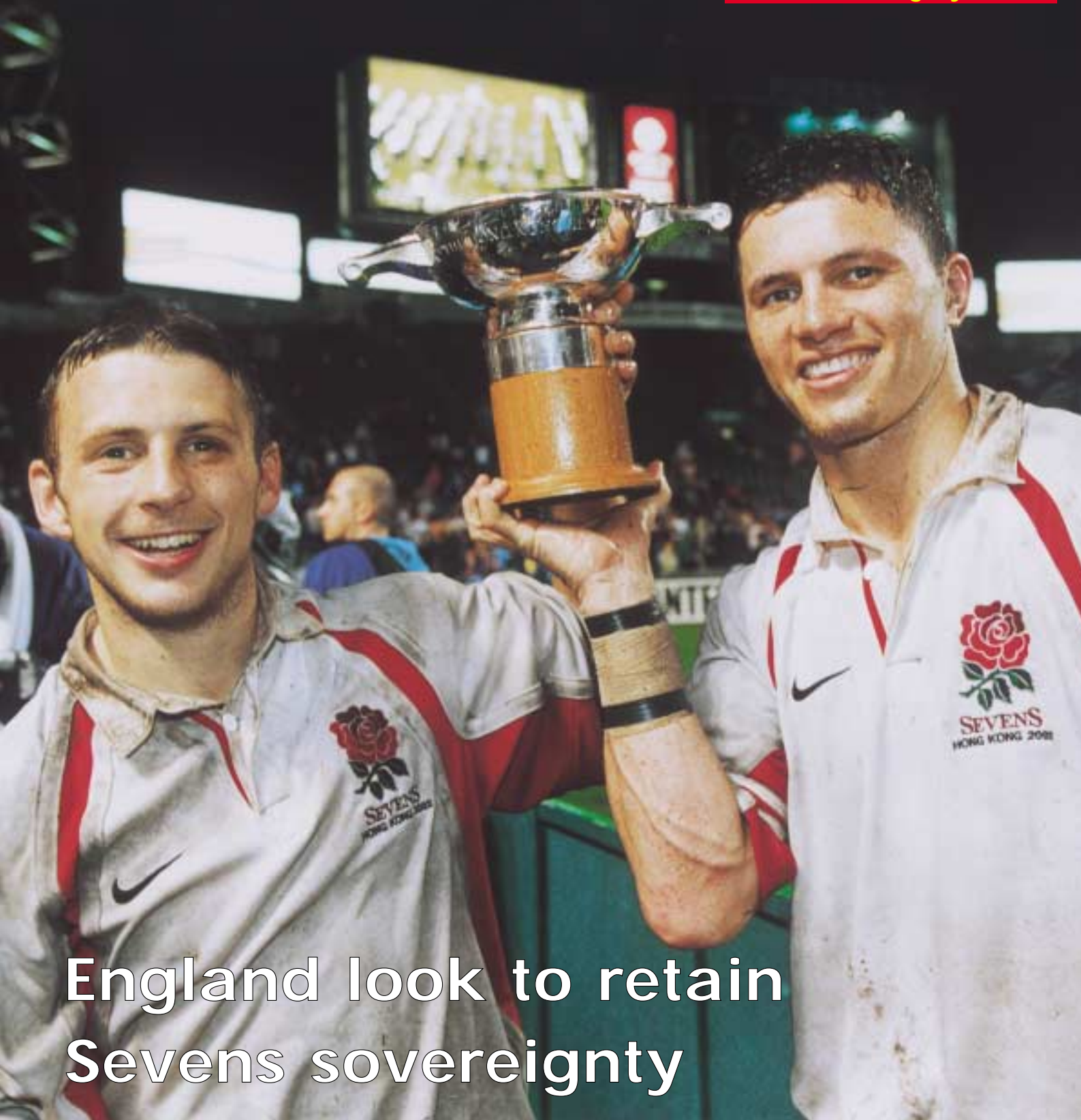


香港

# RUGBY TALK



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## England look to retain Sevens sovereignty

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of the  
HKRFU





**Captain Simon Amor, Henry Paul and the rest of the England Sevens squad return to defend in 2003**

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# RUGBY TALK

In last year's Sevens issue, I wrote about how quickly the 'Sevens' seems to come round. This year is no exception. And it has been a year that we will never forget – there will be many times during the Sevens week of rugby that we remember the dark days of the Bali incident and think of all our dear friends who were affected in so many different and tragic ways. However we will all make an extra effort to make this a very special 'Sevens' in their memory.

A new feature of the closing stages of the season is the 'Taipans' series of games in each of the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Divisions. The best players will be selected for two teams from each Division to play each other in end-of-the-season games that are designed to showcase the considerable talent outside of the 1st Division.

Many squads are currently in training for various tours and tournaments that will take place over the coming months.

The HKSAR U19's are treading new and challenging ground when they travel to Paris for the IRB/FIRA/AER World Championships in April. Their path to Paris has been beset with problems in the form of player availability, injuries and the ineligibility of four players, including the captain, who despite appeal to the IRB, will not be allowed to compete in the Tournament. I trust that all the players and management will be able to put these adversities behind them and seize due reward from their endeavours.

The carnival of rugby is almost upon us, and is started this year by the Racing with Rugby night at Happy Valley. I hope we will see you there – or at the Women's Sevens, Football Club or Kowloon Tens, Aberdeen Country of Origin, International Youth Tournament, various celebratory lunches and dinners – or failing any of them, we'll see you at the Sevens.

Allan Payne  
Executive Director

[www.hkrugby.com](http://www.hkrugby.com)



## Cobra 10s: Sabah

The Sabah Rugby Union, an affiliate of the Malaysian Rugby Union and one of the 14 states that make up Malaysia, is hosting an Eastern Malaysian chapter of the popular Cobra 10s Tournament played in Kuala Lumpur. Located on the island of Borneo, Sabah offers an idyllic setting for tens rugby.

This year's tournament, to be played on 14th and 15th June 2003, has been opened up to international club sides and a special invitation has been issued to all interested Hong Kong clubs. For enquiries, please contact R. William Quek of the Sabah Rugby Union on tel: +6 (089)-667721; fax: +6 (089)-674810 or via email at [rwq@ijm.com.my](mailto:rwq@ijm.com.my) or [pkv@ijm.com.my](mailto:pkv@ijm.com.my). **RT**



## Rugby Academy ready for applications

The HKRFU Rugby Academy is now calling for applications for the academic year 2003-2004, which will commence in July 2003. The purpose of the Academy is to provide promising young rugby players an opportunity to develop their rugby skills and education so they can take full advantage of rugby and career opportunities in Hong Kong.

Boys and girls selected for the Academy will receive coaching instruction, education and guidance in the following three areas:

**A. Rugby skills** (individual, unit and team):

coaching accreditation, refereeing, personal fitness, conditioning and nutrition

**B. Education:**

secondary and tertiary specific courses supported by HKRFU education grants

**C. Life skills:**

a variety of relevant Hong Kong community and team building modules

Application forms can be obtained from the HKRFU. Completed application form, together with copies of relevant certificates, should be submitted to the HKRFU on or before 30 April 2003.

For enquiries, please visit our website at [www.hkrugby.com](http://www.hkrugby.com) or contact Charles Lau, Assistant Manager of Support Services & Rugby Academy of the HKRFU.

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## RUGBY TALK

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## HKRFU Charitable Trust Fund

The Fund was set up to provide financial assistance to those committed rugby players who have satisfactory scholastic achievements with a need for financial support. The Scholarships will be awarded at the discretion of the Hong Kong Rugby Football Union Charitable Trust Fund Committee.

Application forms can be obtained from the HKRFU. The completed application form should be submitted to HKRFU prior to commencement of studies.

Deadline for application for the academic year 2003/2004 is 31 August 2003. For enquiries, please contact the Assistant Manager, Support Services & Rugby Academy of the HKRFU.

**Tel: 2504 8311 Fax: 2576 7237 E-mail: [charles.lau@hkrugby.com](mailto:charles.lau@hkrugby.com)**



## Bali Fund Account Update

Please note that the current account with Hongkong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) in the name of the 'Hong Kong Rugby Bali Fund' has been opened.

Any cheque in the Fund's name can be paid in directly:

A/C name: Hong Kong Rugby Bali Fund

HKD current A/C no: 502-260516-001



# Red Rose continues to bloom...

In February, England made more sevens history by winning its second series title in the Brisbane Sevens at Ballymore (February 1 and 2). England's victory was indisputable, coming as it did with wins over the champions of the two preceding events, Fiji and New Zealand. The Brisbane victory clearly establishes England Sevens' intent to defend its historic title at the Hong Kong Sevens.

The red rose is in full bloom behind the sevens nous of captain Simon Amor and the out-right pace of Ben Gollings, Richard Haughton and the 19-year old Ugo Monye. Adding to the threat, the grafting is being well taken care of by a dangerous front row consisting of former New Zealand rugby leaguer Henry Paul, Tony Roques and another teenager, Magnus Lund. All of whom, barring injury,



should be returning to defend their title in Hong Kong at the end of March.

In Brisbane, England overcame an early challenge against Japan, who fought back from a 22 – 5 deficit to within three points of a draw. After the early hiccup, the side found its momentum in beating Fiji in the final pool match on Saturday and both Samoa (27 – 5) and New Zealand (19 – 14) in the quarters and semis, securing their berth in the Cup final.

In an exhilarating affair, England grabbed the early lead in the Cup final with Roques scoring the opener after Fiji's Nasoni Rokobiau was sin-binned. The lead proved illusory, however, as Fiji responded to England's try in quick order with brilliant replies from Medake Davu and Sailosi Naiteqe.

But under the leadership of Amor, who has blossomed under the microscope of seven-a-side rugby over the past two sea-

sons, England was able to retain its shape, eventually setting up a try from Ugo Monye to level the score at the half.

After the interval, the game continued on a knife's edge until Henry Paul created the space for Monye's second try with four and a half minutes remaining. The game slipped further away from Fiji in the final minutes as Amor provided another carefully crafted opening for Gollings and the match's final try, bringing the final score to England 28, Fiji 14.

Gollings was named Player of the Tournament and shone throughout the weekend, most especially in the semi final victory over New Zealand. No one is enjoying England's present success more than team manager and former rugby leaguer Joe Lydon, who congratulated his players after their Australian adventure. "We showed a good balance of experience and power. Simon Amor captained superbly while Nathan McAvoy, Ugo Monye and Magnus Lund were all outstanding. We didn't perform well in the early rounds which shows there are no easy pickings in world sevens and any team can produce a shock."

***"It was the first time that we have beaten New Zealand in sevens and they were gracious in defeat" Joe Lydon***

In other action from Brisbane, hosts Australia, losers to Fiji in the Cup quarter finals after Brock James was sent-off for accumulating a second yellow card, won the Plate with newcomer to the sevens side Chris Latham helping see off Samoa 47 – 12 in the Final. In the Bowl, Tonga beat the United States 29 – 10, while Cook Islands, who are also appearing in Hong Kong this year, won the Shield with a 29 – 14 victory over Papua New Guinea.

With England rugby in full bloom at the moment, Joe Lydon's men will be looking to pose a thorny challenge at the Hong Kong Stadium this March. **RT**

Henry Paul is one of a host of England Sevens regulars turning the sevens world inside-out

## KIWIS

## FINALLY RULE THE ROOST



New Zealand Sevens, the most successful team in IRB Sevens history, has finally broken an embarrassing losing streak by winning its home event in Wellington (February 7 and 8), for the first time ever with a 38 – 26 victory over England in the Cup final.

After three successive losses at home, the side, behind Coach Gordon Tietjens and captain Eric Rush, mustered up all the pride of New Zealand rugby's tradition to overcome a series of close matches against their fiercest rivals, before making good on their attempt to defend home honour in one of the best sevens finals to date in this young series.

With everything at stake, the final was as close an affair as predicted, despite New Zealand jumping out to a ten point lead through tries from Roy Kinikinilau and Amasio Valence. The Kiwi lead soon dissipated as England continued to prove its class in international sevens, scoring through a 60-metre scramble from the burly Henry Paul and another try from teenage sensation Ugo Monye. Undaunted, New Zealand came back again through Kinikinilau, capping a perfect set-up from Valence to bring the score to 17 – 14 for New Zealand at the half.

After the break, England threatened to take it all away from New Zealand for a second consecutive week, scoring through Gollings 43 seconds into the second half. The failed conversion attempt left the score at 19 – 17 to England. After which, the teams exchanged tries with New Zealand's

Tafai Ioasa scoring at 3:25 followed by England's Phil Dowson at 5:04.

With two minutes left in the match and England leading 26 – 24, the crowd could not be faulted for fearing a fourth disaster. But a third try from Tafai Ioasa's the tournament's second leading try scorer with nine, (behind Fiji's Silesi Bobo with 12), put the Kiwis in the clear, especially as Ioasa's second try was accompanied by a sin-binning for barging against England captain Amor. England's last effective attack was spoiled by a penalty for holding the ball in the tackle on New Zealand's try-line. The score remained at 31 – 26 until 10:33 when New Zealand's Anthony Tuitivake scored a try, which was converted, bringing the final to 38 – 26 for New Zealand.

The victory has not only removed a rather overbearing monkey off New Zealand's back but re-establishes the team's claim as the favourites in the IRB Sevens series. The 20 points for victory in Wellington also provides some welcome breathing room at the top of the IRB Sevens standings, where the Kiwis lead the table by 12 points over Fiji and 22 points ahead of England.

The men in black would have known long before the Wellington kick-off that determination and intent can take them only so far at this level. Performance was demanded by Coach Gordon Tietjens and was dutifully supplied by the entire squad.

New Zealand fronted up throughout the weekend with a 24 – 0 pool match victory over the English, followed by hard-fought victories over rivals Samoa and Fiji. Against the Samoans, New Zealand burst into the lead 21 – 5, before being methodically roped back in for the remainder of the match, gritting out its first narrow scoreline of the tournament 21-19. As reward for their effort versus Samoa, New Zealand earned the dubious right to play Fiji in the Cup semi final; again scraping by 24 – 22 through a match-winning try from Tafai Ioasa.

Appropriately, Ioasa was named the

player of the tournament for scoring the winning try against Fiji in the semi-final and sealing victory for the hometown heroes with two tries in the Cup final.

After losing their pool match against New Zealand, England was fast-tracked to the final with victories over South Africa, 17 – 7, and Australia, where the team came from ten points down to win 21 – 15.

In other action from Wellington, a revitalized French team, on a roll after reaching their first ever Cup semi final in Brisbane, continued their momentum down under, reaching the Plate final before bowing out to Samoa 39 – 5. Canada won the Bowl with a 47 – 5 victory over crowd-favourites the Pacific Island nation of Niue, while Tonga captured the Shield in a thrilling final against Japan that saw the teams tied at the interval and the lead change three times in the second half before Samoa's Kiniconi Bakewa scored a last minute try to send Tonga through 29 – 26.

New Zealand's success in Wellington means that three nations have won the four IRB Sevens tournaments to date, New Zealand (also winners in Dubai), Fiji (win-

ners in George, South Africa) and England, and gives final shape to the IRB Sevens standings before play resumes again at the home of sevens rugby, Hong Kong.

With the IRB's cancellation of both the Chile and the Malaysia Sevens due to logistical and sponsor difficulties, the expanded 24 IRB Sevens championship points on offer to the Cup winner in Hong Kong, and the US\$100,000 prize for the champion, will

play a vital role in the outcome of the 2002/2003 IRB Sevens series. This is good news for Hong Kong Sevens ticket holders, as the new parity in international seven-a-side rugby promises that the Hong Kong Stadium will again be the battle ground for global sevens supremacy.

After missing out on its first Hong Kong Sevens Cup final in three years, New Zealand Sevens will be hoping to go black to the future in 2003. **RT**

## STANDINGS

<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>68</b>
Fiji	56
England	46
Australia	44
Samoa	36
South Africa	32
France	22
Argentina	20
Kenya	4
Wales	4
Namibia	2
Tonga	2
Canada	2



# ALL SET FOR SUPER SEVENS

A major piece of the puzzle that is the annual Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens has been laid with the Hong Kong Sevens Official Draw on Thursday evening, 27 February. The Official Draw has again provided a fitting tournament format for the exciting IRB Sevens competition which makes its traditional pilgrimage to the spiritual home of sevens rugby, Hong Kong, from 28 to 30 March, 2003.

For a second consecutive year, the Official Draw was hosted in the heart of Hong Kong's business district at Exchange Square in Central. The event's long and warm relationship with the Hong Kong Government was embodied by the attendance of The Chief Secretary of Administration for the Hong Kong SAR Government, The Hon. Donald Tsang, GBM, JP; who did more than just assist with the honours but managed to help Hong Kong evade the top three seeds and the cluster of middle-ranked contenders to see the hometown side safely into Pool D.

