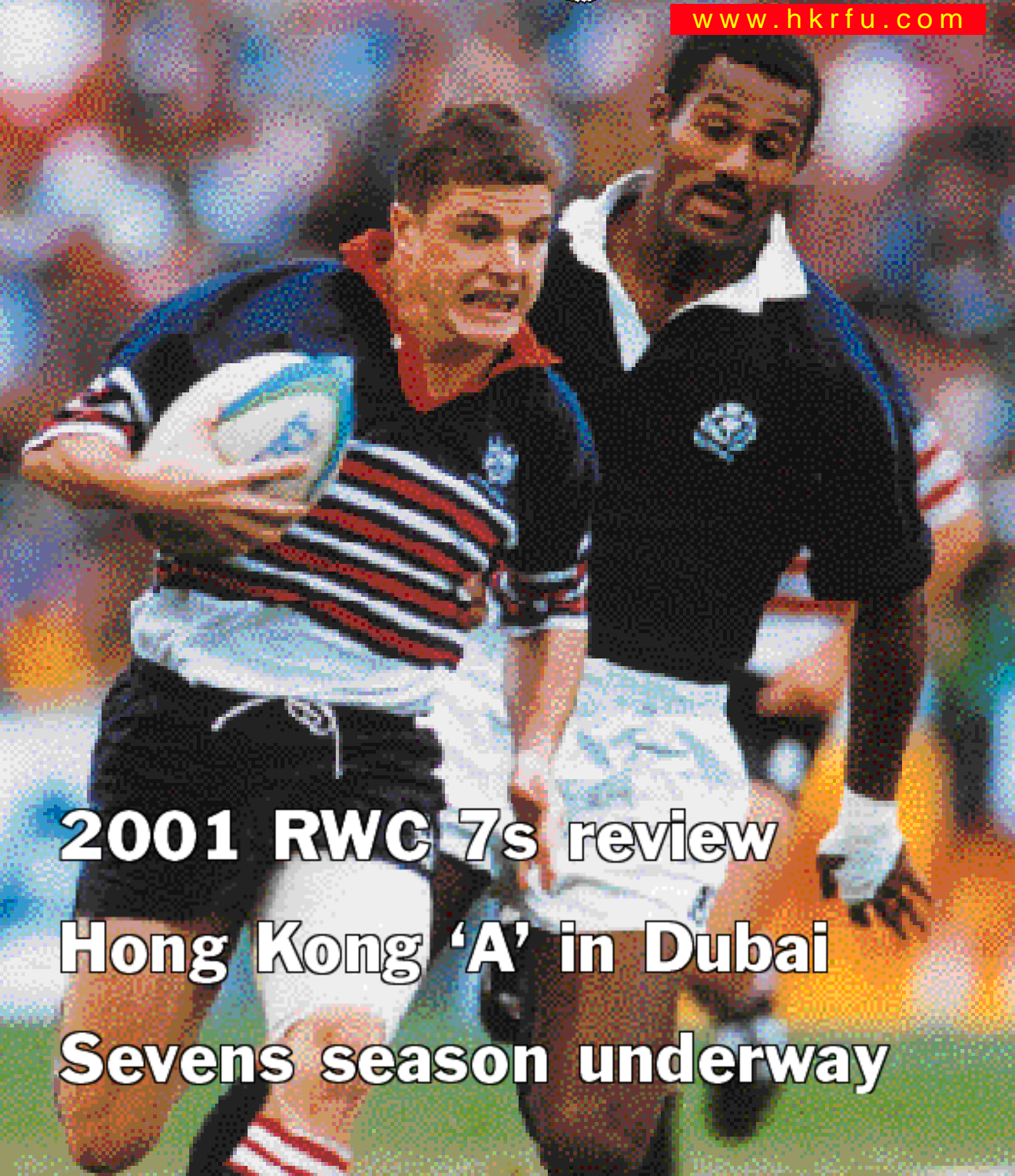


FEBRUARY 2001

RUGBY TALK



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2001 RWC 7s review
Hong Kong 'A' in Dubai
Sevens season underway



Chris Gordon looks ahead to the HK 7s

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RUGBY TALK

A few words about the Rugby World Cup Sevens, the Heineken Grand Championship and the 2001 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens.

Chris Gordon, the Captain of our Sevens Team at the recent Rugby World Cup talks in the magazine of the rough road for Hong Kong in Argentina and the Team's disappointment with the results.

All Hong Kong rugby supporters share their disappointment but I sense a great depth of support for the Team and their past commitment and efforts and again now as they prepare for the Hong Kong Sevens.

The Team played some good rugby against some good teams in Argentina and there is a determination to repeat their performance but in winning style. We wish them a little bit of luck to add to their on field endeavours at the Stadium.

The Finals of the Heineken Grand Championship will take place at the Football Club on Saturday, 17th March. I encourage everyone to attend what promises to be a great day of local rugby.

... and the Sevens. It amazes me, with all the preparations for the Sevens, how many last minute changes are necessary the closer you get to the Tournament. The Sports House team employs the complete range of management and organizational skills to bring 24 teams together (plus a 25th reserve team) for the Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens but I am sure the effort will lead to another great "Sevens".

See you there!

Allan Payne
Executive Director

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Closer ties with Japan Sevens in 2001

The fact that 4 out of 10 circuits on the 2001 World Sevens Series will take place in Asia is a strong reflection on the importance of the Hong Kong Sevens' to the development of rugby in the region.

The pivotal role of the Sevens in promoting rugby throughout Asia was again confirmed in January when the Hong Kong Tourist Association's Tokyo office, as part of cross-promotional activities between the two events, organized an exclusive Hong Kong Sevens Cocktail Reception with the Japan Rugby Football Union.

