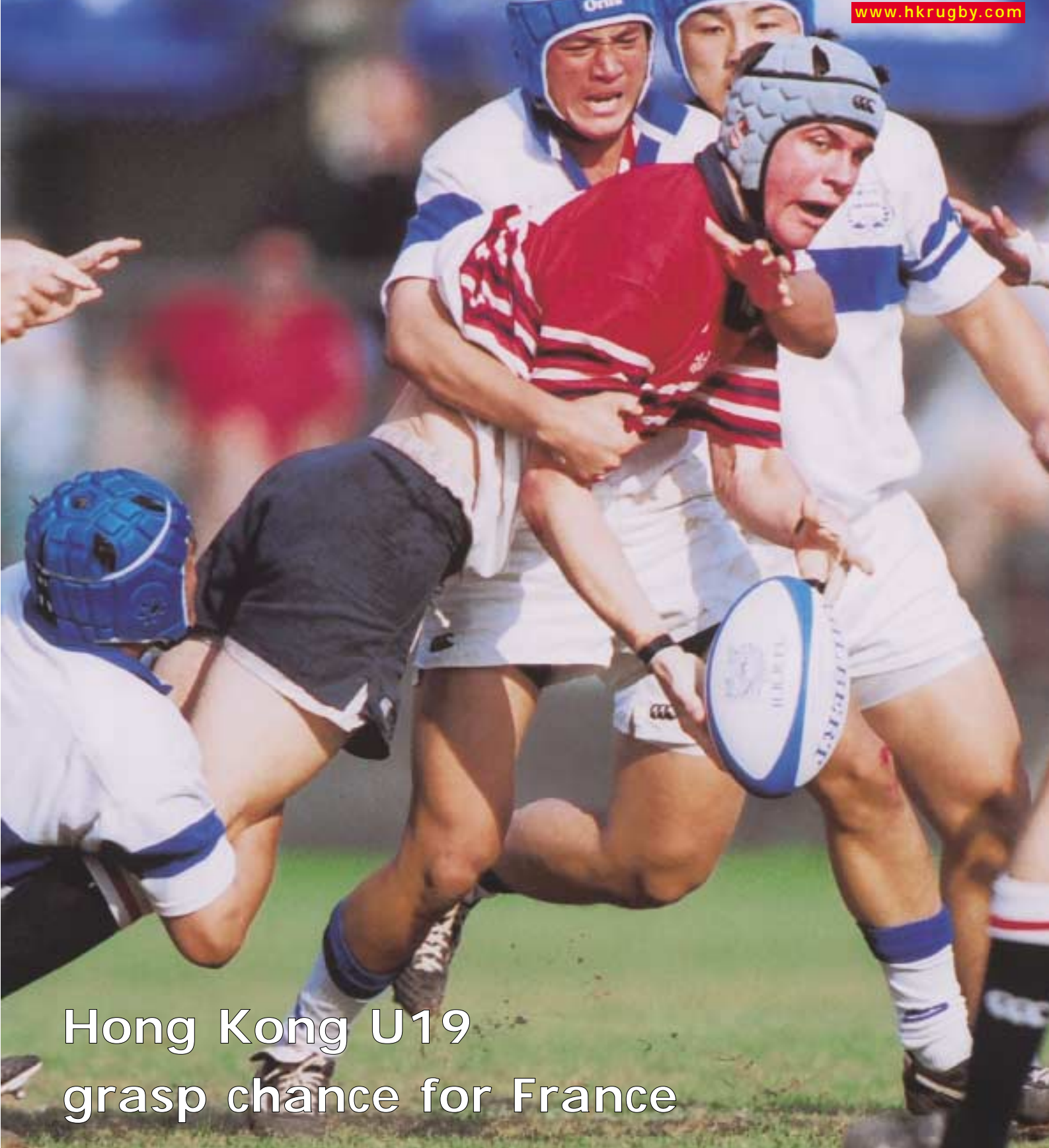


RUGBY TALK



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Hong Kong U19
grasp chance for France



The Hong Kong SAR U19 qualified for the 2003 World Junior Championship in France

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RUGBY TALK

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The busy Christmas schedule that I talked about in the last issue is now complete and we have seen an abundance of skillful and enthusiastic youth rugby on the playing fields of Hong Kong. Much of this issue will be devoted to the efforts of the Youth Section of the Union and the results of their commendable efforts.

The weather plays such an important part in most sporting events and we were lucky enough to be blessed with ideal conditions for both the New Year's Day Youth Rugby Tournament (NYD) and the Asian Rugby Football Union Under 19 Tournament (ARFU U19). The NYD provided great fun and entertainment for all participants and spectators and it was good to see significant numbers of senior players around the touchline to add to the atmosphere.

The ARFU U19 followed and I believe the team who organised and managed this Tournament deserve much credit for providing us with nine days of great rugby. The Championship had a few behind the scenes glitches that are 'part and parcel' of bringing nearly three hundred young players and officials together in Hong Kong but the 'on field' rugby and event control was of the highest order.

Hong Kong qualified for the U19 World Championships in Paris (April in Paris!) but were a little down-beat after losing the play off for 3rd place against Chinese Taipei. The team's efforts in the latter stages of the game were heartening but too late to change the result. The Hong Kong U19 team showed a great and commendable demeanour and determination both on and off 'the field' and are to be congratulated.

After observing so much individual talent amongst the youth of Hong Kong's rugby players, our resolve is more determined than ever to ensure that the rugby environment in Hong Kong provides young players with the opportunity to both enjoy and progress to the senior teams. The future stock of Hong Kong Rugby appears to be in very good order.

Allan Payne
Executive Director



Sports medicine at the Sevens

On Friday 28 March, 2003 a special Hong Kong Sports Medicine Seminar will be held at Sports House. The Seminar is being run in conjunction with the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Medical Imaging Australia and National Capital Diagnostic Imaging of Australia.

The event runs from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, finishing just before the kick-off of the 2003 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens and will be held in the Jockey Club Lecture Theatre in Sports House.

