



Dubai Sevens/Tens tournament

A chance meeting between Roger Drew and the referee manager of the Arabian Gulf Rugby Referees Association, Stan Wright, at Hong Kong in 2006, has led to what is now a much sought after expedition to Dubai for the Sevens and Tens tournament which runs in conjunction with the opening IRB 7s circuit.

The original invite came to the ARRA in 2007 which resulted in Roger (as coach), Pete Willis and Steve Piacun funding themselves for the inaugural Dubai experience. That year our representatives did so well that Pete ended up as AR for the IRB tournament and Steve officiated in a Tens final.

Robert Harman joined them in 2008 and acquitted himself so well that he was appointed to referee one of the 7s finals which just happened to be in front of more than 40,000 spectators. Pete did a Tens final and Steve ended up as an official AR in the IRB Sevens. Roger did assessment work for the RWC Sevens women's referees as well as coaching in the tournament.

As referee manager for both the IRB Sevens and associated tournament Stan Wright has a massive job and it is plain to see that he is the boss. "Whatever the boss says, goes..." is the catch-cry. The whole set up evolves around Stan and over the years he has established a small set of lieutenants to help out, they being two from the UK (who are professional referees) and our own Roger Drew.

Around 40 referees are used for the three day tournament, which has been functioning now for over 40 years. A number of referees

have returned as invitees of the tournament. They have now become part of a special family that takes part in the largest tournament of its type in the Rugby world. It is rightly pointed out that 'if you are an individual – stay at home.'

The recently-built clubrooms, aptly named The Sevens, would be the envy of any stadium.

Within the clubrooms they host many restaurants, changing facilities, a hospital area and large function rooms. The stadium has its own set of external rugby fields in natural grass turf and with the temporary seating put in they can hold approximately 45,000 spectators for both the day and night matches which are held over three days.

If our 2009 representatives, Roger and Richard Wilson (as coaches), Anthony Sowerby and Kyle Harris (as referees) plus Steve Salton (as an invitee) think they're going for an easy "walk in the sandpit" they should think again. Over the three days there will be over 400 games played starting at 8am and finishing at 9pm.

Each referee will get at around 4-8 games per day and also help out with officiating for other matches. They can be expected to be involved in possibly 10-12 matches each day, maybe more.

Our 2009 representatives not only have to fill the shoes of Messrs Willis, Piacun and Harman, but continue to wear them with pride. As the tournament progresses into the business end each referee is ranked by Stan, Roger and the two UK coaches to do quarter and semi finals with final choices to do finals, including acting in the AR role.

As coach Richard and Roger can expect to write reports at least 14 reports each day so we hope he has a lot of ink in his pen.

Our contingent can expect hot and humid conditions and the organisers stress the importance of re-hydration mixed in with sports massage, ice baths and rest periods to recharge their batteries.

It's an opportunity not to be missed so we wish them well for their destiny in Dubai.



