



Philippines RUGBY & MAUL

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Philippines Win A5N Rugby Union Series on Home Soil

The Philippine Rugby Union Men's teams were able to secure the Asian Five Nations Division 3 Trophy by defeating both Iran and Guam at the Nomads Sports Club during the first week of July. This victory has now won the Philippines the right to be promoted to the A5N Division 2 championships in 2010.

Over the last four years, the Philippine National Men's teams, both 15's and 7's have been building a strong platform of successive victories and have certainly signaled to all Rugby playing countries throughout Asia that the Philippines will be a Rugby Union Nation that has to be watched and respected at Asian Championships.

The comprehensive wins over Iran 15-0 and Guam 25-0 certainly proved that the National Men's 15 team have what it takes to compete with the top level Rugby Union Countries in Asia. The Philippines defense in both games held



The Philippine Men's 15's National Team 2009 A5N Div 3 Champions

their opposition to 0 points and as Matt Cullen always states "Defense wins championships"

Outstanding players for the Philippines this year were second row Rafael Zappia (named player of the series) and No. 8 Freddy Morris. Both these men stood up against bigger opponents but once again proved that their skills, determination and pride were superior over their opponents' and paved the way for the Philippine Team to win both games.

The final against Guam was for two trophies, First, The Asian Five Nations Trophy, and second, the Magellan Cup, so the game had a dual purpose, with the winner receiving promotion to Division 2 in 2010. The game hung in the balance with the Philippines holding a narrow 3-0 lead, thanks to a successful Penalty Kick by Rafael Zappia.

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The Philippine Team knew they were in a tough battle and the Philippine Captain Mike Letts called on his troops to lift their performance during the second half. The Front Row combination of Mike Duhig, Austin Dacanay and Paul Ingram heeded their Captain's advice and came out in the second half to totally demolish the Guam front row. This started with a push over try to Freddy Morris from a 5m scrum. Paul Ingram stated "I did not know if we had scored, but I knew it must have been close when I spotted the dead ball line."



Above - Scrum-half Jake Letts encourages the Philippine forward pack as they apply pressure to the Guam front row.



Left -Rafael Zappia kicking a crucial penalty to take a 3-0 lead during the Iran v Philippines game

This try set the platform for the best 40 minutes of Rugby Union the Philippine Men's team have ever played and they went on to score 17 unanswered points to the delight of a capacity crowd at Nomads.

The Philippine Men's 15's team had been battling for three years against Guam and once again, the Magellan Cup would remain here in the Philippines and much to the delight of the players and coaches the Philippine National Team will now move up to the A5N Division 2 and play against Thailand, India and China in 2010.

National Coach Matt Cullen believes that his young team of Filipino Warriors (average age of 22) can definitely compete and win in Division 2 in 2010 and challenged the team to reach Division 1 by 2011. This A5N win at home, combined with the Silver Medal Victory at the 2007 SEA games in Thailand by the Philippine National Men's 7's Team has signaled to all Filipino sports loving fans that Rugby Union is becoming a sport that the Philippines can win. Our next objectives are to win the 2010 A5N Division 2 Championships and secure a Medal at the 2010 Asian Games in China.

Right- Number 8 Freddy Morris flies high to win another line out against Guam



Family Ties Stronger Than Ever in the Philippine Rugby Union

Currently there are four sets of Brothers in the Men's National 15's Team, the Zappia brothers (Rupert and Raf) , the Letts brothers (Jake and Mike) , the Morris brothers (Harry and Freddy) and of course the Saunders brothers (Oliver, Matt and Ben) who made history against Guam in the final of the A5N by all playing together in the Philippine National Team's dynamic backline.

Oliver (23) played stand-off, Matt (21) at outside center and youngest brother Ben (17) on the wing. The three Saunders brothers played in the winning A5N Philippines team and were supported in the stand by father Nigel, mother Maria and their sister Abbie. The whole family has a love for Rugby Union and of course the Philippines, with the boys' Filipino family coming from Pangasinan which is located 4 hrs north of Manila.

The Saunders currently live in Sydney and not only did the family enjoy the opportunity to visit the Philippines and watch the three boys win the A5N series, but they also took time to visit the Philippine Sports Commission and thank Commissioner Eric Loretizo and PSC Chairman Harry Angping for the commission's financial assistance and support .

