

JULY 2010 ISSUE



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KENYA RUGBY UNION NEWSLETTER



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Safari Sevens

JULY 2010 ISSUE

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Safari Sevens

SAFARICOM SEVENS 2010 TITLE MATCH

The home side opened the scores thirty eight seconds into the game when Leon Adongo's burst of speed left him clear of his marker, touching down with relative ease. Lavin Asego missed this conversion. Lou Schabort soon put the South Africans on level terms with a try that was converted by Jacquin Jansen. The Emerging Boks would continue pressing Kenya, getting their second try, securing a 12-5 lead heading into the breather.

Driving rain made the already tense final even more difficult, with both teams keeping play tight as handling errors reigned supreme. Sidney Ashioya reduced the deficit to 10-12. Asego's conversion leveling the scores which stayed this way right through to full time.

Kenya were not about to let go of their home title...Gibson Weru slicing through the Emerging Boks defense before playing a cross kick to Ashioya who grounded the ball, sending the capacity crowd into a f r e n z y . 17-12 and Kenya had retained the Safaricom Sevens for a third s u c c e s s i v e year .

New Zealanders Ponsonby RFC beat French side Les Bleu 26-17 to claim the Plate on their debut while Argentina ensured that they left Nairobi with some silverware, beating Zimbabwe 14-7 to claim the Bowl. South African side Hamilton Raiders beat Samurai 36-5 to run off with the Shield.



2010 Domestic Season Review



The 2010 Kenyan rugby season was uncharacteristically short; a move that was brought about by the need to harmonize the Kenyan rugby calendar with the international rugby calendar, a move geared towards giving Kenyan rugby a more competitive edge. This led to the first division Kenya Cup and second division Eric Shirley leagues being played over one leg with the introduction of a semi final and final match up, a break from the usual two home and away format used in previous seasons. Apart from the league, other tournaments were played in 2010 and they make up our chronological review of the just concluded domestic season.

Saturday February 6th 2010: Resolution Impala retain Floodies with Narrow win

Resolution Impala RFC beat Kenya Commercial Bank RFC 17-13 to retain the season opening Resolution Health Impala Floodlit Tournament.

Mang'u High School's claimed a third Floodie title with a close 9-0 win over surprise finalists Moi Forces Academy 9-0 in an entertaining match.

April 4th 2010: Mwamba RFC and Strathmore Leos share the Great Rift Tens

Mwamba RFC held defending champions Strathmore Leos to a 0-0 draw in the final of the 21st Great Rift Ten-A-Side tournament on Sunday 4th April 2010 at the Nakuru Athletic Club. This was a closely contested duel that saw the two sides evenly matched right up to the final whistle. Fading light meant that both sides agreed to share the trophy for six months each.

April 17th 2010: Quins reclaim the Kenya Cup after one year hiatus

Edward Kinyany's Nivea for Men Quins bagged their first Kenya Cup league title since 2008 after a sensational come from behind 26-21 win over Kenya Commercial Bank RFC in a thrilling final played at the RFUEA Grounds on Saturday 17th April 2010. Quins trailed 3-21 at halftime and it seemed like KCB were out to reclaim the title they last won in 2007 but Quins produced a storming second half comeback, scoring twenty three unanswered points that gave them the league title.

Debutantes Homeboyz RFC won the second division Eric Shirley Shield with a 34-10 win over Kisumu RFC.

May 22nd 2010: UAP Rhinos in historic Bamburi Rugby Super Series defense

Winger Peter Abuoga scored 15 points that enabled the UAP Rhinos to become the first team to defend the Bamburi Rugby Super Series title with a 25-5 win over the SDV Transami Cheetahs in the final clash at the RFUEA Grounds.

Earlier, the Lions led 20-0 at half time, beating the Kampala Coach Victoria side 37-0 to claim third place while Homeboyz RFC claimed their maiden Chairman's Cup title with a narrow 23-17 win over Impala RFC.

Kenya's women register second successive home victory over Uganda

Kenya's women beat Uganda 8-0 in the earlier scheduled international friendly played at Impala Club. Celestine Masinde scored a try with Angie Olum adding a penalty. Coach Sammy Kemmey was particularly impressed by the performance of his side which registered their second home win over Uganda, the first having come on August 15th 2009 during the Elgon Cup in Nairobi.

Kenya Sevens season in review

It was always going to be a trying a season for the Kenya Sevens national team. A World Cup semi final, all time high sixth overall position in the 2008/2009 IRB Sevens World Series and a number of famous scalps under their belt during that record breaking season meant that the team was going to be under close scrutiny from friend and foe alike. Team vice Captain Gibson Weru correctly predicted in an interview with this writer (conducted in November 2009) that teams were after Kenya's scalp. Teams were business like in their matches against Kenya's Sevens Rugby Team and eventually Benjamin Ayimba's charges were unable to replicate their 2008/2009 feats when they finished sixth. The team finished eighth overall on fifty two points, eighteen short of their intended target of seventy points. This was their third straight IRB Sevens World Series top ten finish.

