



PENGUIN INTERNATIONAL RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Rugby Football Union
Kent County RFU

COBRA Tens Tournament Tour Report Malaysia 30 Oct to 4 Nov 2024

Report by Graeme Inglis and Craig Brown

After an 8-year hiatus the Penguins were back in KL for the 51st playing of the COBRA Tens. As 6-time winners of the tournament it was fantastic to be back!

This year the team was coached by Penguin stalwart John McKittrick, ably supported by Will Helu (a previous HK 10s winner with the Penguins). The management team was led by Graeme 'Jingles' Inglis working alongside our Chief Hydration Officer, Nutritionist and Spiritual Advisor, Dougie Meikle. Our CEO Craig Brown also dropped in to ensure things ran smoothly.



COBRA field in great nick

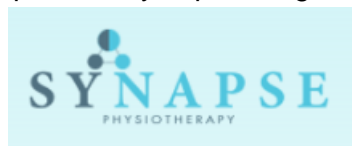
It was a rare home game for the Synapse Physiotherapy Team, our long-term partners based in KL, and as such we were royally looked after all week by Ting, Marc, Zailene and their whole team.

As always, our team retained an international flavour with 6 nationalities represented. The core of the team came from various clubs in and around Auckland, while three players also joined us from clubs in Sydney (full team listed below).

Our tour kicked off on Wednesday 30th October, when the bulk of the team arrived. Coach McKittrick wasted no time in getting the boys acclimatised to the hot and sticky conditions with a good old fashioned lung buster of a training session. Welcome to Malaysia gents!

Following an afternoon of recovery, the team headed down to COBRA Rugby Club for our first team dinner (where we were joined by the Sydney contingent). After a few team bonding refreshments, the team headed out to see what night life KL had to offer.

Thursday gave us a chance to start laying down our game plan for the weekend, which was particularly important given it was the first time

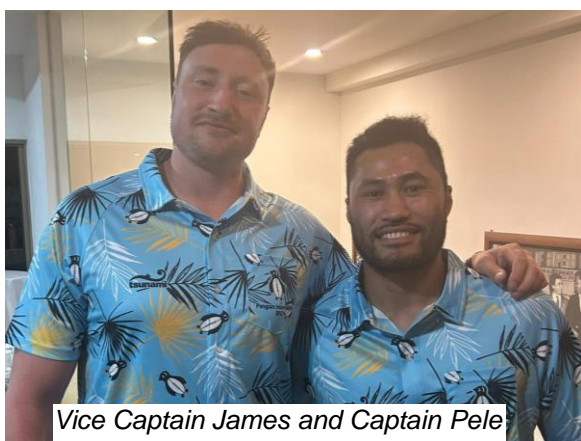


Busy physio Marc

many of the team had played 10s. After the session coach McKittrick announced our Capitan (Pele Crowley) and Vice-Captain (James Fiebig) for the tournament.

A recovery session in the hotel pool (which was surprisingly chilly given the weather conditions), was followed by a very special team dinner at the magnificent Royal Selangor Golf Club, hosted by our good friends from Synapse. A fantastic night was had by all, including a delicious meal, a great live band, some speeches, some karaoke (of mixed quality) and a Haka! (not necessarily in that order).

Friday morning allowed the coaches to add their finishing touches to the game plan, while Friday afternoon was free for the players to relax. Team dinner and an early night meant the boys were in good shape for the business end of the week.



Tournament Day One - Our first game of the day was against Palmy Steel from New Zealand (Plate winners from the previous year). Despite some early resistance, the Penguin's soon got the upper hand and ran out winners 41-0. Game 2 - was against the potentially tricky Harlequins team from PNG. As expected, this was a step up from Game 1, with the Harlequins really testing out our defence with several dangerous runners in their back line. It was great to see the team stick to our defensive structure and even more pleasing to see some of our set plays

result in 'Meat Pies'! Final score Penguins 42- 5 Harlequins . Game 3 was against local outfit SSTMI Tsunami. The Penguins finished off the day with another resounding win 50-0 and could start to look forward to the quarter finals.

On Saturday night, the team headed off to the Sheraton Hotel to refuel at their international buffet! Not sure the restaurant staff had ever witnessed anything quite like it before as 20 large humans made light work of the impressive spread. In a sweet touch to finish off the evening the boys arranged a birthday cake for team manager Jingles! (whose birthday is in April!) 🍰



Back Row: Doug Meikle, Craig Brown, Maake Taulahi, Ben Ruzich, Mahonri Ngakuru, Karl Ruzich, Riley Tofilau, Jed Melvin, Ollie Horne, Kiwi Duncan, James Fiebig (Vice Captain)
Front Row: Graeme Inglis, Will Kaye, Pele Cowley (Captain), Cam Howell, Manahi Tipoki, Bryn Gordon, Hunter Rice, Alex Humfrey, John McKittrick (Coach)
Away coaching the U12s: Will Helu

Tournament Day 2 - Quarter Final - Up next were the Global Lions, from Auckland. For the first time, we were matched physically, which was borne out with an attritional first half. Again, our defence held firm and as the Lions began to tire our backs started finding some gaps! Final score 24-0 to the Penguins and into the semi-final.



