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Message from Alan G L Wright
Co-Founder and Life President
of Penguin International RFC



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May 2011

Dear Fellow Penguins

I am delighted to send you this publication which has been produced by Penguin International Rugby Football Trust, an educational charity of which I am proud to be Patron.

The Trust is the Charity in the Penguin Family which provides support and assistance to the HSBC Penguin International Coaching Academy and provides Rugby Scholarships to talented youngsters of limited financial means who would benefit from elite coaching.

Having celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 2009, your amateur Club continues to carry the flag for Rugby Union around the world by fielding competitive teams on tour and in major international tournaments.

Our players and our members are drawn from all quarters of the globe and the Club has now played/coached in or against teams from no less than 70 countries/territories. We can truly describe ourselves as "international", being the most travelled sports club in the world.

The Club since its very first tour in 1959 has offered coaching to youngsters and players in almost all of the countries where our teams have played. For some years we have been able to increase that aspect of our activities significantly with the outstanding support and encouragement of our title sponsor, HSBC, following the formation of the Academy.

In association with HSBC, the Coaching Academy goes from strength to strength, managed brilliantly by Craig Brown, our CEO and Director of Rugby.

I do hope you will enjoy reading the articles in this publication. They will give you some idea about the coaching activities carried out by your Club around the world and some insight into the experience of one of our Penguin Scholars at an elite coaching academy in New Zealand.

I would like to express my thanks to our title sponsor, the great international banking house HSBC, and to our other sponsors, including those members of the Club who have contributed to the sponsorship of this publication.

In conclusion, I would also like to express my thanks to the Trustees of the charity, under the Chairmanship of Andrew Thornhill, QC and to my Fellow Penguins for their support and goodwill, which is critical to the Club's advancement in the world of Rugby Union.

Yours sincerely,

A.G.L. Wright



Twickenham, May 2009
Golden Anniversary Match
Penguin International RFC v Commons & Lords RFC

HSBC Penguins Coaching Trip to Jordan May 2009

In Jordan we were looked after extremely well from arrival to departure. This was highly appreciated especially as the trip was very last minute. The coaching was received with much appreciation of the technical and tactical input given.

Unfortunately for the Jordanians, there is no structure in place where they are able to play games on a regular basis. This has not helped their development as they haven't played a full 15 aside game in over a year. However, this did not temper their enthusiasm to develop individually, and they participated to their maximum ability throughout the sessions. We hope that in the near future there will be a structure whereby they will be enabled to play games on a regular basis. We believe this is the first challenge facing the IRB and development team in the Arabian Gulf, and has the potential to greatly assist their skill level, game understanding, and experience.

Schools Sessions

Our first session was delivered at High School level. Unfortunately there were only eight pupils present due to the last minute organisation of the session. In this session we delivered hand catch and skill drills as well as fun games. The pupils were full of enthusiasm and it was a good fun session. The school has excellent facilities, although their playing surface is, unfortunately, astro-turf. Interestingly, rugby is dominated by the female game. However, there are some boys who do take part. The rugby at the school is lead by their deputy head teacher who is Welsh.

International Sessions

Four sessions with the Jordanian team on the weekend: 2 in the morning on grass, and 2 in the evenings on astro-turf.



Session 1

The team and their two coaches, who were relatively new to coaching rugby, were enthusiastic and keen to learn about maximising their coaching sessions by introducing structure.

The aims of this session were to develop ball presentation and the roles of support players, and so the skills covered included hand catch, accuracy of pass, and some ruck touch. Emphasis was placed on accuracy of ball presentation and re-alignment to move the ball into space. At times players found this challenging as they tended to be drawn to the ball instead of positioning themselves spatially to form the next attack. The session was concluded by focusing on attacking from lineout, in order to develop game understanding for all players.

Session 2

We continued with hand catching and accuracy of pass, and developed on to how to give and receive a pass early to allow the outside man to work in more space. We also explored the effectiveness of quickly reorganising and communicating the availability of space in the outside channels. The roles of the ball carriers and support players were examined, particularly how they work to keep the ball off the deck. The players practised running into space and developing their ability to beat a defender and offload out of the tackle. The session was concluded by working a set move from scrum.

It was very positive to see the players starting to realise their roles from a set piece, e.g., who is at first and second contacts, and the importance of reorganisation. A massive improvement from session one was evident, and the players could see that this was achieved by the technical input at certain skills.

Session 3

This session involved working on the in-to-out defence system. We started with roles at the contact; the roles of the defensive line of an in-to-out push defence system, and the knowledge and discipline needed to decide when to push hard and when to drift out. The session concluded by looking at the moves from lineout to scrum; focusing on being able to get the ball into the wide channels; attacking the opposition midfield, and attacking wide again.

Session 4

In this last session we discussed training session structure. We suggested that the initial period of training, e.g., when players first arrive to train, provides the opportunity for skill development to be undertaken prior to the main body of the session – for example: the scrum half practising his passing from the deck to his stand-off, or a hooker practising his throwing.

We developed the session by splitting the participants into forwards and backs. Eck looked further into the lineout play, focusing on lifting and jumping technique. Sesh looked at options from the scrum for the backs, and why we attack wide when we have a scrum on the left hand side.

During the main body of the session we ran unopposed moves; practising moving the ball wide from the scrum, and the roles of players in open play.

Information Booklet

We put together a “play-book” which included lineout codes, defence codes, tackle technique and different communication used on the pitch. We also created power-point slides with all of the moves covered in the four days.

Finally, the facilities are poor in Jordan, and the only grass pitch they have access to is of poor quality and is not marked. It is shared with a football team that has the majority of access to it. The school facilities are fantastic, but unfortunately it is only an astro-turf. However the Jordanians have a squad of between 25-30 players who are committed to develop individually and collectively to be a better team. They are looking forward to playing in the Asian Five Nation games, and we hope the input we have given will help them play to a basic yet effective structure.