RUGBY TALK takes a dip in the Sevens Pools for 2003...

## POOL A

Who says Kiwis can't fly?

The only IRB Sevens champion in the four-year history of the competition; reigning Rugby World Cup Sevens and Commonwealth

Games champions; and the only team with multiple victories in this year's series... who says Kiwis can't fly?

Certainly Hong Kong Sevens fans lucky enough to have seen Jonah Lomu, Christian Cullen, Karl Te Nana and Joe Rokocoko in action over the past years would question the scientific validity of this natural fact.

In 2003, the high-flying Kiwis will be back in Hong Kong looking to re-establish their nesting grounds. Having settled the glaring oversight of never winning their home tournament, (see story on page seven), New Zealand can again look to set their world to rights in Hong Kong.

As always, New Zealand Sevens has plenty to choose from amongst its 16-man Sevens squad, which features the classic Kiwi mix of canny coaching from Gordon Tietjens, veteran leadership in players like Eric Rush and Amasio Valence, and outright pace and exuberance from relative squad newcomers Tafai Iaosa, the player of the tournament in Wellington, schoolboy Liam Messam and pacy forward Roy Kinikini.

Grouped with Canada and the United States, New Zealand has one of the most physical and experienced of pools to contend with, but 'Kiwi Klass' should prove more than a match for their pool-mates, with the Sevens opener between New Zealand and minnows Malaysia guaranteed to be a high-scoring, though predictably one-sided, affair.

Canada, tied-tenth with two points on this year's IRB Sevens

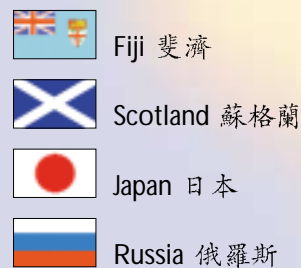
### POOL A 組



### POOL B 組



### POOL C 組



### POOL D 組

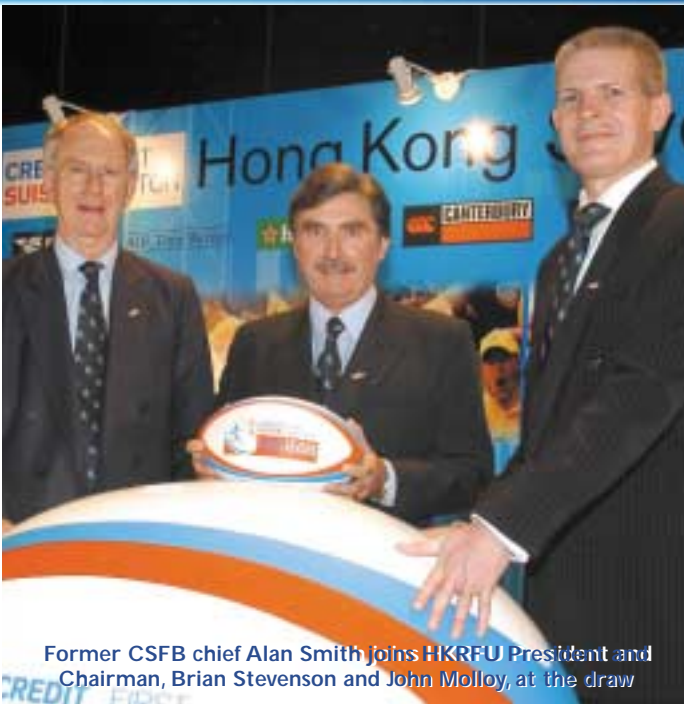


### POOL E 組



### POOL F 組





Former CSFB chief Alan Smith joins HKRFU President and Chairman, Brian Stevenson and John Molloy, at the draw

table thanks to a Bowl victory last month in New Zealand, are still making a strong commitment to IRB Sevens, having participated in every tournament to date. But the Canadians are tasked with finding the ideal replacements for some departing veterans. Last year's squad in Hong Kong featured Canada's most capped players at both sevens and fifteens in Gregor Dixon and Winston Stanley. As a result the side closed out its pool undefeated capped by a 19 – 14 victory over South Africa, thanks to a last-minute try from Marco DiGirolamo, who assumes the squad captaincy in 2003. The upset sent Canada through to the Cup quarter finals, where they were eventually defeated by Wales.

The USA is making its third appearance in this year's IRB Sevens in Hong Kong, but has no points to show for it as yet, although they did reach the Bowl final in Brisbane before losing to Tonga. The US know what level of play is necessary in Hong Kong having lost to New Zealand 43 – 0 in their pool match in Australia last month. Malaysia will make its first appearance on the IRB Sevens this year in Hong Kong, although the draw will make stealing a pool victory a big ask in 2003.

## POOL B

### England elated

The consensus of opinion after the Official Draw was that England's route to the Cup, having been drawn alongside Kenya, Italy and Singapore, lay clear. You can be certain that that is one opinion that won't be shared in the RFU training rooms. The team under coach Joe Lydon is certain to be comfortable with the draw, without being overconfident. Nor should they be, as Kenya, seeded second in the group, have already created a reputation for themselves on this year's circuit, while Italy have proven their own capacity to draw blood in previous tournaments.

England's success in Hong Kong last season, and in Brisbane this year, (followed by an appearance in the Wellington final the next weekend), is nothing short of amazing considering the RFU have only really adopted Sevens since the millennium. But the benefit of

maintaining a talented squad of regulars centred around captain Simon Amor and key players Henry Paul and Ben Gollings, further bolstered by outright pace and a plethora of young talent, make England a clear threat to any team in IRB Sevens.

The Kenyans played in both Dubai and South Africa this year. Showing a bit of debutante nerves, the side could only manage one win from Dubai, although they were pooled in a tough group along with Australia, Morocco and Canada. However, the Kenyans demonstrated the ability to improve rapidly in South Africa, where they narrowly lost their opener to the hosts 21 – 19 before trouncing Arabian Gulf. They also took their first major scalp of the year in beating Wales convincingly 19 – 0, a performance which saw them enter their first ever Cup quarter finals, an achievement many teams have yet to attain after several years in IRB Sevens. Kenya will be hoping that their success under African skies can continue in humid Hong Kong.

Italy also played its only two tournaments to date in the African leg of the IRB Sevens. Despite being in some very tough pools (with Fiji and Argentina in Dubai and New Zealand and Argentina in South Africa) the Italians have recorded some promising victories to date, beating last year's Hong Kong Bowl champions Morocco 7 – 5 in Dubai and winning the Shield in South Africa.

Hong Kong will be the first IRB Sevens event that Singapore will contest in 2003, but the team can look back on inspirational victories over Kenya in last September's Singapore Sevens and over Japan on its way to reaching the Bowl semi final in last year's Hong Kong Sevens as incentive to perform well.

England hope to prevent a handover in 2003





## POOL C

### Fijian flair continues to flow

Fiji celebrated an increasing rarity for the island nation in winning one of the IRB Sevens four series events to date, in South Africa. While the tournament titles don't flow at the same rate they used to, Fiji's fountain of sevens youth continues to emit an impressive stream. Fortunately for Fiji's players, but maybe not its Union, the location of this stream is no longer hidden. Today, former Fiji Sevens players are sprinkled throughout the Super 12 clubs of New Zealand and Australia. This tradition continues in 2003, with Fiji Sevens star Rupeni Caucaunibuca scoring four tries in the first two games for the Auckland Blues. Unfortunately for Hong Kong Sevens fans, 'Cacau', who scored 11 tries at the 2001 Rugby World Cup Sevens, was suspended for Hong Kong in the same year and was swooped up by the Super 12 before he had the chance to dazzle here. Other Fiji standouts like Waisale Serevi, Vilimoni Delasau and Bill Satala play in France and the UK.

Adding to the difficulties, Fiji's coach, Ratu Kitone Vesikula, died at the end of 2002. The Fiji Rugby Union is looking to former Hong Kong Sevens great Senivalati Laulau to continue coach Vesikula's strong work in improving Fiji's sevens situation. In a Fiji rugby first, the FRU have also named three assistant coaches and a trainer, all former Hong Kong sevens players, to aid the national effort. The new coaching and management staff is hoping to gradually shift its selection emphasis from overseas veterans to the young and exciting talent which packs the beaches of Fiji's beautiful islands.

The team has already seen results, with Laulau winning his first ever tournament in charge of Fiji in South Africa. On the strength of their South African success, a Plate victory in Dubai, as well as finals and semi final appearances in Brisbane and Wellington, Fiji are currently in second on the IRB Sevens standings.

Drawn against Scotland, Japan and Russia in 2003, Fiji has an unobstructed access to the Cup finals, although its traditional inflated scorelines could be minimized by the physical pool challenges. The European sides in Pool C face an immense task, as both Scotland and Russia are making IRB Sevens debuts in Hong Kong. Scotland will be hoping to go a step further than their results of 2002 in winning the Plate, which they lost last year to South Africa, 48 – 7. Russia will also be hoping to change things this time around, after their disappointing exit against Chinese Taipei in last year's Bowl quarter finals. Japan is another team under pressure at the moment, coming off one of their worst performances in Hong Kong in recent memory when they were sensationally evicted by Singapore 19 – 17 in the Bowl quarter finals. The recent run of results has been disturbing for Japan Sevens, who lost to Thailand to finish a remarkable fourth at the Asian Games Sevens competition in 2002.



Donald's delightful draw

## POOL D

### Hong Kong's Group of Delight

Ably assisted by Hong Kong Chief Secretary for Administration, Donald Tsang, Hong Kong has seen its way clear of the tournament's trio of top contenders and avoided the convergence of strong middle-runners like Argentina, South Africa, and France which accumulate in the late pools.

Australia, the fourth ranked team in IRB Sevens, heads Pool D. The Aussies have reached the Cup semi final in three of the four previous IRB Sevens tournaments; the exception coming where they would have wanted it least, at their home event, the Brisbane Sevens. In Brisbane, Fiji ushered Australia out in the Cup quarter final stage, 12 – 7. But the never-say-die Australian Sevens team, bolstered by former rugby leaguer Lote Tuqiri and veteran

Wallaby Chris Latham, came through to win the Plate, dismantling Samoa 47 – 12 in the final.

After capping a triumphant weekend by reaching the Cup semi final last year in Hong Kong, Wales has started out this IRB Sevens season in uneven form. In Dubai, they reached the Plate semi final, a real achievement with the level of teams on hand, (the other semi finalists were England, South Africa and Fiji, whom Wales lost to 22 – 12). Wales earned all four of its IRB Sevens points from its performance in Dubai. In South Africa, the team didn't fare as well, losing the Bowl semi final to Namibia, a result the Welsh Rugby Union can't have been pleased with considering the scale of its commitment to sevens which includes sending the team to several events and hosting a series event. Hong Kong will be the first opportunity since December for Wales to strut its sevens stuff on the international stage and there will be many Sevens fans, clad in red and in full voice, hoping they do just that.

For Hong Kong, seeded in Group Three for this year's draw, both Wales and China will be set as winnable targets. "With that draw we need to be in the Plate again, no question about that," said Head Coach Chris Roden; adding that he hopes to go one step further in making the semi finals. To do that, the coach knows his team will have to win either two games outright or take one and keep the scores close in the other two.

"I'm a New Zealander, so you know what I think about playing the Australians, but it will be a great honour for me personally to coach against them for the first time. I think it's frivolous to say that we can beat them, but hopefully we can play some good rugby." Regarding Wales, the coach is quietly confident, "Apart from England, I think there is a good chance with any of the other UK or European teams, including France and Wales. The Welsh reached the Cup semis last year, but it was wet and that might have suited them more than usual. If we can win two games in the pool you get a nice draw in your quarter final, so the Wales game is going to be very important for us."

Finally, the coach is looking forward to what he calls "a great



rivalry" in our last pool game versus China. The China match will be one the team will consider a must-win in order to achieve the pool points crucial for success on Sunday.

While happy with the results, Sevens captain Paul Dingley was careful to note that all the pools and teams are a challenge. "They're all tough, there's no easy pool at all, but we always go quite well against Australia and Wales. And at least we don't have Russia or Chinese Taipei in the fourth slot in our pool. So, it could have been a lot worse."

China has performed in two of the events to date, Australia and New Zealand, but have come away empty-handed. With its previous teams in this year's IRB Sevens based around leading China rugby clubs, Hong Kong will represent the first opportunity for China to gather its full national strength as preparation for hosting the Beijing Sevens the following weekend.

## POOL E

Sixth-placed IRB Sevens side South Africa head Pool E, along with Argentina, Korea and Sri Lanka. Last year's runners-up in IRB Sevens, South Africa have been hit by a spate of injuries and poaching from South Africa's Super 12 sides. Unfazed, coach Chester Williams has set a goal for the team of finishing not worse than second on this year's IRB Sevens; which means earning points in Hong Kong will be vital. He will be assisted by the return from injury of squad veterans Rodger Smith and Helgard Brink, while everyone will be waiting to see if last year's Best and Fairest Player of the Hong Kong Sevens, Brent Russell, will return to defend his try-scoring title from last year.

Argentina won the Plate in South Africa and has reached the Plate semi finals on three other occasions, a performance good enough to see them tied-seventh on the IRB Sevens table. Always a team that runs the superpowers close, Argentina is one of South Africa's bogey teams, and is perfectly capable of altering the Sunday afternoon plans of any of the top teams arriving in Hong Kong.

The past few years have seen Korea and Japan strike an uneasy balance at the top of the Asian rugby standings. But Japan's faltering steps of late have been Korea's steady gains. The Koreans defended their Asian Games gold medals in both fifteens and sevens at the expense of the Japanese in 2002 with Korea beating a resurgent Chinese Taipei Sevens in the final of the Asian Games sevens.

Home of the world's second oldest rugby union, Sri Lanka will be looking to improve on an excellent performance in 2002. The gutsy Sri Lankans scored two tries against Scotland, running them close 19 – 10, and also played well against the eventual Bowl champions Morocco in a 14 – 5 loss before bowing out in the quarter finals. Sri

# 2003 RUGBY WORLD CUP TICKETS donated by BRITISH AIRWAYS

There is a fantastic opportunity for the rugby enthusiast to win tickets for the 2003 Rugby World Cup in Australia during the weekend of the Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens.

British Airways have donated flights, accommodation and 2 tickets for the final, together with flights and 2 tickets for one of the semis, and flights plus 2 tickets for each of the England v South Africa and Australia v Ireland games.

You can only win by being at the Sevens. To win, just answer two questions on a form which will be widely available at the Hong Kong Stadium on all three days of the Sevens, then drop your answers into one of the many British Airways drop boxes that will be



Debra Armstrong of British Airways with members of the Hong Kong Sevens squad at the Official Draw

placed around the concourses. Winners will be drawn and announced before the first of the three finals on Sunday afternoon.

One more great reason to visit the Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens! RT

Lanka has played once this year, in Dubai, losing all five of its matches against some tough competition including Samoa, New Zealand, Canada and France, whom they ran close before losing 19 – 12.

## POOL F

Pool F features another strong top-to-bottom line-up of experienced Sevens sides including the pool's top seed former Hong Kong Cup winners Samoa, currently ranked fifth on the IRB standings. Samoa has already reached one Cup final early on in Dubai and would desperately love to repeat their success of a decade ago when they became the fourth international rugby union to win the Cup in Hong Kong.

The Samoans bring the perfect blend of superb fitness and devastating defence to sevens rugby and will look to overcome a resurgent French Sevens squad, currently ranked in seventh place on the IRB Sevens table. Looking to make things interesting are the Cook Islands, a tiny Pacific Island nation which boasts several New Zealand-based players.

Cook Islands have shown a willingness to mutiny against the current Sevens structure by winning the Shield in Brisbane. Making a difficult pool even deeper are Chinese Taipei, Bowl finalists in Hong Kong and silver medallists in the 2002 Asian Games Sevens competition.

With 24 of the world's finest sevens rugby teams again travelling to Hong Kong, and as many as seven of them legitimate Cup contenders, this year's Hong Kong Sevens could see the best level of play, throughout the ranks, in the 28-year history of the event. As the fourth of eight tournaments this year, and the competition offering the most IRB Sevens championship points for the winners, the 2003 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens is shaping up as the Series fulcrum in 2003. RT



# New system for the Sevens

**W**ith Hong Kong Head Coach Chris Roden taking over the reins of the Hong Kong Sevens squad for the first time in 2003, a new system has been implemented which the Coach says is already producing results.