Over 100 people were hosted at the reception, including media, travel agents and corporates from around the country...

There was even a Japanese rugby supporter who has been to every Hong Kong Sevens since 1984.

The recent Japan Rugby Football Union reception signifies the growing ties between the region's rugby powers

Allan Payne, Executive Director of the Hong Kong Rugby Football Union, delivered a presentation on the Hong Kong Sevens at the cocktail, which he attended along with Beth Coalter, Tournament Coordinator, and John Chiu, Director of

Finance at the HKRFU. Among the highlights of the evening was the presence of the Japan Sevens team, who put in a special appearance before heading to Argentina for the Rugby World Cup Sevens.

The recent Japan Rugby Football Union reception signifies the growing ties between the region's rugby powers, and Asia's increasing stature in the IRB. Closer to home, the event has surely paid off, as the Hong Kong Tourist Association has indicated that supporters coming from Japan for this year's sevens are on the rise.

One thing will remain for certain, the new amiable ties between the Hong Kong and Japan Rugby Football Unions will always be encouraged – off of the pitch, that is. **RT**

Green Pastures for HK Rugby

The Hong Kong Rugby Football Union is pleased to announce that its continuing battle to access more of the limited playing field area in Hong Kong has taken a promising turn.

The local rugby community is glad to welcome back the pitches at Aberdeen Stadium and So Kon Po, which have been opened just in time for the upcoming Heineken League Grand Championships.

Allan Payne, Executive Director of the HKRFU, said, "Lack of suitable pitches for rugby remains a major problem for the Union – and more importantly, for the players of the game – and the Union will continue its efforts to provide better facilities for its member Clubs."

Hopefully the greater availability of the Aberdeen and So Kon Po pitches will make those strawberries heal that much faster... **RT**

LAST CHANCE

Fancy a night on the HKRFU?

From now until February 28, the HKRFU will be launching an interactive competition on its new website, www.hkrfu.com. Those clubs and members interested in competing for the free evening (worth HK\$10,000) can visit the union website and register as a member. Don't forget to fill out your local Club affiliation. The Club with the most entrants by February 28 will win.

Linkage with HKRFU

We have a linkage service right now to link up your club website with HKRFU's website. Please send your club website address to deonlai@pacific.net.hk and we will create a linkage between your club's website and HKRFU. For more details, pls contact Deon at 2504 8314. **RT**



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Outback Steakhouse helps Hong Kong players develop a hunger for the game...

Hong Kong's preparations for the Rugby World Cup 7s in Mar del Plata Argentina were given hearty support in January's Outback Steakhouse Super Sevens Series.

The format of the Outback Steakhouse Super Sevens Series saw the formation of three teams of elite local players to test Hong Kong's squad for the Rugby World Cup 7s. The tournament field included the HKSAR 'A' 7s team and two barbarians squads from Hong Kong Island and the Peninsula.

Confirming the wisdom of the HKRFU selectors, the two-day Sevens Series, which was held on consecutive weekends in January, was handily won on both occasions by the Hong Kong 7s team. While the event got off to a bit of a slow start on the first day, the second was marked with some physically bruising encounters, preparing the boys well for the physical lift of RWC 7s play.

Special thanks must be mentioned to its sponsorship, Outback Steakhouse hosted a special after-match function for the players following the tournament. **RT**

EVENT RESULTS	HK SAR Sevens	HK SAR "A"	HK Island Barbarians Sevens	Kowloon Peninsular Barbarians	Playoffs Result	Total Points	Place
DAY 1							
HK SAR Sevens		15 - 0	21 - 7	17 - 7	29 - 14	19	1
HK SAR "A" S'ns	0 - 15		35 - 12	33 - 7	14 - 29	14	2
HK Island Barbarians	7 - 21	12 - 35		0 - 24		1	4
K'n Peninsular Barbarians	7 - 17	7 - 33	24 - 0			7	3
DAY 2							
HK SAR Sevens		38 - 7	22 - 7	47 - 0	22 - 7	21	1
HK SAR "A" S'ns	7 - 38		12 - 19	33 - 0		8	3
HK Island Barbarians	7 - 22	19 - 22		26 - 10	7 - 22	11	2
K'n Peninsular Barbarians	0 - 47	33 - 0	10 - 26			1	4
1st Runner up: Hong Kong Island Barbarians							
Champion: Hong Kong SAR 7's							



The Main Event in Mar del Plata

The chic resort town of Mar del Plata, Argentina was the site of the third gathering of the sevens rugby clans for the 2001 Rugby World Cup 7s, and from the opening pool rounds it was clear that the new families of the sevens rugby world were growing faster than expected.

In a tournament which will have done wonders for many aspiring rugby nations, the sevens minnows proved more than a mouthful for the likes of England, who narrowly lost to Spain 14 – 12 in their second match, and France who lost to both Georgia and the Cook Islands in the opening days.

The fabulous weekend of running rugby and Latin rhythms also proved that life at the top of the sevens world hasn't gotten any easier, as a determined Argentine squad playing in front of thousands of rabid supporters overcame a 12 – nil deficit ending South Africa's hopes with a 14 – 12 victory in the quarter-finals. But the tournament's most spectacular result came when an unfancied Australian side sent Fiji packing in the semi-finals with a 22 – 14 victory, effectively ending a surprisingly lacklustre performance from the acknowledged co-favourites.

A calmly professional New Zealand side was not affected by the tidal wave of upsets, nor even by the loss of inspirational leader Eric Rush to a broken leg in the first minute of their final pool match against England. Under the able leadership of Karl Te Nana, last year's best and fairest player at the Hong Kong Sevens, New Zealand reversed a 7 – nil shortfall and turned a tidy profit with a final 17 – 7 victory over the English.

