

Cobra 10s 2025 Tour Report



DATE
NOVEMBER
01,02

VENUE
PADANG ASTAKA,
PETALING JAYA

The first weekend in November can only mean one thing. The Cobra Tens in Kuala Lumpur (this year, the 52nd edition)! As always it was great to be back, and this year we had the added pressure of having to defend our title.

Despite trying to muster much of the title winning team from last year, there was only one returnee in the shape of last years' CEO (Chief Entertainment Officer) Ponsonby's own Maake Taulami. The rest of the team were made up by players from a variety of clubs around North Harbour, Northland, Auckland, and the Bay of Plenty, while we were also able to squeeze in one Aussie in the shape of Xavier Stewart from Manly (now forever known as 'Token'). Full team listed below.

The coaching and management teams also had a couple of strong additions this year. Coach McKittrick was joined by Paul 'Rat' Feeney (boasting an impressive global coaching CV), and last year's Team Manager, Graeme 'Jingles' Inglis was joined by long time Penguin, Paul Raeburn. All our Physio needs for the week were met by KL's chief Penguin, Marc Daniel from Synapse Physiotherapy. By happy coincidence the Penguin Coaching Academy were also in action in KL coaching at local schools and clubs throughout the week. Penguin stalwarts Sandra Soler-Gomez, Sue Olovsson and Jay Nicholas were joined by first time Penguin coach Ian Etheridge, helping to expand our Penguin colony for the week.



The majority of the team gathered on Wednesday morning after an overnight flight from NZ. As is now tradition the prize for enduring 10 hours in economy class is to get a few '150s' under your belt in the Malaysian heat to "get the flight out the legs". If nothing else Coach McKittrick certainly set the tone, that we were not here to make up the numbers!

After lunch at the club and the afternoon off, the team headed to the famous 'Long Bar' at the Royal Selangor Club for a dinner, hosted by long standing Penguin supporters Jon Chivers and Previn Singhe. Located right in the heart of KL (close to where KL was originally established)

and with views across the city, this was the perfect introduction and welcome to KL. Thank you, Jon and Previn for a fantastic evening!

With 'Token' having joined the team late on Wednesday night, Thursday gave us a chance to start laying down our game plan for the weekend, and we made the most of our time together with two sessions. At the start of the afternoon session, the coaches announced the Captain and Vice-Captain for the week. This year those honours fell to Tom Barham from North Harbour and Trent Ririnui from Bay of Plenty. Congratulations!



On Thursday night our long-term partners Synapse Physiotherapy threw a Halloween party in our honour at the Royal Selangor Golf Club, where we were joined all of Synapse's staff. A great night was had by all, with Coach McKittrick in particularly sparkling form! Thanks again to Marc, Ting and Zailene (the co-owners of Synapse) for putting on such an amazing evening, and for your enduring support and friendship.

After two heavy days of training, the Captain's run on Friday was kept relatively light and the boys had the afternoon off to rest the legs. The squad assembled again for dinner before heading back for an early night, in preparation for game day!

This year the organisers mixed things up with two pools of six, meaning 5 pool games, then straight into semis. We were drawn in a pool with KL Tigers, KRAS Rugby, SSTMI Tsunami (all local Teams), NTK Rugby from South Africa, and Pakuranga from New Zealand.



Maske Taulami spreads it wide.

Day one went to plan, with strong wins over the three local teams. Our last game of the day was again NTK from South Africa so represented a jump up in physicality, exactly what the boys needed ahead of Day 2. Despite some early resistance Penguins ran out 17-5 winners.

With the rugby out the way for the day, one challenge remained on Saturday evening.....Which player could eat the most the Hilton International Buffet!? True to form the forwards showed the backs how to do things, but an honourable mentioned must go to centre Maake Taulami for almost consuming his own body weight in Tiramisu!

Day 2 started with what on paper looked to be our hardest pool game against Pakuranga who were also unbeaten on Day 1, so the winner of this encounter would take top spot in the pool. While the intensity of the hits certainly went up a notch, there was not much Pakuranga could do without the ball, as the Penguins starved the Aucklanders of position, with some classic tens' rugby. Tries by Panapasa Nasone, Taylor Norwood, Tom Barham and Penaia Cakobau, meant the score finished 24-0 to the Penguins.

In the other half of the draw the two stand out sides were Cobra Ruby and the Royal Town Warriors (a select team made up of foreign players playing in Malaysia and sporting a strong Fijian contingent). In their winner takes all final pool game, the Warriors overpowered Cobra to take an easy win, meaning we got the hometown favourites in the semi-final.