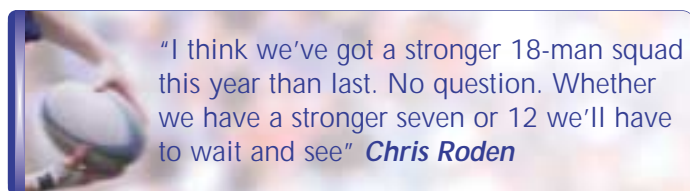
Roden and the National Selectors have subtly shifted the emphasis for this year's squad selection. Turning away from last year's focus on identifying the best rugby players and moulding them into sevens players. This year, the net was widened to include open trials for the 18-man preliminary HKSAR Sevens squad, in line with Roden's hopes of finding players with the physical skills necessary for sevens rugby: fitness, speed and strength.

"In training and selection, we are looking at a player's physical skills a bit more than in the past. If they have the physical requirements we select them in the preliminary squad and see if they have the ability to develop as sevens players. We've been at it since Christmas and the squad has progressed very well. There are a few changes from last year, a few new faces, but I think we've got a stronger 18-man squad this year than last. No question. Whether we have a stronger seven or twelve we'll have to wait and see."

As part of the new system, an open trial was held for this year's preliminary squad of 18 selection. The trials were very successful according to Roden, "We have quite a few new guys in the squad. Whether from the trials, or going through the Asian Games Sevens competition, which gave the local

Chinese players more exposure and a better opportunity to come through, so it will be interesting to see how these players develop over the next couple of weeks."

Hand in hand with the new selection goes the commitment to making it pay off. By picking the most physically gifted of local rugby players, Roden's onus then shifts to making sure they are ready to play at the level expected. "I think we are going down the right track picking players with speed, fitness and strength. But we have to set standards for them. Strength is



"I think we've got a stronger 18-man squad this year than last. No question. Whether we have a stronger seven or 12 we'll have to wait and see" **Chris Roden**

important but speed and fitness are vital. Last year our fitness levels were pretty good at Christmas, but we didn't keep testing them. I think with the fifteen-a-side rugby and injuries, the fitness levels had dropped off by the tournament." This year, Roden intends on seeing that this does not happen again, and the players have been undergoing regular (every three weeks) fitness assessments since December.

"The guys have been fronting up well. Hopefully, we can set them some goals and each year we will get more stringent on the squad's general fitness levels, but it is really a guide for the player more than anything. The guys know that if they don't reach a certain level, they will be letting their team-mates down at the

end of a game or at the end of a tournament. We are also working much more intensively at training. We want to get the players into oxygen debt and then task them with making decisions. And I think we've improved greatly in these areas this year."

Paul Dingley, Squad captain for the 2002 Hong Kong Sevens and captain of the preliminary training squad for 2003, has noticed the difference. "Training this year has been more dynamic, with a lot of weight training and greater reps. There's been more strength work so hopefully that can pay off. Another thing is that we've been lucky to have not had many injuries from club rugby so far."

With the once-in-a-lifetime incentive of running out in front of 40,000 screaming fans, the players have responded to the challenges laid forth. "The squad is stronger so there is more competition within the team. Some of the young guys are pushing the veterans, which is good,"



Hong Kong veterans (from left) Carl Murray and Warren Warner are looking for another Plate appearance in 2003



said Roden, who went on to note that the new players in the squad, Liu Kwok Leung, Lee Cheuk Yin, Dave Atkinson, Simon Hague, Alex Gibbs and James Weston, are "a bit inexperienced at sevens, but they all have the physical skills necessary for this level. They are very fit and very fast."

When asked about how many local players will be in the final team which will be announced in mid-March, the Coach stood pat, but confirmed that he is trying to meet the HKRFU's hoped-for number of three local players in the 12-man final squad. In this he is helped not only by the current promising crop of Chinese players and the play of veteran Chan Fuk Ping, but by the presence of several locally born western players like Peter Clough and Alex Gibbs. "Our target is three for the sevens squad. Last year we only managed two, but I am hopeful that we'll get three out of the 12 this year. There are two new Chinese players in the preliminary squad this year, Liu Kwok Leung and Lee Cheuk Yin, so it will be particularly interesting to see how they develop over the next few weeks," said Roden.

The Coach is tasked with a tough balance of advancing the cause of local rugby on Hong Kong's most prominent stage, while at the same time trying to field the most competitive side possible, a necessity in 2003, as the quality of play in the IRB Sevens continues to escalate.

Roden is aware of the fierce nature of this year's series. "I haven't seen much of it yet this year, but I know it has been competitive. I am having a tape sent to me from the Wellington Sevens so I will have the latest developments, and different attacking and defensive patterns, which can be useful for us. Last year, we picked up a couple of moves from Samoa and they worked well for us. You can learn a lot from those teams. While we may not be at the same level technically, we can still implement some of their plays."

Roden will have the coaching mantle on his shoulders after the efforts of Jim Rowark and Craig Pain in previous years. "I'm coaching the team by myself this year. Last year was a good opportunity for me to be involved, but without having to coach, as we were busy preparing for the Rugby World Cup 2003 qualifiers. It was a

## ON THE UP DOWN UNDER

As part of their preparations for the 2003 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens, the Hong Kong SAR Sevens Squad played at the Kiama Sevens in Australia in late February.

One of the oldest sevens tournaments Down Under, the Kiama Rugby Sevens began in 1973 with only eight teams competing; a far cry from today's 48-team one-day sevens squash. Participating clubs include classic Aussie country sides and traditional Sydney First Grade clubs as well as interstate and overseas teams.

Despite missing several veteran leaders including squad captain Paul Dingley, Chris Gordon and Carl Murray, the holy trinity of the Hong Kong Sevens squad over the past few years, Hong Kong reached the Cup play-off stage. "We had two good wins against reasonably average teams, and then played a good local team in Kiama A. Against them, it was 12 - all till the last play of the game, and they scored the winning try. But they were then beaten in the next round by 40 pts by eventual winners Gordon, so it's hard to say how well we played in the tournament."

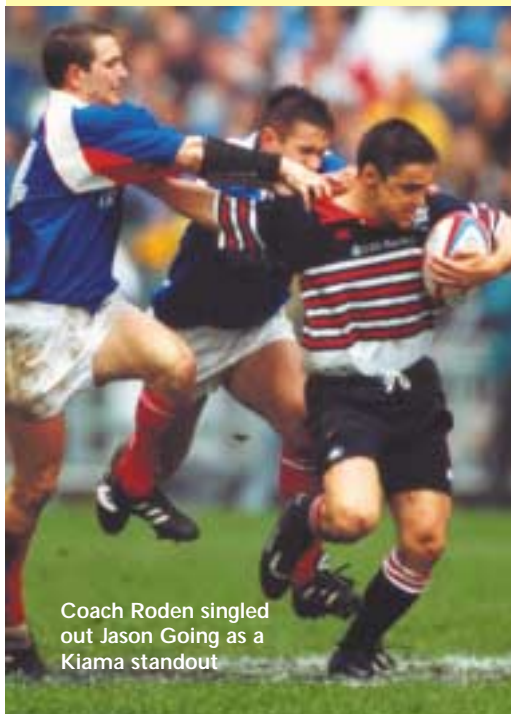
Taking further advantage of the opportunities for a run, Coach Roden arranged training matches versus Croatia/New Zealand for the next day. "Croatia was at the Hong Kong Sevens a few years ago and played very well. They have a lot of international players, and many of them are based in New Zealand. So this gave us a good opportunity to gauge where we are. We split with them at one match apiece."

Roden came back with mixed results from the outing. "I found out a few things that I didn't know, some positive, some not. Once again, experience was something we missed.

Roden listed Jason Going, Warren Warner, who captained the side in the absence of Sevens training squad captain Paul Dingley, and Liu Kwok Leung as those who excelled.

"Of the squad we brought, only three had played in the Hong Kong Sevens last year. So, we had a lot of new guys. Of these, Liu Kwok Leung had an excellent tournament. Dave Atkinson and Justin Gregory also played well."

While the performance of some of the players will have them pushing close for selection in the final squad, some will have found themselves a bit further off the pace. "Some of the players we took with us haven't played that much sevens rugby and I think some of them would benefit from going through an A sevens programme. They are good rugby players, but not necessarily great sevens players, and that showed a bit. It has moved me along in my decision making for the squad, but I am only one of four selectors so I will forward my views to the others." Coach Roden is joined by former HKRFU Chairman Peter Duncan, HKRFU Vice President Ian Brownlee and former HKRFU Marketing Director Pieter Schats on the selection panel for the Sevens squad. The final squad will be announced in the middle of March before the team visits the Taiwan Masters Quadrangular Tournament in Chinese Taipei on March 22 and 23, 2003. **RT**



Coach Roden singled out Jason Going as a Kiama standout

### KIAMA 7'S - HK SQUAD RESULTS

22 February 2003

#### POOL GAMES

HK (34): (0) Kiama B

HK (33): (0) Mulong

#### Tries

Justin Gregory  
Peter Clough  
Lusiano Afeaki  
Warren Warner  
Liu Kwok Leung  
David Atkinson

#### Tries

Alex Zenovic  
James Weston x 2  
Justin Gregory  
Peter Clough

#### Conversions

Liu Kwok Leung x 2

#### Conversions

Liu Kwok Leung x 4

#### CUP PLAY-OFF

HK(12): (19) Kiama A

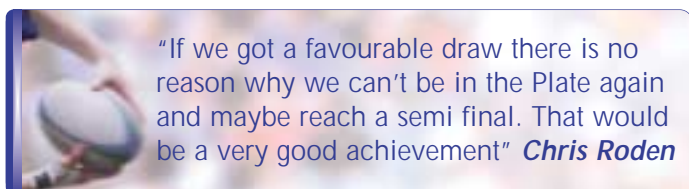
**Tries:** Jason Going, Peter Clough

**Conversion:** Liu Kwok Leung



dual edged sword, but I learned a lot as I shadowed the team over the weekend. This year, we have had a better opportunity to focus on the Sevens without having to prepare for the World Cup or Asian Games. Our focus has been much better."

When asked about his Sevens experience, the Kiwi frankly admits it isn't that much. "I've coached sevens at club, but not provincial level. In fact, there isn't much sevens played in New Zealand, which might be strange since we're the world champions. While moving from fifteens to sevens is not an easy adjustment for players, I think it's fairly easy for coaches."



"If we got a favourable draw there is no reason why we can't be in the Plate again and maybe reach a semi final. That would be a very good achievement" **Chris Roden**

With his emphasis on physical skills for 2003, we put Roden to the test in identifying the fittest and fastest players in the side. Of the 18-strong squad he has in camp at present, Roden picked Andy Chambers as the fastest, followed closely by Peter Clough and James Weston. Accordingly, these three are in the running for slots in the outside backs as is Alex Gibbs, out for the moment with a broken wrist, Lusiano Afeaki and 2002 Hong Kong Sevens squad veteran Jason Going.

The grafters in the side include veterans Dingley, Warren Warner, Chan Fuk Ping, Kris Marin and newcomers Justin Gregory. Familiar figures Chris Gordon and Carl Murray are again in training for the Sevens, joined by up and coming Chinese player Liu Kwok Leung, who continues to make a name for himself in the inside backs. For Roden, these three are essential for their vision, "Carl is a quiet person off the field, but he's amazingly vocal on the field in encouraging and guiding his team mates, he brings a lot of experience, leadership and vision to the side. Chris Gordon also has great vision. In fact, the only other player in the squad with a similar vision to these two is Liu Kwok Leung. So I'm keen to see whether he can come through in the next few months to either put pressure on those



Andy Chambers, the fastest player in the preliminary Hong Kong squad, will be looking to wrong-foot more opposition this year

two or show that he has the potential to be a team leader in the future. He has a very good eye for the gap and is good at putting people away. He just needs some experience, which takes time. But you have to give these players the opportunity to give an indication of their ability."

The Coach was also asked to set some standards for the squad in Hong Kong. "We haven't talked about any goals with the team yet, but I suppose in my mind I would like to see an improvement on last year in Hong Kong, when we reached the Plate quarter finals. If we got a favourable draw there is no reason why we can't be in the Plate again and maybe reach a semi final. That would be a very good achievement."

The team will play an intensive period of top-flight sevens with the Taiwan Masters Quadrangular Tournament with Korea, Japan and Taiwan the week before the tournament, followed by the Hong Kong Sevens and the Beijing Sevens a week later.

Dingley is looking forward to the Chinese Taipei trip. "We definitely need to play before Hong Kong. After the Taiwan Masters, we have time to fix any problems. Hopefully we can play well in Taipei, peak in Hong Kong and carry through to Beijing." **RT**



Cool under pressure: Hong Kong's Paul Dingley shows why he is a superb sevens captain



# SEVEN QUESTIONS FOR SEVENS CAPTAINS

Paul Dingley and Zhang Zhiqiang both began their international sevens careers in Hong Kong in 1998. Both men will be leading their teams at the 2003 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens.

RUGBY TALK caught up with these two very busy men to get their pitch perspective of the IRB Sevens...



Dingley will look to keep Hong Kong on top of things at the Sevens

**Q:** You have played IRB Sevens in Wellington, Brisbane, Dubai, Tokyo, Beijing, and of course Hong Kong, what do you think of the series so far?

**PD:** I think it's a fantastic series, and it seems to get better each year. The standard has certainly improved and there are now five or six teams that can win any tournament. For Hong Kong, it has become more difficult for us to compete as most of the countries contract players that concentrate mainly on sevens. However, we are fortunate that Hong Kong is relatively small, so it's easier for us to get together as a squad when preparing for a tournament.

**Q:** How does Hong Kong compare to other IRB Sevens events?

**PD:** Hong Kong is without doubt the best event on the circuit. All the players I've spoken to rate Hong Kong as their favourite tournament.

**Q:** How is captaining a sevens match different than fifteens, what skills are more or less in demand in each game?

**PD:** A sevens game only last 14 minutes, so one mistake can seriously affect the outcome of a match. A lot more pressure is involved, so more communication required. The one good thing about sevens is that all the players are talking all the time, which helps.

**Q:** What is your best ever Sevens experience?

**PD:** My first year 1998 when I met my wife Louise.

**Q:** You have played IRB Sevens in Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai, Australia and New Zealand. What do you think of the IRB Sevens so far?

**ZZ:** IRB Sevens is very competitive. The games feature speed and technique and are exciting to watch so it's gaining popularity throughout the world. The teams are carefully selected and the sport has raised its standard and increased its competitiveness. New Zealand and Fiji used to be the only teams winning, but competition between the teams is now more intense and results are harder to predict these days.



Zhang Zhiqiang

**Q:** How does Hong Kong compare to the other tournaments? And to Beijing/Shanghai?

**ZZ:** I've played in many Sevens tournaments but the best impressions are from Hong Kong. The festive atmosphere, the beautiful stadium and the fervent crowds are the things that I liked most about Hong Kong. It is different in Beijing, where there is a lack of spectators and the organization is not as strong. The facilities are also not as good as in Hong Kong. The reason behind this is a lack of rugby knowledge and awareness. We need to improve and develop in every aspect of the game. Last year was our first year hosting an international sevens tournament in Beijing, and I hope this year we will manage to make an impressive improvement.

**Q:** What is your best experience at the Sevens?

**ZZ:** The most memorable moments are always the 'firsts' and I can still remember my first time at the Sevens in 1998. It was also my first time representing China Sevens and my first time to play in an international tournament. When I put on the China jersey and walked into the stadium, I began to feel the pressure. My hands were sweating and my legs felt like they were welded to the ground. We were surrounded by the colourful and noisy crowd and I couldn't even hear my team mates. All I could see were my opponents. We were a bit nervous and inexperienced and didn't perform very well in the first year.

The best experience I've had at the Sevens was in 2000, when we were the runners-up in the Bowl Championship. I received the Trophy and shook hands with Mr Tung Chee Hwa. I felt his warm hands and was impassioned. He said to me "Good job, kid! I hope you'll have even better results next year!" I raised the trophy and felt the crowd's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36



# Hong Kong Sevens Supremo

In this issue of the Director's Chair, **RUGBY TALK** catches up with a man that moves nearly as fast as the players in the competition he oversees, Peter Burbidge-King, Tournament Director of the 2003 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens.

**P**eter Burbidge-King, or PBK as he's universally known in Hong Kong rugby circles, brings the ideal blend of experience and enthusiasm to one of the largest volunteer positions in Hong Kong rugby – Tournament Director for the Hong Kong Sevens.

"The Sevens never stops. We have a wash-up meeting, and then we start the next one. As Tournament Director, I am the coordinator of everything on and off the pitch in terms of playing the games. From the minute the teams arrive we have to look after them to help them settle in. Friday morning I am in the stadium and at 3:00pm my heart starts racing. Then, when the whistle blows you're into it until the final whistle blows on Sunday."

