



INFORMATION PAGE

Week of June 24th, 2005

1 Results this week

From Edmonton, Alberta:

Churchill Cup

USA 30 Argentina 34
Canada 5 England 29

These results set up the following matches on Sunday 26th

USA v Canada
England v Argentina

You can follow the Churchill Cup event at <http://www.churchillcupRugby.com>

From Mendoza, Argentina:

IRB Under 21 World Championship

Canada 3 Ireland 77

You can follow developments at <http://www.irbu21.com/HomePage.htm>

And featured this week:

From Blaine, Minnesota:

Under 19 Women's International

USA 3 Canada 36

Extracts from the Rugby Canada web site

On a bright sunny 30 degree day with a very light breeze on an immaculate field, the Canadian U19 Women's team played in their first match of two vs. the United States. U19 Women.

The Canadians came out flying right from the first whistle by building an immediate attack against the US side with textbook Rugby. This pressure resulted in a quick try by winger Ashley Patzer (Lethbridge, AB) to put the Canadians up 5-0 just under three minutes into the first half. Consistent pressure from the Canadians denied any sustained attack from the US. The Americans were forced inside their 22, resulting in unsuccessful attempts to

clear. An excellent counter attack and evasive running from fullback Elissa Alarie allowed the Canadians to stay inside the US 22 metre line for the majority of the first half. A blocked US kick by Canadian captain Leysa Matity (Saskatchewan) 30 minutes into the half resulted in Canada's second try to make the score 10-0.

The US were able to coordinate an attack inside the Canadian half resulting in a Canadian penalty in front of their posts late in the half. The Americans were able to successfully slot a penalty goal to make the score 10-3 at half-time.

The second half began with a penetrating run by the US centres to bring the attack into the Canadian half early on. The Canadians were not put on their heels for very long. With outstanding forward continuity and support, an attack built from inside the Canadian half resulting in a team effort try by Jennifer Kish (Edmonton, AB) 13 minutes into the second half. The try was converted by fly half Kate Foulds of Ontario. 17-3 for Canada.

Punishing defence and sustained attack by the Canadians denied the US any opportunity to threaten again in the match.

Good decision making and ball distribution by Foulds allowed the Canadian back line attack and outstanding forward support to record 3 more tries, bringing the final score to 36-3 for the Canadians.

The final 3 try's for Canada were scored by #8 Kelly Russell (Ontario) converted by Foulds, winger Ashley Patzer, and fullback Elissa Alarie (Montreal, QC), converted by Jenna Waddy (B.C.).

Coaches Natascha Wesch and Mike Hopper were impressed with their team's intensity, preparation and performance in the match. "There is still work to be done in preparation for Saturday's match and nobody will be taking this US squad lightly" commented Hopper.

The same two teams will meet again this Saturday at 10:00 am at the National Sport Centre in Blaine Minnesota.

2 A Canadian Referee in Mexico

I am delighted to report a relationship that has developed between Mexico and Canada, specifically by the appointment of a Canadian referee to the Mexican National Cup final, contested by Celaya and Tasmania.

Congratulations to Canada for adopting this pro-active developmental and fostering role; and congratulations also to the USA for similar previous appointments and initiatives.

Canada and the USA are the leading Unions in NAWIRA. Both have benefited greatly over the years from the mentoring and generosity of countries such as Australia, Wales, New Zealand and, of course, England, which continues to boost Rugby greatly in the region through the Churchill Cup alliance.

We would not be where we are today if it had not been for the help we have received from wealthier and more developed Unions. So it is excellent to witness Canada and the USA adopting this role with the developing Unions in NAWIRA.

Here is an account by Brian Conway, the Canadian Referee, on his trip to Mexico. Young men and women take note. Refereeing provides an excellent career opportunity in Rugby!

Mexico – trip report

I was off to an early start, with my alarm set for 4:00 a.m. Apparently you sleep fairly deeply at that time of day; something I learned as I slept right through the alarm for twelve minutes (I'd even put it on the 'obnoxious' buzzer rather than the radio, just to make sure I woke up...). Too late for any thoughts of a shower! Everything from the bathroom was thrown into the suitcase and off I went. A half an hour later I arrived at the Calgary airport. It's amazing the number of people that actually work in the middle of the night!

My American Airlines flight to Dallas was due to take off at 6:45 a.m. so I got myself a power drink from Jugo Juice and settled into a comfy chair and imagined what it would be like to be sleeping in my bed.

