



PENGUIN INTERNATIONAL RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Rugby Football Union
Kent County RFU

Support Coaching to IMART Pamplona 22 to 27 June 2025

Report by Steve Hill & Craig Brown

Through the offices of Penguin Charity Trustee Brian Cusack, the Penguin Rugby Charity once again agreed to support the International Mixed Ability Rugby Tournament (IMART) being held in the legendary Spanish city of Pamplona in June 2025. The support covered four key areas:



1. Supply kit for the tournament referees
2. Lead a practical coach education session
3. Assist in the organisation/running of the tournament
4. Make a presentation at the Festival Fringe, an opportunity to discuss the history, current activities and potential future activities of the Penguins

Details of IMART and the world cups they run can be found at:
<https://imartworldcup.org/imart-2025/>

What is IMART? International Mixed Ability Rugby Tournament

1. Same rules – uncontested scrums
2. 15-a-side
3. Adults only
4. No classifications or grades of disabled players
5. Full contact
6. Rolling subs
7. No quotas in squad or on pitch
8. Kicking allowed
9. Competitive, but not at all costs
10. Game is played in the true spirit of rugby embracing the values of passion, respect, integrity and solidarity.



Penguins Steve and Christine Hill agreed to represent the Penguin Coaching Academy, as funded by the Penguin Rugby Charity, at the tournament and headed out to Spain full of excitement. The Hills travelled by plane and train to Pamplona via Madrid. They stayed in the centre of Pamplona, hiring bikes to travel the 20 minutes each way, each day to the tournament.

IMART 2025 was a huge event. 1300 players from 15 countries took part in the event over four days of playing matches. Day 1 and 2 all teams played two forty minute matches each. The pitches were in good order but the 33 degree heat was a real challenge for all involved. Our Penguin coaches, Chris and Steve had been asked to help out with day 3 and 4 but actually went on the afternoon of day 2 to scope out the venue and ensure everything in place for our activities on day 3 and 4.



On the Wednesday Chris and Steve were at the venue at 09:00, pitch side then from 10:00 until 17:00 and then from 18:00 to 19:30 with just a 30 minute break at lunchtime. There had been some issues the previous day with coaches/supporters not keeping to the appropriate pitch side areas so our role was a combination of crowd control, team sheet collection, technical area policing, rehydrating the referees and AR's, gazebo erection and taking down.

Chris & Steve's experience as coaches/teachers at telling players what to do was very useful when dealing with some at times very enthusiastic coaches/supporters!

Between 17:00 and 17:45 Steve made a presentation to the Fringe Festival on the history, aims, activities and potential future projects of the Penguins. The audience was small enough to have a really good Q and A session at the end of the talk and the feedback from the organisers was very positive. We got back to the hotel just before 21:00, ate and went to bed!

On Thursday the Hills were again pitch side for 10:00. This was semi-final day so the matches finished at 15:00. This was now the end of a third day for players and coaches in very hot conditions.

For Steve's coach education session 20 keen coaches came to the session. It was great that players from the mixed ability team from Chile also joined in.



Steve recounts: The session presented was very much about how to coach as much as what to coach. Using correct language, praise, positioning, feedback and organisation were the main themes. In very hot conditions nearly all the coaches got involved in the 80 minute practical session. Having watched a day and a half of the tournament focused the session on the areas that appeared to need most work from a skill point of view. The coaches/players were very enthusiastic – despite the heat - and appeared to enjoy and get a lot out of the session. We finished with a fifteen minute Q and A session.

Chris and Steve then cycled back to the hotel, a quick shower and then travelled across town to an official sponsors reception at a hotel. At this event we got to talk to the other supporters of the tournament about the Penguins and why we were helping as we had been doing.

Friday morning was a bit more relaxed as the finals day did not start until after lunch. The day was even hotter with the first game kicking off in temperatures of 35 degrees! Chris and Steve were again pitch side to help and assist as required. The last final was the best of the four with a women's team from Llanelli against a team from Rome going to extra time and almost a penalty shoot out before the Italians scored in the last minute of extra time to secure victory.

Thankfully all the presentations took place under cover.