We would like to thank Penguin International RFC for giving us the opportunity to go to Jordan and develop their team before they go to the Asian Games, and we hope we can work with the Penguins in the future.

Coaches:

Gordon Henderson (Sesh) and Alex Edmonstone (Eck)



Coaching Festival for Schools

East London, South Africa: June 2009

It was a rude awakening in Johannesburg on the Friday morning prior to the first Lions-v-South Africa Test.

We were greeted at our hotel by our driver at 04.30 am, to be taken to the airport for a 06.30 am flight to East London. And so it was that the HSBC Penguin International Coaching Academy team - comprising Richard Hicks (RFU Trainer), Ben Fisher (Player Development Officer, Scottish RU), Sailosi Nawavu (Fijian 7's Rugby Legend) and myself - embarked on the first of many rugby coaching adventures in South Africa.

Upon arrival at East London, our merry group of Penguins - "a Welshman, a Kiwi, a Fijian and an Englishman" - had at least woken up somewhat and, with a good intake of caffeine and African sunshine, we were ready for action.

We were warmly greeted by development officer "Terror" and his colleagues at the Bulldogs Stadium.

We started to prepare for some "game sense" delivery which we would incorporate in the Coaching Session for the expected youngsters. This meant letting the young players discover and learn through playing the game and then extending that understanding by asking questions which also helps check their understanding.

We decided that several different types of non-contact rugby and a basic introduction to contact should be in order. Then all schools attending the HSBC Penguins Coaching Festival would participate in a Tag Rugby tournament.

When the first students arrived, I was immediately struck by how smartly dressed they were; that they understood better than any western child what privilege meant.

On the other hand, I was also a little disconcerted that, on this beautiful crisp morning, the students seemed less than impressed with the thought of a day off school and a day playing Tag Rugby!!

It was only upon meeting Mr. T Mpama, a teacher at Upper Mbulukwenza Junior School, that all became very clear.

Mr. Mpama had to wake at 02.00 am this morning to drive to collect his learners at 03.00 am so that they could leave their homes in the Transkei in order to get to the Coaching Festival on time. They had to drive 100 kms, on a sand road, then a further 200 kms to get to East London, without having had breakfast. When they arrived, they were very tired and very hungry.

As if as one, the Penguins' coaching team was galvanised into action. We bought 30 loaves of bread and 6 enormous tins of jam. Teams fed - the sun came out and so did the smiles - we were ready!!

More excitement as we realised that this was the very first time these youngsters were going to play any form of sport on a field covered in grass. "Teacher we are going to be very good at rugby today because we can play on a field with grass," they exclaimed delightedly!!



The rest of the day was spent playing lots of different types of conditioned games, with a very good amount of skill and natural athleticism, which certainly impressed the Penguins' coaches.

Although many of the children did not understand our various English accents, they were like sponges, absorbing all the hints and tips given by the coaches and then translated by the teachers for them.

None of the children had played Tag Rugby before - but within 15 minutes they were expert players of the game - passing, running, evading and pulling off tags left, right and centre.

As with all the HSBC Penguins Coaching Festivals, the focus was on the children having fun. Tag Rugby will hopefully become part of the curriculum in these schools. All teachers, coaches and development officers from the Border Region were involved and assisted with the coaching and refereeing of the games. Hopefully, this is the start of something big in the region!!

Following the final tournament matches and proudly armed with their HSBC Penguins T-shirts, the pupils treated us to some beautiful African singing - their memorable departing gift to the Penguins.

The youngsters departed in the same good humour as they had arrived.

I hope the trip back to the Upper Mbulukwenza Junior School, although long and tiring, was full of happy memories for the youngsters who attended the HSBC Penguins' Coaching Festival.

Author:

Tony Robinson

Coaches:

Richard Hicks, Ben Fisher, Sailosi Nawavu and Tony Robinson



Official playing kit supplier
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HSBC Penguins Behind Bars!!

Drakenstein Prison, South Africa: June 2009

An hour outside of Cape Town, the roads in Paarl are quiet and picturesque vineyards are dotted over the landscape, so the sight of a three-metre high bronze statue of Nelson Mandela raising his fist aloft tends to stand out. This is the entrance to the prison – then known as Victor Verster, now called Drakenstein – where Mandela spent the final months of his incarceration; this is the very place from which he made his ‘walk to freedom’.

Driving through the gates, it’s hard to believe South Africa’s future was carved out within these fences. In fact, it doesn’t look much like a prison at all. It’s more like a small community with single-storey houses, a children’s playground and even a petrol station, not to mention the large sports field complete with spectator seating. But most of these facilities are for the armed guards patrolling the grounds with rottweilers; the prison cells are located much further back from the road.

Today the sports field is being used by the HSBC Penguin International Coaching Academy to help a group of young offenders qualify as rugby coaches.

First, an official welcome. The prison chaplain, Jerome Samuels, stands to address those sitting in a marquee as rain lashes down. “It’s not important how many times you fall in life,” he pronounces, “it’s how many times you rise after falling.”



The message strikes more resonance given the location. Mandela knows what it’s like to be knocked down but always rose again and, after 28 years in prison, he led South Africa into an apartheid-free era. One current inmate also has an incredible story to tell – and rugby is at its root.

Michael Dakets is a murderer.

He has spent eight of his 25 years in prison, with a further seven remaining on his sentence. He’s also a poet and author, contributing to the book 15 Men: Images and Words from Behind Bars, he’s converted to Christianity and is now an IRB Level One coach.

His transformation behind bars means he’s unlikely to serve out his sentence, but before we get to the present it’s best to address the past. Dakets grew up in Beaufort West in the Western Cape, a town with high rates of unemployment and crime. His father wasn’t around and his mother wanted him to focus on his education, so there was no time for sports in his teenage years. Sadly, there was time for him to get caught up in South Africa’s prevalent gang culture.