The All Blacks seemed to gain strength as the tournament wound on, with a strong 45 – 7 semi-final thumping of Samoa completing their single-minded preparations for the main event in Mar del Plata.

Given a World Cup stage, All Black legend Jonah Lomu does not fail to disappoint... Nor did he in Argentina, scoring three monstrous tries in New Zealand's 31-12 victory, all on physically bruising runs with the first coming in the opening minute of play.

Relatively fresh from being used sparingly throughout the

Lomu also repaid a personal debt, in helping win the Melrose Cup for New Zealand Sevens captain Eric Rush, the man who had first invited Jonah to play in the Singapore Sevens as a 14 year-old, helping launch the world's most famous rugby career.

tournament by New Zealand coach Gordon Tietjens, Lomu single-handedly dismantled the resurgent Australians and put paid to New Zealand's Melrose Cup debt.

Lomu also repaid a personal debt, in helping win the Melrose Cup for New Zealand Sevens captain Eric Rush, the man who had first invited Jonah to play in the Singapore Sevens as a 14 year-old, helping launch the world's most famous rugby career.

Russia and Chile won the RWC 7s Plate and Bowl respectively, reinforcing the strong strides made by these lesser rugby nations, and proving the positive impact sevens has on developing the game in new markets. The hard-fought matches featured some interesting geographic implications, with Russia defeating Georgia 24 – 12 in the Plate and Chile defeating another emerging Latin rugby nation Portugal 21-19 in the Bowl Final.

The promising results by these relative newcomers to the game are also an encouraging sign of the parity emerging from the regular competition of the IRB World Sevens Series.

With 17 of the 24 teams participating in Argentina set to contest the US\$150,000 prize purse at the 2001 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens (March 30 – April 1) sevens enthusiasts in Hong Kong are in for a treat...**RT**



An inspirational performance by Australia ...



最重要的欖球界賽事——世界盃七人欖球賽

第三屆世界盃七人欖球賽已於阿根廷渡假勝地馬德普拉塔圓滿舉行。從今屆賽事的分組比賽開始，一股七人欖球界的新勢力已展現他們的實力，顯示出他們正以史無前例的速度乘勢而起。

多支新興欖球國家的代表隊初次角逐這項夢寐以求的賽事，更擔當起「巨人殺手」的角色挑戰其他傳統勁旅，如英格蘭在第二場分組賽以12:14負於西班牙，而法國更在開賽日連敗兩仗，敗於Georgia和Cook Islands的手中。

一些以速度和強勁節奏見稱的欖球強國在這星期的賽事中亦遇到嚴峻的考驗。熱門隊伍南非在半準決賽面對東道主阿根廷，

在領先12:0的情況下竟被對手從後趕上，阿根廷在成千上萬擁護的吶喊助威下挽回劣勢，結果以14:12淘汰南非出局；而奪標大熱斐濟則於四強被澳洲爆冷擊敗，多場賽事的戰果出人意表，使今屆賽事充滿戲劇性。

另一支勁旅新西蘭卻未受連場爆冷的賽果影響，表現出其皇者風範。他們在對英格蘭的最後一場分組賽事中，雖然靈魂人物Eric Rush於開賽一分鐘不幸受傷斷腳，但是球隊仍能在上屆香港國際七人欖球賽的最佳球員Karl Te Nana的出色領導下，落後0:7依然能收復失地，以17:7擊敗對手。

新西蘭在餘下的賽事中越戰越勇，首先在

準決賽以45:7將強敵薩摩亞徹底打敗，並信心十足地迎接最重要的一場比賽——對澳洲的冠軍戰。雖然決賽的對手並不是宿敵斐濟，但是新西蘭仍然毫不鬆懈，為整項賽事掀起高潮。

新西蘭巨星Jonah Lomu於世界盃決賽的舞台上表現身價，憑藉卓越的個人體能和技術成功三次達陣得分，成為球隊奪標的最大功臣。

新西蘭教練Gorden Tietjens雖然在整個賽事未有充分利用Jonah Lomu上陣，正好讓他保留實力至冠軍戰才竭盡所能地以一己之力突破對手，摧毀澳洲的防線，為新西蘭登上世界盃冠軍寶座立下大功。

Jonah Lomu在協助球隊勝利的同時，亦報答了隊長Eric Rush的知遇之恩；Eric Rush在他十四歲那年提拔他入選參加新加坡七人欖球賽，令他一舉成名及展開其揚威國際的欖球事業。

俄羅斯在銀碟賽決賽以24:12擊敗Georgia，而智利則力壓葡萄牙勝出銀碗賽；這兩國在發展七人欖球運動的日子雖短但已取得驕人成績，進一步奠定了這些欖球新勢力的地位，並為七人欖球運動的發展注入強心針，這些國家的優異表現亦確認了國際七人欖球巡迴賽對提高欖球運動水平有一定的幫助。

有份出席世界盃七人欖球賽決賽週的廿四支球隊中，其中十七隊將來港參加在三月三十日至四月一日舉行的2001瑞士信貸第一波士頓香港國際七人欖球賽，爭奪高達150萬美元的總獎金，屆時香港的球迷將可大飽眼福，於現場欣賞最高水準的欖球賽事。RT



... left everyone missing the supposedly scripted Fiji-NZ final

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Rough Road for Hong Kong in Argentina...

Rugby Talk spoke with Chris Gordon, veteran of the Australian 7s team and Captain for Hong Kong in Argentina on what went right, what went wrong, and how it can be fixed...

Skipper Chris Gordon shares the disappointment of all Hong Kong rugby supporters at the squad's results in Mar Del Plata, but insists that the scoreline (as so often happens in sevens) does not really reflect the way the team played in Argentina, and that the experience still bodes well for the Hong Kong Sevens.