The referees were probably the hardest working group at the tournament – either refereeing or being AR all day throughout the 4 days of competition. The kit provided by the Penguins went down very well and gave our brand a lot of visibility.

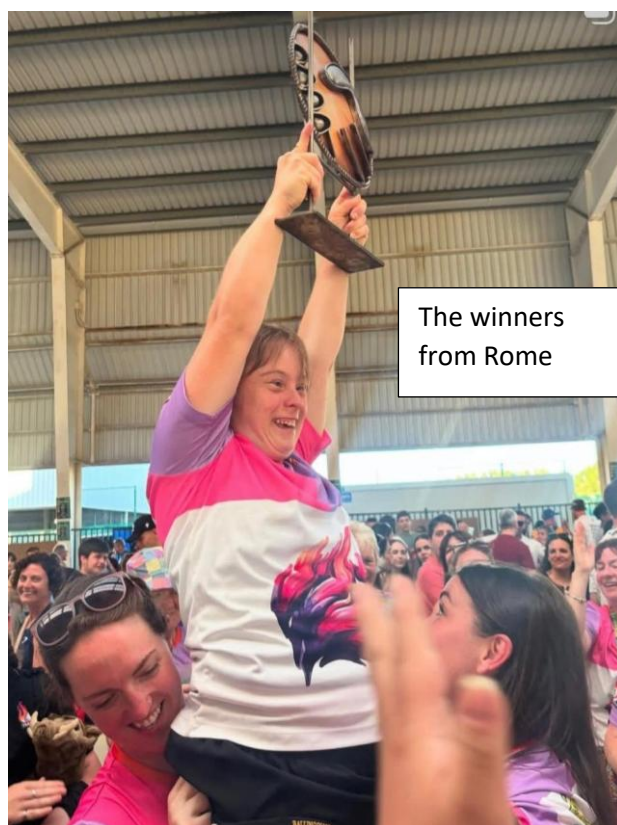
Steve sums up: IMART is an amazing and inspirational event. To witness the joy on the faces of the mixed ability/special needs/disabled players when they succeed as part of a normal rugby match is just fantastic. I have been involved in rugby for more than 50 years and what Chris and I witnessed in Pamplona was probably the best example I have seen of the true spirit and values of our game. I very much hope we Penguins, and I, can support this event in the future.

It was great that Chris and Steve met up with our Penguin friend from Uruguay Carlos Saccone Deambrosis, who was part of the visiting team from Montevideo – Totem XV.

Thank Yous

Penguin Rugby and the Penguin Rugby Charity would like to thanks

- ❖ Christine and Steve for their outstanding work in supporting the tournament and being Penguin Rugby Ambassador
- ❖ Tournament Director Maeve D'Arcy for her helpful advice prior to the coach education session
- ❖ IMART Director Martino Corazzo for fully involving us in such a wonderful event



The winners from Rome

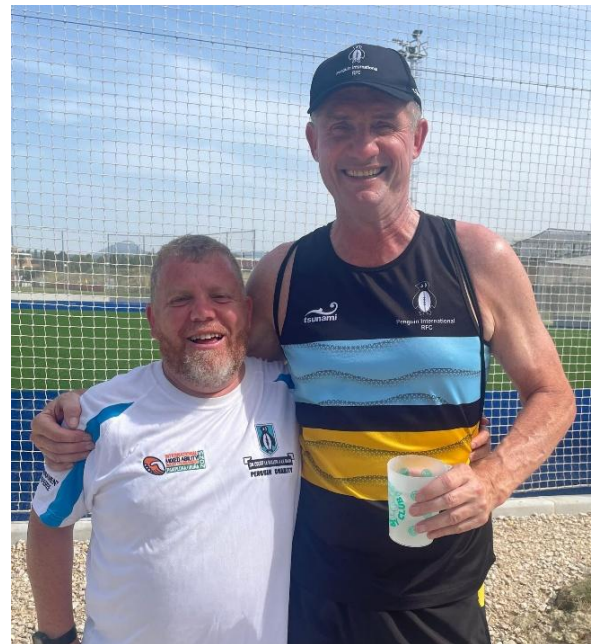
Some Photos



Christine & Steve on the right



Carlos presenting his team's flag to Steve



Christine & Martino