Luckily, he has over 30 years of experience in Hong Kong rugby to rely upon; experience that includes playing, mini rugby coaching and rugby administration, whether in service to the Police Rugby Football Club or to the Hong Kong Rugby Football Union (HKRFU). It is his blend of experience and rugby enthusiasm, and the readily-acknowledged support from his family, that has helped him steer the Sevens through some transformative years as it assumed its rightful place as the Koh-i-noor of the IRB Sevens.

"I have been Tournament Director since 1998. I took over from Peter Else after the Rugby World Cup Sevens in 1997." Since then, the position has changed considerably, "When I took over, the event was still very much the HKRFU's but now it is a big part of the IRB Sevens. The first year for the series was in 2000 and we were really feeling our way back then."

As so often happens with the Sevens, PBK and the Sevens Organizing Committee

successfully navigated the hurdles to seamlessly integrate Hong Kong's Sevens carnival within the IRB circuit; "I take my hat off to the HKRFU and their staff, we've come through some difficult times and it's amazing when it all works," said Burbidge-King.

Commenting on the challenges created by the IRB Sevens, PBK notes that the new series "has not affected the tournament

and developing rugby in the region. But it's a fact of life that we can't have every Asian nation in, so we've had to drop out one or two. While we can't always accommodate all the Asian teams, we do make an effort to rotate teams from the region so everyone has a chance."

Hong Kong has also benefited from the IRB Sevens in another important aspect,

"We now have core participating teams in the IRB Sevens, about 10 at the moment. They are committed to come under the auspices of the IRB, so it makes life easier for us. England coming back the last few years is a prime example, as they have obviously been very important for the Hong Kong Sevens."

One of the most marked changes in Hong Kong resulting from the continuing development of the sevens code is its corresponding effect in the HKRFU. "I am still a gifted amateur, but the Sevens have changed with the IRB Sevens. Before we were run by volunteers and now the game has become professional, as have the HKRFU. We now have a large organization of paid employees, but there are still people like me who serve as volunteers. In fact, my position has always been manned by a volunteer, and for some reason, this side of the Sevens has always had a policeman involved. It seems to be hereditary and my successor will also be a policeman, Rod Mason. It is important that some-

one who works with the government should stay involved because they are familiar with how the system works."

This bureaucratic knowledge will be even more significant at this year's Sevens in light of recent international security concerns. "This year security is very important. The Police Force has been great and security will be very high-profile at the Sevens. The number of police will be increased which will help a lot in pro-



Peter Burbidge-King and his wife Christine at the 2003 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens draw

itself, but it has affected the way the tournament is run. Team selection in particular is in the IRB's purview. The actual organization of the tournament is still ours, but year by year the IRB is more involved in running things, which is proper because to have a successful series you need consistency."

Overall, it has been a positive process confirms Burbidge-King, "The IRB has been very good about maintaining the ethos of the Sevens which is Asian teams

viding stadium security. Between now and the end of March, we don't know what will happen in the rest of the world, but the Sevens will go on."

It is this sort of determination, and not just on the part of PBK, but of all the organizers and volunteers, that has been the key ingredient behind the Sevens' spectacular international success.

As he prepares to hand over his specialist knowledge, Burbidge-King proudly notes that the Sevens is a "well-oiled machine. Many of the volunteers have been doing this for years. Everybody knows what their role and job is, and the strongest resource we have is the HKRFU who are very well organised. Beth Coalter (Tournament Co-ordinator of the Sevens) is a great example, she's magic."

As on the pitch, a bit of organization pays dividends in the office as well. "If you talk to any of the players, whether they have been here year after year or are coming for the first time. They will all tell you that Hong Kong's hospitality is beyond anything they are used to anywhere in the world."

***"The Sevens never stops. We have a wash-up meeting, and then we start the next one"***

Pleasing the players is as essential as pleasing the fans, something the Hong Kong Sevens is famous for. The unique festival atmosphere of the Sevens is, for PBK, one of Hong Kong's primary advantages as compared to other circuit events. "Hong Kong has the edge through history. The Hong Kong Sevens is unlike all other tournaments. It is the most international. Not only do people from around the world want to come to the Sevens, they want to come to Hong Kong. It's the major tourist event of the year."

And Peter Burbidge-King is dedicated to ensuring that this high standard remains, even after he steps down next year. "This year, I have an Assistant Tournament Director, Rod Mason as my understudy. Rod has a long history in Hong Kong rugby as a player and administrator, and he'll take the lead next year and I will be able to give him my advice."

## SHORT BIOGRAPHY: PETER BURBIDGE-KING

Peter Burbidge-King first arrived Hong Kong back in 1974; previously a Royal Marine Officer, he came to serve in the Hong Kong Police Force, and by extension, the Police Rugby Football Club. A severely broken wrist sidelined him permanently after only two seasons, but the Police rugby club's loss was Hong Kong's gain as PBK soon turned his energies to coaching and assisting in the development of Hong Kong rugby.

His developmental credits include being one of the first mini rugby coaches, taking over the second year of players in the Hong Kong Football Club mini programme during the days when coaches aged, if not mellowed, with their players. "Mini rugby started with a group of people around the Football Club over 20 years ago. Dermot Agnew, now Chairman of the Club, coached the first year of players, and mine was the second year. Back then, you progressed with the kids and even today, they are still good friends. I see many of my former players at the Sevens, and it is still hello Uncle Peter and Auntie Christine, (my wife is one of the great mothers of local rugby). It is just amazing at how tight-knit the rugby community is in Hong Kong."

Peter was the Secretary, and later Chairman, of Police RFC during the 1980s, before assuming the roles of Director and Team Manager for the HKRFU, a position he held from 1990 – 1998. At present, Peter is a Vice President of the HKRFU and has been the Sevens Tournament Director since 1998. His rugby success has shadowed his professional success, having quite literally risen through the ranks to his present position as Chief Superintendent and Deputy Regional Commander of the Marine Police; one of the most unique maritime police forces with one of the largest police flotillas in the world.



Peter and his wife Christine have two children, James and Sarah. James, who was born and raised here, is one of the original generation of mini rugbys and an accomplished player in his own right, having represented Hong Kong Schools at U15, U17, and U19 levels and been capped for Hong Kong three times. He now plays for Kowloon RFC.

Like every good policeman, Peter credits his higher-ups for his success. "My wife is probably the greatest female supporter of rugby in Hong Kong. She is well-known in all the circles, and is always one of the first in the HKRFU box at the Sevens in the morning and one of the last to leave at night."

The Burbidge-King's commitment to local rugby has been evident at every Hong Kong Sevens, barring 1977, when Peter was forced to take the mandatory leave of absence required for all Police officers after a certain length of service.

As Peter gazed out at the Harbour from the Marine Police Officers Mess in Sai Wan Ho, he fondly recalled his Sevens experiences. "I've had five years as Tournament Director, and will act in an advisory capacity next year. It will be a sad day, but there are other tournaments. I am moving to Brisbane so maybe they will be interested in my experience for their Sevens."

The results have been gratifying for a man who has spent 30 years in service to Hong Kong, both through his career and his sport. "I look at it as doing my little bit for the community. But again, I have been hugely supported throughout by my wife, daughter and son, so really it's been a family effort." Luckily for Hong Kong rugby enthusiasts, the Burbidge-King's define any friend of rugby as a friend of this very special family. **RT**

When asked what that advice might be, PBK's reply came unhesitatingly, "First, enjoy it and feel proud of it at the end of the day. I know I do. My last task at the Sevens is to run the Player's Dinner (on Sunday evening). When I finish, I sit with my wife in the corner and we reflect

on the weekend. It's very gratifying to see the players and the spectators and what a wonderful time they've had. That's what it's all about really." Over the next few years, Peter Burbidge-King will make that move to the spectators stand himself. He will certainly have earned it. **RT**



For rugby fans around the world, March in Hong Kong means some of the most enjoyable rugby viewing around, but for the local rugby community it means it's time to lace up the boots and get serious, with the HKRFU League Grand Championships in full swing along with a raft of other competitions and entertaining and informative rugby-related activities...

## And they're off...



The HKRFU has announced that in association with the Hong Kong Jockey Club, this year's Hong Kong Sevens party will be released from the gate one week earlier than usual with Racing with Rugby Night at Happy Valley on 19 March, 2003.

The rugby race meeting will include a Class One main event, the Hong Kong Rugby Football Union Cup. The HKRFU is even turning the tables trackside with a 110m Dash by players from Hong Kong's rugby clubs.

Jason Cornell, HKRFU Director of Marketing confirmed the footrace saying "We've called for club entries. The race will feature players representing their clubs and will take place as an opener to the feature race of the night."

Allan Payne, Executive Director of the HKRFU, explained the event's raison d'être. The racing night will present a great opportunity for the rugby community of Hong Kong including players, officials, sponsors, patrons and supporters to have a great evening's entertainment in an environment with a completely different sporting theme.



Payne indicated that this could be an ongoing event on the rugby calendar, "It is hoped that the "Racing with Rugby" evening will be a regular event on both the Racing and Rugby calendars. I encourage Hong Kong's rugby community to join us at the first of these events for a great way to start the following week's carnival of rugby."

The HKRFU is taking up an entire floor of the 'Happy Valley Suite' for the community to enjoy the evening in comfort, catered for by Jockey Club staff with food and beverage provided at approximately HK\$428 per head or HK\$5,000 for a table of 12.

## Mighty minis family festivals

The HKRFU has concluded another successful season of mini rugby festivals. This year, Hong Kong's 2,000-player strong mini rugby community gathered together for five fun-filled family festivals.

Over 20 years old, the HKRFU Mini Rugby Union features 13 active clubs and thousands of local and expatriate children, both boys and girls, under the age of 12. Accompanied by their parents, these children play rugby each Sunday morning from September to April.

Hopefully, these mighty Minis will provide a sufficient supply of senior stars to ensure the future of Hong Kong rugby is as promising as its past.



### Mini Festivals – 2002/2003 Season

Festival	Date
DeA Tigers	3 November 2002
Aberdeen/ Flying Kukris	26 January 2003
Hong Kong University / Sandy Bay	16 February 2003
Tai Po Dragons	23 February 2003
Hong Kong Football Club	2 March 2003

## HKRFU 50<sup>th</sup> Season Annual Dinner & Awards Presentation



Conrad Hotel  
Friday 2nd May

Further details in the next  
issue of Rugby Talk

For more, contact the  
HKRFU on 2504 8311,  
or visit us online at  
www.hkrugby.com

## Cathay Pacific Community Coaching Week

Lack of facilities, not enough props and players leaving the game around 15 or 16... Ring bells?

These problems are familiar to Hong Kong's rugby community, but local enthusiasts can take consolation from the fact that, according to England Rugby Football Union Training Manager Will Feebery, these are the same challenges that beset even the world's top-ranked rugby union, England.

With the support of Cathay Pacific, Feebery and Ivan Torpey, RFU Rugby Development Officer for Hampshire, were hosted by the HKRFU in February, along with kicking specialist and ex-England fullback Simon Hodgkinson.

Hong Kong Head Coach Chris Roden explains, "Each year we try to bring someone in from overseas for a coaching module. Last year, it was former New Zealand Women's Coach Darryl Suasua and women's rugby. This year, Allan's (Allan Payne, Executive Director of the HKRFU) idea was to make it more community-based. The main focus is the RFU Level One Coaching Course, but we are also hosting secondary schools coaching sessions, individual skills sessions for national team players and even club administration workshops, so it's very extensive."

Feebery first started his RFU career as a Development Officer for Hampshire, where he helped discover a rather influential England player, the nation's leading points scorer, Johnny Wilkinson. "The RFU development programme has been in existence for 14 years and is really paying off at the moment. We've been working on youth rugby for years and now there are thousands of youngsters playing."

Feebery's goal is to provide a useful reference and help other unions take advantage of the RFU's success. "In Hong Kong for example, the facilities aren't plentiful, so we need to build a resource that would help the HKRFU fit that. We can give the Union our information on how we have tackled this in our system and they adapt what they can."

Key to the success of the Community Coaching Week will be the conferences with the HKRFU Development Officers and the local clubs. "One of the things we discovered was that unless you get schoolteachers qualified as coaches, even if it's just tag, it doesn't work. Development officers can't be everywhere, so to sustain the continuity you have to qualify teachers and parents as coaches. We've brought our resources on how to play, coach and referee tag rugby to give out to the schools while we're here."

Feebery and his assistant Torpey have been pleasantly surprised by the turnout at the sessions so far, in particular the Level One Coaching Course, which was fully booked with 30 participants. With the strong turnout, the pair spent much of their last shopping hours in assessing the 30 candidates, along with Hong Kong's Terry Hart, a Level 3 qualified Coach in his own right.

The coaches' objectives varied for each area. "Skills-wise, our objective is to get players to understand what we're trying to do. With the coaches, it's getting them to understand what coaching is all about: how to improve and challenge a player and how to break down a skill and develop it properly, so that the player understands what he's trying to do with that particular skill".

"Overall, the attendance and feedback has been very positive; whether from players, schoolteachers or mini rugby personnel. We even had an excellent sessions with the referees. A wedge of information is flooding back from the sessions which the HKRFU will be able to analyse. We will also be preparing a detailed report on the week and how it has gone."

"We have really enjoyed ourselves. The whole focus of our tour to Hong Kong was to teach safety and enjoyment in that order. We place the emphasis on enjoying everything we do and I hope that comes through in the end. Because after all, it is still a game and meant to be enjoyed."

Feebery's work ensures that this will be the case for future generations, not just in England, but in Hong Kong.

RFU Training manager Will Feebery (2nd left) and Simon Hodgkinson (foreground) meet with the HKRFU staff (Ivan Torpey not pictured)



## Official Sevens Ticket & Merchandise Outlets 2003

Shop 102, 1/F, The Landmark, Central, Hong Kong  
Tel: (852) 2523 0320  
Mon - Sun, 10:30am - 7:00pm

1/F Devon House, TaiKoo Place, 979 King's Road,  
Island East, Hong Kong Tel: (852) 2214 9120  
Mon - Fri, 10:30am - 7:00pm Sat, 10:30am - 3:00pm

Official Sevens Ticket Outlet  
No. 1 Lan Kwai Fong, Central, Hong Kong  
Mon - Sun, 5:30pm - 10:30pm

Roadshow Promotions  
Harbour City, Tsim Sha Tsui (15 & 16 March 2003)  
Pacific Place, Admiralty (22 to 27 March 2003)





# AND THE WINNER IS ...

www.hksevens.com.hk

The 2002 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens saw one of the best tournaments in the 28-year history of the event. With a return to pre-event sell-outs and the crowning of an unprecedented new winner, the 2002 Sevens set an impressively high benchmark for success. Not even three very wet days could dampen the crowd's enthusiasm; while nothing short of a tsunami could extinguish the excitement surrounding the 2003 Sevens. Before we kick-off the next exciting chapter in Hong Kong Sevens history, *RUGBY TALK* takes a fond look back at a sensational Tournament in 2002...



*South Africa beat Scotland 48 – 7 in the Hong Kong Sevens Plate and Morocco edged Chinese Taipei 15 – 12 in the Bowl*

*James Simpson-Daniel scored a hat-trick for England in their 33 – 20 Cup Final victory over Fiji, as they became the first Northern hemisphere union to win the Hong Kong Sevens*



*The highest Score at the 2002 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens was 66 – 0 with Fiji beating China. Fiji scored 10 tries and 8 conversions in the 14-minute match. Fiji was also the highest scoring team in 2002 with 33 tries, an average of 5.5 per match played. They scored 201 points throughout the weekend and averaged 34 points per match*

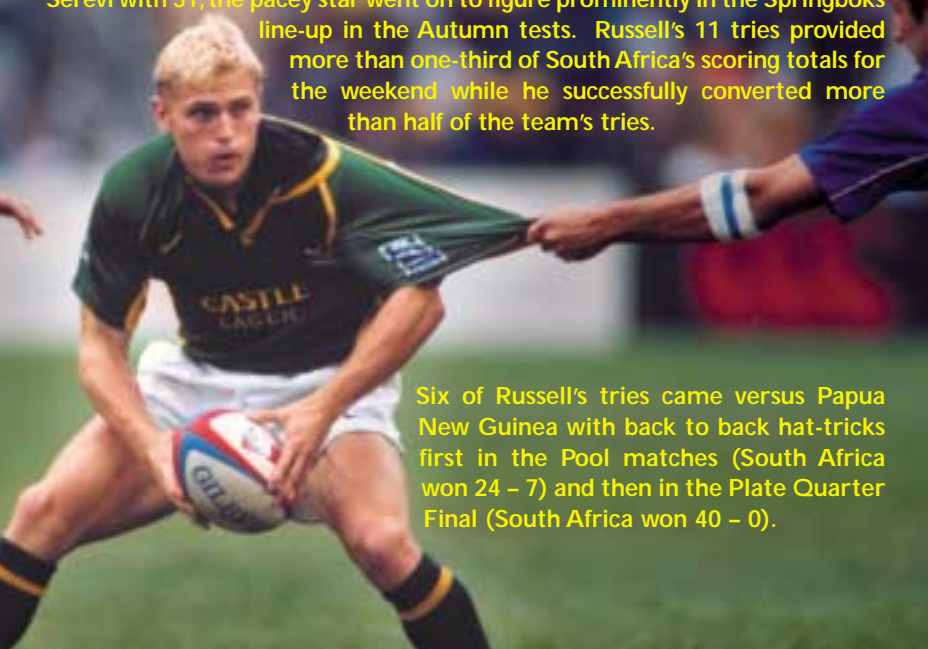


*Waisale Serevi scored his 1,000th IRB Sevens point at the 2002 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens*



Brent Russell became the first South African to win the Hong Kong Sevens Leslie Williams Award for the Best & Fairest Player at the 2002 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens

On the basis of his 89 points coming from 11 tries and 17 conversions and nearly doubling the next highest players, Simon Amor with 52 and Waisale Serevi with 51, the pacy star went on to figure prominently in the Springboks line-up in the Autumn tests. Russell's 11 tries provided more than one-third of South Africa's scoring totals for the weekend while he successfully converted more than half of the team's tries.