RT: Chris, a bit of a rough road in Argentina?
CG: Naturally we were all very disappointed with the results, as we had been hoping to win two or three of our pool games and in doing so qualify for the plate. To finish with zero from six for the tournament was certainly not expected, but it wasn't really a true reflection of how we played.

We'll be aiming to be more positive when we've got the ball

RT: In what areas of the game did you feel the squad did well?

CG: You certainly couldn't question our commitment. Everyone was trying as hard as they possibly could. Our defence, for the most part, was quite good and it was only against Portugal where we really let ourselves down. Our ball retention was also quite good, and we managed to hold possession for long periods of time.

RT: How were you lacking?

CG: I think that perhaps we weren't positive enough when we had the ball. We were holding it for long periods of time and moving it across the field but we weren't testing the defence. When we did start to have a crack – against Samoa, Wales and Chile – we played really well.

RT: Can you comment on the level of competition? Was there a lift from Hong Kong Sevens play?

CG: The standard was remarkably high. The big difference from Hong Kong was that there were no so-called "easy" games. The traditional minnows like Kenya, Por-

tugal and Spain were all surprisingly strong and the weekend featured a number of upsets – Spain beating England, Kenya beating France etc.

The game has also become more physical. Teams are much more aggressive in defence and it's now more difficult to find gaps. Then again, that may be because I'm getting too old.

RT: With 17 of the 24 teams at the RWC 7s coming to Hong Kong, what areas will the squad be concentrating on improving in the run-up?

CG: We'll be aiming to be more positive when we've got the ball. We have shown that we play our best when we try to take the game to the opposition so we'll be approaching each game with the intention of attacking at every opportunity.

RT: Can you comment on some of the teams we may see in Hong Kong...

CG: Australia was outstanding and were it not for Jonah Lomu, they would have won the final. I think they must be one of the favourites for Hong Kong.

RT: In your opinion, what is behind the recent resurgence of Australian 7s.

CG: I think the Australian Rugby Union has finally decided upon the role that they want 7s to play, and that is to develop players for higher honours in 15s. The squad they have got now is quite young, extremely fit and very quick. Whilst they're not big, they're very fast right across the paddock and they have probably the best defence of all the teams. I think you'll see a lot of these guys - like former Hong Kong player Rob MacDonald – going on to play Super 12 and eventually for the Wallabies. In that respect Australia appears to be following New Zealand's lead.

RT: Who would you say was the best player of the tournament?



Matt Reede getting some rough treatment from Australia

CG: Brendan Williams from Australia was outstanding. He scored nearly every time he had the ball. Oh, and Jonah was pretty impressive in the final.

RT: Who in your opinion was Hong Kong's player of the tournament?

CG: No-one played badly and by the same token no one really stood out. One of the more pleasing aspects of the tournament was the emergence of Ricky Cheuk, who proved that he has got what it takes to make it at this level. He's only very young but he played with a lot of confidence in both attack and defence. He's definitely a star of the future.

RT: Thanks Chris, and all the best in March. **RT**

RESULTS	
Hong Kong	5 – 29 Australia
Hong Kong	0 – 19 USA
Hong Kong	0 – 26 Portugal
Hong Kong	12 – 21 Samoa
Hong Kong	12 – 26 Wales
Bowl Quarter Final	
Hong Kong	14 – 19 Chile



港隊於阿根廷世盃賽中荊棘滿途

分組賽碰上澳洲及薩摩亞，無緣打入銀碟賽

最近，一股世界橄欖球新勢力在阿根廷剛結束的世界盃七人橄欖球賽中向全世界展示實力，並擊敗一些傳統勁旅，可是香港隊卻未能成為這股新勢力的其中一份子。

香港隊在六場的比賽中全軍盡墨，以5-29 敗給澳洲可說是意料中事，可是敗給葡萄牙和美國的戰果卻令人感到失望。

香港隊隊長Chris Gordon跟香港橄欖球迷一樣感到失望，但他認為這賽果並未真正反映港隊在這次世界盃的表現。

Rugby Talk希望讓讀者對港隊在世界盃的表現有更深切了解，訪問了這位既是前澳洲七人橄欖球隊代表，又是出席世界盃的香港隊隊長Chris Gordon，看看他對港隊表現有何評價：

RT: 你認為可否用荊棘滿途來形容港隊於阿根廷的比賽嗎？

CG: 我們對這次的成績確實有點失望，因我們於賽前曾希望在分組賽中能取得二至三場的勝利，從而晉身銀碟賽。全軍盡墨確是意料之外，但這戰績並不足以反映我們的真正實力。

RT: 那麼，你認為港隊在哪方面表現理想？

CG: 各球員在整個賽事中均竭盡所能，全力以赴，所以他們的熱誠是不容置疑的。港隊在大部份的防守情況下也表現理想，只有在與葡萄牙的對壘中有一點鬆懈；而且，我們的持球能力相當高。

RT: 表現欠佳，你認為港隊欠缺了什麼？

CG: 我們雖能在比賽中長時間控球在手，但沒有好好把握進攻機會，帶球直搗敵方底線。在與薩摩亞、亞威爾斯和智利的比賽中，我們致力改善這缺點，結果取得顯著進步。

RT: 你對這賽事的水平有何評價？與香港七人橄欖球賽相比如何？

CG: 這次賽事水準極高，相對香港的賽事，這次賽事的對手都並不容易應付的對手。一些以往被認為技術較幼嫩的隊伍如肯亞、葡萄牙和西班牙也給人意外驚喜，他們均擊退一些實力雄厚的勁旅，如西班牙和肯亞，他們在周末的賽事中分別擊敗英國和法國等。