“I wasn’t so confident in those days,” recalls Dakets. “I had low self-esteem and self-image. I don’t think I’m an evil person, but it was a case of me wanting to fit in and be part of a gang. It’s peer pressure; you do what you believe people want you to do.”

That peer pressure led to murder. A 15-year sentence was handed down and prison introduced Dakets to rugby, the oval-ball game helping to improve his confidence as well as his temperament. He says: “I played my first game in prison in 2004 – outside I just watched it. The first thing rugby did for me was help with my self-control, to not get angry or hit a person or fight. Rugby’s a fighting sport but it’s taught me how to discipline myself.

“I’m fitter than I was in the past and rugby also helps you to develop a creative mind. When you get on the field you’ve got to be creative to get to a certain point. That can be applied in our daily lives as well as on the field and can help us change.”

Dakets may be one of the smallest props in the world – he looks like he’d have trouble scrummaging against some 12-year-olds – but he says: “It’s not about your age or size but your skill.”

That skill – and the skill of more than 20 other young prisoners – was clear to see during the coaching course. This is the first time the Penguins have worked in a prison – and it was quite an eye-opener for the instructors.

“It puts life in perspective,” says Tony Robinson, who works in coach development for the RFU when not on the road with the Penguins. “Life’s hard over here and makes me realise how lucky I am – and I’m not just trotting out platitudes.”

All those at Drakenstein had natural talent. The hard bit was converting that playing ability into coaching ability. Standing in front of a group and explaining how to execute a grubber kick or catch a high ball is a daunting task but most got past any shyness. The jovial nature of the Penguins coaches kept the mood light and Robinson says: “We try to give these guys confidence. They’ve got low self-esteem so for them to coach



and make them feel that they can do things well, you can’t underestimate

that. If we’ve made a difference to those guys’ lives it’s fantastic.”

The Penguins, celebrating their 50th anniversary, are best known as an international invitational side that plays in tournaments all over the world. In 2000, for example, they became the first European club to play a series of international games against China’s national team. The coaching arm was launched five years ago and has been a resounding success.

The Penguins rely on accredited coaching instructors willing to take time off from the day job to travel to far-flung places and teach people how to coach. Flights, accommodation and a daily allowance are provided, then it’s over to the coaches. “It’s a privilege to be involved in something like this,” says Robinson. “We see hardship but it’s so rewarding.”

Welshman Lynn Evans, another coach who took part in the Drakenstein sessions, says: “The Penguins decided coaching was very important in developing countries. They get requests from various unions asking for help with coaching, especially in emerging nations, so we help develop coaches. It’s the capacity to take the game to as many people as possible.”

The Penguins have certainly done that. In 2009 alone, as well as South Africa they have been to Hong Kong, Malaysia, China, Jordan, Mongolia and Macau, while trips to Qatar and Singapore are planned for later in the year. They are also going to work with the national teams of Pakistan and India.

“I was in Malaysia last time and the Philippines are asking the Penguins to go there too,” explains SRU academy coach Ben Fisher, another involved at Drakenstein. “Everywhere the Penguins go, they open up more doors to other opportunities. We’ve seen that in Asia with a lot of the smaller unions looking for help to develop coaches. The Penguins are still playing in international tournaments and the kids coaching is going really well, but the coaching education side forms a big part of it all too.”

Evans adds: “There are so many different rugby cultures. In Dubai we went to Arab schools to deliver coaching and they’d never seen a rugby ball. Then in Malaysia the coaches are mostly teachers who’ve played a bit of rugby and have been picked for their knowledge of the game in schools there.”



It’s not just those being coached who are benefiting either, those doing the coaching enjoy finding out techniques from other places in the world. At the risk of sounding like the start of a joke, an Englishman, a Welshman, a New Zealander and a Fijian were those involved in Paarl and other nationalities are also part of the programme.

“There are lots of coaches from lots of countries and it’s about sharing ideas,” says Fisher, a Kiwi working in Scotland. “This is the first time I’ve worked with Robbo and Lynn, and you can pick up things off these guys. As coaches we share ideas and experiences – and that is a huge part of it. As Robbo says, it’s not about English people coming to say this is how to do things. We want to see how other people do things – it’s a good chance to share international ideas.”

The Penguins’ aim is to leave a legacy, to ensure rugby reaches as many people as possible via qualified coaches. Dakets can leave a legacy of his own by taking the game to youngsters when he is released and helping them avoid a life of crime.

“I wasn’t a nice person,” says Dakets, looking back. “Now I’ve given my life to Christ and I’ve learnt how to discipline myself through rugby. I want to give back to the community. I want to show how I’ve changed and to show youngsters that prison is not a man’s home. No one wants to be in prison and even if they think they want to be here it’s no place to stay.”

Dakets may have fallen as low as someone can go but rugby has allowed him to rise to new heights. And we should all be grateful to the game for that.

Coaches:

Tony Robinson, Lynn Evans, Ben Fisher and Sailosi Nawavu

This article appeared in Rugby World magazine. To save 30% on a subscription to Rugby World, the world’s best-selling rugby magazine, go to www.rugbyworld.com

HSBC Penguins in Mongolia

June 2009

Here is one for the pub quiz:
“which is the only country
with a national rugby team
but has no club rugby?”

Mongolia! Not only do they have no club rugby as such, but they have no grass to practise on and the entire Mongolian Rugby Union's equipment comprises approximately 10 rugby balls and 10 plastic discs. Such was the challenge facing Frank and me when we arrived in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city. We really had no idea what to expect but this did come as a bit of a surprise. What they do possess, though, is enthusiasm in huge quantities and a real desire to learn about the game, to improve their individual skills, to get some live games and to set up a structure and plan which will allow the game to develop at grassroots and national levels.