The flight to Dallas was uneventful and three and a half hours after leaving Calgary we touched down in Dallas. I had about three hours to wait for the next flight to Mexico City, so I found a TGI Fridays and settled in for a bite to eat and did some office work on my laptop.

The flight to Mexico City was another two hours and after I had collected my bag I headed for the exit. Miguel Carner, the President of the Mexican Rugby Union had three of his employees meet me as I came out through customs.

We talked about Rugby and sports in general on the forty minute drive to the hotel Maria Cristina in downtown Mexico City. Mexico City is home to some 24 million people and is the most populous city on the planet.

Carlos Aguilar, the 'international relations' officer of the Mexican Rugby Union, met me at the hotel. Carlos helped me check in to my room and told me that I'd have an hour and a half to freshen up before others would be back to take me out to dinner. After sitting all day, I unpacked and did some

stretching. At 7:30 p.m. Cristina Flores (who has been a long-time supporter of Rugby both in Canada and Mexico) picked me up at the hotel and took me to a local restaurant where the Mexican federation had a reception for me.

Cristina introduced me to Miguel and over several local draft beers I was introduced to many boosters of the game in Mexico, representatives from a number of clubs and each of the captains from the two teams that were to play in the championship game the following day. One of the teams, Tasmania, was from Mexico City and the other team, Celaya, was from the city of Celaya where the championship game was to be played.

Celaya is located in the eastern part of the State of Guanajuato, at the heart of the El Bajío region. Guanajuato borders with the states of San Luis Potosí to the north, Querétaro to the east, Jalisco to the west, and Michoacán to the south.

The city has an elevation of 5,772 feet and an average annual precipitation of 24 inches. The climate is hot and dry with occasional afternoon showers in the summer, and pleasant and mild during the winter.

During the reception, we were treated to a slide show of pictures from the Mexican team's first foray into international 7's at the recent IRB 7-a-side tournament in Los Angeles. We also watched a video of the Mexican win over West Indies at the 7's. Miguel also presented me with a Mexico Kooga game ball (that I later had both teams sign).

As I had had a long day, I left at 10:30 p.m. and headed back to the hotel. I got up at 6:45 a.m. on Saturday morning and headed downstairs to the hotel restaurant for breakfast. Miguel met me in the restaurant at 8:30 a.m. He had the championship cup with him and it looked like a true Rugby championship trophy – a wee bit battered and bruised after a hard night celebrating with players drinking beer out of its' depths and enduring the odd slip onto the floor! Miguel had tried to polish it up without too much success. He had brought a can of brasso silver cleaner with him and asked one of the waiters if they could help. Ten minutes later the cup reappeared, shining like the William Webb Ellis trophy!

Pablo arrived and we all finished breakfast before heading towards Celaya, Mexico. The drive took about two and a half hours. I watched with trepidation as the outside temperature gauge in Miguel's car increased. By the time we reached the playing field at the University of Celaya at noon the temperature had inched up degree by degree from 20 Celsius to 32 degrees Celsius. I had some lunch that I had brought with me and then relaxed for the next hour and a half. As part of the celebrations for the day, there were youth games before the main game. It was great to see large numbers of U-16 kids on the field throwing the Rugby ball around.

An hour or so before the 2:30 kickoff, I got my gear and went into one of the classrooms where the team from Mexico City was changing. I went through my pre-game 'chat' with the team and made sure that they understood key phrases. One of the players translated into Spanish for those players whose English was limited. I then headed to the Celaya change room and again went through the same process. It appeared that most players understood English and that perhaps only two or three on each team did not. This was a bit of a relief because it meant that 'management' of the game would be more or less like a normal game.

As I started to do some warm-up sprints, I got a taste of the altitude. I thought that coming from Calgary (3000 feet) I would not have too much trouble. The additional altitude was immediately apparent... Fortunately I'd worked hard on my fitness leading up to the exchange and once I got going, it was the heat that turned out to be the greater challenge (for the players as well). The first twenty minutes of the game were played at a frenetic pace, as both teams attempted to put their imprint on the match early. Tasmania made a break for the line and had a player tackled just short under the posts. A ruck formed and it looked like Tasmania were arriving in numbers. A Celaya player prevented the ball from being produced and I had no option but to penalize and sin bin him for a rather cynical/professional infringement. Tasmania chose to run the ball rather than go for points (if there is such a thing as a turning point in the game after only five minutes, then this was it). Tasmania failed to score.

The match see-sawed for the rest of the half, with ferocious and brave tackling by both teams. Tasmania failed to capitalize with the extra man and by half-time Celaya had converted two penalties to lead by 6-0.

