



Advantage Line

UAERF Official Newsletter



From the UAERF office

Another busy and very productive first quarter is about to close for UAE Rugby. Our domestic leagues continue to flourish, our partners in West Asia and Arab Rugby have successfully competed in, and hosted, various local and regional tournaments, and our team behind the scenes are preparing for what is a very busy weekend with the Mini & Youth tournament and the Conference finals - Friday March 25th. UAE Rugby's action continues with the elite Premiership division's final games played through to April 8th.

Our Player Pathway Programme was submitted by HSBC and shortlisted in the SPIA awards 'Best Sport Youth Development Project' for 2015 activities. The awards were held on the evening of March 23rd and we are delighted to have been recognised and to have received a Bronze award for our joint efforts in bringing the game of rugby to Emirati children. Congratulations to all involved and we look forward to a successful 2016.

A first for UAE Rugby occurred earlier this year when UAE Rugby and Dubai Media Incorporated entered into an agreement to produce and host a UAE Rugby Show on Dubai Sports Channel. You may have seen the crew and their personable sports presenter at various games, we will share the links to the shows and any updates via our social media, when available.

We are very excited to welcome Land Rover who has joined our highly successful Player Pathway Programme as co-principal partner, alongside HSBC. Land Rover will bring much valued support to further develop the Player Pathway Programme across existing Emirates and strengthen our reach in to new Emirates – thank you and welcome to UAE Rugby!

UAE Rugby's AGM was held Wednesday March 23rd, and was immediately followed by the mid-season meeting between the Federation and our clubs.

In closing, we take this opportunity to remind all that all final and official scores, and news, will be shared via the official news portals of the Federation. So keep a close eye on twitter @uaerugby, facebook www.facebook.com/uaerugby and the website www.uaerugby.ae.





UAE National Sevens

While XV's action continues to dominate UAE's domestic calendar, UAE's Emirates Airline National 7's team has been training extensively to contest the 2016 Asia Rugby's Development Sevens series. Played over 2 weekends; February 20 and 21 in Chennai and February 26 and 27 in Al Ain, only 1 space was open for the overall winning team to move up into the elite series.

UAE's National side finished 8th in last year's Asia Rugby Sevens Series however were ranked within the bottom 5 teams in the tournament and subsequently relegated to the Union's Development series rather than moving up into and participating in the elite Asia Rugby Sevens series.

Chennai's campaign saw the UAE finished 4th after losing to the Philippines 38-21, and in Al Ain UAE finished 2nd to Chinese Taipei 24-22. Congratulations to Chinese Taipei, won the overall series and secured their place in the Asia Rugby Sevens Series 2016 – to be played in September and October of this year.

Our thanks to Al Ain Amblers Rugby Club for hosting the 2nd leg of the Development Series.

Looking ahead, UAE Rugby's acting head coach, Apollo Perelini, is casting an eye over the XV's games and looking toward the International XV's season, and the Asia Rugby Championship.



Chennai Photo Credit : Asia Rugby / Gerhard Botes

UAE Rugby Domestic Leagues Update

UAE Rugby's elite Premiership division recommences the weekend of March 25th, after the conclusion of the West Asia Championship, and is scheduled to close the weekend April 8th. We're expecting the final few rounds to provide quality rugby after the teams have gained more exposure to high-intensity games through participation in the WAC.

The Conference League is coming to close where the finals, which are divided into 2 categories - top 6 and bottom 5 – will be played March 25th. Battling it out will be Sharjah Wanderers, Jebel Ali Dragons, Heartbeat Tigers and Dubai Sharks – Good Luck to all teams.

We are delighted with the response and support the inaugural Community League has received from clubs and players. The purpose of this league was to provide another tier within the season's calendar for a more social, less intense level of play, while following the rules and regulations of the game. Our sincere thanks to all involved and we look forward to acknowledging the winner and planning the 2016/2017 league.

UAE Rugby's Mini & Youth Finals will be held on Friday March 25th from U9 through to U16, hosted at The Sevens, Al Ain Road, Dubai. Signaling the end of the season for this division, the tournament aims to showcase the best youth teams currently competing in the UAE and aims to act as a litmus test for coaches as to the development of their players, and teams for the season.

While our focus remains on the domestic games our attention is shifting to XV's where UAE will compete in Asia Rugby's Asia Rugby Championship – Division 2 on May 18th & 21st in Uzbekistan.





The first quarter of 2016 has been very exciting for the Player Pathway Programme.

We hosted two all Emirati PPP festivals in Al Ain, the first on February 25th which saw 240 girls and 360 boys (junior) participate and on March 3rd with 200 boys (senior) playing.

In February a U16 girl's competition (under the Ministry of Education) was played at Al Wasl Club – 65 girls from 4 schools enthusiastically took part in a touch tournament with Sukhaina High School taking the honours. Other schools that participated were; Umm Suqeim Model School, Asma School and Al Salam School. An U15 girl's team played in March's Al Ain Girls Touch tournament where on the same day 3 girls played for Arabian Knights in an U15 contact competition.

4 teams (70 boys) took part in January's HSBC Boys Mini & Youth Festival - Rashid School for boys, VDEC, Dubai Mixed School and a mixed team from the Northern Emirates. Congratulations to Rashid School for Boys on their win. In February we held a 4-team contact competition at the Dubai Sevens between Hamdan Bin Rashid school, Al Marif, Dibba School and Sharjah. Hamdan Bin Rashid School came out as victors. We were very encouraged to see Al Ain wolves finished as runners up in the Al Ain Leg of the U19 club competition.



Asia Rugby West News

What an exciting finish to the inaugural West Asia Championship! After a thrilling first season where the leaderboard changed regularly we congratulate Dubai Exiles on their emphatic win and securing the title of 2016 Champions! We sincerely express our thanks to all teams, their clubs and their people, the referees and the administrators in helping create a successful and enthralling 3 months of regional rugby.



An exciting chapter in Asia Rugby's opened at the recent Asia Rugby Development 7's in Chennai where Syria's National 7's team participated in their first International Development tournament. Congratulations and we look forward to seeing them in action again soon.

Summer is knocking so our team will be working with our Asia West unions to plan and conduct various trainings as well as assist with friendlies to hone the level of skill as we move into a new season.

Sponsors' Update

We've been fortunate to have the support of major global brands from the embryonic stage of UAE Rugby and the focus over the past 6 months has been to re-sign some of those major sponsors, which underpin much of the activities and game development of rugby in the UAE.

The process has been a very positive one, which requires the submittal of a sophisticated reporting structure to continue to position our commercial assets with a quantifiable return on investment for our sponsors. That being said, they are all great supporters of the game and what it stands for in the community. For that we continue to thank them for the support, which allows us to package our passion and commitment for the development of the game.

As an example of the spirit of the game, we are proud to welcome Land Rover as a co-principle partner to the Player Pathway Program in partnership with our long-term supporters, HSBC. The fact that these two global brands have agreed to partner in support of this unique and successful program speaks volumes of what the game stands for and as a result the growth is underpinned for the next 3 years.

The unsung heroes of rugby are the match official and referees, and we are again proud to acknowledge and thank Dubai Duty Free for continuing their support for another 3-year term. These funds will be used to continue the development of talent and education, and give the team a new kit design for next season.

With the growth of the Player Pathway Program, our needs for vehicles has doubled and with the support of our new Logistics Partner, Avis the team are driving around the UAE in style and safety with their branded vehicles to promote the relationship – official announcement to follow. You'll see these at all UAE Rugby events and on the well travelled roads to rugby grounds throughout the UAE. Our thanks to Avis and we welcome them to the UAE Rugby family.





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