



Advantage Line

UAERF Official Newsletter



From the UAERF office

We are weeks away from the start of a very busy season, locally, regionally and internationally, so much has happened in the lead-up.

Although we were disappointed to receive the news that we will not be competing in the Asian Games, our National 7's team remains focused and we will continue to develop our players, and compete in the upcoming Malaysia 7's, as these tournaments are integral to our pathway.

Very exciting news with UAERF being asked, by

ARFU and the IRB, to manage ARFU West Asia's Cross Border Competitions (ARFWA CBCs) more information will follow so stay tuned.

Our pre-season meeting with Club chairmen will be held September 9th at 7:30pm.

Stan Wright has outlined a very detailed programme for the UAE Referees this year, although we couldn't fit all Stan's news, we will post Stan's full piece on UAE Rugby's facebook and twitter.

**Fly
Emirates**

Internationals

UAE National 7's team travelled to Hong Kong recently to compete in the first leg of the Asian 7 Series.

It was the first time that a number of players competed at such a level, and as part of this team. We were very interested to learn that our boys were considered to have the youngest average age out of all the players who represented their respective countries.

A very tough pool to be drawn into, against Japan and Malaysia, and day 1's results were telling; losing to Malaysia 40-0 and Japan 51-0. The resolve, and attitude of each individual was outstanding as not once did they lose intensity or give in. Day 2 saw Chinese Taipei post a 29-0 win, and Kazakhstan a 40-5 win over the UAE. August also saw our National U20's side compete for the first time in Malaysia. This was a great opportunity for us to introduce some of the younger Emirati players to the International level and mentality required to compete.

UAE National 7's team continue their training ahead of Malaysia 7's, September 6th-7th, in Kuala Lumpur, followed by the 3rd leg in China, October 18th-19th.

Stay ahead of UAE Rugby news, including the National 7's, via twitter @uaerugby



It's back! UAE Rugby's Domestic League

The fixtures are set and teams are in full training mode readying for the start of the UAE Rugby Domestic season.

Will the Jebel Ali Dragons continue their dominance of the local scene?

The domestic season kicks off Friday September 19th with the Conference and the Premiership the following weekend – September 26th. ARFU West Asia's Cross Border Competitions (ARFUWA CBC) start on September 26th as well.

Visit www.uaerugby.ae or like us on www.facebook.com/uaerugby for more information about the fixtures, and watch for regular updates from our very supportive local sports media.

**SPORT
360**

UAE Rugby/IRB Super Week

It's coming fast, and by the time you receive this edition, the Dubai Duty Free "UAE Rugby/IRB Super Week" will be in full swing!

Kicking off on Friday, September 5th we are thrilled to have received applications from all across the Gulf.

We are especially pleased to share that the IRB Level 1 Medical Course, on September 13th, is full. Thank you to all registrants!

We do have limited availability in other courses that are on offer. If interested, please check with us to see if there are spaces available. Forms can be found on our website: www.uaerugby.ae or email: gabbyc@uaerugby.ae



ARFU & ARFUWA Chat

Firstly, thanks to everyone in the West Asia Region for your continuing support to helping to grow the game of Rugby.

Congratulations to Ghaith Jalajel on his appointment as the new ARFU West Asia Development Officer (on a 2-year contract).

Looking ahead, ARFU is scheduled to host a 7's competition in Al Ain at the end of October, which will now act as a seeder for a standalone Olympics Pre-Qualifier (proposed first-half 2015). In addition, the ARFU Council shall be coming *en masse* to Dubai around the Dubai 7's to hold a myriad of meetings culminating in a full Council Meeting and AGM on Sunday 7th December 2014 – *Ross Mitchell, ARFU*.

Luke Godley, Doha RFC Chairman shares that "2014-15 promises to be another tough but exciting season, anticipating as much, our 1st team captain Jamie Clarke, has been working the boys hard during pre-season. Doha RFC look forward to defending the Gulf Premiership title, I know Coach Aaron Palmer is expecting a number of tough games, and of course we're all delighted to see Kuwait re-joining the fold."

HSBC Player Pathway Programme

We have some exciting events coming up with HSBC. Recent meetings with the HSBC team have seen the planning of 2 festivals, both to be held in November.

Al Ain Primary Schools will have a festival on 24th November in preparation for Dubai 7's, and on November 25th both a primary boys festival and secondary boys festival will be held.

Both Festivals will be hosting none other than

legendary Fiji National Player Waisale Serevi!

Just as exciting is the news that 8 UAE-based National Schools will contest in their own tournament at the Dubai 7's on Saturday 6th, with the final being played on Pitch 1.

Obviously these schools, especially the players, are excited to be on pitch 1 so we expect rousing applause when these students run onto the paddock.



UAE Match Officials Updates



Like the Clubs, the Referees have commenced pre-season training in earnest. While the refereeing team has been focusing on fitness and technique, as a collective body the referees and coaches have also been discussing our coaching theme for the season.

At the end of the 2011/12 season we lost all of our top end referees through retirements and transfers, leaving a significant gap in referee knowledge and experience which we sought to fill through adopting an across the board development strategy of coaching, to basic refereeing patterns and applying the law as it is written.