The Sports Medicine seminar is designed to be of interest to all medical and paramedical personnel interested in or participating in Sports Medicine. It represents a great opportunity for all those interested in sports medicine, both locally and internationally, to get together to share views and opinions. The programme covers a range of topical issues, particularly of the shoulder, knee, hands and wrists. Guest speakers include Dr Jock Anderson, Head of Medical Imaging at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

Entry fee for this unique seminar is HK\$650. For more information, please contact Ms Mandy Cheng at email: mandy@cuhk.edu.hk or on tel.: 2632 2290. **RT**

Coaching flying high with Cathay Pacific

Expert coaches and guests from the England RFU will be in town from February 17 through 24 for the Community Coaching Week, courtesy of Cathay Pacific and the HKRFU. The week-long programme will comprise a number of different coaching clinics, run by expert guests from the English RFU. The clinics will be arranged so that all people involved in rugby, including the players, the coaches, the referees and rugby club management teams' can benefit.

The clinics will include:

- Coaching Sessions for Mini, Youth and Adult rugby players (Male and Female)
- Coaching Sessions for specialist skill areas (goal kicking, half-back passing and more)
- School visits
- Workshops for Rugby Club Managers (improving club structures and internal operations)
- Level 1 Adult Coaching Course
- Referee Meeting Session

Any interested parties should contact Hong Kong Head Coach Chris Roden at the HKRFU on 2504 8311 or email: info@hkrugby.com. **RT**

RUGBY TALK

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Golden oldies

Hong Kong Contemptibles XV have entered a Team in the Golden Oldies World Rugby Festival to be held from 17th to 24th May 2003 in Brisbane.

The Contemptibles have represented Hong Kong at this social rugby festival on several occasions (Perth 1991, Dublin 1993, Christchurch 1995 and Cape Town 1998). Every Hong Kong player over the age of 35 on 17th May 2003 is invited to play. In Hong Kong Rugby's 50th year this is the ideal way for the older players to tour together. Simon Earles, Laurie Pevitt and Nigel Clark are ready to host the boys in Brisbane.

For further information telephone Grahame Low on 2577 1817 or reply to the team's e-mail address contemptiblesxv@hotmail.com. **RT**



MEMBER CLUBS RUGBY TOURS: All member Clubs are reminded that before proceeding on rugby tours, they are to seek permission from the Union. The Club will be required to provide the Union with brief details of the following:

1. **Touring Team** (name, numbers)
2. **Destination & dates**
3. **Scheduled games**

The Union will also require details of the tour insurance cover and Clubs are asked to note that the Union has arranged for comprehensive cover to be made available for teams at competitive prices. Details may be obtained from Neil Molyneux on 2504 8308 or neil.molyneux@hkrugby.com. **RT**

Kiwis back at top

After two tournaments in the IRB Sevens, the New Zealand Sevens squad has re-occupied its top slot in the overall standings; a position the team has leased on a nearly permanent basis since the inception of the IRB Sevens. The reigning champions, New Zealand have been the IRB Sevens' title holders for three successive years. This year, New Zealand has risen to the top by virtue of their 36 - 0 drubbing of Samoa in the final of the Dubai Sevens (December 6 and 7, 2002).

In Dubai, New Zealand continued its mastery of the seven-a-side game, responding to a loss to Samoa in their final pool match in the only way they know how, by dispatching them comprehensively 24 hours later in the final. The lopsided victory handed New Zealand the title for the season's first IRB Sevens event and earned them their fourth consecutive Emirates Trophy as Dubai champions.

Fiji, in second place on the IRB Sevens overall standings, went on to win the Plate in Dubai, beating England in a grudge re-match after last year's Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens Final. The improving English again posed a stiff challenge to the experienced Fijians, but without the benefit of Hong Kong's torrential downpours, Fiji on a fast and hard pitch posed too many questions of the English defence. Ideal conditions for running rugby led to a classic flying Fijian attack with the South Seas sultans of sevens scoring five tries in all to win 29 - 5.

Also in Dubai, France edged Canada to win the Bowl 17 - 14, garnering some early points on the table, whilst the Shield was won by Morocco, who beat Namibia in the final. **RT**

STANDINGS AFTER TWO TOURNAMENTS

TEAM	TOTAL
New Zealand	36
Fiji	28
Australia	24
South Africa	24
Samoa	22
Argentina	12
England	10
Kenya	4
Wales	4
France	2
Namibia	2

FIJI FLYING AGAIN

Fiji returned to the winners podium at the IRB Sevens in George, South Africa (December 12 to 14 2002), bringing a dramatic end to its high profile title drought. In Africa, the Fijians enjoyed a rare taste of success against their oldest sevens rival, New Zealand, besting the reigning world champions and only holders of the IRB Sevens title, 24 - 14.

From the opening kick-off Fijian pressure placed the microscope that is sevens rugby squarely on Kiwi shoulders. The pressure told true as New Zealand made a rash of uncharacteristic errors with Fijian defenders effectively shutting down any available space. The inspired Fijian performance put paid to New Zealand's hopes of winning early on, taking an unassailable 19 - 0 lead at the half.

New Zealand may have left too much on the pitch in the quarter finals against South Africa. The hosts, behind player of the tournament at last year's Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens, Brent Russell, on his return to the fold from Springbok action, nearly overcame a 5 - 21 halftime deficit. Despite South Africa's thrilling near-comeback, Roy Kinikinivalu's final try for New Zealand proved decisive as the Kiwis held on to win 28 - 24.

In other results, Namibia came back from a 21-point deficit to edge an inconsistent French squad for the Bowl 22 - 21, while Argentina beat Samoa 27 - 7 in the Plate. In the Shield Final, Italy (which will be making its first appearance at the Hong Kong Sevens since 2000), beat Zambia 43 - 17.

With a memorable new venue and ideal conditions, rugby was the weekend's real winner in South Africa as confirmed by the successful performances of Zambia and Kenya. Zambia went on to achieve their first win in their IRB Sevens debut, beating Italy. The performance of Kenya was equally memorable in giving Fiji its biggest scare of the tournament. The pacy Kenyans turned the tables on Fiji, drawing the match with the eventual tournament winners. With this exciting capability, Kenya should be a more than welcome participant at the 2003 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens.

With Fiji, Argentina, Namibia and Italy (who won the Shield) taking titles, the silverware was shared between four continents, a fitting tribute to the vibrant internationalism of the global festival that is sevens rugby. **RT**



Footrace to the final: Fiji on the comeback trail for Hong Kong

Chile Sevens postponed

The third IRB Sevens event of the 2002 and 2003 season in Chile (originally to be played on from 10 to 11 January) was rescheduled after insurmountable logistical difficulties in securing flights for the Oceania-based teams to and from Chile. Due to these difficulties, the event will be rescheduled for 7-8 March. The exact dates and pools for the tournament, which will be held in Santiago, will be confirmed in due course. **RT**



HK U19 GRASP CHANCE FOR FRANCE

Many would see the Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens as the highlight of the HKRFU's 50th Anniversary Year; others might point to Hong Kong's being named as the first international rugby union to host a second Rugby Sevens World Cup. But it could well be another of this celebratory season's memorable events which proves the most lasting of this year's many successes: Hong Kong's performance at the recent Asian Rugby Football Union (ARFU) Under 19 Tournament.