*Six of Russell's tries came versus Papua New Guinea with back to back hat-tricks first in the Pool matches (South Africa won 24 – 7) and then in the Plate Quarter Final (South Africa won 40 – 0).*



## HEAD-TO HEAD

Years Played  
Years missed  
Finals Played  
Finals Won  
Head-to-Head Finals Won  
Hong Kong Sevens Titles  
Leslie Williams Awards for Best & Fairest Player of the Hong Kong Sevens

## RUSH

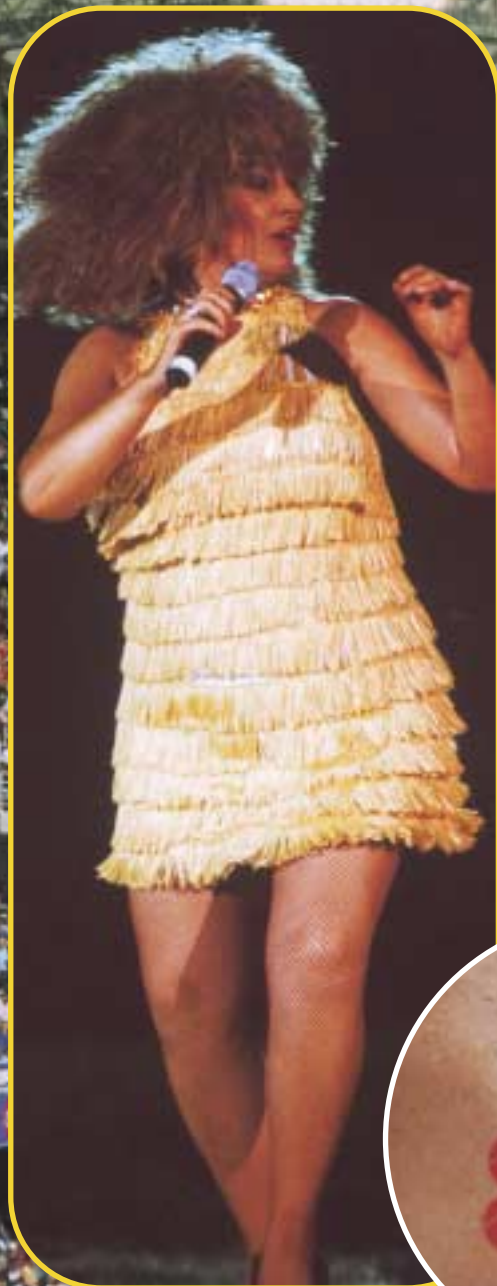
14 (1988 – 2000, 2002)  
2001: broken leg at the Rugby World Cup Sevens in Argentina  
10  
6  
4 (1995, 1996, 2000, 2001)  
6  
1 (1991)

## SEREVI

13 (1989 – 2000, 2002)  
2001: recovering from a broken leg from club rugby in France  
10  
6  
4 (1990, 1991, 1992, 1999)  
6  
3 (1989, 1990, 1998)

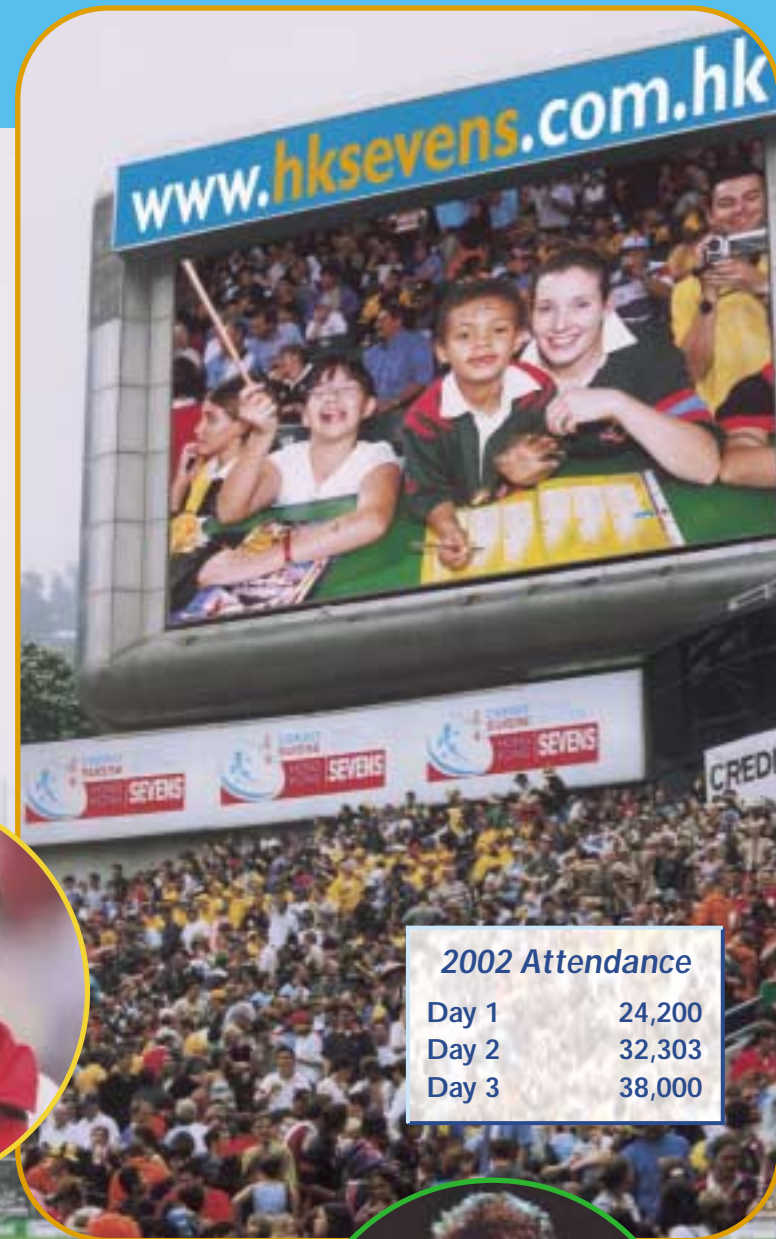


# ... RUGBY!



## 2002 Food and Drink Consumption

Heineken	1,000+ hectolitres
Spirits	8,000 bottles
Wine	5,000 bottles
Beer (Draught)	2,100 barrels
Beer (Can)	72,000 cans
Soft drink	15,000 cans
Hotdogs	15,000 pcs
Buffet for Suite	27,000 sets
Food for Players	1,200 sets
Food for Boxes	10,500 sets



## 2002 Attendance

Day 1	24,200
Day 2	32,303
Day 3	38,000



## Manpower for 2002

Officials & Referees	110
Ball Boys / Girls	32
Catering Staff	1,450
Heineken Vendors	80
Merchandise Sales	150
Cleaning Staff	150
Security & Stewards	750



## Hong Kong Sevens Long Lunch

600: Number of people attending the 2002 Long Lunch  
HK\$260,000: Funds raised for the HKRFU Charitable Trust at the Lunch





## Women's Sevens on the rise

**T**he players and supporters come from around the world with one thing in mind, playing in or watching the best tournament of its kind anywhere in the world... the 2003 Cable & Wireless Hong Kong Women's Rugby Sevens and Asian Championship (HKWRS) on March 27th and 28th, 2003 at So Kon Po.

"Women's rugby is one of the world's fastest growing sports," notes Jamie Scott, Honorary Secretary General of the Asian Rugby Football Union, "It is only a question of time before the holding of a Women's Rugby Sevens World Cup becomes a reality." As in the earliest days of the Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens, the earliest growth of this Women's World Championship is being nurtured here in Hong Kong.

Reflecting the rise in the women's game globally, the 2003 HKWRS is welcoming four international representative sides including last year's champion New Zealand's Aotearoa Women's Sevens and the USA Eagles, last year's runners-up. Rounding out the international field are England and Fiji.

The Asian Championship, first played as part of the HKWRS in 2000, has also enjoyed tremendous growth, with a 100%

increase in participating unions over the past two years. In 2003, a record ten Asian teams will be coming to vie for regional and international honour, including hosts Hong Kong, Arabian Gulf, China, Japan, reigning Asian sevens champions Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Uzbekistan.

*"Women's rugby is one of the world's fastest growing sports .... It is only a question of time before the holding of a Women's Rugby Sevens World Cup becomes a reality" Jamie Scott*

To encompass both tournaments, the Asian Championship sides are pooled into two groups of five teams each. On the first day, the four international teams will play each other in a round robin competition, as will the Asian teams. The results of the opening day will provide the seeding for day two, with the top four Asian teams competing with the international sides for the Hong Kong Women's Rugby Sevens title. The top two Asian teams will meet at 1:40pm on Friday 28th March to settle the Asian Championship.

In the previous three tournaments, New Zealand has beaten the USA in the

HKWRS Cup final, while Kazakhstan has advanced past Hong Kong in the Asian Championship; but the new teams could upset the balance of power. England, one of the top ranked women's rugby teams in the world, should pose a real threat, while every sevens fan knows what Fiji is capable of on their day.

But Aotearoa and the USA have made it clear that changing the order of things won't be easy, with each recording important victories in the run-up to this year's tournament. The Eagles completed a successful 8-2-1 tour of New Zealand and Fiji in February that included beating the Fiji national team and drawing with defending Hong Kong champions, Aotearoa.

The rivals met in New Zealand's Whangarei Sevens. The Fiji tour seemed to pay early dividends for the Eagles, who drew with Aotearoa "A", 12 - all. The Eagles' elation didn't last long, however, as they came crashing down to earth after a 12 - 5 loss to a loaded Aotearoa "B" side which included Cheryl Waaka, No. 8 for the New Zealand Black Ferns, winners of the 2002 Women's World Cup and a finalist for the women's World Player of the Year.

With its "A" and "B" sides playing each other in the final, Aotearoa's undefeated streak in tournament competition was guaranteed to continue, but their intensity didn't wane. Coach Peter Joseph's decision to use the tournament and final as a selection vehicle for Hong Kong meant the affair was as intense as any classic derby. Determined to retain their spot in Hong Kong, Aotearoa "A", captained by the appropriately named Kellie Kiwi, won the final 41 - 5, helping chase selection doubts from the coach's mind.

With the world's elite women's rugby sevens outfits coming to town, Hong Kong's Women's Sevens squad will be facing a greater challenge than ever before. At the moment, the team remains focused on first finding a way to circumvent Kazakhstan and secure Asia's top sevens spot; a task which will be made more difficult with the inclusion of teams from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

While these two teams enter the tour-

Hong Kong looks to keep a step ahead of its Asian competitors



Photo: Neil McCormick



China Women's Sevens returns to the Asian Championship in 2003

Photo: Neil McCormick

nament largely unknown, the performance of the Kazakhs, both in Hong Kong and as an Asian representative at the Women's Rugby World Cup, portends a tough and physical competition. The presence of Uzbekistan, a largely expatriate-side from the Arabian Gulf and a fit China side in Hong Kong's Pool will only add to the physical demands of the two-day tournament. Asian rivals Kazakhstan have a less strenuous route against Krygyzstan, Japan, Singapore and Thailand.

Despite the challenges, squad manager Karen Robertson remains confident about the team and the future. "We have a good squad at the moment and training has been

going well. We haven't had enough matches yet, but we hope to get a good look at the girls on tour."

"Paul's [Coach Paul Gaffney] been fantastic. I hope that he'll help again next year" **Karen Robertson**

The squad will be pared down to ten in late March to allow the selectors, Hong Kong Women's Sevens Coach Paul Gaffney and HKRFU Head Coach Chris Roden, a chance to look at all of the players. Robertson, a long-time veteran of women's rugby in Hong Kong and previous chairperson of Hong Kong Women's Rugby, credited Gaffney's work in preparing the side for this year and expressed her hopes he would return. "Paul's been fantastic. I hope that he'll help again next year, as we have never had the same coach for two years in a row. With younger girls at U19 level starting to come through, we could improve a lot with some continuity."

After the cancellation of traditional warm-up tournaments abroad this year, Coach Roden arranged a Tour to Sri Lanka from the 6th to the 10th of March 2003.

In a fitting confirmation of the calibre of rugby on display at the Hong Kong Women's Rugby Sevens, the HKRFU have again confirmed that for a fifth consecutive year the HKWRS Cup final will be played at 9:25pm on Friday night (March 28) at the 2003 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens. **RT**

## Ladies league lifts off

In this year's Women's fifteen-a-side competition, Club Ice held firm to overcome a strong challenge from DeA Tigers and win the League title. The result was decided by a solitary penalty goal, drop-kicked by Tash McCarroll late in the match. DeA Tigers were left ruing their inexperience when they turned down two penalties in front of the posts instead opting to run the ball. "We didn't know that we could drop-kick goals," said disappointed DeA captain Wu Yuet-ming.

Despite the drawback, the league's local players responded well to the highly successful fifteen-a-side competition this year, which takes the place of the normal tens format played by Hong Kong's women ruggers.

### Hong Kong Women's Rugby reaches new heights



McCarroll, a member of Hong Kong Women's Rugby Sevens training squad, said "This season's league was awesome, it was the best fifteens competition we've had. The numbers were good because it was held at the start of the season when we get new players. I think the Chinese girls really enjoyed it as well. In general it was good for Hong Kong, because if we want to try and qualify for the Women's Rugby World Cup in future, we need to have more experience instead of just playing one qualifying match. In New Zealand where I'm from, we're used to playing fifteens and now we're the world champions. In Hong Kong, it's only going to get stronger." **RT**

### HKSAR WOMEN'S 7s SQUAD TOUR TO SRI LANKA

6 – 10 March 2003

#### Management:

Paul GAFFNEY (Coach)

Karen ROBERTSON (Manager)

Mel BRAITHWAITE (Physiotherapist)

#### Players:

Emma HOLLAND

KWOK Yuk Lin, Kalin

Michell KOLOSSY

Natasha MCCARROLL

TSE Man Sze, Cookie

Toni PHILLIPS (Captain)

Donna SPENCE

Natasha WESTON

WU Yuet Ming

YU Suk Han, Fish



# DHL Hong Kong Tens delivers

**F**or the international rugby connoisseur, the ideal warm-up to the Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens is spent watching two action-packed days of the DHL Hong Kong Tens.

The 17th-annual Hong Kong Tens kicks off on Wednesday and Thursday, 26 and 27 March 2003, at the Hong Kong Football Club. The 24-team tournament is broken down into eight groups of three teams each, which then play in pool competition on day one before being seeded into the Tens Cup, Plate and Bowl competitions. With a well-deserved reputation for its intensity of play, the teams at the 2003 Tens come from Australia, New Zealand, England, Wales, Ireland, China, Japan, Singapore and Saudi Arabia.

One of the premier rugby tens tournaments in the world, the DHL Hong Kong Tens is renowned for hosting top calibre players from the northern and southern hemispheres, including many former and future international stars.

The teams in this year's competition include 2002 Cup finalist Herbert Smith New Zealand Metros and semi finalists Clifford Chance Aliens and Crawshays. Three new international teams are also featured in this year's Cup competition Sydney University Assignment, Asia Miles



Tens action 2002

Photo: Sean Li

Samurai and the Bank of Bermuda Otago Shepherds. Returning teams from last year's top flight include Standard Life Asia London Exiles and the Hong Kong Barbarians.

