their game is prospering. Foreign club scouts would have noted scrum-half cum fly-half Yuri Kushnarev and a mountain of muscle in Russia's powerhouse pack. It was always going to be difficult for Tonga in this company but the south sea islanders showed flair throughout and in winger Alaska Taufa they had a player of natural ability.

Scotland showed what can be done when major agencies co-operate. It was a sporting success. This year the tournament is being staged in the historic city of Mendoza, nestling below the giant Andes. Argentina deserve to stage a major tournament such has been their contribution to rugby at all levels and to a massive extent in the Sevens game. The 2005 U21 championship, expected to be of an even higher standard, will surely do an Andean mountain of good for rugby in Argentina. Roll on June.

## and the U21 World Championships 2004

vious that there was a clear  
f the game. In terms of average  
warded, the data was all but

### DIFFERENCES

	RWC03	U21 2004	U19 2004
Rucks and Mauls	136	134	108*
Kicking (conversion success rate)	73%	60%	68%*
Kicking (penalty success rate)	71%	62%	61%*
Winning by team scoring most tries	81%	73%	90%*
Penalties for crooked feed / per scrum average	1/202 scrums	1/66 scrums	1/80 scrums
Red Cards	0	2	4*
Yellow Cards (per game)	1/1.7	1/1.0	1/09*
Source of tries (lineout)	26%	29%	29%*
Source of tries (scrum)	27%	20%	18%*

\* Further examination of the U19 percentage brought these figures even closer together. This is because in the Under19 tournament, it appeared that time taken for substitutes, talking to players and water breaks had not been added on.

Had this been done, the overall ball-in-play time of the U19 tournament would have been within just a percentage or two of RWC03 and the same as U21.



# RWC 2007 Match Schedule

The RWC 2007 match schedule was released by the French Federation at a press conference in Paris, on 7 March. The 48-match tournament is spread over six weeks and three days, covering two calendar months, September and October 2007.

Stade de France, the biggest tournament venue, hosts seven matches, including the opening match on 7 September and the final on 20 October. Next in line is Marseille with six matches (including two quarter-finals), Parc des Princes in Paris with five (including the third place play-off), Bordeaux, Montpellier, Toulouse and Cardiff (which gets a quarter-final) with four each, Lens, Lyon, St. Etienne and Nantes with three each and Edinburgh, with two matches. The matches are spread evenly over the 45 days of the tournament with the opening day, Friday September 7, one of the 12 tournament days to host one match only. There are five days with two matches, six days with three matches, two days, on September 9 and September 29, with four matches (the busiest in the tournament) and five rest days, with no matches at all. Over 70% of the matches (33 out of 48) are played at the weekend to maximise the exposure and the gate. The identity of the 12 qualifiers is still a mystery as the qualifying rounds are currently in full flow (see page 24).



World Champions, England, will feel at home in Lens, the most English-looking stadium in the tournament.

## 'Total Rugby' IRB Bulletin Issue 9

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**Disclaimer:** The views expressed by the contributors in the Bulletin are not necessarily those of the IRB.

NO	DATE	MATCH	VENUE	POOL
1	07 Sept	France v Americas 1	St.Denis*	D
2	08 Sept	England v Americas 3	Lens	A
3		Australia v Asia	Lyon	B
4		New Zealand v Europe 1	Marseille	C
5	09 Sept	Ireland v Africa	Bordeaux	D
6		Wales v Americas 2	Nantes	B
7		South Africa v Oceania 1	Paris**	A
8		Scotland v Repechage 1	St.Etienne	C
9	11 Sept	Americas 1 v Europe 3	Lyon	D
10	12 Sept	Europe 1 v Europe 2	Marseille	C
11		America 3 v Repechage 2	Montpellier	A
12		Asia v Oceania 2	Toulouse	B
13	14 Sept	England v South Africa	St.Denis	A
14	15 Sept	Ireland v Europe 3	Bordeaux	D
15		Wales v Australia	Cardiff	B
16		New Zealand v Repechage 1	Lyon	C
17	16 Sept	Oceania 2 v Americas 2	Cardiff	B
18		Oceania 1 v Repechage 2	Montpellier	A
19		France v Africa	Toulouse	D
20	18 Sept	Scotland v Europe 2	Edinburgh	C
21	19 Sept	Europe 1 v Repechage 1	Paris	C
22	20 Sept	Wales v Asia	Cardiff	B
23	21 Sept	France v Ireland	St.Denis	D
24	22 Sept	South Africa v Repechage 2	Lens	A
25		Americas 1 v Africa	Marseille	D
26		England v Oceania 1	Nantes	A
27	23 Sept	Scotland v New Zealand	Edinburgh	C
28		Australia v Oceania 2	Montpellier	B
29	25 Sept	Americas 2 v Asia	Bordeaux	B
30		Europe 2 v Repechage 1	Toulouse	C
31	26 Sept	Europe 3 v Africa	Lens	D
32		Oceania 1 v Americas 3	St.Etienne	A
33	28 Sept	England v Repechage 2	Paris	A
34	29 Sept	Australia v Americas 2	Bordeaux	B
35		Wales v Oceania 2	Nantes	B
36		Scotland v Europe 1	St.Etienne	C
37		New Zealand v Europe 2	Toulouse	C
38	30 Sept	France v Europe 3	Marseille	D
39		South Africa v Americas 3	Montpellier	A
40		Ireland v Americas 1	Paris	D
		<b>END POOL STAGE</b>		
41	06 Oct	QF1: W pool B v RU pool A	Marseille	
42		QF2: W pool C v RU pool D	Cardiff	
43	07 Oct	QF3: W pool A v RU pool B	Marseille	
44		QF4: W pool D v RU pool C	St.Denis	
45	13 Oct	SF1: W QF1 v W QF2	St.Denis	
46	14 Oct	SF2: W QF3 v W QF4	St.Denis	
47	19 Oct	3rd place play-off	Paris	
48	20 Oct	Final	St.Denis	

\*St.Denis venue - Stade de France    \*\*Paris venue - Parc des Princes