In the second half, Celaya's dominance in the scrums and discipline at the tackle/ruck, led to two tries taken from quick tap penalties. Tasmania fought back and scored a try with ten minutes left, but it was too little too late. Ultimately the home team Celaya ended up deserved 23-7 winners and the local fans cheered on exuberantly.

The match was televised and three cameras recorded the action from towers surrounding the field. Several dignitaries were in attendance including the Ambassador to New Zealand.

Shortly after the medal ceremonies there was a torrential downpour and we huddled under tent canopies for the storm to pass (which it did a short time later – luckily the game had been moved up an hour from its' original start time, otherwise we would have been caught in the storm).

From the grounds, it was off to the 'third quarter' – as the Mexicans called it. I think that something was lost in the translation! We drove to one of the fine

local establishments and much celebrating and toasting was done. I made a presentation of Rugby Canada pins to the captains on each team, the MVP from each team, and my two touch judges. Miguel was presented with a Rugby Canada tie.

Miguel, Cristina, Pablo and I then went to a local restaurant where Cristina ordered a variety of delicious Mexican foods for me to try. We talked about the game and had a very enjoyable dinner socializing and talking Rugby. After a long day, it was time to head back to Mexico City. We left Celaya at 9:30 p.m. and I arrived back at the hotel at midnight. I think I fell asleep as I was getting into bed.

I got up early on Sunday morning so I could go to one of the local markets and have a look around (and search out a gift for my wife Yvonne, who supports me in all things Rugby). The taxi driver helped me in my negotiations with the locals and, gift in hand, it was off to the airport for my early afternoon flight to Dallas and then on to Calgary.

After another ten hours traveling, I was glad to arrive home to my family. Certainly a whirlwind exchange. I calculated that, including travel time to and from airports, I spent roughly thirty hours traveling in the space of three days. The experience was a wonderful one – full of friendly and warm people and one I shall never forget.

Thanks go to everyone that made it possible (the Referees Committee, Cristina, Miguel and all of his supporters and friends in Mexico). Please feel free to pass this along to anyone that you think might enjoy reading it. To my fellow referees on the Focus Group – as promised, a very nice bottle is waiting to be shared with you all at the National Championships!

Thanks to Brian for his account

3 Of Golf, Rugby and the Olympics!

New Zealand Rugby Man Wins US Open of Golf Helps promote Rugby w/ the swing of his club

Written by Baron.Hanson@post.harvard.edu, Cambridge, MA USA

What do Retief Goosen, Ernie Els, Tiger Woods' caddie Steve Williams, and the newly minted 2005 US Open Golf Champion Michael Campbell have in common? They are all former high-level Rugby players. And they also happen to be at the top of the Golf world.

In fact, major prime-time commentary unfolded during the Pinehurst telecast on Sunday, centering on Michael Campbell's New Zealand heritage. His story included numerous mentions of Maori traditions, the Haka, and of course the

All-Blacks Rugby Team. It turns out Michael Campbell fell just short of his lifelong dream to wear the Silver Fern on the pitch for New Zealand. Not making the All-Blacks cut due to size, Campbell turned his strength, passion, and endurance toward the next best usage of green grass - the Golf course. This exuberant New Zealand

Rugby man is now the pride of his country, winning the 2005 US Open of Golf. What's more, Campbell fended off fellow Kiwi caddie Steve Williams's best customer - Tiger Woods. Like Campbell, Williams was once close to receiving a phone call from All-Black selectors.

What makes the Campbell-NZ story special is a variety of correlations between Golf and Rugby, past, present, and future. First, in recent years Golf has evolved into a power fitness sport. Woods, Sorenstam, and others on top are in test-shape. Steve Williams is often credited with advancing: "If you want to improve your Golf game, train like a Rugby player." It is no wonder that Goosen, Els, and now Campbell have applied their mental and physical advantages as former Rugby players to reach the peak of modern Golf. Come to think of it, have you ever known an RFC to not hold an annual Golf event?

Second, Golf was featured as an Olympic sport at the 1900 Paris Games. Rugby was last an Olympic sport in 1924, when the USA triumphed. Interestingly, Rugby and Golf are in tandem once again, seeking inclusion into the 2012 Olympic Games.

Third, Golf and Rugby players are both gentleman and lady sports that demand integrity, manners, and values. Golf and Rugby players also have honor and respect for their competitors and fans, something "basketbrawlers" and soccer hooligans will never find on any radar screen.