Keen to end their season on a high, Kenya braved a battling Emerging Boks and pouring rain to win a third successive Safaricom Sevens title, a week after completing their IRB Sevens World Series assignments



Victoria Cup

Kenya began their Victoria Cup campaign with a gritty 11-10 come from behind home victory over visiting Zimbabwe when the tri-nation tournament which also features Uganda kicked off on Saturday 12th June 2010 at Nairobi's RFUEA Grounds. Zimbabwe had the hosts on the ropes for large spells of the match, taking a 7-0 lead thanks to a Leslie Machanjaira try that was converted by Danny Robertson. Peter Abuoga fluffed a few penalty kicks that would probably have seen Kenya lead. He eventually cut the deficit to 7-3 with a successful penalty kick at the stroke of half time. Robertson stretched Zimbabwe's lead with a penalty before captain Innocent Simiyu sparked off the Kenyan revival with an unconverted try that brought the scores to 10-8 in Zimbabwe's favour. Youngster David Ambunya, making his Kenya debut off the bench forced an infringement off the visitor. Moses Kola was sure with his boot, giving Kenya an 11-10 lead, a lead they kept to the end. Uganda would play host to Zimbabwe a week later, running off with a 24-15 win that sees the Rugby Cranes perched atop the Victoria Cup standings heading into their clash with Kenya in Kampala on Saturday 3rd July 2010, a clash that also doubles up as the first leg of the Elgon Cup, the traditional clash pitting these two East African sides. Besides battling for regional

bragging rights, the East African sides will be fighting for better IRB World rankings and it promises to be a finely poised battle.

While Uganda were beating Zimbabwe in Kampala, Kenya were in South Africa, curtaining raising for the Springboks in their clash against Italy. Kenya were on the receiving end of a 7-101 score line against Currie Cup side Mpumalanga Pumas, a result that generated lots of heat amongst the rugby fraternity. Well...there were lessons learnt from the fixture...lessons that will definitely be put into practice in future assignments.

Kenya "A" sparkle in CAR Tournament Trophy –South Kenya "A", last minute additions to the CAR Tournament Trophy –South gave a good account of themselves, winning their two matches in Arusha, Tanzania in mid June. The Charles Cardovillis coached side started with a 27-3 win over Mauritius on Wednesday 16th June 2010 before beating Uganda "A" 27-13 in their second fixture on Saturday 19th June 2010.





UGANDA TOUR

Kenya Wins

Kenya put in a spirited performance in registering a 33-25 away result over Uganda at the Kyadondo Rugby Club. This Victoria Cup clash which also doubled up as an Elgon Cup tie saw Uganda fail to get the ball the requisite ten yards clear from kick off leading to an early scrum down which bore no fruit as the game stayed tentative in the opening exchange. A Kenyan foray into Ugandan territory saw the Rugby Cranes concede an early penalty. The massive boot of Peter Abuoga ensured the ball sailed over the sticks giving Kenya a 3-0 lead.

Uganda would soon respond, winger Bishop Onen penetrating the Kenyan rearguard with no success. Kenya would soon make another foray into Ugandan territory, winning another penalty from a Ugandan infringement. Abuoga stretched Kenya's lead to 6-0 on eleven minutes. Kenya's Andrew Amonde would soon drop a high ball, gifting the hosts a scrum down that gave them the impetus to attack from the base. Onen was on the end of good build play from the Cranes, touching down at the corner flag. Ben Kiiza missed the conversion with the scores at 6-5 in Kenya's favour.

This try sparked the game into life, Abuoga piercing through the Rugby Cranes defense but his final delivery to Victor Sudi was poor. Kenya soon made their first serious foray into the Ugandan twenty five, camping for close to five minutes as they dominated the maul. Daniel Kiptoo would soon pass the ball to Nato Simiyu who played in Innocent "Namcos" Simiyu who barged over the tryline for an 11-5 lead. Abuoga's conversion took the score to 13-5.

The hosts would again respond, taking the fight to the Kenyan half, winning a penalty that Kiiza slotted home, reducing the scores to 13-8. The visitors were soon awarded a penalty after another Ugandan infringement, marking another spell of Kenyan dominance. They kept possession and stole into Ugandan territory with Tony Mutai touching down right at the stroke of half time.

The visitors were quick off the mark in the second half, Amonde

touching down early on. Abuoga would again miss this conversion as Kenya led 23-8. Ugandan backrower Robert Sseguya cut the deficit with the first of his three tries. Kiiza again missed this conversion with the scoreboard reading 23-18 in Kenya's favour.

With a thirteen point deficit, there clearly was a game to be played. The intensity rose a notch high and it is probable that this influenced Kenya's decision to go for points when the erratic Ugandans again infringed. Abuoga was sure with the kick. A massive Ugandan kick saw them enter Kenya's twenty five yard, piling pressure. Kenya would soon lose Mike Aung to the cooler at about the same point. Sseguya added his second try after a Ugandan maul in the Kenyan five yard. Kiiza again missed this conversion as Kenya led 26-18.