We arrived from Beijing after a 2 hour flight on a crystal clear day, which gave us a real impression of the vastness and terrain of the country. We touched down at Chengis Khan International Airport (only a few planes each day) and then experienced our first drive on Mongolian “roads” – a challenge for every driver, and even more of a challenge for every passenger!

Chengis Khan is a real hero in Mongolia. Almost everything is named after him – airport, streets, hotels, vodka, etc., but it was our first invitation to meet the Mongolian RFU Committee that made me smile: in large letters “Chengis Khan Irish Pub”! Guinness travels well!

The driving forces behind the development and the game in Mongolia are Austin Gansukh, who doubles as team captain and CEO. He is ably assisted by Mr. Batbayar (Bat to his friends). They both speak very good English, having completed business degrees in Wales and England respectively.

One of our sessions was to participate in a live press conference which was very well organised by the young lock who doubles as the Union P.R. National news and sports cameras were in attendance, as well as press and radio. Frank and I were invited to speak on the current, and potential, future of Mongolian rugby, as was Austin and one of their most experienced players. A very slick and well presented exercise, which gave the profile of the game some excellent publicity.

The players train on the fifth school pitch. We were invited to watch their first session to assess the situation. Players change on the side of the “pitch”, which is surrounded by high flats, and is about the size of a full soccer pitch. There the comparison with normal playing-fields ends! This pitch had no grass, only ash and rubble. So no boots at training - only trainers, and no activity, i.e., tackling and rucking, which may cause the players to come in contact with the uninviting ground. Quite a challenge when coaching a contact sport.



Nevertheless, the players set about training with the same enthusiasm as a team training on a lovely, soft, grassy pitch. They trained hard every day we were there, some players taking the week off work to do so, and they had fun! On the last two full days, they acquired the use, for 2 hours each day, of a small, all-weather pitch. At last, tackling and rucking, and full game-contact became the priority in spite of it being not the most “forgiving” surface to go down on. Mongolian culture is suited to the contact element of rugby, because one of their main sports is wrestling. However, the “team-game” concept proved more difficult for them to grasp.

Time was also spent in the “classroom” (borrowed from of a local company) where we enjoyed canteen lunches with the employees! That “a picture is worth a thousand words” proved an appropriate saying, as we spent some time illustrating, through Frank’s computer, concepts, skills, game situations, and season planning ideas. Copious notes were taken!

Socially, the team comprised a great bunch, and they looked after us very well – too well on one occasion, when we returned to our hotel in the early daylight hours after sampling, amongst many other brews, the delights of the Scotch whisky – Laphroaig!

Our last night ended with a surprise get-together with the whole training squad, resplendent in their new tracksuits, which had been issued that day. We met in a German bar complete with Mongolian “Frauline” sliding one metre pots of beer along our very long team table!

If enthusiasm counts for anything, then the future and development of Mongolian rugby is assured. Against all the odds, they are making progress, and it is to be wondered what they will be able to do with more equipment and a blade of grass to play on!

Chengis Khan lives on in their rugby squad!

Author:

*Pete Gallagher –
proud owner of a Mongolian national rugby top!*

Coaches:

Pete Gallagher and Frank Hadden



Coaching Rwanda in Hong Kong

March 2010

THE RWANDAN squad that arrived in Hong Kong this spring were understandably keen to focus on the present. The talk among the 13 players aged 17 to 27 was of rugby, skyscrapers and the sheer excitement of it all, and not the apocalyptic events of 16 years ago that turned their beautiful country into a slaughterhouse.

For an outsider, however, it's impossible to talk of Rwanda without mentioning 1994. So let's deal with the past first. Rwandan president Juvénal Habyarimana was assassinated on 6 April that year; Habyarimana was a Hutu and his supporters claimed his murderers were Tutsis, Rwanda's other ethnic group who had been in conflict with the Hutus for a number of years. Within hours the killing began as neighbour turned on neighbour and friend on friend. The blood-letting continued for three months, during which time a staggering 800,000 Rwandans were butchered, mostly Tutsis.

Present-day Rwanda is on the up with a stable economy and a strong government. The nation's rugby team reflect this friendly and formative self-confidence. The squad, nicknamed the 'Silverbacks' after the country's breed of mountain gorilla, arrived in Hong Kong at the end of March after a 27-hour flight from Kigali, Rwanda's capital, and their eyes were on storks before they had even landed.

Only two of the players had ever been on a plane before and most were similarly ignorant of such Western commonplaces as escalators and air conditioning. As for the skyscrapers, especially the

55-storey International Finance Centre, they couldn't believe what they were seeing.

"We've never seen so many buildings like this, and very tall ones too," said Djuma Adams Mugabo, the team's captain and centre. "The tallest building in our country is only 14 floors. Here everything dwarfs that."

Mugabo is a young man, only 23, but he's already experienced a lifetime's worth of suffering. He lost his father during the genocide and, in the traumatic months and years that followed, he drifted away from his mother and four siblings. He was a lost soul, living on the streets of Kigali selling cigarettes and washing cars to make ends meet.

"I used to live on my own and it was a hard situation," reflects Mugabo. He was sent to a school but hated it because "even if you're a bright student, you can't make it because you're poor, and sometimes they dismiss you. You go home and you just cry."

Then one day he saw a group of kids playing a game with a strange-shaped ball, and in a flash Mugabo's life had changed. He came under the wing of Gerald Nsenga, the Silverbacks coach, who brought Mugabo to live with his family and paid for him to continue his education.

Like most Rwandans, Mugabo makes up in speed what he lacks in size. He is quick and agile, relying more on guile than grunt. With Nsenga's encouragement, Mugabo joined one of Rwanda's nine league sides, discovering the joys of teamwork and try-scoring. And then he met the second towering influence in his life.