The new sides could be dangerous with Asia Miles Samurai having played in 12 sevens tournaments in the last year alone, winning six and losing in the final of two others. The side has extended Tens invitations to Robert Howley, Scott Gibbs, Arwel Thomas and Eric Peters. The Otago Shep-

herds are also trying to round up a herd of former All Blacks with invitations to Jamie Joseph, Graham and Stu Bachop, Stu Forster and Marc Ellis. The task of Sydney University Assignment is simply to continue its current form as the number two team in Sydney's first grade last season.

Hong Kong's current and former finest will also be on display in 2003, with the Standard Life Asia London Exiles bringing back three familiar faces to Hong Kong rugby, Isi Tuivai, Riaz Fredericks (last year's winner of the Don Black Best & Fairest Award at the Hong Kong Tens) and Luke Nabaro. The Hong Kong Barbarians will call on players from local clubs Valley, Aberdeen, Kowloon and others.

Festivities for the 2003 DHL Hong Kong Tens began on February 22nd with the second annual Tens Ten Course Dinner and Official Draw held at the Hong Kong Football Club. Guests at the black tie dinner included Peter Wheeler, ex-England and British & Irish Lions hooker and Chief Executive of Leicester Tigers, as master of ceremonies; former All Black Andy Haden; and John Bentley former England and British & Irish Lions representative at both rugby union and league as guest speakers.

Hayden even played in the Tens in its earliest years, although the outspoken former lock-forward from Auckland couldn't



Peter Wheeler, John Bentley (2nd and 3rd left) and Andy Hayden (far right) dressed to the nines for Tens

recall much about the occasion, but whether from the effects of a long return flight to New Zealand from the UK (on which he stopped over to play in Hong Kong), or the social atmosphere of the Hong Kong Tens could not be confirmed.

Noting the improving standard of the Tens, Hayden recalled that in the earliest days of this fabled tournament, “You started with ten players on the pitch and then tried to bring on ten more before the final whistle. It was very different from today.”

Hayden offered his own take on the popularity of the Tens saying it is “ideally suited for this part of the world, because you don’t have to rely on big forward packs to get ball. Everyone gets their share, and the ability to use it well is what determines the winner. It’s a great game for learners really, because it has all the defensive elements of rugby missing from sevens.”

- The Football Club always puts on a good dinner and the Ten Course Tens Dinner is no exception with 534 people



HK Tens: pulling away from the competition in 2003

attending this year’s gala affair, which was also used as a fund-raiser. Money raised during the evening topped HK\$200,000, with over HK\$100,000 of that going to the Hong Kong Rugby Bali Fund thanks

to generous donations of Scotland v Wales Six Nations tickets by Murray Burton and a Rolling Stones autographed guitar from a New Zealand donor brought up by Andy Haden. **RT**



# Rugbyfest 10s

Everyone knows the great success of sevens in Hong Kong, but the ten-a-side rugby code also has many adherents here, with one of the newest and most welcome competitions on the mid-week scene the Descartes Kowloon Rugbyfest Tens on Wednesday, 26 March, 2003.

Rugbyfest is designed to attract social and touring teams who play at a reasonable standard but want a competitive and predominantly fun tournament that allows them to dazzle their mates with a 'Serevi shimmy'. Kowloon Secretary Chris Welsh explains "Visiting teams who are not of an 'elite' standard have in the past been disappointed by the difficulty of getting a game during the week. Rugbyfest will give these teams the chance." Kowloon is extending its hospitality to any member of the local rugby community as well, all of whom are invited to stroll down to So Kon Po for a pint or even a run out on the pitch should they choose.

According to HKRFU Executive Director Allan Payne, tens rugby renders well socially. "Tens competitions are a regular precursor to our main league programme in September, and return at the end of March, providing very social 'bookends' to the league competition. Since Tens is usually played in tournament format it provides a great opportunity for local and Asian region rugby players to meet up."

Among the teams participating in this year's event are sides from Japan (Yokohama Athletics and Country Club and the Tsunami Teetotallers), England (Stoneyhurst Wanderers), Australia (New South Wales Sheepshaggers), the USA (Pacific Coast



Grizzlies, and even from as far as Wanchai with the Devil's Advocate World Select, Hong Kong Barbarians, Aberdeen, Nomads and of course, the hosts Kowloon RFC.

The one-day Rugbyfest Tens is played from lunchtime until early evening with Cup, Plate and Bowl competitions. The tournament's ideal social scheduling provides these superbly trained athletes the morning lie-in necessary to prepare for the competition while keeping the evening free for the extracurricular activities essential to proper team-building.

Testing the players' dedication to the full, Rugbyfest Tens offers a full-day bar with food and an 'Evening with Kowloon Dinner' featuring ex-England prop Jeff Probyn and other entertainment. In keeping with its social theme, the Dinner has been opened to all punters. Tickets are only HK\$150 which includes entrance, food and drinks at happy hour prices all evening. For enquiries e-mail the club on [kowloonrfc@kowloonrfc.com.hk](mailto:kowloonrfc@kowloonrfc.com.hk). RT

## Kowloon shows True Grit

Descartes Kowloon won February's Guam Rugby International Tournament a.k.a. True Grit Tens, setting a tournament record along the way for its 71 – 0 drubbing of Japanese club Tsunami Teetotallers. In fact, the Kowloon boys conceded only one try on the weekend, while mounting some impressive offensive statistics with 53 – 0, 28 – 0 and 34 – 0 victories joining their 71 – 0 skulling of the Teetotallers.

In the Cup final, Kowloon met the tournament's only other undefeated side, Japan's Sumitomo Samuraiz. After conceding their only try to their pacey opposition, Kowloon re-gained control with four quick tries to put the match away 29 – 7.

Kowloon evidently impressed, as Guam RFC member Ross Morrison was quoted in the local Pacific Sunday News saying, "Kowloon's speed and skill are amazing. It's fun to watch them play and good for the Guam teams. It exposes us to a very high level of skill and play and shows us what can be achieved." In response to this overwhelming admiration, Kowloon captain Dean McLachlan noted that "It was a great tournament. The hosts were outstanding, the teams were good and there was the perfect number of sides – that way we didn't have to get up too early in the morning."

Kowloon was invited to the True Grit 2003 as a result of a reciprocal relationship with tournament organizers, Guam RFC, who visited the Kowloon Rugbyfest Tens in 2002. RT



## RUGBY RICHES IN 8TH COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

**T**his year Aberdeen Rugby Club together with the Hong Kong Rugby Football Union are hosting an auspicious 8th year of the popular Country of Origin Tournament at the Aberdeen Sports Ground on Sunday, 23rd March, 2003.

A unique fixture in the HKRFU calendar, the Country of Origin sees local rugby players switch their club ties for national kit in an entertaining family-friendly rugby festival. Previous years of the tournament have seen up to 2,000 people turn out for the event, including visiting teams from the Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens.

This year's tournament promises to be another successful outing for the entire rugby community with the Country of Origin including a Hong Kong versus the 'Rest of the World'



women's rugby match and a mini-rugby exhibition. Aberdeen has a resurgent women's club scene and a thriving mini-rugby section with over 130 local children between the ages of 3 and 14 as current members.

Tournament Director Rob Perren believes the future of rugby in Hong Kong relies on competitions like the Country of Origin. "Events like this with both a high standard of play and an excellent social side are ideal exhibitions of local rugby to attract sponsors and further the development of the sport in Hong Kong."

The ten featured teams for 2003 include Australia, England, France, Hong Kong, Ireland, Japan, defending champions New Zealand, Scotland, Wales and the USA. The teams will be drawn in two pools. The winners from each pool will play each other in the final and each team will play a minimum of four games. The matches conform to ten-a-side rules and last for 12 minutes.

This year Aberdeen has added a wooden spoon award to the Country of Origin to ensure that every country has something to play for throughout the tournament. **RT**



# Who's afraid of Asahi Valley?

**W**ho's afraid of Asahi Valley? The rest of the First Division League, that's who. After an unbeaten run of 12 straight games in the League, Valley are now on course to wrap up the season in similar fashion, having won both their opening matches in the Grand Championship.

Huge wins of 54 - 14 over DeA Tigers and 54 - 3 over Synovate Aberdeen in the first two rounds have taken them halfway to wresting back the First Division title they lost to Aberdeen last season. Their remaining matches are against Descartes Kowloon and DHL Club.

Valley's first-half demolition job over DeA Tigers was perhaps the best rugby played by them this season. In a sublime performance dripping with power and pace, Valley blew away DeA by running in five tries in the opening 30 minutes. That they added a further four tries in the second half speaks volumes for their commitment and passion to play perfect rugby for 80 minutes.

"Our plan was to hit them hard and straight away. We wanted to be physical and they just fell apart. Everybody stepped up their game," said Valley's player-coach Semi Iafeta summing up his side's nine-try tour of DeA. Valley continued their blitzkrieg against defending champions Aberdeen the following week. But while the scorecard resembled their efforts from the week before, the quality of rugby was not as high-octane. "It was not as intense as against DeA. But we still managed to put a half-cen-

tury of points up," said Valley convenor Grant Beauzeval who knows his side of stars has set the bar commendably high.

Who can stop them now? The only realistic challengers are DHL Club. Like Valley, the Hong Kong Football Club outfit are unbeaten having won 32 - 0 against Descartes Kowloon and 32 - 10 against Aberdeen. But unlike Valley, they have not been as awe-inspiring. DHL Club coach Andrew Tranent is however pleased with the progress of his team. He is quick to point out that these days Football Club doesn't only rely on the boot of their goal-kicker, but that they can also run in tries.

***"Our plan was to hit them hard and straight away. We wanted to be physical and they just fell apart" Semi Iafeta***

"In the past we used to depend on Owain Morrison to kick the penalties, but now we are freely scoring tries too. I'm happy with our last two wins. I will take a 32 point scoreline any day," says the outward-looking Tranent. DHL Club's first win over Kowloon was without stalwarts Paul Dingley, Warren Warner and Chris Gordon in their ranks. To convincingly beat Kowloon without a raft of key players proves that Football Club has the depth which teams like DeA Tigers, Aberdeen and Kowloon unfortunately don't.

"The lack of players who can come in if

someone is injured has been our biggest drawback this season. Last year we won because we were fortunate to have an injury-free run. But this time we are struggling for numbers. We have been forced to bring in players from the Third Division who can't make the step up," said Aberdeen's stand-in skipper Mike Meredith.

To underline Meredith's words, Aberdeen won the Union Sevens with all their regular players available. But the Grand Championship began badly. Star midfielder Colin Bisley suffered a fractured cheekbone against Kowloon and his loss left a wide hole.

The story was the same for DeA Tigers and Kowloon. The latter missed powerhouse forward Peter Michael for their first two games. DeA meanwhile missed Andrew Chambers, but even the return of Logona Kerisome for the Valley match and the move of Fred Moe back into the second row, did not help. Not when up against a team packed with Super 12 stars like former Samoa winger Alex Telea, Australian Matt Dowling and Iafeta himself.

Last season Aberdeen shocked a lot of people, including Valley, by winning the league crown. To put matters right, Valley have brought in quality players in crucial positions and that move is paying dividends. "We woke the giant in Valley. Our objective at the start of the season was to defend our title but as soon as we saw the players Valley had brought in this season, we knew it would be a tough ask," says Aberdeen chairman Richard Cooke.

With bigger player bases, the race for the 2002-03 title has now reverted back to the traditional bun-fight between Valley and Club. As always, both teams have more depth in numbers than the rest of the three First Division sides. So even the loss of players like Valley fullback Jamie Goldberg and lock forward James Sidwell, and Football Club scrumhalf Rory Dickson and fullback Chris Gordon for the crunch games will not matter as much. The silky running style of Goldberg and the power presence of Sidwell however will be missed to a point. "We will have to re-organise our front five as



Valley have avenged themselves for their 2002 Grand Final loss to Aberdeen

well as the backline,” said Valley captain Andrew Wong Kee.

“On our last two performances we are pretty confident of winning the League title. We have to keep our momentum up and keep it going,” added Wong Kee who is in danger of missing Valley's penultimate game against Kowloon. Wong Kee was at the wrong end of a late tackle in the game against DeA Tigers and was concussed. He will have missed his obligatory three week stand-down period, but as a precautionary measure might miss playing against Kowloon so as to be fully fit for the crunch Football Club game.

Football Club teams have already brought home silverware this season with Club Dragons winning the Second Division title while Club Select took the Third Division. Dragons dominated Valley Knights up front in the forwards to win 27-3 while Club Select had a harder time subduing sister-team Club Sequins 15-8. But the trophy that matters, the First Division Grand Championship, is still not inside the halls of the Sports Road club. Yet, on evidence seen so far, it seems Football Club will struggle to bring it home, that is unless Paul Dingley can inspire his teammates to produce 80 minutes of committed rugby against his former club.

While the win over Kowloon was accomplished, especially as Football Club was coming off a three-week break, the victory over Aberdeen was not as clinical with Club failing to build on a 20-3 lead at halftime and only added two more tries late in the second half.

“One of our problems this season has always been that we start slowly. But we begin well now, then sit back and relax. This is something we have to work on if we are to challenge Valley,” says Tranent.

But what is promising is the form showed by Football Club midfield duo Warner and D'Acre who are both in good form and with fly half Warrick Dent and stand-in fullback Anthony Boyd

Club Dragons taking Division II silver back to their lair



**CLUB CRUISE:** Football Club teams have won both the Second and Third Division, with Club Dragons overcoming Valley Knights 27-3 in the II's, while Club Select edged Club Sequins 15-8 in the Third Division. Gai Wu J beat University 31-12 to win the Fourth Division title while Taipo Dragons scored a 15-8 victory over DeA Tigers to win the Fifth Division. Look out for the May issue of *RUGBY TALK* which will feature a complete Grand Championship wrap-up.

providing admirable support, the backline looks dangerous and capable of giving Valley a run for the money.

“They look good. They have got all their players on board and will be hard to beat. But I don't want to analyse the opposition too much. I would rather concentrate on our own game, or otherwise you can lose focus. The best thing is to keep it simple,” said Valley skipper and scrumhalf Wong Kee. This season, Valley take great pride in how they play. While results count, what also matters is the execution of ideas on the field.

“Clinically our performance against DeA Tigers was the best we have played this season. But we have still got a long way to go and there are things to work on. We were not concerned about the score against DeA, all we wanted was to take it a step up to a new level,” says Iafeta.