Even with such close scores and a man down, the Kenyans continued to dominate and soon made things even more difficult for Uganda when Simiyu scored his second try. Abuoga's conversion took the scores to 33-18. Sseguya completed his treble at the death, Kiiza finally found his convertible boots but it was a case of too little. Final score Uganda 25 Kenya 33 Kenya picked up a bonus point for scoring four tries and now lead the Victoria Cup standings with nine points from two games. The two sides face off in Nairobi on Saturday 10th July 2010 when the fate of the Elgon Cup and maybe even the Victoria Cup could be decided on this date.

Earlier, Uganda's women edged out Kenya 8-5 in their Elgon Cup tie at the same venue. This game was a closely contested affair, Uganda putting the early pressure before Kenya got their groove. Both sides would rue missed chances as the first half ended 0-0. Second half was equally close. It took twenty five minutes in this half before Fortune Irankunda broke the deadlock. Kenyan captain Celestine Masinde soon equalized before big Christine Kizito gave Uganda the win with a late penalty.

By Michael Kwambo.

Rugby Sevens Pools set for Commonwealth Games

The International Rugby Board together with the Commonwealth Games Federation has announced the pool draw for the Rugby Sevens event at the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, India on 11-12 October.

Marking almost exactly one year since Sevens' inclusion as an Olympic sport at the 121st IOC Session in Copenhagen, the tournament will be the first opportunity to witness its proven blend of high-octane action and competitive matches in a multi-sport Games environment.

Defending Commonwealth Games Sevens Champions New Zealand are top seeds and head Pool A, Scotland, Canada and Guyana complete this pool.

2002 bronze medalists South Africa head Pool B and face three challenging opponents, Wales, Tonga and the host nation, India.

Reigning IRB Sevens World Series champions Samoa top Pool C and have Kenya, Uganda and Papua New Guinea.

2006 silver medalists England head Pool D and face Australia, Samoa and New Zealand. The two rugby superpowers will also face matches against the third African team in the draw, Namibia, as well as Sri Lanka.



Where were YOU????? Safaricom Sevens





Where were YOU?????? Safaricom Sevens





Gordon Tietjens Interview



Gordon Tietjens, New Zealand Sevens Coach

One on one with Gordon Tietjens

New Zealand Rugby Sevens Coach Gordon Tietjens is undoubtedly one of the game's unsung heroes; he could easily be termed the best rugby sevens coach ever. He has led his side to eight IRB Sevens World Series titles, three Commonwealth Games Gold medals and numerous other titles. All Blacks Jonah Lomu, Joe Rokocoko, Christian Cullen and Eric Rush are just some of the many players who have passed through "Mr. Sevens" school of excellence. He spoke to Michael Kwambo during the Safaricom Sevens 2010 where he was the tournament's Chief Guest.

Motivation

Tietjens is still very passionate after sixteen years at helm, after winning all that sevens rugby can currently offer. He says he is motivated by unearthing new talent and seeing his charges move on to greater heights. He attributes his success to the family culture that he has instilled within his team. He says, "you have to build a culture, a real family culture within the team. You've got to have players that have a really good work ethic. It's important to pick players with natural talent and skills. I work my players mentally and physically. The work ethic and culture give you the ingredients to go out and win titles."

Emptying the tank

He says "emptying the tank" is about a player giving his 200%, give his all. That is why physical and mental fitness is important. If you get that collectively and consistently within your squad ... you can't go wrong."

Pressure from the rugby-mad Kiwi public

Tietjens says fans now understand that rugby sevens is part of New Zealand's rugby development. He says players like Lomu, Cullen and Rokocoko have used sevens to launch themselves onto the wider rugby arena, featuring for the All Blacks and their respective Super 14 sides.

He also recollects his side's very first loss to Kenya saying, "It was always going to happen...I didn't want it to happen to us...that's sevens rugby for you. There are about seven or eight sides that can win any tournament. The emergence of these teams has made the level of competition so much tougher. New Zealand obviously set the benchmark, winning eight of the first nine IRB Seven World Series titles but these teams have emerged, changing the whole complexion of sevens rugby. We are now forced to be consistent. You must be consistent. We once won a World Series with only one tournament win and plenty of consistent results that helped our cause. That is key in winning a series."

Tietjens thoughts on Kenya's Rugby Sevens team

Tietjens said, "Kenya is a very good side, they probably lack consistency at the moment. They lift themselves whenever they play New Zealand, Samoa... they need to do the same against the Portugals, Canadas et al. That is the way to treat every game. Good teams are those that do it week in...week out. That's one goal I set for my team. You must win."

"Kenya needs to build depth to cover injuries...it is really important. Kenya perhaps needs to bring in younger players to work with the senior players", he added.

His thoughts on his first visit to Kenya

"I am excited to be here. Kenya is great. It has fantastic athletes who have lit up the Commonwealth and Olympic Games. They have the physique and stamina to be great sevens players."

He said he wouldn't be surprised if sevens rugby became a massive sport in Kenya.

"The Kenyan team are great crowd pullers on the IRB Sevens World Series. They always attract massive support all over. In fact, I remember our quarter final fixture against Kenya during the Las Vegas leg... we felt like we were playing in Kenya. It sure is great to be in Kenya. I look forward to enjoying my stay and catching great rugby action too."

Watch this interview online:

<http://www.youtube.com/safaricom7s>

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