Dave Hughes was born in Hong Kong 26 years ago to British parents. A hooker for the Hong Kong University side, he moved to England in 2008 to work as a surveyor. One day on his way to work he began reading *Shake Hands With the Devil*, a harrowing account of the Rwandan genocide written by Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, the Canadian commander of the United Nations peacekeeping mission.

"I was insulated from all the troubles in the world and reading that book opened my eyes," recalls Hughes. "It shocked me out of my complacency. I deeply felt I needed to go and see for myself and try to understand why this tragedy happened."

The day after finishing the book Hughes resigned from his job and caught a plane to Kigali to work for one of the country's many voluntary organisations. Rugby was the last thing on his mind when he arrived in Rwanda and began work for a charity, but cycling to work one day he nearly fell off his bike at the sight before him. There was a group of street children in rags playing rugby. "I couldn't believe my eyes. I hadn't seen anyone playing sport, but to find a rugby ball in Kigali was amazing."



The kids told Hughes the ball was among a batch of rugby equipment sent from an expat club in China, the Shanghai Hairy Crabs. "I went back the next day and met them again," explains Hughes, "and one thing led to another and soon I was playing and coaching a team called the Kigali Sharks."

Hughes's skills weren't limited to playing and coaching; soon he was organising tournaments and inviting sides from other African countries to come to play in Rwanda. His mum and dad flew in from Hong Kong to join the fun, and Hughes senior suggested taking a Rwandan team to the Hong Kong Sevens.

Easier said than done, but Dave Hughes is as tireless as he is selfless. Soon the wheels were set in motion with the aim being to bring a Rwandan side to play in the Kowloon RugbyFest Tens, a curtain-raiser to the main sevens tournament. Hughes has a bulging book of contacts in Hong Kong but he was still surprised by people's generosity. One sports company donated free kit, a PR firm took on the team free of charge, the Hong Kong union gave them tickets on the house for the main event and waived the entrance fee for the tournament and one person chipped in \$1,000 (£668) out of his own pocket after reading about Hughes's work.

There was also a helping hand from the HSBC Penguins, one of the invitational sides that have been coming to the Hong Kong Sevens for decades. The Penguins treated the Silverbacks to a day of coaching before the tournament under the eyes of former Scotland boss Frank Hadden, Japan coach John Kirwan and Steve Hill, the new director of rugby at Richmond.

For Hadden, coaching the squad was an unforgettable experience. "I loved being involved in the professional era," he says, "but this (working with the Rwandans) is what our great game is all about. They have such enthusiasm for the game, and it's infectious. But there's also a determination to continue building the sport in Rwanda."

"Their role models are the Kenyans. That's who they follow during the sevens tournaments, and certainly there are a lot of similarities between the two countries in terms of physique. They're both very quick and more suited to sevens and tens – at this stage of their development at least – than 15s."

Before the Silverbacks went into action at the RugbyFest Tens, the Penguins made the odd tweak here and there and, most importantly, told the players to go out and showcase Rwandan rugby. And that's just what they did. The Silverbacks won four of their six pool games to go through to the Plate final, where they were squeezed out 7-0 by the ARC All-Stars, a southern hemisphere invitational team.

Among the impressed onlookers was Bobby Skinstad, the former Springbok captain.

"I was astounded by their pace and skill levels," he said. "They have obviously taken to rugby in a big way. We've all seen what the Kenyans have achieved at sevens and there is a similar potential with these guys."

For Mugabo, playing in Hong Kong was a "dream come true" and they aim to return next year, but Hughes's dream will be realised the day he sees Rwanda playing in the main Hong Kong Sevens tournament. For that to happen two things must occur.

"The key is funding," he says. "If we get money to send back to Rwanda, to get them a pitch, to get them a clubhouse, to get them IRB-certified... with the right training and funding they could be in the Hong Kong Sevens in five to ten years' time."

The second factor is the players. Hughes refuses to discuss the ethnic composition of the Silverbacks; its immaterial to him, they are Rwandan rugby players, not Hutus or Tutsis, and that's a philosophy shared by the squad. Nonetheless, millions of young Rwandans – including many of the Silverbacks – still carry the emotional scars from the horrors of 16 years ago.

"They don't trust anyone," he says. "Rugby is an opportunity where they can build that trust; they can meet other players, they can learn leadership skills, controlled aggression that you need in rugby. Slowly they can build relationships and realise there are people in this world that are nice and giving and they can be friends with them. It seems odd that rugby can be that tool that can get them to gain trust."

Odd but true, and the proof is Djuma Adams Mugabo, the Rwandan captain who grew up with no home and no father, but who never lost faith despite it all. "The good thing is I always have hope that anything is possible," said Mugabo. "If you want to achieve, you have to believe."

This article appeared in Rugby World magazine.

HSBC Asian 5 Nations

A Coach's Perspective: April - June 2010

HSBC Penguin International Coaching Academy undertakes a three and a half month, 11 country tour through Asia to support the HSBC A5N tournament.

The drama just kept on coming, right up to the end of this year's HSBC Asian 5 Nations. The Division 4 tournament scheduled for Kyrgyzstan was disrupted by rioting on the streets of the capital and the final match of the last tournament, the winner takes all encounter between Cambodia and Laos brought back memories of the South Africa v All Blacks World Cup Final. The night before the game, Laos influential Stand Off Chris Mastaglio went down with food poisoning just like the All Blacks in 1995.

There was more drama in the build-up to the game when the heavens opened during the Sevens tournament being played as a curtain raiser in the quaint Old Stadium in beautiful Phnom Penh. It didn't stop the Dump Kids beating the French International School in the U13 Final. HSBC has placed a heavy emphasis on my involvement with disadvantaged kids and it is remarkable how well they have taken to the game here in Cambodia and in India as well. These children are actually youngsters who spent their lives sifting through the rubbish dumps outside the capital until the French rugby related charity known as 'Sourire Pour les Enfants' (making kids smile), started a school for them. Their U15's lost to the bigger French boys in the final but they were as good as any of the youngsters I had worked with throughout Asia.

