



PENGUIN INTERNATIONAL RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Rugby Football Union
Kent County RFU

Tour to the Netherlands

13 to 16 July 2023



by Craig Brown, Bruce Atchison, Jess Bunyard and Sandra Soler-Gomez

Through the offices of Netherlands Rugby President Roderick Bolle and Penguin Secretary Graeme Inglis, discussions started on a possible tour to the Netherlands for the summer of 2023 at the Penguin Charity lunch in September 2022. After some discussions around content and location a two-match tour was agreed featuring one match for the Men's XV and one for the Women's XV.

Given the Corendon Festival of Rugby was occurring in Amsterdam, featuring the U18 and U20 teams from a number of nations including Netherlands, USA, Belgium, Hong Kong and Canada it was an obvious fit that this was the best week to tour.

With the support of Kristof Vanhout, Dutch Rugby's Technical Director, two matches were agreed against differing teams. The Men's would play Kwagga Rugby, a side based in the Netherlands but selecting South African Expats from Europe and the Women's team would play the Mo Sista's a team linked to a mental health charity.

Preparation

All squad members arrived at the team hotel, Corendon Plaza, near Schiphol Airport with minimal issues. A mention of women's skipper Anna Caplice who arrived without her bags following a tight connection in Dublin enroute from the US!

The schedule for the tour was fairly simple. Arrive in Amsterdam on Thursday, train Friday, play Saturday and head home Sunday.

The squad got to meet and greet on Thursday. With the differing arrival times from early morning



Anna Caplice leads the team out for the first ever Women's XV's match with the help of her nephews

some headed into Amsterdam to look about and some just chilled at the hotel. Dinner was set for 9PM so the teams met at 7:30 to make introductions and start to get to know each other.

The meals provided by the Corendon hotel were wonderful and the buffet theme was just what a rugby team needs!

10AM Friday and all were present. We headed off to the local football Club Sport Combinatie Pancratius Badhoevedorp 22 (SCPB 22) who allowed us to use their fields. Two artificial pitches were available so perfect for our needs – no rugby goal posts in sight though!!



Kit ready to hand out

Once arrived at the ground, Penguin CEO and Tour Manager welcomed all and ran through the health and safety, logistics and admin matters. Penguin Secretary Graeme Inglis also added his welcome.

Women's team Manager Sandra Soler-Gomez presented Penguins to all, which had to be on your person at all times, except for when rugby activities were taking place. You might think it is easy to keep track of a 3cm tall Penguin.....

With the admin done it was over to coach Bruce and coach Jess to prepare their players for the Saturday matches.

A Captains run was planned for Saturday morning so once again the teams left the hotel at 10AM, back to the SCPB 22 fields for a 45 minute light run. Both coaches were happy with the preparation post training.

Men's coach Bruce Atchison named Billy McQueeney from Wales as his captain and Rhys Price from England as his vice-captain. Women's coach Jess Bunyard named Anna Calprice from Ireland as her captain and Megan Gaffney from Scotland as vice-captain. Well done to all.

Lunch was at noon and then on the bus at 13:15 for the 20 min drive to the Dutch Rugby arena.

Women's Manager Sandra all kitted up on the way to training



Honorary Vice President Presentation

The Club's Executive Committee met in June 2023 and decided to grant two special awards to long standing supporters and significant contributors of the Club, by bestowing Hon Vice Present awards to two special people.

Penguin CEO Craig Brown made the announcement at the tour introduction meeting and presented Marc Daniel and Sue Olovsson with awards signed by Club President Richard Bennett.

The award was presented to recognise many years of service to the Club in the areas of medical support covering physio, massages, strapping and general medical requirements.

Marc has been supporting Penguin Rugby since 2002 and Sue since 2013.

Well done to both and they received a well deserved ovation from the group.