此外，這項比賽對體能的要求也愈來愈高。各隊趨於加強防守力量，這使突破敵方防線愈見困難。這尤其對我造成阻力，可能因為我的年紀愈來愈大了。

RT: 你對主辦機構的安排滿意嗎？

CG: 總括而言，這項賽事可算是順利地舉行，我們只有在剛抵達阿根廷布宜諾斯艾利斯機場時遇上一些問題，就是要花上兩個半小時才可取回行李。此後，我們對大會的各種安排如球隊接載、

住宿及膳食等均感到非常滿意；而各項比賽亦能如期舉行。

RT: 參加世界盃七人橄欖球賽的廿四支勁旅中，將有十七隊來港出席香港七人橄欖球賽，你認為港隊在備戰時應集中改善哪幾方面？

CG: 我希望球隊可以提高於控球時能主動進攻的心理質素。過往的經驗告訴我們，我們是有能力在持球後策動攻勢的。故此，在未來的比賽中，我們將好好把握每一個進攻的機會。

RT: 你對一些即將來港參加香港國際七人橄欖球賽的隊伍，如曾在世界盃交手的威爾斯、葡萄牙和澳洲，有何評價？

CG: 澳洲隊是深受香港球迷愛戴的球隊，他們擁有超凡的技術；若非新西蘭的Jonah Lomu在決賽中表現神勇，相信他們已摘下桂冠。我們只與威爾斯隊對賽過一次，他們確是一支難得的球隊，而陣中多名球員均是初次參加七人賽。葡萄牙隊則給人難忘的印象，隊中沒有出名的球星，但整隊的狀態甚佳，在新西蘭籍教練的帶領下表現出色。

RT: 你認為有何因素令澳洲隊再次重視七人橄欖球賽？

CG: 我想澳洲橄欖球總會希望借七人賽來培育新一代橄欖球運動員，準備十五人賽事。事實上，澳洲隊的隊員十分年青，擁有驚人的速度和上佳的狀態。雖然他們並非大塊頭，但擁有驚

人的速度於球場上馳騁，而且澳洲隊大概是擁有最佳防守的球隊。我想將來會有多位澳洲隊新星—如前香港隊隊員Rob MacDonald參加Super12賽事和成為澳洲十五人橄欖球國家隊的成員。

RT: 美國隊的表現如何？他們在威靈頓的表現十分神勇，你認為是偶爾的發揮嗎？

CG: 我們於阿根廷以0-19落敗給美國。他們跟數年前比較已進步不少，球隊擁有不同體型的球員以應付不同位置的需求；球員的速度亦不俗，更顯出相當的默契。如他們能保持現有的水準，相信在香港國際七人橄欖球賽中將有不俗的表現。

RT: 你認為誰是這賽事的最佳球員？

CG: 澳洲隊的Brendan Williams表現突出，差不多於每次持球時均能為球隊取得入球；當然，新西蘭的Jonah Lomu在決賽中的表現亦給人留下深刻的印象。

RT: 哪一位香港隊隊員在比賽中表現最出色？

CG: 每位球員均全力以赴，也沒有一位表現特別出眾。卓銘然可算是其中一位令我們喜出望外的球員，他的表現足證他是有能力成為世界級的選手。雖然他很年輕，但無論在攻和守，均表現出信心。他肯定是未來香港橄欖球壇的一顆新星。

RT: 多謝您接受今次的訪問，希望港隊在三月的比賽能取得驕人的成績。 **RT**



The SAR will be ready to dive in at this year's HK Sevens



It's a family affair . . .

Familiar faces to anyone on the local rugby scene, Ruth and Ross Mitchell and children are the perfect poster family for the Hong Kong Rugby Football Union's "Rugby A Game for All" campaign.

For the Mitchell's, rugby is a passion. An indication of their enthusiasm for the sport was clearly evident during the 1995 Hong Kong Sevens when the entire family were involved in some capacity. Ross, husband and dad, took to the field as referee where he officiated many of the big guns including Fiji, New Zealand and Samoa; meanwhile, mum Ruth was playing for the Hong Kong Women's Sevens team; son Craig played in the Colt's tournament and younger sister, Kerry, pitched in as a tournament "ballboy". "It's certainly not often you see that happening," laughs Ross.

Ross is the territory's top rugby referee. The Liverpoolian arrived in Hong Kong 25 years ago to join Hong Kong's finest and immediately signed up to play in the Police rugby team where he continued at a competitive level for 7 years.

"I'd been playing rugby at a fairly competitive level and then when the kids came along I started playing at 2nd level. It was the downward slope kicking in," he joked. "Because I'd been playing at 1st level, I didn't really want to drop down, so the natural progression from there was refereeing."

While Ross was honing his whistle-blowing skills, Ruth, an ardent Everton football fan, began showing a strong interest in rugby. "I love football, but once I started watching rugby I got more and more involved and wanted to play," said Ruth.

In 1993, at 37, Ruth donned boots for the first time. After a brief stint with the Police team, she switched to DeA where she's been ever since. Currently Captain of DeA, Ruth also plays at scrumhalf for the Hong Kong Women's Rugby team and is a driving force behind the promotion of the women's game. Most recently, Ruth captained the HK Women's 7's squad in Wellington, NZ, in their preparation for the HK Women's Rugby 7's.

Ruth has been virtually injury-free throughout her rugby-playing career – a remarkable achievement for any player but especially impressive considering she is running around the paddock with girls half her age – a feat her children are clearly proud of.