Jordan Hutchings trucks it up, closely assisted by Alex Vaaia

As expected at semi-final stage the quality of the rugby went up another notch with both teams not taking a backward step. Despite the early stalemate, Penguins edged in front with a well worked try by Matt Letoga. This was closely followed by a try from our Fijian flier Panapasa Nasone (HT 10-0). The second half remained close but a third score, by vice-captain Trent Ririnui, finally put some daylight between the teams. By the time Cobra scored at the death it was too little too late (FT 15-5)

So, onto the final against the Royal Town Warriors who had put 31 points in Pakuranga in the other semi-final! Things got off to a perfect start, with the Penguins grinding their way up the pitch and hooker Jordan Hutchings barrelling over for a well worked try. Crucially the conversion was missed, which could come back to haunt us. The Warriors quickly hit back with a line break from their own half resulting in a try under the sticks (HT 5-7). With the game evenly poised, the Warriors again went the length, having blocked a dangerous Penguin grubber and fly-hacking the ball deep into Penguin territory with nobody home (5-14). With time running out the Penguins tried valiantly to claw one back. Unfortunately, the missed conversion meant we needed to score twice. All credit to the Warriors whose defence was nothing short of outstanding as they kept the Penguins pinned back in their own half in the dying minutes. With time up on the clock the Penguins eventually got the break they were after as Panapasa Nasone scored under the posts, however this was nothing more than a consolation try (FT 14-10). Congratulations to the Royal Town Warriors on the well-deserved win!



Guy-Visachi makes a break in the final



Close by no Cigar – Penguins go down 14-12 in the Final to RTW

Sunday night gave all the teams a chance to relax and enjoy each other's company, at the post tournament function in Cobra Rugby Club, before heading our separate ways on Monday.

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 happen. Also thanks you for putting on another cracking tournament!

Thanks to our Liaison Officers, Gavin and Ali (aka The Ice Man!) for their incredible help, you truly do make our lives so much easier!

Thanks again to Jon and Previn for hosting us at the RSC, and to the Synapse team for laying on the Halloween party!

It was also great to have Ian Etheridge along (from our long-standing partner Tsunami) as one of our Academy coaches, while the main man himself Tsunami CEO Andrew Chambers also put in an all too brief appearance. Thanks again gents for all your support.

And just a final word for the lads (from the Penguin Management), thank you for all your efforts across the week unfortunately small margins meant we were unable to retain our title this year, but this is in no way a reflection of the work you all put in. 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!

	Club	Rep Honours
Backs		
Taylor Norwood*	Silverdale	North Harbour Dev, Waikato 7s
Aisea Halo*	Takapuna	Moana Pacifica, North Harbour, Tonga XVs/7s
Xavier Stewart*	Manly	NSW Schools, Waratahs Academy
Tom Barham*	Silverdale	North Harbour
Guy-Visachi Waerehu*	Mid Northern	Northland Dev, Dolphins RL
Panapasa Nasone*	Mahurangi	North Harbour, Fiji 7s
Maake Taulami	Ponsonby	BOP age groups, South Canterbury
Cooper Rodden*	Mahurangi	North Harbour Dev/7s
Forwards		
Ryan Mead*	East Coast Bays	North Harbour
Matt Letoga*	Mid Northern	Northland
Penaia Cakobau*	Mahurangi	North Harbour, Suva
Cavan Rush*	Mid Northern	Northland Dev, Chiefs U18
Jordan Hutchings*	Western Sharks	Northland
Alex Vaaia*	Takapuna	North Harbour age groups
Harry Deacon*	East Coast Bays	North Harbour Dev
Trent Ririnui*	Rangataua	Bay of Plenty

Saturday 1 November



Group A - Mens Op...

Pitch 1



Penguin Rugby

42



KL Tigers Rugby Club

0

Group A - Mens Op...

Pitch 1



KRAS Rugby

0



Penguin Rugby

55

Group A - Mens Op...

Pitch 1



Penguin Rugby

43



SSTMI Tsunami

7

Group A - Mens Op...

Pitch 1



NTK Rugby

5



Penguin Rugby

17

Sunday 2 November



Group A - Mens Op...	Pitch 1
 Penguin Rugby	24
 Pakuranga Rugby Club	0
Mens Cup SF1 - Me...	Pitch 1
 Penguin Rugby	15
 Cobra Rugby Club	7
Mens Cup Final - M...	Pitch 1
 Penguin Rugby	10
 Royal Town Warriors	14

Team Stats

Played 7, Won 6 Lost 1

Points for 206 Points Against 33

	T	C	PT
Cooper Rodden	1	16	37
Tom Barham	5		25
Taylor Norwood	4	1	22
Panapasa Nasone	4		20
Matt Letoga	4		20
Xavier Stewart	4		20
Guy Waerehu	4		20
Peiaia Cakobau	2		10
Aisea Halo	2		10
Harry Deacon	1		5
Alex Vaaia	1		5
Trent Ririnui	1		5
Jordan Hutchings	1		5
Maake Taulami		1	2



For more action pics of the tournament follow this link!

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1oAuSHipeWQm34GL9Xx7xc1W9MTXBNOX?usp=share_link