The Zappia brothers, Rupert and Raf also made their mother Nita who travelled from Riverview in Sydney extremely proud, with both her sons scoring tries against Guam in the final and what made the moment even more special was when both boys stepped up to convert their own tries, with Rupert kicking his conversion in front of the capacity crowd from the sideline.



The Saunders Family at the Philippine Sports Commission



L-R PSC Commissioner Eric Loretizo, Ben Saunders, Matt Saunders, Oliver Saunders, Fred Morris, Coach Matthew Cullen, Nigel and Maria Saunders

Mrs. Zappia was over the moon when youngest son Rupert scored a try in the last minute to seal victory against Guam and her eldest son Raf, was named the Philippine Player of the A5N Series for 2009.

There are also the Morris brothers, Fred and Harry who took the field in both A5N games this year. The brothers who come from Wales last played together for the Philippines in 2007 with Fred spending the last two years in the British Army and travelling to Afghanistan. Harry on the other hand has continuously represented the Philippines in both 15's and 7's tournaments and was part of the winning team that won the silver medal at the South East Asian Games.



Brothers Rupert and Rafael Zappia with their mother Nita holding the A5N trophy

Both Fred and Harry learnt to play Rugby Union in Wales and travel to the Philippines to represent their mother's country.

Finally, there are the Letts brothers who have both Captained Philippine National Rugby Union Teams. Mike is the current captain of the victorious A5N Men's 15's team and Jake was the captain of the U/19's team that travelled to Taiwan and won the Division 2 Championships. The brothers hail from the Northern Beaches of Sydney and currently play for Warringah, with Mike playing in A-Division and Jake playing in reserve grade.

There are other sets of brothers who have represented the Philippines before, with this year's Vice Captain Michael Duhig playing for the Men's National Team and his younger brother Francis representing the U/19's Team who won the Asian under age championship in 2006.

It is fantastic to see strong family ties playing a vital role in the Philippine National Men's Rugby Union Team and this is a direct result of their Filipino heritage. As everyone knows the Filipino culture has extremely strong and committed family values and this is being reflected in the Philippine Rugby Union.

Congratulations to all the Families of the Philippines National Men's Rugby Union team and one day soon, we will see more brothers representing their country in the great sport of Rugby Union.



Fil- Aussie Brothers Mike and Jake Letts



(VS) Fil-UK Brothers Harry and Fred Morris

Philippines Rugby Union Finally Receives recognition in the Filipino Sports Media

The Victorious Filipino A5N Rugby Union Team have received much needed public exposure to show the Filipino sports fans that the Philippines can win in this relatively unknown sport. Throughout recent history, the Philippines Sports Media has been dominated by basketball and soccer. It was not until the National Men's 7's team won the silver medal at the last South East Asian Games and the recent victory of the Men's 15's team at the Asian Five Nations Tournament that the media and the Filipino sports fans have started to show an interest in the sport of Rugby Union. These victories have also shown that Rugby Union can also be won by the Philippines against Asian International opponents.

Recently, members of the current National Team were interviewed on "HARDBALL" with Bill Velasco, Jino Rufino and Boyet Sison and were also invited to meet Freddy Webb and Gretchen Fullido on the "Sports Talk" DZMM show. Several articles were also printed in the Philippine Daily Inquirer and The Philippine Star. National Men's Coach Matt Cullen explained that it is fantastic to be receiving media support, especially now that Rugby Union has become a NSA sport with the Philippine Sports Commission and the Philippine Olympic Committee. In the last 4 years, the National Men's 15's and 7's teams have beaten all before them and have paved the way to introduce Rugby Union as a sport for the Philippines.

Thanks to all those that have supported the development of Rugby Union here in the Philippines. The PRFU are committed to Rugby Union development and winning International competitions here in Asia.



Philippine National Players at the set of ANC's sports show "HARDBALL" hosted by Bill Velasco, Jino Rufino and Boyet Sison



Philippine National Team members and PSC Sports Commissioner Eric Loretizo meet DZMM "SportsTalk" hosts Gretchen Fullido and Freddy Webb.



THE NOMADS BULLETTES IN BANGKOK FOR THE 6TH ASIAN CLUB TOUCH CHAMPIONSHIPS

by: Arabelle G. Jimenez

The Nomads Bullettes Ladies Team carried the Philippine Flag at the 6th Asian Club Touch Championships, our first-ever effort at a Federation of International Touch (F.I.T.) sanctioned tournament, which was held in Bangkok, last 20-21 June 2009.

