



PENGUIN INTERNATIONAL RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

*Rugby Football Union
Kent County RFU*

Pocklington RFC 7s

Pocklington

7th April 2023

by Tony Penn & Craig Brown

Introduction

For the second year in a row, Penguin stalwart Tony Penn set about selecting a competitive team to take out the exclusive Pocklington 7s and go one better than reaching the final in our debut year in 2022.

Once again Pock rugby put on a fantastic show with the town and region supporting well with thousands in attendance.

Pocklington RFC invite a guest each year to make the 7s draw and with a great Penguin connection Tony Underwood made the draw (Tony was part of the Penguin team that won the COBRA Tens in Malaysia at the first attempt in 1993).

The Team

The selection of the multi-national squad was formulated by an accumulation of efforts from management and co-captains Richie Kaisia and Tomasi Tanumi. We had 1 Samoan, 5 Kiwi's, 3 Fijians and 4 English to make up our diverse squad. Each player was selected for the different qualities they offered on the pitch. Thanks to Pock rugby for giving us the opportunity of training on their pitch prior to the tournament. This allowed the selectors to fine tune their selection and pick the best blend of players to play the game envisaged.

In the forwards we had Joji Loguvatu (Fiji, Pocklington RUFC) for his height and defensive tenacity, he was complemented well by Harry Cartwright (England, Bishop Burton College) & Alex Todd (England, Hull RUFC) who's youth and exuberance proved advantageous in the latter stages of games. Andrew 'Drew' Kere-Rako (NZ, Bishop Burton College) was the dog in the ruck area, but leader of the laughs off the field, closely followed by the Wrecking ball Sammy Dawson (NZ, Hull RUFC), And Caleb Stanley (NZ, Bishop Burton College) or better know 'The Bus' for his explosive carries and hard hitting tackling.

All these fella's were led by Co-Captain Richie Kaisia (Samoa) who's communication and leadership from the front never goes unrecognized.

In the backs we had a blend of youth and experience, the young guns comprised of Tim Waqadau (Fiji, Hull RUFC) & McGyver Lui-Chan (NZ, Bridlington RUFC) who both offer fantastic footwork and offloading abilities, Rob Smith (England, Beverley RUFC) & Matiu Welch (NZ, Bridlington RUFC) offer expansive distribution from the middle of the park and both of them are not afraid to show their skills with the boot.

As with all good sevens teams, speed is key and we were blessed to have the vastly experienced Mike Adlard (England, Hull RUFC) & RL Convert Jake Boardman (England, Beverley RUFC) both providing blistering speed.

The back line was led by a true stalwart of UK Sevens Tomasi Tanumi (Fiji, Rotherham Titans) who's passion off the field and motivation of the players truly resonates what playing the beautiful game is all about.



Team Photo

Back row: Craig Brown (CEO), Jake Boardman, Mike Adlard, Andrew Kere-Rako, Rob Smith, Joji Loguvatu, Sam Dawson, Alex Todd, Tim Waqadau, Caleb Stanley, X, Jobbers (Manager) John Zimnoch (Hon Vice President and Cultural Attaché)

Front Row: Tony Penn (Sicko & Coach), Harry Cartwright, Tomasi Tanumi, Richie Kaisia, Matiu Welch, Mcgyver Lui-Chan

The Tournament

The Pock 7's tournament is a one of a kind and Yorkshires oldest sevens tournament, it is held on Good Friday and brings in a bumper crowd of over 3000 to watch both men's and women's tournaments. 2023 is the 64th year of the tournament which has hosted an impressive array of winners including Headingley (later to be known as Leeds Tykes) & Newcastle Falcons. The tournament has grown over recent years hosting a plate for those knocked out in their first game and also adding the Women's cup in 2009 which has grown in popularity in recent years with England Women's world cup success.

The Day

The players all met on the morning of the Tournament in The Feathers Hotel to have a team meal, set out the days objectives and to display that Penguin International were there in the fantastic Tsunami apparel. The management and committee were introduced to the players, and we made our way through the town to enter the ground. We set up our base that became very popular with the local crowd who wanted to get behind the team which provided a fantastic atmosphere.

Match 1 vs Old Peterites

The players had been put through their paces in the warmup and the starting 7 were raring to go. We hit the ground running with 2 quick fire fantastic tries from Kere-Rako & Adlard to put us in

prime position to show our tenacity and skillset at 14-0 after 2 minutes play. Old Peterites had small amounts of possession that was met by the hard hitting defence of Captain Kaisia, who showed the crowd his ferocious bone crunching style was not to be reckoned with. We kicked on with a further 2 tries, Adlard got his brace and some fantastic passing allowed the rookie Boardman to show his electric pace down the far touchline to get over just before half-time leaving the score 26-0.

The second half started very similar to the first with Adlard nipping through the middle from a ruck to touch down for his hat-trick. After a few tactical changes, fresh energy and fantastic power was shown by Todd & Cartwright to release Welch under the sticks. Just when you thought Adlard had stepped off the gas with the Penguins in a comfortable position at 38-0, he only went under the sticks again from some wizardry by the Stalwart Tanumi. This was finally rounded off with another finish from Boardman. Final whistle 48-0.



The Penguin Corner

Match 2 vs Cleveland Cougars

From watching the first round of games, we were under no illusions that this would be our toughest test as Cleveland looked like a very useful opponent. As with the nature of this historic tournament, both teams are now in a knockout game and the winner progresses.

The game started as a tense affair with both teams looking to take an early advantage, the deadlock broke after 2 minutes with advantage Cleveland after sustained possession finding a chink in the Penguin defense, 0-7. The boys re-gathered their concentration and with some brute strength and speed Waqadau burst through the line to level the scores with 4 minutes played. Both teams looked evenly matched but the energy of the Cleveland team paid dividends with 2 tries before the half, HT:7-17

The half time team talk revolved around the energy needed to counter the attack of Cleveland and the communication needed to increase.

As the second half Kicked off there was a notable difference in the approach from the players who were giving enormous effort to try get the next score but for the efforts of the Cleveland defense at the ruck proved valuable as a turnover gave Cleveland a vital 3 score lead. 24-7.

As with any 7's game no score is too far gone and the fire had ignited with the penguins, 2 quick fire tires from Cartwright & Lui-Chan blew the game right open with 2 minutes to play 21-24. The exchanges were frantic as both sides were feeling the pressure. Cleveland managed to get the better of the exhausted Penguin boys and snook over in the bottom corner to finish the game 21-31.

Conclusion

Although the tournament was short lived the players never faltered with their efforts, the pride they showed to represent Penguin International was clear to see, and their style and energy on the field excited the crowd. This was resonated by the congratulations the Penguins received off the field. We will be back, bigger and better!

Thanks

Thanks to Tony, Jobbers, Richie and Tomasi for pulling the team together, running everything on the day and for finding a bit of sponsorship.

Thanks to the players for their efforts in training in the lead up to the tournament and their efforts on the day.