"Hong Kong's bid to host the event in 2003 was a huge undertaking and a very generous gesture on the part of the HKRFU," said Jamie Scott, ARFU Honorary Secretary General. In addition to footing much of the bill for hosting 26 players and coaches from ten regional unions for ten successive days, the logistics involved in the tournament were equally massive with five hours of rugby on most days. Thankfully, the efforts of the HKRFU and the tournament committee comprising youth rugby veterans Steve Wong (Chairman of the Organising Committee), Sanjay Lalwani (Secretary) and newcomer Robbie McRobbie (Tournament Director) were instantly redeemed as the HKSAR U19 XV secured its primary tournament objective in qualifying for the upcoming IRB/FIRA-AER World Junior Championships, to be played from April 9 - 19, 2003 in France.

With some advantageous scheduling for the 2003 Tournament, Hong Kong was able to both host the event and capitalize on the expanded player pool in town at U19 level during the holidays with returning overseas players, many of whom were seamlessly folded into the final squad

for the ARFU U19 Tournament. This annual influx of talented youngsters notwithstanding, the cornerstones for Hong Kong's success were laid long before the New Year's Day Youth Rugby Tournament.

"We really began our preparations with our tour to Dubai in November. Since then, we have improved tremendously, even from New Year's Day through to the end of the U19 Tournament." HKSAR U19 Coach

"Hong Kong's bid to host the event in 2003 was a huge undertaking and a very generous gesture on the part of the HKRFU"

Terry Hart praised his charges for their capability to improve and for finishing strong. "By the end, particularly in the second half against Chinese Taipei in the Plate final, I felt our players were all on the same page and carrying out the game plan we wanted them to." Hart also noted that "The team gelled over this period and there was a real sense of group identity and bonding which took place. They learned some important things about rugby and the demands of an intensive competition like this, as well as something about the joy of the game. I think that is an important improvement."

Hong Kong qualified for the last of four ARFU spots in France as the fourth best performing team in the ARFU U19 Tournament. Korea, Japan and Chinese Taipei had all pre-qualified by virtue of their rankings in the same tournament in 2001. While Japan and Korea clearly dominated their pools, the competition for the final qualifying slot was appropriately intense, with Hong Kong's strong performances in the opening matches only adding to the excitement.

Hong Kong finished 3 - 1 in their pool, with strong opening victories against Sri Lanka, 22 - 0, and Singapore, 18 - 7. The team also helped right Hong Kong's representative record against China with a 24 - 13 victory before entering the last pool match versus the Group's class competitor, Japan. Several players paced the team's success along the way, including tight forward play and some promising moments from 16-year old wing/fullback Rowan Varty who scored three tries against Sri Lanka and another against China. Rounding out a potent back-three was Rowan Turner, a model of consistency for Hong Kong throughout the tournament, posting 21 points against China alone with a try, two conversions and four successfully taken penalties.

With Thailand, Hong Kong's nearest competitor for the fourth and final spot, losing their pool match against Malaysia 19 - 15, the qualification was effectively ceded to Hong Kong. In hindsight the coaching staff might have preferred to have fought for fourth a while longer as, with France a reality, the team's focus might have lessened. Taking advantage of the situation, Coach Hart wisely rested some of his



Hong Kong met their closest regional rivals in the ARFU U19 Tournament Plate Final



Holding steady after qualifying for France ...

starters against Japan leading to an understandable 89 - 0 rout in Hong Kong's last pool match.

Despite the score line versus Japan, the players' euphoria at reaching the World Junior Championships grew unabated with Saturday's rest day. For the finals on Sunday, Hong Kong were still looking to regain their focus to achieve another important Tournament objective, beating Chinese Taipei in the Plate.

But it was not to be, as within minutes, a re-energized Chinese Taipei atoned for earlier losses to Thailand and Korea by jumping out to a 25 - 0 lead against Hong Kong. The eventual 31 - 14 result for Chinese Taipei will have hopefully given a welcome wake-up call to Hong Kong's finest young players as to the nature of the competition that awaits them.

In the off chance that it didn't, this will certainly come from Hong Kong's Under 19 coaching duo of Terry Hart and Andrew Tranent over the coming weeks. "We weren't in it at all in the final, even though our preparation was the same" said Hart. "In the first half, the lads had their heads in the World Championship," confirmed the coach who added that Chinese Taipei's reinvigorated performance didn't help matters. "They hadn't been playing very clinically and had been having trouble finishing. In the opening stages, they couldn't take a rolling maul from a lineout in-close, but they did it three times and scored three tries against us from this move in the final," opined the coach.

Chinese Taipei's blitzkrieg instantaneously focused the team's efforts, but the

early letdown proved insurmountable. Despite the loss, Hart prefers to focus on the positives "I thought that we showed real strength of character to come back in the second half and we were doing well until the final try off an intercept when we were camped out on Taipei's five-metre line."

After the dust had settled, Hong Kong was forced to watch their nearest rivals in Asia, and at the upcoming World Championships, (Chinese Taipei will be pooled along with Hong Kong in the competition's 'B' Group), celebrate jubilantly. Hopefully, the players will cast this disappointment into determination over the next few weeks. It is a prospect which will be encouraged by their coaches. "We are

putting in place a system for the next ten weeks, including the setting of fitness and individual skills targets. We are also encouraging all the players to get some games in and keep playing rugby to maintain their match fitness. We want to improve our fitness so we can be more alert and reactive, which we weren't in the first half against Chinese Taipei," said Hart.

The coach confirmed that Overseas players represented in the HKSAR U19 at the ARFU Tournament can remain a part of the experience should they be able to make themselves available for France. He also added that he can name two more players to the side, with the squad for France set at 26 while the ARFU U19 Tournament maximum was 24.

Hong Kong's inability to fulfill its secondary objective of winning the ARFU U19 Plate will have hopefully left a lasting reminder for the squad of what still needs to be done. It is a reminder that the coaching and management team will be sure to re-visit over the next few weeks.