Through this strategy we re-establish a base of top end referees culminating in Norman Drake, Chris Linwood and Mark Jackson making the ARFU elite refereeing panel. Chris attended the IRB TOP School in Stellenbosch, and Eduard Martin and Maurice Butler making the ARFU development panel. For an Association our size and location, this was an outstanding achievement. For us, the feather in the cap was having Chris and Norman referee at the IRB Junior World Trophy – the selections for which were made by the IRB selection panel.

While we believe we have made significant strides in developing the UAE refereeing talent, we believe we should not forget that our principal objective is to meet the refereeing needs of the UAE Rugby Federation's competitions and tournaments.

As part of our coaching theme discussions for this season, we looked at the refereeing impact we have had on games over the last couple of years, and taken into account the learnings and expectations of the administrators of the game. One of the themes of the IRB referee coaching and development strategy is to look at the continuity of the game, and how that is achieved. At the top end of the game, referees are encouraged to look at the material effect of what players are doing in the contact and breakdown areas, and leave the rule book in the pocket a little longer so that continuity is achieved through a process of decision making that is based on a mix of the law book, and rewarding or sanctioning positive or negative play.

One of the concerns we had from last season was the high number of yellow and red cards. From a coaching perspective the view was that a number of penalties were "brought referee penalties" in that we allowed unproductive tackle/ruck/maul situations to go on too long waiting for a miracle advantage to occur. The real impact of this type of decision making was that players got frustrated trying to play for dead ball, with the inevitable consequence players got offside, and, other players reacted to that. The coaching message in these situations was that a scrum was a better game structuring option, than a pile up leading to unnecessary penalties once defensive lines had formed.

The upshot of our discussions has been that we are going to follow a refereeing AND coaching theme for this season, which will focus on the continuity of the game and consistency of refereeing!

Key points we will be working on are;

1. Proactive management
2. Refereeing beyond the next event
3. Rewarding positive play
4. Giving to the game the energy it deserves
5. Consistency of refereeing (both as individuals and collectively as a group)

We will brief members September 5th on expectations and the way we will meet the needs of UAE's competition rugby, followed by practical reinforcement at the Al Ain tournament September 12th.

With Federation assistance, we look to have an open forum discussion with the shapers of the game, to help refine the competitive refereeing approach and quality, so that we meet the needs of the game that we all want to see played with panache and aplomb.



SPONSOR ACTIVITIES

HSBC – supporting the development of UAE rugby

2014/15 marks the third year of HSBC's partnership with the UAE Rugby Player Pathway Programme, the in-schools initiative designed to develop the next generation of Emirati players. Now established in 23 schools, the programme sees 3,000 Emirati boys and girls playing rugby across the course of the season.

The highlight of this year's programme is undoubtedly the *Emirates Airline Dubai Rugby Sevens*, where a total of eight Emirati u-18 teams will bring their game to the region's biggest stage, to compete for the UAE National Schoolboys title in front of 40,000 spectators

HSBC wishes all players, coaches, referees, support teams and families the very best for an exciting and fun season of rugby in the UAE!



Sponsors Wrap!

The off season has been a busy time engaging with our current sponsors, whether re-negotiating to renew contracts, or planning for activations and or promotions for the upcoming season.

There is plenty of exciting news with the imminent signing of Eden Park to continue the Eden Park 7's series, which will be held in Dubai and Abu Dhabi late October early November 2014. We are finalising some details of benefits to all UAE Rugby sanctioned players which is designed to integrate Eden Park with the rugby community in the UAE.

We are also about to finalise the agreement for the Sport 360 UAE Rugby Premiership and Conference for the 2014/15 season. This partnership has made a significant difference in the media coverage of local rugby and of course this relationship is the catalyst for the UAE Rugby Annual Awards, which was very successful in its inaugural year. We will be able to share more details with you in the next issue, however keep an eye on Sport 360 for the official launch prior to the season kick off.

As you know player welfare is one of the major priorities of UAE Rugby and as such we are glad to announce we have agreed on commercial and insurance coverage terms with Zurich for medical insurance requirements for all players sanctioned by UAE Rugby. Without the commercial commitment increasing from last season, we have managed to increase the benefits to all players, which augers well for a safe and enjoyable rugby season ahead.

To round out our activities, Dubai Duty Free will again sponsor our Match Officials and Referees for the 2014/15 season. In addition, they will also be the title sponsor for UAE Rugby/IRB Superweek which commences 5th September. Stay tuned for the official announcement through our social and media channels soon.

Keep ahead of UAE Rugby news by following us on www.facebook.com/uaerugby or via twitter @uaerugby

- off the bench -



General Secretary Qais Al Dhalai and board member Mohamed Shaker met with Fijian Ambassadors (above) and New Zealand Ambassador (below) last week.



A special South African farewell to UAE Rugby by the UAE Ambassador to South Africa



UAE Ambassador to Hong Kong, H.E. Ahmed Nasser Al Khaja, wishing UAE National 7's team success at Hong Kong 7's