Craig, Sue and Marc

Jersey Presentation – Friday Afternoon

Tour Manager Craig Brown bumped into legendary Welsh international and coach Lyn Jones in the hotel. Lyn is now working for Dutch Rugby after a very successful playing and coaching career including 5 caps for Wales and being head coach at Ospreys, London Welsh and for Russia. Lyn played for the Penguins in 1986 against Oxford (at Iffley Rd Oxford). Lyn was asked to present the Penguin players their jerseys and happily agreed.

Using the hotel facilities, it was decided the best place to present the jerseys was under the 747 Jumbo plane parked out back of the hotel! It was a Penguin record with the most jerseys ever

presented (44 in total). Lyn reflected on his time as a player and the differences to the modern game. He said today's game was much more enjoyable for players as it was about keep the ball moving, trying to



find space and a long way from the forward grinds and ruck after ruck from his playing days.

Craig Brown thanked Lyn for his time and confirmed Lyn was the oldest Penguin on tour.

Women's XV v Mo Sistas

Women's coach Jess Bunyard was delighted with the way her team took to the two training sessions and bought into her game plan. Jess enjoyed herself and confirmed the tour was an amazing experience for the whole team and what a privilege it was to coach the team; the first time the Penguins had a women's 15s team.

The biggest challenge was the short amount of time the team was together. The tour was over a weekend, which meant one training session, a captain's run and then game time! Jess wanted the player's time with Penguins to be enjoyable and a great rugby experience. In order to ensure all had a great experience, Jess confided in the amazing team manager, Sandra, about making this tour the most period-friendly tour ever. It was agreed to supply free period products along so that any player could use them if they needed. Jess also chatted to the players about the free products and how training could be tailored if they needed it.



It was remarked that Jess had a big smile on her face the whole time! That was due to the players, management and support staff all making it such and enjoyable experience; the tour went smoothly due to the amazing physios and management we have at Penguins. Jess' coaching philosophy was player lead including deciding the line up and voting for their leadership group. The captain was Anna Caplice and the vice-captain was Megan Gaffney.



In the first half of the match, the team played some wonderful flowing rugby. When the rain arrived, the team changed tactics a bit and used their physicality, teamwork and mental resilience to help them win the game. The match was a great spectacle to watch. When it had finished, the players all had smiles on their faces and Jess was a very proud coach.

Final result: Penguins 26 – 22 Mo Sistas



Back Row: Jess Bunyard (Coach), Sue Olovsson (Masseur), Karis Stephens (Lichfield RFC), Iona Antwis (Sale Sharks, England U20), Kathrine Baverstock (Loughborough Lightning), Sandra Soler-Gomez (Manager), Lucy Winter (Watsonian FC), Roderick Bolle (President, Netherlands Rugby), Teleri Wyn Davies (Caernarfon), Lizzie Musa (Saracens), Molly Kelly (Loughborough Lightning, Wales U20), Craig Brown (Penguin CEO), Hollie Bawden (Sale Sharks), Eeva Pohjanheimo (Cheltenham Tigers, Finland 7's & 15's), Katie Dougan (Wasps), Emma Quarterman (Bath), Zailene Deliza (Physio)

Front Row: Ellen Ramsbottom (Sale Sharks, England U20), Anna Caplice (Captain, Gloucester-Hartpury, Ireland), Emma Hennessy (Cheltenham Tigers), Mollie Wilkinson (Bristol Bears, Wales U18), Maria Teixeira (Sporting Clube de Portugal), Tess Braunerova (Wasps), Marta Magalhaes (RC Diok), Vivian Bahlmann (Rugby Klub 03 Berlin), Matilde Goes (Sport Lisboa e Benfica), Megan Gaffney (Vice Captain, Heriots, Scotland), Ting Low (physio)

Men's XV v Kwagga Rugby

The squad was the perfect mix. Aging from 19 to 44 and from 7 different nations, and all with a desire to be a Penguin. The squad gathered and quickly built strong foundations. Training on Friday was a good start and the principles for the 'plan' were laid down, with players taking responsibility for different components of the session.



Tausinga on attack

Quickly Billy McQueeney showed himself as a leader among the group and was supported brilliantly by seasoned Penguin campaigners, the Young brothers, Calum Harris, Gregor Gillanders and Chris Walker.