"We will look at other players. The team at the Asian Championships was very different from that in Dubai, and the team for the World Junior Championship could be very different from the one that played at the Asian U19 Tournament," said Hart. This sentiment alone should focus even 18-year old attention spans, if Hong Kong is to truly grasp their chance in France. **RT**



Hong Kong left it until too late to break through versus Chinese Taipei in the Plate Final



Hong Kong's New Year's Day delight

Hong Kong Youth Rugby assumed its traditional centre-stage spot over the New Year's holiday with the hosting of the 35th Annual HKRFU New Year's Day Youth Rugby Tournament at the Hong Kong Football Club.

Following its traditional format, the New Year's Day Youth Rugby Tournament began with inter-territorial mixed-sex matches at U12 and women's U19 level, while Hong Kong's best were matched against their Overseas counterparts in the U14, U16 and U19 games.

The New Year's Day Youth Rugby Tournament is traditionally one of the best attended events on the rugby calendar, and the crowds did not disappoint on the event's 35th anniversary, with over 2,000 people attending, many of them continuing their celebrations on from the night before.

Throughout the day, Hong Kong's local players made a colourful appearance, wearing red jerseys for the first time ever. The change to red jerseys proved auspicious with Hong Kong winning two-thirds of the international competitions in 2003, with victories in the U14 and U16 matches.

Mr Danny Tsang, HKRFU Director, Youth, took heart from the successful results. "The victories of the local teams at U14 and U16 level demonstrate the success of our foundation work in Youth Development. The local players performed excellently this year and they have made us all at the HKRFU optimistic towards the future development of rugby in Hong Kong." Tsang added that some of the players from the New Year's Day matches at U14 and U16 may play themselves into the HKRFU's new Rugby Academy in the future, where they can receive further rugby skills and fitness training as well as assistance in personal development.

ISLAND'S CUP OVERFLOWETH IN THE WATERFORD BOWL



The New Year's Day Tournament begins with its traditional opener, the Waterford Bowl between Hong Kong's Island and Peninsula U12 players. Island ran away with the match, winning 29 – 0 in the 20th Waterford Bowl. Island captain and centre, Charlie Foley was named the Watsons Water Best and Fairest Player of the Waterford Bowl. **RT**

WOMEN'S CHOICE

After the U12 match a Women's Under 19 seven-a-side demonstration was held, also with an Island versus Peninsula division. The match was close with Peninsula finally edging their competition 17 – 12.

The teams from the Women's U19 seven-a-side match. Right: Katherine Lenan



The David S. Davies Foundation's Best & Fairest Player of the U19 Women's Seven-a-side demonstration was one of RUGBY TALK's favorite youth players, and a player likely to be one of Hong Kong's leading female ruggers in the future, Peninsula's Katherine Lenan. **RT**

HONG KONG LUCKY IN THE LECKIE

After the Women's seven-a-side match, the afternoon is cleared for a slate of local versus overseas competition starting with the Stuart Leckie Cup for U14.

Founded by former HKRFU chairman Stuart Leckie in 1993, the U14 match is traditionally one of the most even of the day's competitions. In recent years however, the scales have tipped Hong Kong's way, as the numbers of overseas students at this age bracket have been insufficient to compile a team in strength.

In previous years, the sides have been evened out more roundly, but Hong Kong's mastery of this age bracket continues. This year, the Hong Kong U14, led by a convincing forward pack which would produce not only the match's Best & Fairest Player, but the tournament's as well, on their way to defeating the Overseas U14 soundly 31 – 5.

Flanker Tom Harvey seems to have been a key ingredient in the recent Hong Kong U14 success, having been named as the match's Best and Fairest Player in 2002 and again winning the award as the David S. Davies Foundation's Best and Fairest Player in the 2003 Stuart Leckie Cup. **RT**



Hong Kong brushed off its competition in the Stuart Leckie Cup for U14. Inset: Tom Harvey

HONG KONG WHITEWASH IN THE GEORGE WHITE TROPHY

The George White Trophy is contested by Hong Kong and Overseas U16 squads, and was first played for back in 1978. Named after a former HKRFU U21 Coach, this event has been in danger of becoming an Overseas monopoly, with the internationals winning seven years out of the last ten.



Stampeding sixteens. Inset: John Park receiving his award

Last year's George White Trophy was the most evenly contested in the entire tournament, with the Overseas squeaking by 7 – 5. The trend evaporated in 2003, as Hong Kong ran away with the competition at U16 level, winning by 29 – 3.

Leading the way from the front was Hong Kong U16 prop John Park, a previous player of the day at U14 level at the 2000 New Year's Day Youth Rugby Tournament. **RT**

OUTMATCHED IN THE MIDDLESEX

Following the U16 match is the day's traditional highlight, and the raison d'être of the New Year's Day Youth Tournament, the Middlesex Cup, the original U19 trophy first contested in 1967.

The Middlesex Cup is the ideal showcase for Hong Kong's future representative players, but has become the province of the Overseas outfits of late. The Overseas have won every tournament in the past decade with the exception of Hong Kong's victory in a tight match in 1998. Adding to local woes is that Hong Kong has been kept off the board entirely over the past few years.

With this year's New Year's Day Youth Rugby Tournament providing an important final opportunity for the HKRFU U19 selectors to name their squad for the ensuing Asian Rugby Football Union U19 Tournament, the intensity of this annual bragging rights match was even than normal.



Inset: Millfield Schools Mark Wright helped continue the overseas streak in the Middlesex Cup

In light of the upcoming ARFU Tournament, many overseas players enlisted in Hong Kong's cause at the New Year's Day Tournament, but it was still not to be enough as the Overseas U19 again overpowered its domestic counterpart by the score of 28 – 0. Scrum-half Mark Wright, one of three players from the squad attending the Millfield School in the UK, was named the JP Morgan Best & Fairest Player of the Middlesex Cup. **RT**

LICHTENSTEIN FIRST HK LARRY ABEL TROPHY WINNER SINCE '99

With the sun fading on another welcome New Year's Day of rugby and community, all that was left was to name the day's best. For the first time since 1999, a Hong Kong player won the Larry Abel Trophy for Best and Fairest Player of the Day, Hong Kong U14 lock forward Kevin Lichtenstein.

The Larry Abel Trophy for the Best and Fairest Player of the New Year's Day Youth Rugby Tournament was first introduced in 1995. Larry Abel was a leading figure in promoting youth rugby for many years in Hong Kong.

The judging panel for the 2003 Larry Abel Trophy and the Best and Fairest Players from the individual matches was Jarrad Gallagher and Jung Ho Jung.