Hong Kong Football Club be warned. **RT**

**By our Special Correspondent**



## 1ST DIVISION – GRAND CHAMPIONSHIP

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	Bonus	TL
Asahi Valley	2	2	0	0	108	17	2	10
DHL Club	2	2	0	0	64	10	2	10
Synovate Aberdeen	3	1	2	0	41	99	1	5
DeA Tigers	2	1	1	0	61	77	1	5
Descartes Kowloon	3	0	3	0	36	107	0	0

## MEN'S STANDINGS – 2002/2003 SEASON

### 1st Division – League Championship (Final Standing)

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	Bonus	TL
Asahi Valley	12	12	0	0	355	136	7	55
DHL Club	12	8	4	0	297	183	8	40
Descartes Kowloon	12	7	5	0	299	240	6	34
DeA Tigers	12	5	7	0	237	241	7	27
Synovate Aberdeen	12	4	8	0	227	242	6	22
PLA Sports Institute	12	3	9	0	161	339	3	15
China Agri. Uni.	12	3	9	0	125	320	2	14

### 2nd Division – League Championship (Final Standing)

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	Bonus	TL
DHL Club Dragons	15	14	1	0	478	138	11	67
DHL Club Scorpions	15	8	7	0	289	209	8	44
Valley Knights	15	8	6	1	337	246	7	37
Hitachi D S CWB	15	5	10	0	226	337	7	27
Descartes K'n Lions	15	5	9	1	187	375	1	23
DeA Tigers II	15	4	11	0	211	423	4	20

### 3rd Division – League Championship (Final Standing)

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	Bonus	TL
Valley Mustangs	12	10	2	0	374	77	10	52
DHL Club Sequins	12	8	3	1	352	181	9	41
Police	12	8	4	0	275	142	6	40
DHL Club Select	12	7	5	0	207	196	5	31
Descartes K'n Pussies	12	4	8	0	145	256	3	19
Synovate Aberdeen II	12	4	7	1	65	273	0	18
Nomads	12	0	12	0	94	387	1	1

### 4th Division – League Championship (Final Standing)

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	Bonus	TL
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#### Group A

Gai Wu J	4	4	0	0	161	29	4	20
Valley Griffins	4	2	2	0	52	40	2	10
Police Panthers	4	2	2	0	54	91	1	9
DHL Club Bulls	4	1	3	0	32	107	2	6
CWB Pirates	4	1	3	0	48	80	1	5

#### Group B

University RFC	4	4	0	0	122	40	3	19
Typhoons	4	2	2	0	90	63	2	10
City Seven	4	2	2	0	48	39	1	9
Descartes K'n Beavers	4	1	3	0	57	87	1	5
DeA Tigers IV	4	1	3	0	43	131	1	5

### 5th Division – League Championship (Final Standing)

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	Bonus	TL
Taipo Dragons	12	11	1	0	271	41	6	50
DeA Tigers V	12	9	3	0	274	84	8	44
Nomads II	12	5	7	0	169	193	5	25
Gai Wu A	12	5	7	0	153	186	3	19
CWB Marines	12	0	12	0	38	401	0	0

Standings as of 7 March 2003

## TOP TRY SCORERS 2002/2003 SEASON

PLAYER	TEAM	NO. OF TRIES
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### Division 1

Alex Telea	Asahi Valley	22
Colin Bisley	Aberdeen	8
Andrew Chambers	DeA Tigers	5
Jamie Goldberg	Asahi Valley	5
Stu Denton	Asahi Valley	5

### Division 2

Paul Chung	Hitachi D S CWB	6
Chris Edwards	Kowloon Lions	5
Julian Dayman	Valley Knights	4
Richard Lamming	DHL Club Dragons	4

### Division 3

Jean Paul Linschoten	Valley Mustangs	17
Mark Pulverenti	DHL Club Sequins	17
J Morgan	Police	12

### Division 4

Hiramatsu Ryoichi	Gai Wu J	20
Tam Chu Hin, Louie	Police Panthers	16
Takahashi Motoharu	Gai Wu J	13

### Division 5

Wong Ka Sang	Taipo Dragons	12
Ma Tak Wai	DeA Tigers V	10
Tsang Hing Hung	DeA Tigers V	10

### Womens

Tse Man Sze, Cookie	Hitachi D S CWB	7
Tash Weston	DHL Club Ice	6
Kwok Yuk Lin	Hitachi D S CWB	5

## WOMEN'S STANDINGS – 2002/2003 SEASON

### Women's 15-a-side League

TEAM	P	W	L	D	F	A	TL
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#### A Division

DHL Club A	6	6	0	0	163	12	12
DeA Tigers A	6	4	2	0	118	59	8
HK U19 Dev. Squad	4	2	2	0	22	53	4
Nomads	6	1	5	0	29	160	2
Hitachi D S CWB A	4	0	4	0	19	67	0

#### B Division

Synovate Aberdeen	6	5	0	1	132	36	11
DeA Tigers B	6	3	2	1	97	39	7
Asahi Valley	6	3	3	0	67	68	6
DHL Club B	6	2	4	0	39	96	4
Hitachi D S CWB B	6	1	5	0	20	116	2

Standings as of 7 March 2003

# Summer Fun that's too hot to handle

**T**he Hong Kong Touch & Tag Rugby Association has opened registration for the popular 2003 Summer Touch & Tag Rugby Festival, which will take place every Saturday from April 26 to June 14, 2003.

This year's competitions will be played from 2:00pm to 6:00pm at Happy Valley Recreation Ground and the Tsing Yi Sports Ground. Entry fee for the 12-person teams is only HK\$400 per team. Six players from each team will be on the field at one time, while the mixed teams will need to play at least two females at all times. The teams will have to provide their own numbered uniforms, but the Hong Kong Touch & Tag Rugby Association (HKT&TRA) are sponsoring a prize for the best turned-out team as incentive.

The Summer Touch & Tag Rugby League is a well-supported event with 92 teams competing in 2002. In response to overwhelming demand, the HKT&TRA has announced that it will accept both team and individual applications. Individuals registering for the league will be grouped into teams and provided training from a group of 12 experienced HKT&TRA volunteer coaches.

## Entry is open across nine divisions in 2003:

Men's Open Touch
Mixed Open Touch
Corporate Mixed Touch
Women's Open Touch
Men's Open Tag
Women's Open Tag
Novice tag
Hong Kong Secondary School Tag Rugby Championship
Hong Kong Tertiary Tag Rugby Championship

The Secondary School and Tertiary Championships are new initiatives in 2003, in response to the strong representation of secondary and tertiary schools across the Territory in local touch and tag rugby. The competition is open to all local schools, ESF schools, International schools, Institute of Vocational Education and Continuing Education schools, so the winning teams in these competitions will truly earn the title of Hong Kong Champion. The teams will also be allowed to participate in the Open Divisions should they choose.

HKT&TRA have established three training centres available for team training and coaching sessions, one in Kowloon side (Morse Park), one in New Territories (Fanling) and one in Hong Kong (Happy Valley). "We always accommodate individual players. What we will do is to group them together according to their ability and playing standard, then they can form their own unique team or have



Touch & Tag fever grabs Hong Kong

them join other existing team that need extra players," said HKT&TRA Co-ordinator Ray Ng.

Ng also commented on the success of the Touch & Tag Summer Rugby Festival and the popularity of the non-contact alternative to local rugby. "I believe that over 5,000 active players have taken part, or will be participating in Hong Kong Touch & Tag Rugby Association activities. That includes 1,200 players registered in the last Summer League, roughly 1,000 participants in our four annual team and corporate touch tournaments, over 740 in our four tag tournaments per year and another 1,000 odd from our Tertiary, Secondary and Primary school tournaments around Hong Kong."

With interest in touch and tag rugby continuing to mount, interested parties are advised to register as soon as possible. The deadline for entries is 31 March, 2003. For more information on how to enter, please contact Ray Ng of the HKT&TRA on tel: 2504 8311, fax: 2576 7237 or email at ray.ng@hkrugby.com. **RT**





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## SEVEN QUESTIONS FOR SEVENS CAPTAINS

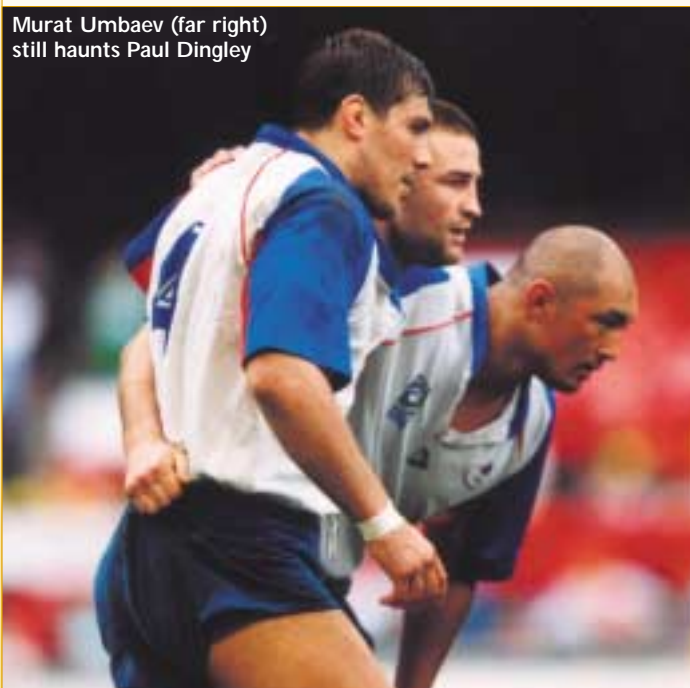
Which do you prefer sevens or fifteens? Why?

**PD:** It's a tough question. I love the contact in fifteens, but then I also get a great rush out of playing sevens. Probably sevens, especially in the Hong Kong Stadium.

Who is the best sevens team and player you have played against?

**PD:** New Zealand, without a doubt. The player would be the massive Russian I had to prop against last year who pushed me around like a toy car. No, Eric Rush is the best player I've played against. He's got everything. He's Mr. Nice guy off the pitch, but turns the switch on when he's on the park.

Murat Umbaev (far right) still haunts Paul Dingley



Can Hong Kong be competitive with local players in Sevens?

**PD:** There are always going to be expatriates in the Hong Kong side as it's a very transient place, but already there are a number of local players representing Hong Kong. Chan Fuk Ping, Ricky Cheuk, Liu Kwok Leung, Lee Cheuk Yin. Players like Justin Gregory and Andrew Chambers could also be classed as local as they have lived here all their lives. Teams like New Zealand and Australia are also made up of players of different nationalities, so we're really not that different.

#### Conversion attempt

Who do you think will win the Cup, Plate and Bowl in the 2003 Hong Kong Sevens?

**PD:** That's always a tough one to answer. But for a guess, Cup – New Zealand, Plate – Hong Kong, Bowl – Taiwan. **RT**

praise, and saw Chinese flags waving through the crowd. I felt I had completed a mission for my country. I was relieved and delighted.

Which do you prefer sevens or fifteens? Why?

**ZZ:** I prefer sevens. It is a miniature version of fifteen-a-side, and it demands more of every player at every position. Each player has more time and space to display his wits, technique and speed. The result is incredible! For Asians who are smaller in build, but more reactive and flexible, Sevens is ideal. For me, sevens is a tougher test of a player's basic skills, technique and stamina. Also, I think it provides spectators a more exciting game to watch.



Why is it good for China to participate in the IRB Sevens?

**ZZ:** Under the supervision and support of the IRB & ARFU, the China Rugby Football Association has been actively promoting rugby and has achieved substantial results. At the 1998 & 1999 Hong Kong Sevens, the China Team was ranked last, but since 2000, China has improved significantly. We were able to reach the Bowl Championship final in 2000 and enter the Plate Championship in 2001, which is the best achievement we have had so far.

Who is the best sevens team and player you've played against?

**ZZ:** I like New Zealand and Fiji, especially Eric Rush and Waisale Serevi. They are both gentlemen and international rugby stars. They set a good example for the rest of us.

How does the China Team look this year?

**ZZ:** China's performance has been in decline since 2001. Over the last year we have lost many games. This is due to the poor transition between the older and younger generations of players. The older players have left the team. At the same time, younger players have not caught up and developed their skills; hence there is an absence of skilled players which is the biggest problem China is facing now. This year will be my sixth time leading China at the Hong Kong Sevens and I hope the team can tackle the transition problem and get a good result in the Sevens.

#### Conversion attempt

Who do you think will win the Cup, Plate and Bowl in Hong Kong?

**ZZ:** I think New Zealand will win the Cup, Hong Kong, the Plate, and China, the Bowl. I might not have high expectations, but if we could win the Bowl this year, I'll be very happy. **RT**



Paul Dingley

## 香港七人欖球代表隊隊長專訪

Paul Dingley和張志強兩位都是於1998年開始他們的國際七人欖球賽生涯。張志強今年是連續第六年以隊長身份代表中國隊參加香港國際七人欖球賽，而Paul Dingley以隊長身份與隊友進行集訓，參加香港及北京兩站賽事。

Rugby Talk特別追訪了兩位近來忙於預備賽事的隊長，暢談今年的香港國際七人欖球賽。



張志強

●你每年都會參加世界七人欖球巡迴賽，出賽地方包括：威靈頓、布里斯班、杜拜、東京、北京及香港，你對巡迴賽有什麼看法？你覺得七人欖球賽的水平有提高嗎？它對香港有什麼影響？

我覺得世界七人欖球巡迴賽是一項極好的比賽，而且每年均在進步。球賽的水平亦逐漸提高，現在已有五、六隊是有實力的隊伍，能輕易贏取任何比賽。對香港來說有一定的困難，因多個國家的外援球員都專注於七人欖球賽上，球員的質素不斷提高，比賽的競爭亦越來越激烈。但幸運的是，香港是一個小地方，我們預備出賽時，比其他地方較容易湊成一隊球隊準備及練習。

●你參加過多個國際七人欖球賽，你會如何比較香港和其他地方的七人欖球賽？

香港的七人賽是整個巡迴賽中最好的！我和世界各地的球員傾談時，大家都認為香港國際七人欖球賽是他們最喜愛的比賽。

●當七人代表隊的隊長和十五人隊的隊長有什麼分別？有什麼技術是每個比賽都會用上的呢？

一場七人賽只有十四分鐘，所以每一個錯誤都會對球賽造成重大的影響。在七人賽中，比賽壓力比較大，而球員的溝通亦比較重要。在七人賽中，各隊員都會不停對話，所以對比賽有很大的幫助。

●哪一年的香港國際七人欖球賽是你最難忘的？

在1998年，是我第一次參加香港國際七人欖球賽。那次我認識了我妻子Louise。

●你喜歡十五人賽或是七人賽？為什麼？

這個問題很難回答，我喜歡十五人賽那種拼搏的身體接觸，亦喜歡七人賽的緊張刺激。我想我應該偏向喜歡七人賽吧！尤其在香港大球場比賽的時候。

●在你曾參加的比賽中，你覺得哪一隊是最好的七人欖球隊？誰是最好的欖球員？

那當然是紐西蘭隊！

而最好的球員，就是那位巨大身型的俄羅斯球員，去年我跟他對賽的時候，我就像一輛模型車被他推來推去，無法動彈。說笑而已！真正最好的球員應該是Eric Rush魯殊。他擁有所有的條件，在場外，他是一個好好先生，在場內，他又是一個全力以赴的球員。

●你覺得香港能像韓國和台灣一樣，最終會以有實力的本地球員出戰七人賽嗎？

基於香港是個流動性很大的城市，很難避免在香港隊當中會有外國人。但是其實香港已有數個球員是本地人，他們包括陳福平，卓銘然，廖國樑，李卓賢。而Justin Gregory和Andrew Chambers亦可算是本地球員，因為他們都是在香港土生土長的。

其他國家的隊伍像紐西蘭和澳洲，他們都由不同國籍的球員組成，所以香港隊其實沒有什麼大分別。

●在二零零三年瑞士信貸第一波士頓香港國際七人欖球賽，你覺得哪隊會贏得銀盃、銀碟和銀碗？

這個很難說，但以我估計，紐西蘭應可奪得銀盃賽冠軍、香港可贏銀碟、而台灣則可贏得銀碗。

RT

●你曾參加世界七人欖球巡迴賽，出賽地方包括：香港、北京、上海、澳洲及紐西蘭，你對巡迴賽有什麼看法？

世界七人欖球巡迴賽是競爭激烈的比賽，集速度和技巧於一身。隨著IRB對該項目的大力支持和推廣，越來越多人關注，參賽隊伍的挑選越來越嚴謹，無可置疑的大大提高了欖球運動水平和競爭的激烈程度。比賽的結果亦令人愈發難以預料。

●你參加過多個國際七人欖球賽，你會如何比較香港和其他地方的七人欖球賽？又會如何比較北京和上海的七人欖球賽？

我先後參加了許多七人欖球賽，給我最好印象的是香港站。我喜歡這個城市的欖球氣氛、漂亮壯觀的比賽場地、球迷的狂熱和完善的服務。而北京就大大不同，不僅是觀眾群嚴重不足，大會的組織和各項服務都不夠完善，各方面的進步需要一個學習和借鑒改善的過程。

●哪一年的香港國際七人欖球賽是你最難忘的？

給我感覺最好的是在2000年3月的香港國際七人欖球賽，中國隊獲得碗級亞軍，我帶著隊友們穿過歡呼的人群登上領獎臺，逐一同領導們握手示意，當我握著董建華先生那厚實、溫暖、充滿力量的手時，我非常激動。董建華先生也對我說：「好樣的小伙子！希望你們明年打得更好！」然後，我帶領著隊友們高舉著獎盃繞場一周，看著、聽著狂熱的觀眾們給我們的鼓勵和讚揚，特別是在觀眾席之間飄動著的中國的國旗，我的心裡更是熱血沸騰，好像完成了國家交付的任務般異常輕鬆，喜悅！

●你喜歡十五人賽或是七人賽？為什麼？

我比較喜歡七人欖球賽。七人賽是十五人賽的縮影、昇華，在各個位置對運動員提出了更高的要求。在小團體的基礎上突出個人，給個人更多的時間和空間去發揮自己的聰明才智，是技巧和速度的完美體現，亞洲人的體形偏小和靈巧的特點，十分適合七人賽。

●中國隊參加世界七人欖球巡迴賽對球隊有什麼幫助？中國隊自從1998年開始踏出國門，融入世界欖球的行列。在國際欖球理事會、亞洲欖球聯合會的關心和支持下，中國欖球協會積極在中國推廣這項運動，且取得了顯著的成效。2000年開始，中國隊的整體水平大幅度提高，獲得香港國際七人賽的碗盃賽亞軍，2001年更進入碟盃賽，這也是中國隊有史以來最好的成績。

●在你參加過的比賽當中，你覺得哪一隊是最好的七人欖球隊？誰是最好的欖球員？

我喜歡紐西蘭隊和斐濟隊，特別是Eric Rush和Waisale Serevi，兩位紳士球星。他們是很好的榜樣。

●中國隊今年的表現怎麼樣？

自從2001年以後，中國隊開始走下坡路，其主要原因是老隊員隨著學業的結束和年齡增長及工作的繁忙，逐漸脫離了欖球隊。而年輕的隊員又不能儘快成長，在交替方面出現斷層，沒有生力軍是中國隊目前面臨的最嚴重的問題。