The Championships attracts club teams from all over Asia and International club touring teams that contest their own 'International Challenge' Series. This was the perfect opportunity for the Bullettes and the development of Philippine Touch Rugby to move up to the next level in this field.



Nomads Bulletes

Fifty teams from 10 different countries bannered by New Zealand, Australia and United Kingdom will vie for top honors in the men, women's mixed and masters categories, respectively. After a runner-up finish on their maiden stint in the Chris Kays Memorial Rugby Tournament last 2007 in Pattaya, Thailand, the the Nomads Bullettes ladies are confident to put up a fighting performance in Bangkok.

"Touch [rugby] has as a very good chance of becoming popular in the country because of our Asian physique—we're not tall and heavy," said Arabelle Jimenez, also part of the Nomads Bullettes. "But we're very fast and well coordinated."

Touch Rugby, a fast-rising field sport with minimal contact, has gained popularity the last five years in the Philippines with the sport promoting the fundamental skills of running, handling, evasion and support play. Touch rugby also develops the basic principles of attack and defense without the fear of getting hurt.

Headed by Coach Rey Gigataras, The Nomads Bullettes, who have reaped awards in various tournaments in the Philippines, head the field competing in the event with the support of Gatorade and Mizuno.

After a gruelling 2-day tournament under the heat of Thailand, the Singapore team has emerged as the champions, which are mostly composed of the Singapore National Team. As Bullettes President Clair Barberis said, "On the overall, the learnings over the tournament weekend weighs just as much as winning the gold. We signed up for the tourney wanting to improve, not knowing what to expect, played as best we could and walked away with a valuable reality check." And this, we all know - Touch in the Philippines may have a long way to go, but our penetration in the Asian field has shown what Pinays are made of.



Nomads Bulletes

PRFU FEATURED PLAYER:

Name: Harry Morris

Nickname: ask the boys

Age: 24

Date of Birth: March 27, 1985

Current City: Swansea, UK

Heritage: English/Philippines

Team: Dунvant RFC, Philippines National 7's and 15's, Alabang Eagles

Position Played: Centre, Wing, Full-back

Rugby Hero: Tana Umaga, Habana

Interesting Skill: On or off the field?



Why RUGBY? Rugby satisfies my instincts to run hard and fast, play as a very close team and as an individual, use brains as well as brawn. Break the opposition and then have fun and get drunk with them afterwards... and there's that winning feeling...

Since **Harry** was able to do anything, he has always been into Sport... His parents, being former athletes themselves encouraged him and his siblings in all aspects. So after moving to UK at the age of 6, Harry and his brother started playing rugby for a local Under 8's team, as well as representing his City, School and County in swimming, Athletics and Gymnastics. During his early teens he needed to cut down on the amount of sports due to time and overtraining, so he focused on Rugby, and continued doing athletics in the off-season. From Ammanford RFC U14's, Harry moved to a more successful Youth team, which won the Youth League in North and South Wales, and in the schools league, reached the finals in 2 successive years. He also represented and played with Welsh Crawshays and attended Wales development team camp before having to leave for University. During University he played for his Uni first team, and English Eastern counties, and earned full colours and was nominated for player of the year, 2 out of 3 years of his time in University. Now playing in Wales Division 1 League, but looking to enter Premiership next season. According to Harry, "the great thing about playing rugby is the bond between the whole team, on and off the field, and playing for Philippines Rugby has been the strongest bond within a team that I've played for before". My aim is to get Philippines into the top 5 teams of Asia, and move further on and up Worldwide, in 15's and 7's rugby.

PRFU UPCOMING EVENTS:

Aug 8 and 22 - PRFU 7's Round 1 and 2

@ Rizal Stadium, Vito Cruz, Manila

September 5 - Fat Boy 10's Tournament

@ Clark Airbase

September 19 - PRFU 7's Finals

@ Nomads Sports Club

October 10 - MAAP Subic 7's (ARFU Endorsed Event)

@ Remy Sports Field, Subic Freeport Zone

**October 21- Nov 2 -
Philippine National 7's Team Tour
to Brunei 7's and Borneo 7's
(ARFU 7's Tournaments)**

The Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) presents the **Subic 7's** international rugby football competition. Saturday, 10 October 2009 | Remy Sports Complex, Subic Bay Freeport, Philippines.

Endorsed by ARFU (Asian Rugby Football Union) and Philippine Rugby Football Union.

REGISTER YOUR TEAM NOW! Club Fee: US\$ 50.00

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The Philippine National Men's 15's Team 2009





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