Larry Abel Trophy winner Kevin Lichtenstein with U14 Coach Bill Mason

Previous winners of the Larry Abel Trophy are :

2003	Tom Harvey	(HK)	1998	Kenzo Pannell	(HK)
2002	Jun Tsujimoto	(O'seas)	1997	Mark Egan	(O'seas)
2001	Tom McColl	(O'seas)	1996	Karl Hackston	(O'seas)
2000	Kenzo Pannell	(O'seas)	1995	Lee Cheuk Yin	(HK)
1999	Keith Robertson	(HK)	1994	Chan Fuk Ping	(HK)



REVVING UP FOR RUGBY

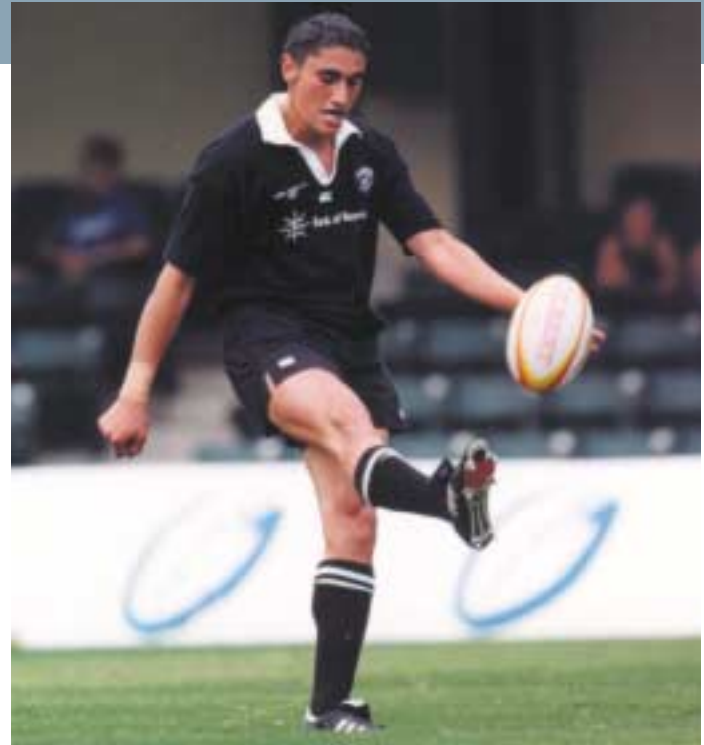
Hong Kong is preparing itself for another bout of rugby madness with all the old and new favourites returning in 2003. *RUGBY TALK* will be keeping you informed on the latest events over the next few issues.

HONG KONG TENS

The DHL Hong Kong Tens resumes its coveted position as the premier lead-up to the Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens with its two-day treasury of ten a-side rugby taking place at the Hong Kong Football Club on Wednesday March 26 and Thursday March 27 2003.

The Tens features 24 teams, divided into 8 groups of 3 teams each, playing off over a two-day period. The first day is organised in a Round Robin format involving all teams playing the opposing teams within their designated group. On the second day the rugby gets a bit more intense with a three tiered competition being played, based on the results of the first day. The teams are divided into competitions playing for the right to win the Tens' Cup, Plate or Bowl.

The Hong Kong Football Club is again hosting a special 2003 DHL Tens Ten Course Dinner on the evening of Saturday 22 February 2003. Confirmed speakers include 1997 British & Irish Lions star John Bentley, legendary Kiwi lock Andy Hayden and former England hooker Peter Wheeler. Tables can be booked at



The 2003 DHL Hong Kong Tens will help kick-off Rugby Week in Hong Kong

HK\$750 per person or HK\$7,000 for ten. For reservations or more information, please email to: tensdinner@hkfc.com.

Entry to the 2003 Hong Kong Tens can again be gained with the purchase of a match programme on the day of the event. The action on the pitch is guaranteed to be intense, while the rugby madness truly begins at the Tens. Don't miss it! **RT**

Hong Kong Women's Rugby Sevens and Asian Championship 2003

Hong Kong Women's Rugby will be hosting its fifth international women's sevens tournament over March 27 and 28, 2003 at So Kon Po in the shadow of the Hong Kong Stadium.

Incorporating the Asian Women's Sevens Championship, the 2003 Hong Kong Women's Rugby Sevens is shaping up to be the best ever with 13 confirmed teams as *RUGBY TALK* went to press including England, Fiji, New Zealand, the USA and Japan.

The strong field assembled for the 2003 edition of the Hong Kong Women's Rugby Sevens promises all the excitement of previous instalments. The Tournament Draw will be held in February with the Hong Kong National Team to be announced in early March.

Tickets to the Hong Kong Women's Rugby Sevens, the best competition of its kind in the women's rugby world, are once again complimentary, so there is no excuse not to pop by for a visit on the way to the Stadium. As anyone attending the Friday night of the Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens will attest, the quality of rugby at the Women's Sevens is impressive, with the finals played beneath the lights at the Hong Kong Stadium. Come see if the Kiwi stranglehold on women's rugby can be broken. **RT**

PLAYING FOR PRIDE

For those who can't resist the lure of truly international rugby, be sure to visit the Aberdeen Country of Origin, as Hong Kong's local rugby players give their all for national pride. The Country of Origin will be held at the Aberdeen Stadium on Sunday 23 March 2003. For more information on how to form or sponsor teams, please contact Rob Perren at: raparren@netvigator.com.



International action - HK style at the Aberdeen Country of Origin

KOWLOON RUGBYFEST 10s

The newest competition during rugby week in Hong Kong is proving to be popular. Kowloon's Rugbyfest 10s is a promising social tournament for those who prefer to enjoy their rugby madness with more pints than bruises. This one-day extravaganza of champagne and rugby takes place on Wednesday March 26, 2003 at So Kon Po.



Social teams came from around the world for Rugbyfest

In only its second year, Rugbyfest continues to attract attention from ruggers around the world who make the annual pilgrimage to the Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens. Applications for this year's tournament have been received from England, Wales, Japan, the Middle East and from around Asia. Among last year's clubs, Varsity Blues from Guam and the defending champions, USA Owls, last year's winners, will be returning. The Owls have also entered a side in the Hong Kong Tens. Kowloon is promising to announce more participants closer to the event.

Among the most sociable of Hong Kong's rugby clubs, Kowloon has arranged a plethora of entertainment both during the day and into the wee hours of the morning. Rugbyfest veterans may even get a glimpse of the famed Ms Kowloon. **RT**

Calling all Celts!