●在二零零三年瑞士信貸第一波士頓香港國際七人欖球賽，你覺得哪隊會贏得銀盃、銀碟和銀碗？

我希望是紐西蘭隊拿到銀盃、香港隊可以拿到銀碟。我希望中國隊可以拿到銀碗，我的要求可能不夠高，但是，如果可以實現的話，我就心滿意足了。

RT



## 香港、中國齊爭出線

「二零零三年瑞士信貸第一波士頓香港國際七人欖球賽」的抽籤儀式已於二月二十七日假交易廣場The Rotunda舉行，大會邀請到香港特別行政區政務司司長曾蔭權GBM太平紳士為主禮嘉賓。二十四支參賽隊伍分別被編入六個組別進行分組循環賽，分組賽成績將決定隊伍進入銀盃賽、銀碟賽或銀碗賽。

於三月二十八日至三十日假香港大球場隆重舉行的「二零零三年瑞士信貸第一波士頓香港國際七人欖球賽」，為今屆世界七人欖球巡迴賽的第五站賽事，是唯一採取二十四隊制的賽事；而銀盃賽冠軍更會獲得三十分，比其他十六隊制賽站的冠軍分數高出十分，地位超然。

今年的參賽隊伍實力相當，上屆世界七人欖球巡迴賽衛冕總冠軍紐西蘭已於今屆世界七人欖球巡迴賽的四站賽事中，奪得兩站的錦標，暫時以六十八分高踞排名榜榜首。而斐濟及英格蘭則各贏得一站錦標，分別以五十六分及四十六分僅次於紐西蘭之後。

由於智利及馬來西亞的比賽被取消，原定十一站的巡迴賽已縮短為九站，故相信各支勁旅必定竭盡全力，爭奪香港站賽事的殊榮，奪取寶貴的三十分及總值十萬美元的冠軍獎金。

大會按照各隊在過去六場世界七人欖球巡迴賽的成績排名，今次在香港這場比賽，納入統計的比賽包括上屆最後兩站賽事，至今年二月完成的第四站賽事紐西蘭威靈頓站。至於沒有參加巡迴賽的隊伍，大會則參考該隊在最近一次世界盃七人欖球賽及過往香港國際七人欖球賽的成績而定出今屆賽事之種子隊伍，然後進行抽籤儀式。

二月二十七日的抽籤儀式由香港欖球總會賽事總監白必敬先生(Peter Burbidge-King)主持，經過主禮嘉賓曾蔭權GBM太平紳士，



瑞士信貸第一波士頓執行董事Andrew Cattle先生及香港欖球總會主席史拜恩先生(Brian Stevenson)抽籤後，一號種子紐西蘭被編入A組，將於分組循環賽中迎戰加拿大、美國及馬來西亞。B組包括二號種子英格蘭、肯雅、意大利及新加坡。三號種子斐濟則被編入C組，同組隊伍有蘇格蘭、日本及俄羅斯。

自英格蘭於去年銀盃決賽中以三十三比二十擊敗斐濟，在「香港國際七人欖球賽」中寫下光輝的一頁後，球迷便紛紛對這支來自北半球的球隊感到興趣，相信大家必定繼續將注意力放到這支衛冕的球隊上。

至於東道主香港則被編入D組，將會面對澳洲、威爾斯及中國。香港欖球總會會長麥樂萊先生(John Molloy)表示：「香港隊被編入D組，甚具挑戰性，有世界上數一數二的澳洲及威爾斯，




### POOL A 組

-  New Zealand 紐西蘭
-  Canada 加拿大
-  USA 美國
-  Malaysia 馬來西亞

### POOL B 組

-  England 英國
-  Kenya 肯雅
-  Italy 意大利
-  Singapore 新加坡

### POOL C 組

-  Fiji 斐濟
-  Scotland 蘇格蘭
-  Japan 日本
-  Russia 俄羅斯

### POOL D 組

-  Australia 澳洲
-  Wales 威爾斯
-  Hong Kong 香港
-  China 中國

### POOL E 組

-  South Africa 南非
-  Argentina 阿根廷
-  Korea 韓國
-  Sri Lanka 斯里蘭卡

### POOL F 組

-  Samoa 薩摩亞
-  France 法國
-  Cook Islands 庫克群島
-  Chinese Taipei 中華台北



再加上香港將會迎戰中國，相信該場比賽會有相當可觀性。而香港隊近來勤於備戰並進行多場熱身賽，狀態甚佳，相信他們仍然能夠有機會打入銀碟賽。」

此外，麥樂萊先生更於抽籤儀式中公佈一項嶄新的宣傳活動，就是與香港賽馬會合辦的「香港欖球總會盃」於三月十九日(星期三)在跑馬地馬場舉行，屆時各欖球界名人會被邀請參加當晚酒會。另外更有一場別開生面的短跑比賽，觀眾可為一眾欖球員打氣。而較早前已公佈的合作夥伴——蘭桂坊協會亦首次加入宣傳「二零零三年瑞士信貸第一波士頓香港國際七人欖球賽」這項亞洲體壇盛事。

賽事三日套票，成人為港幣750元，小童套票(十二歲或以下)為港幣250元。去年賽事門票於比賽前一早售罄，香港欖球總會今年繼續於一月開始公開售票，球迷更可於大會網頁www.hksevens.com.hk訂購門票。此外，球迷亦可前往大會兩間紀念服裝專門店(中環置地廣場一樓二零二號舖及鯉魚涌英皇道979號太古坊德宏大廈一樓)或中環蘭桂坊一號的銷售處購票。

大會每年均推出一系列精美的七人賽紀念服飾讓欖球迷選購，今年推出的全新系列可於網上商店www.hksevens.com.hk訂購，或於上述兩間大會紀念服裝專門店購買。

為進一步推廣香港國際七人欖球賽及推動本地欖球運動發展，香港欖球總會由三月一日起一連四個星期於四個大型商場舉行巡迴展覽，展出賽事資料、派發精美紀念品、售賣大會紀念服飾並設有攤位為市民提供免費彩圖及繪面。地點分別為九龍塘又一城



香港欖球總會員工

(三月一至二日)、銅鑼灣時代廣場(三月八至九日)、尖沙咀海港城(三月十五至十六日)及金鐘太古廣場(三月廿二至廿七日)。有關賽事詳情可瀏覽大會網頁www.hksevens.com.hk。RT



香港隊與各主禮嘉賓合照



香港欖球總會主席史拜恩先生(Brian Stevenson) (左) 及前港欖球總會會長麥樂萊先生(John Molloy) (右)

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## 二零零三Cable & Wireless香港女子七人欖球賽暨亞洲錦標賽

「二零零三香港女子七人欖球賽暨亞洲錦標賽」將於三月廿七至廿八日假掃桿埔運動場舉行。世界各地欖球員及支持者紛紛來到香港，一心一意為著參與及支持這項國際級女子欖球盛事。

亞洲欖球協會名譽秘書長司各至(Jamie Scott)表示：「女子欖球是其中一項全球迅速冒起的運動，而將現有的女子欖球賽事發展成女子七人欖球世界盃更是指日可待。」

女子欖球運動日益普及及流行，從二零零三香港女子七人欖球賽暨亞洲錦標賽能雲集世界各地的精英球隊參與便可見一斑，今年來港的國際隊伍包括衛冕冠軍紐西蘭的奧迪萊亞毛里隊及上屆亞軍美國飛鷹隊，而另外兩支球隊分別是英格蘭及菲律賓。

女子欖球亞洲錦標賽於千禧年首次舉行至今，規模越來越大，有著極大的增長，今年便有十支亞洲勁旅參賽，當中包括東道主香港、亞拉伯海灣、中國、日本、亞洲七人賽冠軍哈薩克、吉爾吉斯、斯里蘭卡、新加坡、泰國及烏茲別克。

女子欖球亞洲錦標賽將分成兩小組，每小組五支隊伍對賽，而四支國際隊伍及亞洲球隊將於首日分別進行小組循環賽事，而首四名亞洲隊伍將於第二日與國際隊伍一較高下，角逐二零零三香港女子七人欖球賽冠軍。於同日下午十二時四十分首兩名亞洲球隊將進行總決賽，爭奪亞洲錦標賽冠軍。

紐西蘭與美國曾於過去三年的冠軍戰中



對陣，實力非凡的哈薩克亦曾在亞洲錦標賽與香港隊碰面，但今年有勁旅英格蘭首次加入戰團，賽果難以預料。英格蘭今年將會迎戰享譽國際，具出色表現的菲律賓，相信也會有一定的威脅。

縱使港隊將面臨重大挑戰，擔任香港隊領隊的羅拔臣(Karen Robertson)表示滿意港隊現時的表現及對未來充滿信心。她說：

「港隊現時正在接受緊密的訓練，狀態非常好。球隊亦於三月初前往斯里蘭卡進行了熱身賽，對球隊準備月尾的賽事有很大幫助。」

香港女子欖球隊教練嘉夫尼(Paul Gaffney)及香港欖球會總教練基斯(Chris Gordon)將於三月中後，從隊中挑選十位球員作港隊最後名單。作為富經驗的香港女子欖球運動員兼前香港女子欖球會主席，羅拔臣亦讚揚嘉夫尼過去為港隊預備所付出的努力及熱心，並希望嘉夫尼明年能重返港隊執鞭任教。羅拔臣表示：「嘉夫尼是一位十分傑出及難得的教練，我希望他能繼續執教，使一眾青年欖球員能在持續及統一的訓練模式下有更大的進步。」

「女子欖球是其中一項全球迅速冒起的運動，而將現有的女子欖球賽事發展成女子七人欖球世界盃更是指日可待。」

Jamie Scott



二零零三香港女子七人欖球冠軍爭奪戰將連續第五年在瑞士信貸第一波士頓香港國際七人欖球賽的首日賽事(三月二十八日)完結後，於晚上九時二十五分假香港大球場舉行。各女子七人欖球員已蓄勢待發，於當日展示個人實力，為觀眾帶來精彩賽事。RT

# 二零零三非撞式欖球夏日比賽及嘉年華

香港非撞式欖球總會現已正式開始接受報名，歡迎各隊伍報名參加由今年四月二十六日起一連八個星期六舉行的二零零三非撞式欖球夏日比賽及嘉年華。

比賽每逢星期六下午二時至六時，假跑馬地運動場及青衣運動場舉行，每隊十二人的報名費只需港幣四百元正。每隊每場派六位球員出賽，而男女混合賽則每場必須有至少兩名女球員參加。每隊需自備有球員號碼的制服，而香港非撞式欖球總會將頒發獎項予出席率最高的隊伍，作為球隊制服的資助。

## 二零零三非撞式欖球夏日比賽共分九個組別：

- 男子公開組（非撞式欖球）
- 女子公開組（非撞式欖球）
- 男、女子混合公開組（非撞式欖球）
- 工商盃男、女子混合組（非撞式欖球）
- 男子公開組（帶式欖球）
- 女子公開組（帶式欖球）
- 新秀組（帶式欖球）
- 全港中學錦標賽（帶式欖球）
- 全港大專錦標賽（帶式欖球）

於去年舉辦的非撞式欖球夏日比賽及嘉年華深受歡迎，共有九十六隊參賽。而總會為感謝各界熱烈支持，今年決定接受團體及個人報名；個別參賽者會被安排組隊，接受由總會提供的十二位資深義務教練的訓練。香港非撞式欖球總會統籌吳志堅先生表示：「為了照顧及

配合到個別的參賽球員；我們將按個別球員的能力及球技分組進行訓練，之後他們可自由組隊或者加入其他球員不足的队伍。」

中學及大專錦標賽是今年新增的項目，近年學界越來越熱衷參與非撞式及帶式欖球，成為不可缺少的代表。今次比賽歡迎各本地學校、英基學校協會分屬學校（ESF）、國際學校、香港專業教育學院、各持續進修學院參加，勝出的隊伍將會是真正正正的香港盟主。而各隊伍，有興趣亦可參加公開組別。

香港非撞式欖球總會已設立三個訓練中心作為集訓的場地，分別是九龍摩士公園，新界粉嶺及香港跑馬地。

香港非撞式欖球總會統籌吳志堅先生認為這項越來越受歡迎的運動及嘉年華舉辦得非常成功。他說：「香港現在已有五千個活躍的球員參加香港非撞式欖球總會舉辦的活動。其中包括一千二百名來自去屆夏日聯賽，約一千名來自四支周年隊伍和工商盃比賽，超過七百四十名來自每年四次的帶式欖球比賽，再有一千多名是來自大專及中、小學界錦標賽的球員。」

由於比賽反應熱烈，總會呼籲各參加者及早報名。報名截止日期為三月三十一日。

如有垂詢，請聯絡香港非撞式欖球總會統籌吳志堅先生。RT

電話: 2504-8311

傳真: 2576-7237

電郵: ray.ng@hkrugby.com



在比賽中，球員們都非常投入。



男、女子混合公開賽的其中一幕。

# 二零零三年春季學界帶式欖球錦標賽(中學組)

第十二屆中學組春季學界帶式欖球錦標賽已於二零零三年二月六及七日假九龍大坑東遊樂場舉行。賽事再次獲得多間學校支持，派出球隊參加男子高級組、男子初級組、女子高級組及女子初級組的比賽。再一次證明香港欖球總會多年前開始進行的學校推廣計劃辦得非常成功。

這項學界帶式欖球比賽除了提供機會予學生們互相切磋外，更發掘有潛質的同學，於比賽後繼續學習傳統式欖球。現時有多位效力本地欖球會的欖球員也曾透過參加學校推廣計劃，繼而加入本地的欖球會參加聯賽，當中更不乏代表香港到海外參賽的青年軍。香港欖球總會希望在未來的日子，香港的中小學能夠繼續支持本地的欖球運動發展。RT

## 全場比賽成績

### 女子初級組

冠軍	西貢崇真天主教中學
亞軍	香港管理專業協會羅桂祥中學B隊
季軍	伊利沙伯中學舊生會中學
殿軍	仁愛堂陳黃淑芳紀念中學B隊
最佳球員	洪彩沂-香港管理專業協會羅桂祥中學

### 女子高級組

冠軍	陳樹渠紀念中學
亞軍	德愛中學
季軍	九龍真光中學
殿軍	嘉諾撒聖家書院
最佳球員	劉倩彤-德愛中學

### 男子初級組

冠軍	新界鄉議局大埔區中學A隊
亞軍	元朗公立中學校友會鄧兆棠中學A隊
季軍	陳樹渠紀念中學B隊
殿軍	聖公會曾肇添中學
最佳球員	羅子洋-元朗公立中學校友會鄧兆棠中學

### 男子高級組

冠軍	佛教大光中學B隊
亞軍	仁愛堂陳黃淑芳紀念中學
季軍	西貢崇真天主教中學
殿軍	陳樹渠紀念中學
最佳球員	陳偉鈞-仁愛堂陳黃淑芳紀念中學



## Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens 2003

**Date/Time:** Friday 28 March, 3:00pm – 10:00pm  
 Saturday 29 March, 8:00am – 10:00pm  
 Sunday 30 March, 7:30am – 7:30pm

**Venue:** Hong Kong Stadium

**Admission:** Three days; HK\$750 for adults and HK\$250 for children under 12, available online at: [www.hksevens.com.hk](http://www.hksevens.com.hk) or from the Official Ticket and Merchandise Outlets.



## Cable & Wireless Hong Kong Women's Rugby Sevens and Asian Championship



**Date/Time:** Thursday and Friday, 27 & 28 March, So Kon Po

**Cup Final:** Friday 28 March, 9:25pm  
 Credit Suisse First Boston Hong Kong Sevens  
 Hong Kong Stadium

**Asian Championship Final:** Friday 28 March, 1:40pm, So Kon Po

**Admission:** Free for So Kon Po matches

## DHL Hong Kong Tens 2003

**Date/Time:** Wednesday, 26 March, 11:00am – 9:00pm  
 Thursday, 27 March, 10:00am – 9:00pm

**Venue:** Hong Kong Football Club  
 3 Sports Road, Happy Valley

**Admission:** Entrance with programme purchase



## Descartes Kowloon Rugbyfest Tens

**Date/Time:** 11:00 am onwards  
 Wednesday, 26 March,

**Venue:** So Kon Po

**Admission:** Free

## 8th-Annual Aberdeen Rugby Club Country of Origin

**Date/Time:** 10:00 – 6:00 pm  
 Sunday, 23 March

**Venue:** Aberdeen Sports Grounds

**Admission:** Free

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