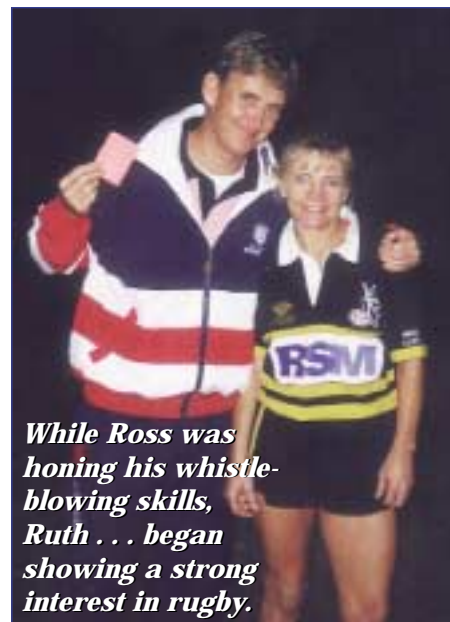
Ruth smiles when she recalls the time a friend of hers was on the sideline watching her play. The friend, a former referee in HK, was amused to see Craig and Kerry on the sidelines calling out 'Go Mum Go' as she was heading towards the tryline.

But while the Mitchell's are supportive of each other's pursuits, Ross recalls a particular incident that resulted in an on-field conflict of interest. "I was refereeing an important 1st grade match which Craig was playing in. He came into a situation when he tackled someone and what he did was absolutely right, but I penalised him. The crowd went absolutely berserk. I knew what I'd done was wrong and I penalised him because I didn't give him the benefit of the doubt against the guy on the ground who I should've penalised.

"Suddenly, out of the crowd came this booming voice, 'For god's sake man, he's your son'. After that I told Craig I'd never referee him again. You are trying so hard so show impartiality that 50/50 calls end up going against them 60/40. It's not fair on him and it's not fair on me," said Ross.

Growing up in Hong Kong, Craig was active in 7's, playing as a schoolboy and then captaining the Hong Kong Under-19 team, which toured Asia including Sri Lanka and Malaysia. A successful product of Hong Kong's Rugby Development programme, Craig was awarded the Hong Kong Development Player of the Year in 1999. Twenty-one-year-old Craig is currently studying engineering at Coventry and plays rugby for a local club side.

Terry, 19, is also in the UK, studying Sports Science at Sheffield University. Although a competent touch and tag player, Terry looks to be following in her dad's footsteps. "She's got the makings of a great referee," says her dad. "She just seemed to



While Ross was honing his whistle-blowing skills, Ruth . . . began showing a strong interest in rugby.

pick it up easily and she was only 16 when she first began. I've even offered to give her tips if she chooses to take up refereeing."

With the Hong Kong Sevens around the corner, Ross is working hard on his fitness. He trains throughout the week and refs each Saturday. Any "spare" time is spent at the gym. Ruth's schedule is equally demanding. She trains Monday and Thursday and plays for DeA on Saturday, while Wednesday and Sunday is spent training with the HK squad.

When asked to name their highlights during their association with rugby, Ross immediately singles out the Hong Kong Sevens. "You are rubbing shoulders with the best players in the world – players like Campese and Lomu," says Ross. "That's a huge boost and it gives you the confidence you need when you go on to ref test matches."

For Ruth, the opportunity to travel to different countries has been an incredible experience.

"It's just brilliant to be able to go and play rugby in different parts of the world. That in itself is a highlight."

Aside from New Zealand, Ruth has played in tournaments in Dubai, New York, Sydney, China and Singapore.

This year, they hope to travel down to Australia as a family to see the Lions take on World Champs Australia.

But in the meantime, there's work to be done at the Hong Kong Sevens! **RT**



DeA Ladies Spice Up Dubai

In January, 13 DeA ladies rugby players, a coach, a manager and a fitness instructor embarked on a rugby pilgrimage to Dubai. DeA Captain Ruth Mitchell reports on the ladies success in the desert.

We arrived in Dubai at around 9.30 in the evening and were met by the Chairman of the Arabian Gulf RFU, Mr John Griffiths, and by the Arabian Gulf National Coach Darryl Weir. Early morning pool sessions began each day, with our fitness instructor Ingrid kindly whipping us in to shape for the forthcoming games.

Our first game was against a Gulf Select team. This was a full-on game of 10s and I must say it was the hardest game we have played all season. We won a bruising encounter 20 – 5.

The next morning saw us back in the pool stretching our sore and aching bodies in preparation for the day's 7s Tournament. In what seemed like no time at all we were back at the Exiles pitch starting another day of rugby. Our first game was against Muscat; we got off to a good start by winning 33 -0.

Within half an hour we were back for our next whirlwind game, against Abu Dhabi. Another successful game for DeA with a 22 –7 result. This game finally saw us gel, in playing and thinking 7s; which effectively prepared us for our final game against Doha.

The match against Doha was the most evenly contested, with DeA edging out 20 – 10, and winning the tournament on the back of an undefeated weekend.



DeA Ladies looking good off and on the pitch

Following the game, and an ice cold shower, we stayed to lend our support to Hong Kong 'A', which were playing an exciting match against the Emirates Select (see story page 12). The whole team was up in their seats cheering them on throughout the game. A superb day.

And the evening was even better, starting off at the after-match functions with the DeA Girls making a stunning entrance in their beautiful cheongsams, courtesy of Shanghai Tang. Once all the formalities were over it was time to party and hit the town where we all danced the night away until the early hours.

For those who did not indulge in the madness, there was a final pool session to attend and a wonderful day of what all girls love most - SHOPPING. For others, it was back to bed after the pool session, (honest Ross it wasn't me).