My journey started at the Hong Kong 10s where I coached the Penguins, a team consisting mainly of Pro players from New Zealand and finished with the Dump Kids in Cambodia. In 3 ½ months I visited 11 countries, worked directly with 12 different National teams and indirectly with many more. I conducted around 40 training sessions working with approx 1200 young players and 700 adults. I took Coach Education sessions in Hong Kong, Singapore and Korea, did co-commentary on 2 Premier League games covered live on TV, attended 8 Press Conferences, and did umpteen TV interviews including a wide ranging discussion with an Iranian Channel which touched on almost everything except uranium. There were of course hundreds of column inches to be written for newspapers in a part of the world which does not traditionally devote much space to Rugby.



Lunch with Korean coaches

Throughout that journey through so many diverse cultures one thing remained constant – the enthusiasm and commitment of so many people in this part of the World to the game of Rugby. It takes energy to sustain and grow the game in Europe but it takes even more energy to start and then grow the sport in Asia. In most countries there are very few pitches, a chronic lack of local opposition and temperatures that make you sweat tying your boots up. I was asked on Total Rugby what my one wish would be for Asian rugby. My hope is that more clubs from both the Northern and Southern Hemisphere choose to tour in this part of the world giving the local teams the opportunity to get more match practice.

The growth of the women's game seems even more remarkable, as they look so fragile, but you need to be tough to survive in some parts of Asia. The growth in India for example is a remarkable success story. Three years ago there was only one club for women in Pune and this year I attended a 7s tournament in Delhi where 35 teams participated. The girls from Kerala had travelled 72 hours in a non-air conditioned bus just to take part (and I thought it was tough for the boys in Orkney).

At the top end in the Premier League there is a gap between the fully professional Japanese and the rest. The intensity of a 5 week tournament is too much for the Amateur teams whose form drops off during the event as the travelling/playing/going back to work schedule gets too much for them. Meanwhile the Pro players are improving game on game with the recovery protocols, the video analysis and the quality of preparation that befits a professional outfit run by John Kirwan.

The gap between the rest of the Premier League and Division 1 is not too great and if Sri Lanka can get themselves properly organised off the field, they should hold

their own following their promotion. One of the biggest surprises was the size of the game in Sri Lanka. Now that the civil war is over they could begin to harness their undoubted potential.

They will replace South Korea, once the powerhouse in this neck of the woods. Sadly their structure has been overtaken due to the influence of the professional game. They play expansive rugby at great pace but have difficulty sustaining their early intensity and fell away dramatically after half time in every game. There is not much growth going on compared with elsewhere in Asia and their preparation is now outdated. Hopefully they will react positively to the shock of relegation and bounce back next year.

Nor is there much of a gap between Divs 1 and 2. Despite the resources ploughed into China, the size and athleticism of their team and the amount of time the PLA spends training, they were not nearly tough enough at the contact area and both India and Thailand blew them away. The Thais possessed one of the players of the tournament in Warangkorn Khamkoet. Even against the Philippines, the convincing winners of Division 2, whose backline were almost exclusively Aussie rep players from both Union and League, he looked unstoppable. He had electric acceleration, a fine left peg, tackled hard, had good hands and most importantly had a well developed game awareness which invariably allowed him to make the right decision. Full marks to the Thais who selected their team from passport holders only and for producing a player of this quality.

There are many fine professional players in Japan of course, but the stand out player of the tournament was the Kazakhstan opsider Anton (the Horse) Rudoy. His Russian club prevented him from travelling to 2 away games (I've heard that one somewhere before) but he seemed to single-handedly win the matches against the Arabian Gulf and Korea. Some of the more powerfully built Asian players are hard to stop, as they have very good footwork, but he did more damage carrying the ball than anyone else in the competition, scoring a hatful of tries in the process. He was a fine fetcher as well and comes with a pedigree as his mother played in the 2nd Row for the Kazak women's team for 15 years. Quite simply he could play for any club in Europe.

The step down from Division 2 is more pronounced as the teams are less physically fit and have fewer opportunities to hone their skills with match practice. The Iranians were a bit different however and looked as if they could hold their own at the next level up following their promotion from Div 3.



Coaching Chinese army in the rain

They are in good shape physically, defended well and their Stand Off produced a somersault as high as an Olympic gymnast on the Final whistle.

The Div 3 Press Conference contributed 2 of the more bizarre moments on my travels. I arrived to see Byron Kelleher presenting the jerseys to the Indonesian team (where did he come from?) and afterwards I spoke to their Captain, Kirk Arundale. He had learned to play at Guiseley School in West Yorkshire where I was invited by the Headmaster in 1978 to kick-start their rugby programme. What are the chances?

Other highlights included the last ever after match Dinner for the Arabian Gulf team following their fine win against Korea in an exciting contest full of open rugby. They have been split by the IRB into the 7 different countries from which they were formed and it was an emotional occasion. It wasn't too emotional because I can definitely remember the belly dancer and the referee and touch judges being forced into a beer drinking contest before being presented with ties by the hosts. It would never happen at Murrayfield.

The HSBC A5N has been a great catalyst for the game in Asia. It is important that youngsters being introduced to the sport can see a pathway to the top of the game. In the divisional tournaments if you win 2 games you get promoted, lose 2 and you get relegated. This has brought a focus to the game in a continent where the enormous populations mean that the potential for growth is huge. The cut-throat nature of the competition has forced the countries involved to look closely at themselves, decide where they want to go and consider carefully how they might plan to get there.

If you're still wondering how Cambodia and Laos got on, rest easy. Laos won a tough match that ebbed and flowed in difficult conditions by 12 -3. At the after match reception in the Paddy Rice Sports Bar in Phnom Penh, I was sucked into the Laos court session and forced to drink copious amounts of tequila for changing their pre match warm up from a walk around the park to something more purposeful. The spirit of rugby is alive and well in Asia.