Aberdeen RFC will be holding its annual Ceilidh on 15 February 2003 at the Police Officers Club in Causeway Bay. The event is black tie and entry fee is HK\$450 and includes buffet dinner, all you can drink from 7:00pm to midnight and some Scottish reel fun.

Close on these upturned heels is the Aberdeen Sevens Dinner, which will be held on Thursday 27 March 2003, at the Aberdeen Marina Club. Rory Underwood has already confirmed as one of the speakers with another mystery international to be announced in March. Fabulous prizes will be auctioned off for charity during the evening including Phil Greening's England Sevens Jersey from the 2002 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens, signed by all the members of the team. This historic piece of rugby memorabilia is a guaranteed one-off and can only be purchased by attending the Aberdeen Sevens Dinner.

For information on booking a place at either the Aberdeen Sevens Dinner or the Aberdeen Ceilidh, please contact Aberdeen social secretary Nigel Barnes on nbarnes@dtz.com.hk. **RT**



LEGAL AID FOR BALI VICTIMS

Hong Kong's rugby community continues to reach out to the victims of last October's Bali bombing tragedy. The most recent initiative was the first annual Inter-Law Firm Charity Touch Rugby Carnival held on Sunday, 19 January, at Happy Valley. The Tournament honoured the memories of three members of the Hong Kong legal fraternity who perished in Bali: HKFC rugger Jake Young from Clifford Chance, Ed Waller from Lexis-Nexis and Dan Miller from Herbert Smith. The outing also provided an important opportunity to raise funds for the families of Bali victims.

The idea started with HKFC Scorpions member Wayne Penning, a club mate of the three players at HKFC and a colleague of Jake Young's at Clifford Chance. "Basically, I was lying at home four or five days after the Bali tragedy, shell-shocked. I was quite angry and frustrated, trying to come to terms with what happened. Instead of generating all that negative energy I wanted to turn it into something positive. I began thinking about what I could do that would help raise money for the victims. Particularly I was thinking of Jake Young, a colleague at Clifford Chance. I knew Jake, I knew he had a little boy and I have a little boy. Ultimately, I thought let's organize an Inter-Law Firm Touch Tournament."

Like all good things, the idea quickly took off, gathering support from a wide range of the legal community as over 15 legal firms took part, along with an all-star team of sorts assembled from the Members of the Hong Kong Bar and Judiciary, better known as the day's Jake Young Cup Champions, the Bar Barians.

With the enthusiasm of the legal community fully behind this worthy event, the organisers then approached Ray Ng and The Hong Kong Touch & Tag Rugby Association (HKT&TRA) and the Hong Kong Football Club for their support. Tasks were defined

with Penning and the organisers responsible for marketing, promotion and fundraising, while HKFC provided facilities, equipment and lunch, and the experienced staff of HKT&TRA took care of the tournament management, referees and pitches. The ideal weather and beautiful sunshine were provided by Jake and the boys, and the day was a resounding success.

The results would always be secondary in light of the nature of the event, but the rugby on display was of a decent standard, particularly in the Plate and Cup finals. The day began with teams of four males and at least two females playing 10-minute pool matches with no breaks. From the semi-finals onwards the matches were played with 7 minute halves and a one-minute interval.

"I was quite angry and frustrated, trying to come to terms with what happened. Instead of generating all that negative energy I wanted to turn it into something positive"

The finals were a close affair with a well-prepared Bar Barians side edging Clifford Chance's entry, Every Chance, in the Jake Young Cup Final by 4 - 1. The Bar Barians had the better of the day and exhibited the greater creativity, while Clifford Chance could not seem to organize its offence in the day's last match.

In other action, Johnson Stokes & Master's entry, the JSM Jokers, won the Dan Miller Plate by beating Baker & McKenzie in the day's closest final, 2 - 0. The team from Stephenson Harwood & Lo, SHL's Angels, captured the Ed Waller Bowl with a victory over Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer's Fresh Touch, 5 - 3.

Commenting on the role of the HKT&TRA, Ray Ng said

"When Wayne Penning contacted me and asked if we would be interested in helping them run this tournament, I was really excited and told him that of course, we would contribute in any way we could to the success of this event. Looking back, I think it has been a great success and I hope that we can continue to run this event in the future."

Penning confirmed that the idea is to make the day an annual event which will benefit different charitable causes every year. Funds were raised this year through a HK\$10,000 entrance fee per team, as well as sponsorship money provided by legal recruiters and other industry-related firms. Other funds were raised on-event, with donations collected for the children's entertainment and the passing around of the famed rugby cap.

All together, approximately HK\$200,000 was raised, making the Inter-Law Firm Touch Rugby Carnival a great way to reach out for those in need. **RT**



Reaching out through touch rugby:
the finalists from the Inter-Law Firm Touch Rugby Carnival Charity

2003元旦日青少年欖球錦標賽

一如過往的傳統，第三十五屆元旦日青少年欖球錦標賽已於一月一日假香港足球會圓滿舉行。今年的比賽模式跟往年一樣，以男子十二歲以下及女子十九歲以下的本地隊伍對賽打開序幕，繼而以男子十四歲以下、十六歲以下、十九歲以下的本地精英隊對海外隊掀起是日比賽的高潮。

此項比賽一向廣受歡迎，是香港欖球界其中一項盛事，而今年亦不遑多讓，參與及參觀的人數高達二千人，場面極之熱鬧。

整天賽事中，香港的本地球員全體首次以紅色球衣示人，色彩繽紛。亦不知是否紅色能帶來好運，本地精英隊對海外留學生隊的三場賽事中，其中兩場：男子十四歲以下及十六歲以下的賽事，本地精英隊均能獲勝。

香港欖球總會青少年發展董事曾兆輝對今次的賽果感到相當鼓舞：「本地男子十四歲以下及十六歲以下的隊伍均能在比賽中勝出，證明了我們對本地青少年培訓的成效，為本地青少年欖球運動的發展打下強心針，我們對前景十分樂觀。」曾兆輝更表示十四歲以下及十六歲以下的球員大有機會在十六歲以後入選新成立的香港欖球訓練學院，繼續接受更多的欖球及體能訓練，以及個人發展的培訓。