So again another successful tour by DeA Ladies. On behalf of the team, I would like to thank all of the supporters and sponsors of DeA rugby Club. **RT**

Ruth Mitchell – Ladies Captain

RESULTS:

DeA Ladies 20 – 5 Arabian Gulf Select (10s)

Tournament 7s

DeA 33 – 0 Muscat

Tries: Ruth Mitchell (3), Keri Glenday (1), Fish Yu (1)

Conversions: Fish Yu (4)

DeA 22 – 7 Abu Dhabi

Tries: Ruth Mitchell (1), Kery Glenday (1),

Fish Yu (1), Doris ? (1)

Conversions: (1)

DeA 20 – 10 Doha

Tries: Ruth Mitchell (1), Fish Yu (2), Doris Chow? (1)

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HK high-flyers carpet Arabian knights

Hong Kong 'A' 15s made a successful tour to Dubai over Chinese New Year to take on an Emirates Select 15 in what would be show-case event of a great weekend for Arabian Gulf rugby.

The match, which was a part of a mini and women's rugby festival over the weekend, in which DeA ladies also participated (see story page 11), was a well-attended affair held at the Dubai Exiles grounds.

Captained by Adam Horler, celebrating his first Hong Kong 'A' cap along with teammates Michael Lacey, Michael Kerr, Andy Paddock and Robert Perren. Hong Kong turned aside the Arabian challenge, winning 28 – 19 in a game, which according to Manager Craig Wooten, Hong Kong could have "scored several more times, excepting a few mistakes at critical times which stopped this."

A pleased Wooten credited Hong Kong's teamwork adding that, "Throughout the match, the team showed good spirit to maintain their lead in the face of a very physical and well-drilled Emirates Select side," added Wooten.

Strong performances were recorded from Adam Horler, Michael Kerr and Rob Naylor, with the Man of the Match going



Captain Adam Horler leads the squad out in Dubai

larger pack in the expatriate-dominated Arabian Gulf side. Despite the score line, the team rose to the occasion, turning in

a vastly improved scrummaging performance than in the first game. Unfortunately, Hong Kong 'A' conceded two tries in the first quarter of the match, creating an insurmountable gap for the rest of the match.

Rob Perren, Club Captain of AMI Aberdeen, said the entire team, "improved a hell of a lot, and it was a game which provided the team with some valuable experience," adding that the team "walked off of the pitch with their heads high, with everyone feeling that the score line didn't really reflect the team's performance." Useful matches like these are a must for the continued development of the Hong Kong 'A' 15s side, and no matter what the final result is, as long as the boys are continuing to learn and develop their skills, Hong Kong will have won in the long run.

With the Hong Kong 'A' squad competing well against the Arabian Gulf, and the DeA Ladies taking out the 7s tournament silverware in Dubai, the SAR's whirlwind desert rugby tour in 2001 proved an unqualified success. **RT**



New 'A' caps Andy Paddock (left) and Rob Penen (centre) join Aberdeen teammate Ken Cambuff in Dubai

to Jared Going. Tries were scored by Andrew Dailly, Terence Ng and Going with Rob Naylor slotting through 3 penalties and 2 conversions to round out a strong afternoon for Hong Kong.

Throughout the match, the larger Emirates Select pack troubled the Hong Kong forwards in the set piece, but the increased mobility of Hong Kong 'A' and sharp attacking from the back line helped the team outclass its Arabian Gulf counterparts

Things weren't as easy in the squad's other contest versus the Arabian Gulf representative 15, with Hong Kong 'A' going down 55 – 21. Hong Kong 'A' was again forced to compete against a much

RESULTS:

Hong Kong 28 – Emirates Select 19

Hong Kong 28 – Arabian Gulf 55

Hong Kong 'A' 15 to Dubai

Chan Fuk-ping, Ken Carnduff, Alex Zenovic, Jason Going, Michael Lacey, Robert Naylor, Lee Cheuk Yin, Duncan Robertson, Michael Kerr, Tony Wong, Robert Perren, Justin Gregory, Adam Horler (capt.), Andrew Dailly, Graham Black, Terence Ng, Bryce Dailly, Roman Law, Paul Chung, James Wood, Andrew Paddock, Owain Morrison, Leung Chi Ming.

The Hunt for the Cup...

More excitement is looming for local rugby fans in March, as the HKRFU's Heineken Domestic League Grand Championship gets into full swing.

Adding to the excitement of the ongoing Heineken League Grand Championship is the three-way battle for supremacy between league leaders Asahi Valley, and joint second-place holders Hong Kong Football Club and DeA.

On the strength of their emphatic XX – XX victory over DeA on February 17, Asahi Valley assumed DeA's former position at the top of the table with 17 points from 4 matches.

DeA drops to 3 wins and a loss from its four games with a total of 14 points, whilst an injury-devastated Hong Kong Football Club side is clinging to its second-placed tie with DeA on 14 points.

Rounding out the table are PLA seeded third in the standings on 9 points and the winless Headstrong Kowloon and AMI Aberdeen sides, tied for fourth on 2 points.

As **RUGBY TALK** goes to print, the two runners-up are preparing for an epic contest on February 25, when Football Club meets DeA. With Club struggling to fill gaps created by injury, DeA will be eagerly anticipating its first opportunity in years for a Grand Championship Finals appearance.

In other 1st Division competition, Valley will be taking on an always physical and superbly fit PLA squad, while an improving AMI Aberdeen side, bolstered by some new additions from the Southern Hemisphere, will be looking to break the duck against a depleted Kowloon.

This year's 2nd Division Major Championship is as closely contested as the 1st, and as eerily familiar, with an undefeated Valley Knights team leading the table on 24 points; followed closely by Football Club Dragons on 22 points and Football Club Scorpions on 18 points.

Trouble lies ahead for the Club sides however, as they will be meeting each other on February 25. With both teams looking to solidify and improve their position, something will have to give.