Author:
Frank Hadden

Coaching in Portugal

May 2010

During the Penguin International RFC XV tour to Lisbon, the team's players joined coaches in the HSBC Penguin International Coaching Academy for coaching sessions with local youngsters.

Monday 24th

Antonio Da Cunha, the Penguin representative for Portugal, arranged for a coaching session with Escolinha de Rugby da Galiza. The Mission Statement of the project is:

Tackle the differences - Social integration through rugby of children and youngsters from problematic communities.

President Maria Gaivão explains that since it started in 2006 Escolinha de Rugby da Galiza has had 170 players. Maria further emphasises:

"Escolinha de Rugby da Galiza" (ERG) mission is to strengthen social intervention in problematic communities through rugby. It aims at the development – human and athletic – of children/teenagers, between 3 and 15 years that live in a troubled and deprived community (Galiza) in the suburbs of Estoril (city close to Lisbon).

The children represent a great ethnical diversity, being mostly descendants from African, Brazilian and East-European parents. Rugby was selected because it is a cooperative sport that stimulates the perception and

incorporation of essential values like team spirit, solidarity and tolerance – all are necessary, regardless of physical, cultural or temperamental differences. It promotes the sharing, practice and transmission of moral, ethic and social values, facilitating a balanced growth and permitting the development of self-reliance, respect for others and for human life. Furthermore, it is a bridge between the school (knowledge and skills) and the families (primary educators), involving them in a global educational and formative project, by using motivation tools like periodic objective contracts (scholarship, athletic and behavioural), self-evaluation reports, monthly parent meetings and participation in regular meetings and tournaments with national clubs.

Craig Brown, Tony Penn, Steve Ketchin, Tama Tuirirangi, Ben Pegna, team captain Marcus DiRollo, and Antonio da Cunha ran a session based on skills team work and of course fun.



Team skipper Marcus and Steve watching the passing technique



The Penguin Coaches with the Belenense players

The session took place on an outdoor concrete surface, which limited the amount of contact work that could be done, but none the less, the Penguin coaches ran an interesting and energetic session.

The assembled players were grouped into age groups with 3 groups formed between the 60 players present.

The older players concentrated on creating space through passing including loop, miss and switch passes and important to these were the running lines, inter-dispersed with relay and team competition games. The younger players worked on game and team structure through touch and other conditioned games.

Tuesday 25th

A coaching team made up of Steve Hill, Riccardo Franconi, Ben Dormer, John McKittrick and Craig Brown travelled to the home club of the Penguin representative for Portugal, Antonio da Cunha, to run sessions for the club's youth teams.

Upon arrival, the assembled players were split into their team groups and allocated to the Penguin coaches. Over the next 2 hours all groups had a vigorous work out with the emphasis on individual skills, organisation, tactics and also some 7s drills. In one group, Penguin Tour Manager Ben Dormer joined in the action and was seen on the bottom of the odd ruck!

The groups coached were the Under 12s, Under 14s and Under 16s and 85 players in total attended.

At the completion of the coaching, following a quick shower, the Penguin coaches were hosted by the Belenense committee for dinner in the club's restaurant.

Friday 28th

The Coaching Academy was delighted to run a session for our hosts Agronomia's youth teams. Steve Hill, Riccardo Franconi and John McKittrick made the journey to the Agronomia grounds late Friday afternoon and arranged the 80 odd assembled players into three groups based on the players teams (Under 12, Under 14 and Under 16).

The local coaches provided guidance on what they required the HSBC Penguin Academy coaches to concentrate the sessions on. This was a mixture of skills, continuity, organisation and defence.

Author:

Craig Brown



Team huddle

Diary of Oisin Lennon

Alan Wright Penguin International Rugby Scholar: 2010



International Rugby Academy of New Zealand, Palmerston North, North Island, New Zealand
High Performance Players' Course: 31 January - 19 February 2010

First Week

Just a short note on how things are going. I arrived with an English boy from Millfield School and met the rest of the players on the IRANZ HPP Course. We have 25 players with 6 different nationalities, including 6 talented South Africans.

Our first week has been an amazing experience despite it being so tough. Every day is packed with a mixture of training and lectures in nutrition, leadership, mental toughness and the importance of learning to balance the demands of sport with other personal interests and life-style with Eroni Clarke. We start at 6.30 in the morning and finish with dinner at 8.00 in the evening and then go straight to bed !!

Team-building was probably our toughest session this week, with Buck Shelford taking us on a 6 kilometre log run, an incredible exercise that tested everyone's abilities in strength and mental toughness as well as bringing the team together.

With a combination of Buck Shelford, Dave Ellis and Murray Mexted training us this week, I have learnt more than I have in the 3 years I've been playing rugby!! As I type this now, our individual coaches are arriving...including Ian Jones, Christian Cullen and many other Rugby Legends!!

Second Week

The second week was not as physical as our first week, but it was much more mentally challenging with so many Rugby Legends imparting their knowledge to us.

We started off the week with a Hangi, a traditional Maori meal in which the local Maori villagers dig holes in the ground, put red-hot iron rods in it, cover the rods in cabbage leaves then put baskets of meat and vegetables on top and cover them with wet blankets. They then prepared the meal and performed a local Haka and we, in turn, sang a Maori song.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, we had Dave Rennie, Anton Oliver and Scott Robertson in to coach us in things like contact, the breakdown and line-outs.

On Thursday, we had a match against Manawatu Academy. It was incredible because, throughout the day, we each had our position-specific coaches tutoring us in and out of the game. I had the privilege of having the great Ian Jones as my coach. He was a huge help to me. Despite the team succumbing to a disappointing defeat (excusable as we had only been together just over a week!!), Ian Jones filled me with confidence through his coaching and praise (with the use of video analysis so you can see what you did right and wrong).