The energy and enthusiasm that carried through the whole tour was a joy to witness. Will Cave's energy was a constant, on and off the pitch. Francisco Costa Campos and Jorge Abecassis brought a laid-back approach in the backline, but when they flicked the switch, they brought a high level of intensity. One of the great quirks of a Penguins tour, is being able to team brothers together in a situation they haven't experienced too often (unlike the inseparable Youngs), the Price boys took the reins at 9 and 10 and controlled the tempo of the game with a lot of maturity and skill.

The boys came out the blocks very quickly, in challenging wet and windy conditions before the clouds parted and the sun shone on some truly outstanding attacking rugby, so good, that sometimes the ref thought they'd passed the ball forward!

Charlie Farmer and Sami Sjoeborg were everywhere, Charlie getting his hands on the ball and Sami clearing rucks like a demon. Alex Todd at number 8 was the outstanding performer on the day, wreaking havoc in the Kwagga defence and making his presence felt in defence.

The front row had a lot of fun in the scrum, securing great ball for the exciting back line to run onto and create space all over the pitch. Young Paddy Nelson seems to always have a smile on his face, easy when your pack is dominating, with Francis Appleton and Charlie Brabham on the other side similarly enjoying the South African scrum opposition.

Captain McQueeney and Gregor Gillanders dominated the line out, worked hard in the loose, bringing a calm aggression and mature direction to the team. The perfect locking combination.

The back 3 got a lot of ball with Harry Fisher, Rhys Tudor and Iestyn Scott looking dangerous every time they got the ball and finishing some fantastic moves off with tries. Tausinga Kautai was destructive in the centre and looked threatening with every touch of the ball. The play makers pulled the strings and made the game plan come to life, The Price boys, Jorge and Francisco were relentless and found space at speed. Joe Allday came on at 9 and the intensity continued, no let up for the opponents



Iestyn scooting away



The bomb squad finished the job. Scott Rendall, Toby Twigg, Calum Harris, Chris Walker and the Youngs came on made a tough afternoon even harder for the Kwagga squad. The Penguins were relentless, trying to keep their own line intact with great team work and then supporting the ball carrier in wave after wave of attacks.

2 sessions. A clear plan. A desire to honour the shirt. It was good day in Amsterdam.

Final Score: 61-5 to the Penguins



Back Row: Roderick Bolle (President Netherlands Rugby), Rhys Price (Hartpury, Wales U18), Paddy Nelson (RGC, Wales U20), Chris Walker (Tukapa, Taranaki, NZ U20), Scott Rendall (Orkney, Scotland age groups), Iestyn Scott (Chinnor), Calum Harris (Westcombe Park), Gregor Gillanders (Rosslyn Park, Leicester, England age groups), Rhys Tudor (RGC), Sami Sjoeborg (Zurich RFC, Switzerland), Toby Twigg (Castricum Rugby Club, North Wales), Billy McQueeney (RGC – Captain), Joe Allday (Kendall), Alex Todd (Hull), Tom Price (Chinnor), Will Cave (Chinnor, East Midlands U20), Craig Brown (Tour Manager), Richard Young (Redcar), Tausinga Kautai (Castricum Rugby Club, Canterbury age groups), Bruce Aitchison (Coach)

Knelling: Marc Daniel (Physio), Charlie Brabham (Chinnor, Bristol Bears, Wales U18), Francis Appleton (RC Eemland, NLD U21, Notts County), Harry Fisher (Watsonians), Jorge Abecassis (CDUL, Portugal) Francisco Costa Campos (Cascais, Portugal age groups, Portugal 7s), Neil Young (Redcar)

In Transit: Charlie Farmer (Northumbria Uni, Sco U18, North Eng U20), Graeme Inglis (Tour Manager)

Thank Yous

Club Sponsors

The Club thanks Tsunami Sport and Synapse Physiotherapy for their continued support of Penguin Rugby. We are very grateful and consider you part of the family.