Our semi-final was against a team called the Royal Town Warriors made up of foreign players playing in Malaysia's top division. They again represent a step up in class, having easily won all their pool games on day one and in beating a strong Auckland University Vipers team in the QF. Games like this are a good reminder as to why I retired! The hits going in from both sides were bone crunching. Our defence was proving to be our secret weapon, against a team who had scored at will in earlier rounds. The Warriors played more of a sevens style of rugby throwing the ball around, while we stuck to our game plan, kicked for the corners and used our big pack to hang onto the ball and grind out territory. Well it seemed to work as Penguins won out 24-5!

So one game left! The big one! Our opponents in the final this year were regular Cobra visitors the Casuarina Cougars from Darwin, who were packing several Flying Fijian's. We knew we had our work cut out! In a similar match to the semi, it was a clash of styles. The Penguins did a great job in starving the Cougars of position, nullifying their dangerous back line. Despite two consolation tries late on, the Penguins held out for a hard fought 19-10 victory.



Tournament Results

Day 1 – Pool D	
v Palmy Steel	41-0
v POM Harlequins	42-5
v Tsunami	50-0
Day 2	
Quarter final v Global Lions	24-0
Semi final v Royal Town Warriors	24-5
Final v Casuarina Cougars	19-10

Statistics

Points For 200

Points Against 20

34 tries and 15 conversions for

Scorers

	Tries	Conversions
Kiwi Duncan	8	1
Pele Cowley	3	1
Karl Ruzich	3	
Will Kaye	3	
Riley Tofilau	2	
Hunter Rice	2	
Ollie Horne	2	
Ake Taulahi	2	
Mahonori Ngakuru	2	
Bryn Gordon	2	
James Fiebig	1	1
Cam Howell	1	12
Jed Melvin	1	
Ben Ruzich	1	
Manahi Tipoki	1	

Sunday night gave the lads a chance to let their mullets down and celebrate a fantastic victory. Not even the 4am pick up the following morning was enough to slow the boys down, most of who came straight from the night club to the bus (Good Work!).

As always there are many people we need to thank for making this trip possible. Firstly to COBRA Rugby Club, who provided us with a huge amount of support to make this trip possible. Also thanks you for putting on a cracking tournament.

We also have a number of supporters to thank who sponsored a day on tour, including;

- Yuill Irvine
- Bruce Fair from Jackspeak
- Bill and Alec Calcraft
- Marianne Okland
- Paul Christopher
- David Townsend
- Alan Black & Andy Morris



Also a big shout out to our long term sponsors Synapse and Tsunami. As well as being the best rugby team there, we were also the best cared for and the best dressed too! Thank you all!

Thanks also to our Liaison Officers, Brandon and Gavin for their incredible help.

And just a final word on the lads from Jingles, thank you for making my job easy and for delivering your job on the pitch! I hope to see you all again in a Penguin jersey at some stage! Please help us to continue to spread the word about the Penguins!

Penguin Team

Name	Club	Honours
Ben Ruzich*	Helensville	North Harbour & U20s, Blues Wider
Bryn Gordon*	Northcote	North Harbour, Manawatu, Moana Pacifica
Riley Tofilau*	Northcote	North Harbour Academy, 20s, Blues wider
James Fiebig	North Shore	North Harbour, Free Jacks, Penguins
Alex Humfrey*	Gordon	Bath, Jersey Reds
Jed Melvin*	East Coast Bays	North Harbour, Free Jacks
Karl Ruzich*	Northcote	North Harbour
Mahonri Ngakuru*	Seattle Seawolves	Moana Pacifica, Tasman, North Harbour
Pele Cowley*	Ponsonby	Auckland, Counties, Samoa
Manahi Tipoki*	North Shore	Harbour age groups
Cam Howell*	North Shore	North Harbour Blues 20s
Ollie Horne*	Manly	Ayr Super 6, Glasgow Warriors, Aus Universities
Maake Taulahi*	Ponsonby	South Canterbury
Kiwi Duncan*	Mid Northern	Northland XV & 7s, Blues U18/20, NZ U19
Will Kaye*	Gordon	Richmond, Eng Students
Hunter Rice*	North Shore	Blues 20s

* 1st time Penguin

Thanks for local photographer Ahmad Jeffry Mohamed Wahi who kindly provided us with some of his photos – much respect.



Thanks to Liaison Officers Brandon left and Gavin right with Maake





Bryn running the hard yards



Hunter into the gap

Will evades the tackle
and is on his way



VC James trucks it up



Ben sold the dummy and was through



Good D from Mahonri & Manahi



Karl charges into the opponents from PNG



Manahi and Alex secure ball

Offloading Riley at work



Poised running from Jed



Ollie carrying hard in the final



Sidestep coming from Maake





And Ben is over - 5 points



Nice fend coming up by Alex

Top try scorer Kiwi



James, Karl and Manahi watching something!



Mahonri & Ben working on D





Great display by Cam