Then, that weekend we were given a break from rugby to rest our heads!! We went to a lodge in a beautiful valley just on our own...no coaches no rugby, just the team and a bus-full of foreign boys and girls. It was great because the course at IRANZ is so intensive that the whole team got to relax and really got to know each other.

Third Week

The third week started with 7 hours of training on Monday along with lectures. But it was one of the best days learning-wise as Mike Cron came to coach the forwards in scrummaging. In the 2 hours with him and his video camera, we all went from pretty average scrummagers, both in strength and technique, to a well-organised and technically near-perfect pack (and it showed in our game that week). The next few days towards game day on Thursday were relatively easy-going with Buck Shelford and Dave Ellis going through our patterns and skills. NZRU High Performance Referee - Lyndon Bray - came in to help us understand the new rules and why they're in place. Wayne Smith came in to give us Defence Training.

On Thursday, our last real day, we got to play against Wellington Colts U21 Academy - a team who were hot favourites to put 30-40 points on us as they had a team filled with NZ U20s and NZ Sevens players along with a lot of weight over us. But we held strong and put up a vastly superior performance to the week before and held them to an unfortunate loss of 23-12. But there were many positives to take from the game and we did ourselves proud. I personally got the full 80 minutes to enjoy the game.

That night we finished off with team dinner and celebrations with words from Murray Mexted and 5 individual prizes for different things. I personally won the award for the most improved player on the course...so I'm obviously well chuffed and proud of myself!! Our team captain will be joining the Penguins in Hong Kong for the HK Tens Tournament and we all wish him the best.

I am also lucky to have made great friends at IRANZ with Craig De Goldie (former NZ Sevens player 1998-2004) who is beginning a career in coaching. Craig has played for and captained the Penguins XV, X and VII teams around the world on many occasions. As I sit in Glenmark RFC now at my new Club for the year, Craig is just a call away.

Overview

The course at IRANZ was truly inspirational. IRANZ combined 22 young and highly ambitious players along with a team of legendary coaches and tutors in an enclosed and

strict environment to create an atmosphere of ambition, commitment, learning, confidence, brotherhood, excellence... and a lot of humour.

One of the main aims of the course, as Murray told us, is to put a team together in 3 weeks that is a close-knit and focused group of talented rugby players. It takes a lot of work but, in the IRANZ controlled environment, it really did come together and we proved that in our games.

In order to do this, the Academy covered what seems to be every technicality of the modern rugby game. Our mental toughness coach would teach us how to prepare for the game and for training while being able to switch off and live a life outside of rugby also. Eroni Clarke gave us lectures on how we live our lives as people outside of rugby and how everything we do affects our rugby and our normal lives. Our nutritionist gave us a vast understanding of how our diet affects our game. Then we would have the likes of Anton Oliver perfecting our line-out techniques and Scott "Razor" Robertson perfecting our tackling, even Lyndon Bray giving us an understanding as to why the new rugby rules are in place. And with all that expertise and experience as just the tip of the iceberg, it's no surprise that we pulled together as a very good team on and off the pitch.

Our team was built of 6 nations combined. We had 6 South Africans, an Ozzie, an English boy of Japanese descent, 2 Samoans, myself the Irishman and the rest were all North Island Kiwis.... so clearly, from the start, Buck and Dave had their work cut out to build a close-knit team. But with team-building exercises like the log run and the attitude of Buck and Dave towards us, they did more for us than most coaches could achieve. By their attitude I mean that I can't recall a single moment in which either coach raised their voice; they were always confidence-building and constructive; they were strict but had no problems in sharing a joke and a smile.

Most of the players on the course came from Rugby Academies such as Harlequins or Hawkes Bay or NZ under 20's with a desire to up their game that bit extra to get to the next level. I believe that every player on the course has huge potential to reach their goals. The ambitions of the players was so high that we all have a main goal to represent our countries against each other; these are goals we all feel are realistic if we put everything we learnt on the course into practice.

For me personally, the course was very tough at the start. I didn't have the life-long rugby backgrounds the other players had since I'm relatively new to the game. So, from the start, I

decided I'd simply be fearless, learn from every mistake and take everything on board...and, in the end, it paid off. I can honestly say, without any arrogance, that I'm on a par at least with the other players and have brought my game to a higher level than I could ever have achieved with years of play at home.

The IRANZ coaches passed on decades of knowledge to me and the others and that knowledge is still etching itself into my brain as I write...like a headache of fantastic rugby knowledge! I feel that Buck Shelford was one of the key components to my improvements; he would always either let me know what I was doing wrong or praise what I did correctly; he took each of us for individual meetings and he really did motivate me with both his praise and his criticism.

The Next Step

I have my long-term goals but, for now, my goals are set for the year ahead. I have been fortunate enough to be accepted as a player at Glenmark RFC in North Canterbury which is a club with an outstanding record and reputation for producing All Blacks. So, I start by doing my best to establish myself in the First XV at Glenmark RFC in my new position of flanker and helping them make it 3 championships in a row. My "rugby adventure" continues as I prepare to embark on Glenmark's 5 day rugby tour in Sydney which Robbie Deans has organised and he will be taking time out to coach us.

Thank You

I must thank Penguin International for awarding me the Alan Wright Penguin International Rugby Scholarship which has made this amazing experience possible.

My special thanks to the Trustees, Patron and Hon Secretary of Penguin International Rugby Football Trust who have made the arrangements for me to attend the course at IRANZ.

I will strive to achieve the highest rugby honours I can to repay you all.

The excellent course at IRANZ has brought me on leaps and bounds both as a player and as a person. It was the most amazing experience of my life and I come out a much better rugby player and person and with lifelong rugby friends from around the world.

My sincere thanks again...and I'll keep you updated with how I get on with my rugby.

Author:
Oisin Lennon