男子十二歲以下 WATERFORD BOWL

為賽事掀起序幕的是Waterford Bowl男子十二歲以下比賽，由港島隊與九龍隊對戰。港島隊表現出色，以29：0輕取九龍隊。其中港島隊的隊長及中場Charlie Foley更被選為屈臣氏蒸餾水十二歲以下最優秀運動員。



女子十九歲以下組別七人欖球賽

接著便是十九歲以下組別女子七人欖球賽，同樣是港島隊與九龍隊對戰。經過一番激戰，九龍隊以17：12險勝。被選為David S. Davies Foundation女子十九歲以下最優秀運動員的是九龍隊的Katherine Lenan。

比賽漸漸步進高潮，接著便是一連串本地精英隊對海外隊的賽事。



男子十四歲以下 STUART LECKIE CUP

憑著前鋒Tom Harvey的實力和帶領，本地精英隊表現大勇，以31：5打敗海外隊。而Tom Harvey亦以突出的表現，獲得男子十四歲以下組別David S. Davies Foundation最優秀運動員，這是他連續第二年獲得該獎項。



男子十六歲以下 GEORGE WHITE TROPHY

男子十六歲以下George White Trophy始自1978年，比賽是以一個前度香港欖球總會教練命名。在過去十年間，此比賽獎盃已七次落入海外隊手中，這賽果差點就成了比賽的傳統。幸而，近年本地精英隊發奮圖強，逐次把分數距離拉近，而今年就成功以29：3奪回獎盃。



此組別的最優秀運動員是本地精英隊的John Park，他曾在2002年元旦日參加過男子十四歲以下組別的比賽。

男子十九歲以下 MIDDLESEX CUP

Middlesex Cup是本地球員表現自己的最好機會，但很可惜，像George White Trophy一樣，在過去十年間，海外隊捧盃九次，本地精英隊只能在1998年險勝一次。

基於“亞洲十九歲以下青少年欖球錦標賽”於一月稍後舉行，此次比賽亦是球員最後表現自己入選香港代表隊的機會，因此令比賽氣氛更加緊張。

由於準備“亞洲十九歲以下青少年欖球錦標賽”，有數名海外留學生都被納入本地精英隊代表本港出賽，但基於實力相距，海外隊再次以大比數28：0大敗本地精英隊。

被選為JP Morgan男子十九歲以下最優秀運動員的是海外隊的Mark Wright，他現於英國Millfield School就讀。





香港十九歲以下青少年代表隊 成功晉級打入法國世界欖球錦標賽

今年是香港欖球總會成立五十週年，本地欖球除了一年一度三月舉行亞洲體壇盛事「二零零三年瑞士信貸第一波士頓香港國際七人欖球賽」之外，香港更繼一九九七年後，再度成功申辦「二零零五年七人欖球世界盃」；更值得慶賀的還有香港隊在「亞洲十九歲以下青少年欖球錦標賽」中的出色表現。

亞洲欖球協會(ARFU)榮譽秘書長司各致(Jamie Scott)表示：「對於香港欖球總會主辦本年度的『亞洲十九歲以下青少年欖球錦標賽』，我們非常感謝總會的慷慨支持。」除了要贊助十支球隊，每隊二十六名隊員及教練的總開支外，連續十日的比賽安排及策劃亦見香港欖球總會各工作人員的努力及心血。

幸而，香港隊並沒有辜負賽事籌委會一眾委員包括籌委會主席黃兆軒先生(Steve Wong)、秘書 Sanjay Lalwani及賽事總監

Robbie McRobbie的期望，最後成功出線，獲得「二零零三年十九歲以下青少年世界欖球錦標賽」的參賽資格，於今年四月九至十九日遠赴法國比賽。

亞洲欖球協會(ARFU)榮譽秘書長司各致(Jamie Scott)表示：「對於香港欖球總會主辦本年度的『亞洲十九歲以下青少年欖球錦標賽』，我們非常感謝總會的慷慨支持。」

香港隊除了有主場之利，賽事時間的配合亦是有助出線的原因之一。只因比賽期間（一月四日至十二日）正值海外留學生

回港渡假時期，不少有實力的留學生皆可入選，代表香港出賽。

話雖如此，香港隊長期的集訓和準備亦是功不可抹。教練赫特(Terry Hart)表示：「我們數月前出戰杜拜時，就已經開始訓練和準備。其後隊員在『元旦日青少年欖球錦標賽』以及今次『亞洲十九歲以下青少年欖球錦標賽』中均表現出色，進步不少。值得一提的是於碟賽中與中華台北一役的下半場，我覺得各隊員均能達到齊心一致，跟著預定的比賽策略作戰。」赫特再補充：「經過多場比賽，各隊員已經培養出團結精神，每位球員均增加了不少有關欖球的知識，更明白到一場激烈比賽所需的作戰精神，以及欖球比賽所帶來的樂趣。我認為這是十分令人鼓舞的進步。」

香港是第四隊及最後一隊獲得「二零零三年十九歲以下青少年世界欖球錦標賽」參賽資格的亞洲隊伍，其餘亞洲代表均憑去



港隊於銀碟冠軍戰中，以14比30，不敵中華台北。



華台北球員力圖衝破港隊的防衛。

年排名入圍，當中包括日本、韓國及中華台北。為了爭取亞洲代表的最後一個席位，循環分組賽中各賽事均戰況激烈，香港隊在首輪賽事中的勇態更是比賽的精華所在。

香港隊於分組賽中獲得3勝1敗的總成績，分別以22比0大勝斯里蘭卡、18比7戰勝新加坡及以24比13擊敗中國；到最後才面對同組勁旅日本。

當與港隊實力相若的泰國隊以15比19敗給馬來西亞後，「二零零三年十九歲以下青少年世界欖球錦標賽」的亞洲球隊參賽資格亦順利落入香港隊手中。基於這個原因，為免球員過勞或受傷，赫特亦作出策略性調動，在對日本一戰中抽起數名主力球員。雖然港隊最後以0比89敗給日本，但部份球員能夠稍作休息，備戰決賽。

縱使香港以大比數敗給日本，球隊對能成為亞洲代表的興奮心情仍絲毫不減，經過一天的休息後，再度提起精神，以挑戰碟賽冠軍的心情對戰中華台北。只可惜中華台北越戰越勇，一洗較早前輸給泰國和韓國的敗績，於比賽開始數分鐘即遙遙領先，最後以31比14擊敗香港隊。