The 3rd Division, "home of champagne rugby", sees another predominance of established Club sides, with HKFC's Select and Sequins topping out the table in Group A with 12 and 10 points respectively from three games. In Group B of the 3rd Division, Valley Griffins are clinging to a 1-point lead over Kowloon Ills with 11 points to 10 from 3 matches.

In the developmental 4th Division, HKFC Bulls continue their undefeated run with 24 points from 5 matches, while City Seven, newcomers to the league this year, continue to make a great debut holding on to second place with 15 points and three wins coming from their 4 matches.

Finally, the Women's 7-a-side competition is continuing apace this year in preparations for the Hong Kong Women's Rugby Sevens to be held this year at So Kon Po on March 29 and 30, 2001.

A seemingly unstoppable DeA side continues to enjoy a remarkable year. After winning the Women's 10-a-side competition early on in the season, the ladies have made a seamless transition in co-leading the table with Asahi Valley on 13 points. While both are tied at the moment, Valley has a game in hand on DeA, and will be intent on disrupting their tide of victories this year. T8 Research Causeway Bay is in third place on 9 points, followed by HKFC on 5 points. The composite schoolgirls side included in this year's competition continues to amass important experience in competing in the league, where they currently hold 5th position with 4 points, narrowly edging ahead of Gai Wu ladies. **RT**

A seemingly unstoppable DeA side continues to enjoy a remarkable year ... the ladies have made a seamless transition in co-leading the table with Asahi Valley on 13 points



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Sevens Season Underway

Sevens Season officially kicked-off in Hong Kong on Tuesday February 6, at the Hong Rugby Football Union's Team Announcement and Media Briefing for the 2001 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens.

The Press Conference, which was held at the Hong Kong Stadium, saw the official line-up revealed for the 2001 Hong Kong Sevens.

The teams are as follows:

Arabian Gulf	Argentina	Australia
Canada	China	Chinese Taipei
England	Fiji	France
Hong Kong	Japan	Korea
Malaysia	New Zealand	Portugal
Russia	Samoa	Singapore
South Africa	Sri Lanka	Thailand
USA	Wales	West Indies

The official tournament draw will be held on Tuesday February 27



Alan Smith, Vice Chairman Asia Pacific for Sevens title sponsor Credit Suisse First Boston attended the press conference, along with Gerry Forsgate, President of the HKRFU, Allan Payne, Executive Director of the HKRFU and Pieter Schats, Director of Marketing.

Hong Kong RWC7s 2001 Captain Chris Gordon was joined by his Rugby World Cup team-mate Ricky Cheuk and promising players Andrew Dailly and Andy Yuen in modelling the latest collection of Sevens apparel (see order form on page 17).

The HKRFU also confirmed that tickets have been held at last year's price of HK\$750 (adult) and HK\$250 (children under 12) for this three-day extravaganza. **RT**

So, how do I get tickets?

Tickets go on sale starting February 15 through the following outlets:

Hong Kong Sevens Merchandise and Ticket Outlet

Exchange Square: Shop 306, 3/F, Exchange Square Podium
9 Connaught Place, Central, Hong Kong
Monday – Friday: 12pm – 4pm
Saturday: 10am – 7pm

Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

(while stocks last)
Monday – Friday: 12pm – 7pm
Saturday: 10am – 7pm

Hong Kong Stadium Box Office

Every weekend until March 25, 2001
Noon – 4pm



For the first time ever Sevens enthusiasts can purchase tickets via the Hong Kong Sevens website at:

www.hksevens.com

More Sevens information in next month's BUMPER SEVENS ISSUE of RUGBY TALK

HEINEKEN PREMIERSHIP
STANDINGS – 2000/01 SEASON

NAME OF TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	TL
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1st Division – Major Championship

Asahi Valley	4	4	0	0	110	23	17
DeA	4	3	1	0	112	60	14
HK Football Club	4	3	1	0	113	63	14
PLA Sports Institute	4	2	2	0	79	91	9
Headstrong Kowloon	4	0	4	0	44	110	2
AMI Aberdeen	4	0	4	0	38	149	2

2nd Division – Major Championship

Valley Knights	5	5	0	0	218	62	24
HKFC Dragons	5	5	0	1	176	29	22
HKFC Scorpions	5	4	1	0	121	50	18
Police	5	2	2	1	89	112	14
T8 Research C'Bay	5	2	3	0	177	111	10
Kowloon Beavers	6	1	5	0	79	140	8
Valley Mustangs	5	1	4	0	51	181	4
Gai Wu A	4	0	4	0	17	243	0

NAME OF TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	TL
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3rd Division – Major Championship

Group A

HKFC Select	3	3	0	0	85	31	13
HKFC Sequins	3	2	1	0	102	40	10
Typhoons	3	2	1	0	68	62	10
DeA II	2	1	1	0	68	29	5
Aberdeen II	2	0	2	0	18	48	0
Police Panthers	3	0	3	0	19	150	0

Group B

Valley Griffins	3	2	0	1	56	8	11
Kowloon Pussies	3	2	1	0	52	22	10
Nomads	2	1	0	1	37	18	7
Gai Wu J	2	0	2	0	10	68	0
CWB Pirates	2	0	2	0	10	49	0

4th Division – League Championship

HKFC Bulls	5	5	0	0	214	22	24
City Seven	4	3	1	0	75	11	15
DeA III	5	3	2	0	127	103	14
Taipo Dragons	5	1	4	0	18	141	4
Gai Wu N	5	0	5	0	48	205	4

Women's 7-a-side Competition

Asahi Valley	3	3	0	0	77	17	13
DeA	4	3	1	0	74	48	13
T8 Research C'Bay	3	2	1	0	48	27	9
HKFC	3	1	2	0	15	25	5
Schoolgirls	4	0	3	1	27	65	4
Gai Wu	3	0	2	1	10	69	2