Fourth, the attention that Michael Campbell's New Zealand heritage will earn this year for Golf and Rugby will most certainly parley to mainstream broadcast blips and media comparisons. Rugby will not be the primary focus, but CNN, ESPN, et al. are already showing Campbell doing The Maori Haka and mentioning his serious Rugby past. It is a safe assumption that the word "Rugby" will end up in print and online via more Google searches, now that a New Zealand Rugby man takes the center stage of Golf for a while.

In fact, during his news conference, Michael Campbell brilliantly opened his comments the way every New Zealander does - mentioning the All-Blacks Rugby team first, himself second. It's called externality. Campbell remarked: "I'm happy to win, but the All-Blacks are playing the Lions at home right now, so boys, I must say to you first [looking into the camera] 'All the best!' I know you can do it! ... I'm happy, this win certainly earns me a top seat for the All-Blacks back home, this [trophy] is for New Zealand," he said.

But this Rugby man from New Zealand has also earned Golf's most ultimate prize: a multi-year invitation to compete in The Masters, at Augusta National Golf Club, in Augusta, Georgia. All other golf tournaments and majors are mere qualifiers for The Masters. Golf's grandest show is important because The Silver Fern of the New Zealand All-Blacks will likely be worn by Campbell - on his cap or shirt - and will be seen by the largest non-Rugby audience in the world leading up to and during Masters weeks. This non-Rugby audience includes potentially new sponsors and brand value drivers that will place IRB leaders on their financial toes. Thank you Michael Campbell. IRB investment into the most untapped landscape on the planet for Rugby has just been advanced in the USA - by a golfer.

Rugby is game of team cohesion - fifteen, ten, or seven players - whereas Golf is a game of individual discipline. Yet in the Olympic context, Rugby players and golfers are highly identified according to their country and flag. Case in point, The Ryder Cup. Citing online sources, Rugby and Golf have been short-listed along with squash, roller sports and karate (?!) to be added to the Olympics roster if a vote by the International Olympic Committee on July 8 removes one of the existing 28 sports. Mark Egan, the International Rugby Board's Sevens tournament manager, is encouraged by this news of Olympic sport removal.

"Rugby has a lot to offer the Olympic Games, and we believe we have an extremely strong case that Rugby be included," Egan states via www.golftoday.co.uk. "At the recent Rugby World Cup Sevens in Hong Kong, six Olympic Committee members attended the event. Two of those gave us positive reports on what they saw of Rugby. Hong Kong had a 120,000 sell-out crowd over three days. 700 million homes received broadcasts in over 100 countries in 11 languages - so Rugby had a tremendous response."

However, the firmness of PGA and European tour scheduling is viewed as a potential obstacle for Golf's Olympic inclusion. In many ways, arranging a field of golfers is akin to arranging a field of auto racers - high in individual number and complex. Golfers and drivers are like rock stars - unique talents and personalities unto themselves. Replacements are not an option. However, even though international Rugby matches are scheduled years in advance, player pools and selections can change before, during, and after matches if needs be. Golfers are 100% liable for their own constant and individual performance. This constraint further opens the door for Rugby vs. Golf in the Olympics, especially via the Sevens format, due the flexible entity of a Rugby team.

The last sport to be removed from the Olympic Games was polo in 1936. In 2002 the IOC decided to cap the numbers of sports included in an Olympic Games at 28, the number of events at 301, and the number of athletes at 10,500. At that same session in Mexico City, three sports facing removal -

pentathlon, softball and baseball - were given a reprieve when members resisted a proposal to drop them to add Golf and Rugby. The global Rugby and Golf leadership must continue to press forward via more local level catalysts and proof of economic footprints. The IOC may change its tune as both sports rise to the top and interest more nations and more athletes.

In fact, evidence suggests Golf and Rugby prove that smaller countries can potentially win medals at the Olympic Games and beyond. Providing a great platform for all countries to compete on the world stage is what Rugby and Golf are all about. Not only is Fiji the current World Sevens champions, Vijay Singh is also one of the top five Golfers in the world, also from Fiji. Go you good things.

The IRB believes Sevens is its secret weapon to pave the way for Rugby to return to the Olympics by 2012. Although I am more of a player and fan of Fifteens, I agree with the IRB and Egan because Sevens allows a faster Rugby tournament format, has fewer infractions, is less complex, can train fans easier via television, and requires less Olympic athlete capacity than Fifteens Rugby would. Sevens is also more visual in terms of open field running and scoring. Coincidentally, Rugby Sevens season begins in the USA right about now.

Best wishes to all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Jones
Regional Development Manager