赫特和Andrew Tanent 將會擔任港隊教練，帶領香港隊為四月的「亞洲十九歲以下青少年欖球錦標賽」作準備。赫特表示：「我們在碟賽中實在不在狀態，球員於比賽上半場均想著法國的世界盃賽事，無法專心作戰。縱使我隊在下半場極力反擊，但對著中華台北煥然一新的勇態，仍是無法扭轉劣勢。」最後港隊只能目送碟賽的獎盃落入喜

氣洋洋的中華台北隊手中。

至於四月的比賽，香港隊將再次在循環分組賽中迎戰中華台北，希望港隊能將這次的失敗化為力量，重整隊風。赫特表示：「在未來的十個星期，我們將集中隊員的體能及個人技術訓練。我們亦鼓勵隊員維持定期比賽，保持出賽狀態。希望隊員能鍛煉出更強體能，在比賽中有更快、更具警覺性的反應。」

赫特表示所有曾代表香港出戰「亞洲十九歲以下青少年欖球錦標賽」的海外留學生如時間上能配合，他們亦可隨隊到法國

參賽。港隊將派出二十六名球員出戰，比其他比賽增加兩名後備球員。

對於未能完成碟賽的冠軍夢，相信教練及領隊一定會仔細分析箇中因由，對港隊陣容作出適當的調配。而人選方面，赫特表示：「我們會因應各球員的表現去安排出場陣容，就像從杜拜一役到亞洲錦標賽，球隊陣容就有很大的變化。所以四月的賽事，我們亦可能起用不同的隊員。」以教練的口吻，香港隊一定會以最強勁的陣容出賽，爭取於法國世界賽中進出最佳成績。RT



縱使球員在球賽中會有不少的碰撞，但各人仍奮力作賽，爭取佳績。



UPCOMING FIXTURES

8th February

1st Div	Union 7's
2nd Div	No games
3rd Div	Bill Riach 7's
4th Div	Bill Riach 7's
5th Div	No games
Women's	No games

15th February

1st Div	Asahi Valley v DeA Tigers Synovate Aberdeen v Descartes Kowloon DHL Club bye
2nd Div	Valley Knights v Hitachi D S CWB DeA Tigers II v DHL Club Scorpions DHL Club Dragons v Kowloon Lions

3rd Div	
Game A	2nd Seed v 3rd Seed
Game B	4th Seed v 5th Seed
Game C	6th Seed v 7th Seed

4th Div	
Game A	1st Seed v 8th Seed
Game B	4th Seed v 5th Seed
Game C	2nd Seed v 7th Seed
Game D	3rd Seed v 6th Seed
5th Div	CWB Marines v Gai Wu A DeA Tigers V v Taipo Dragons Nomads II bye To Be Confirmed

Women's

22nd February

1st Div	Asahi Valley v Synovate Aberdeen Descartes Kowloon v DHL Club DeA Tigers bye
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2nd Div	
Game A	1st Seed v 4th Seed
Game B	2nd Seed v 3rd Seed
3rd Div	
Game D	1st Seed A v Winner Game B
Game E	Loser Game A v Winner Game C
Game F	Loser Game B v Loser Game C

4th Div	
Game E	Winner Game A v Winner Game B
Game F	Winner Game C v Winner Game D
Game G	Loser Game A v Loser Game B
Game H	Loser Game C v Loser Game D

5th Div	
Game A	1st Seed v 4th Seed 2nd seed v 3rd Seed To Be Confirmed

Women's

1st March

1st Div	DHL Club v Synovate Aberdeen DeA Tigers v Descartes Kowloon Asahi Valley bye
2nd Div – Cup	Winner Game A v Winner Game B Loser Game A v Loser Game B
3rd Div – Cup	Winner Game D v Win Game A
– Plate	Loser Game D v Loser E
– Bowl	Loser Game E v Winner Game F
4th Div – Cup	Winner Game E v Winner Game F
– Plate	Loser Game E v Loser Game F
– Bowl	Winner Game G v Winner Game H
5th Div – Cup	Winner Game A v Winner Game B
Women's	To Be Confirmed

Fixtures as of January 24, 2003

LEAGUE STANDINGS – 2002/2003 SEASON

1st Division – League Championship

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	Bonus	TL
Asahi Valley	11	11	0	0	327	129	6	50
DHL Club	11	7	4	0	275	173	7	35
Descartes Kowloon	11	6	5	0	236	232	5	29
DeA Tigers	11	5	6	0	227	219	7	27
Synovate Aberdeen	11	4	7	0	220	214	6	22
PLA Sports Institute	11	3	8	0	153	276	3	15
China Agri' Uni'	12	3	9	0	125	320	2	14

2nd Division – League Championship

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	Bonus	TL
DHL Club Dragons	13	12	1	0	401	117	9	57
Valley Knights	13	7	5	1	281	194	6	36
DHL Club Scorpions	13	6	7	0	191	202	6	30
Hitachi D S CWB	13	5	8	0	194	270	6	26
Descartes Kowloon Lions	13	5	7	1	172	269	1	23
DeA Tigers II	13	3	10	0	187	374	3	15

3rd Division – League Championship

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	Bonus	TL
Valley Mustangs	11	9	2	0	334	65	9	47
Police	12	8	4	0	275	142	6	40
DHL Club Sequins	11	7	3	1	277	167	8	36
DHL Club Select	11	7	4	0	195	156	5	31
Descartes Kowloon Pussies	11	4	7	0	140	242	3	19
Synovate Aberdeen II	11	3	7	1	51	268	0	14
Nomads	11	0	11	0	80	312	1	1

4th Division – League Championship

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	Bonus	TL
Group A								
Gai Wu J	3	3	0	0	108	29	3	15
Valley Griffins	3	2	1	0	47	34	1	9
Police Panthers	4	2	2	0	54	91	1	9
DHL Club Bulls	3	1	2	0	32	54	2	6
CWB Pirates	3	0	3	0	42	75	1	1

Group B

University RFC	3	3	0	0	72	40	2	14
Typhoons	2	1	1	0	55	39	1	5
City Seven	3	1	2	0	31	31	1	5
Descartes Kowloon Beavers	3	1	2	0	50	60	1	5
DeA Tigers IV	3	1	2	0	43	81	1	5

5th Division – League Championship

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	Bonus	TL
Taipo Dragons	10	9	1	0	249	24	6	42
DeA Tigers V	10	8	2	0	247	77	6	38
Gai Wu A	10	4	6	0	124	164	3	19
Nomads II	10	4	6	0	121	178	3	19
CWB Marines	10	0	10	0	38	336	0	0

Standings as of January 24, 2003