Sponsor A Day On Tour

The Club would like to thank the following people who personally contributed funds to the tour. Without your support the tour would not have been possible – thank you.

Tony Robinson	Bill and Alex Calcraft
Tom Wacker	Yuill Irvine
Richard Bennett	Marianne Okland
Abby Moonbeam-Brown	Roderick Bolle

Our Hosts

Many thanks to Netherlands Rugby and their photographers for use of these excellent photos and also thanks for all the hospitality and organising. First class. In particular thanks to Geraard Spaans and @nlrugbyshots.

Our Volunteers

Thanks to Sandra, Jess, Bruce, Graeme, Sue, Marc, Ting, Zailene and Craig who put in a lot of work behind the scenes to create and deliver an awesome tour.



Marc's new shoes



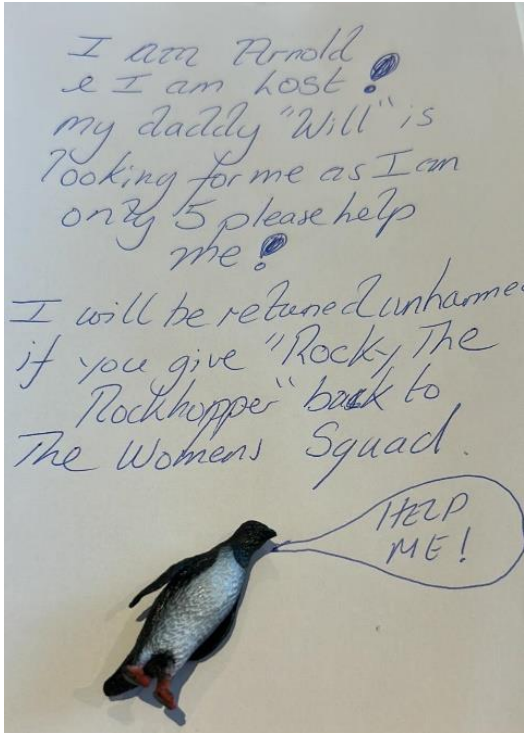
Jess and the team in the stand post match



Our Portuguese friends



Not every day you have a Jumbo in your hotel!!



Alleged kidnap!



Thumbs up from Bruce



Billy ready to lead the team out



Craig, Zailene and Ting



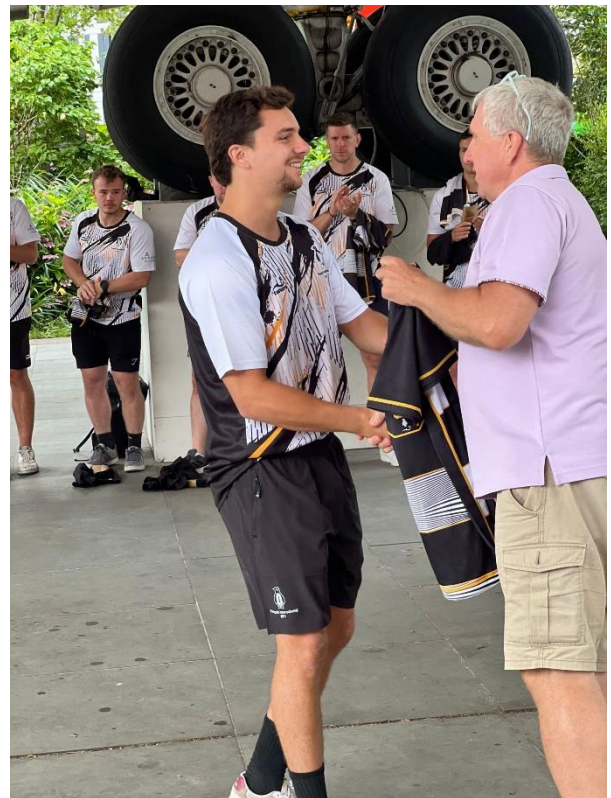
Post match braai



Washing done



Primed



Jersey presentation to Jorge