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March was another busy month for Abu Dhabi Harlequins Rugby Club (ADHRC) who hosted and entertained teams from the UAE and overseas at the home of rugby in the Capital.

The month kicked off with a visit by a UK touring side. Trinity College, Croydon U12s team came to Abu Dhabi as part of their UAE tour. After an excellent and competitive game of rugby with the visitors as eventual winners, the teams enjoyed great hospitality with a meal and awards in The Clubhouse before departing with hosting families from ADHRC to be shown around the Capital.

We also hosted the Toa Dubai Ladies tournament that saw teams from all over the Arabian Gulf turn up to compete in the penultimate round of the Ladies Rugby Competition. Toa Dubai were so impressed with the facilities and the way that ADHRC Ladies competition was run back in January that they asked to hold their own tournament at the home of ADHRC. It was a great day with excellent rugby on display from all the ladies teams.

ADHRC and ZSC will also be hosting the first round of the Asian Five Nations Rugby Competition as the UAE take on Kazakhstan on the 29th April.

After a hugely successful touch rugby tournament we will be hosting the second competition starting on 5th April.

Trevor Stott-Briggs (TSB) Fund Raising Day. On Friday April 15th ADHRC will be holding a huge day of fundraising for our fellow rugby player and ADHRC member who suffered a serious injury last month. We hope to see as many people as we can come along and enjoy a great day of rugby, entertainment with fantastic auctions and raffle prizes.

On Friday 13th May ADHRC will be hosting a Black-tie dinner at the Clubhouse with legendry Irish international guest speaker **Willie John McBride**. Tickets are on sale from ZSC Tennis Club reception, or for more info call 050 3351250

April dates;

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 5 th April | Second ADHRC Touch Tournament Starts |
| 15 th April | TSB Fundraising Day |
| 29 th April | UAE v Khazikstan – Asian 5 Nations Rugby |





TOA Ladies tournament, held at ZSC



Abu Dhabi Ladies vs Sharjah Ladies

With a slight delay to scheduled kick off times and a less than enthusiastic looking Sharjah team Abu Dhabi ladies started off in a determined fashion. With a lot of work since the last tournament and a confidence building win over the hurricanes in the bag, AD were determined to build and accomplish more this time around. With a strong team despite a few injuries still in the squad AD Ladies were switched on to their familiar opposition. With some clear organisation and a newfound width in both attack and defence AD were holding their own as Sharjah led with some attacking drives through the middle. Some good work in the contact slowing the oppositions ability to recycle the ball led Quins to keep their width and not get exploited by the offload, which had been the case in many previous meetings with this team.

With some possession under their belt the Quins ladies were showing clear signs of wanting to spread the ball wide to the pace of their backline, aiming to get the ball into the hands of Kellyann Davey and Paula McCarthy. Having seen Davey make some sharp steps and half breaks in her own half, drives by Aideen Butler and fellow forwards Tiffany Allard and Mariead Holohan picking straight lines one after another led to some recycled ball in the Sharjah half. Jill Oliver relayed the ball to Helen Martin who fired the ball wide immediately via Davey to give the ball to McCarthy whose speed took her clear round



the outside to score under the posts for the first try of the game. Jill Oliver converted easily with a kicking style that was now showing elements of poise and concentration.

Before the half Sharjah managed a score close to the posts with some good offloading and some continuous recycling. A clever loop led to an overlap which in the end wasn't needed as the Sharjah playmaker ran through a stretched defence to score a try which remained uncovered.

HT – 7-5 to Quins

The second half kicked off to a similar game play from AD as they continually moved the ball from one side of the pitch to the other looking to try and out pace the Sharjah backline. A strong break from McCarthy again on the wing led to a 60 metre gain as Allards fantastic support work enabled her to make a telling tackle on the Sharjah cover defence. McCarthy was chased down as she broke, the ball was thrown back into a Sharjah hand and it was Allards tackle that managed to force the error to enable AD to get their hands back on the ball in the form of a scrum.

With some tired hands on both sides making mistakes Quins were able to camp themselves in the opposition half. Some quick thinking and a quickly taken penalty enabled Butler to take the ball down the clubhouse side of the pitch, when she was caught and tackled before the line, the ball was about to be shifted out to the wing when Helen Martin came bursting through with a strong run and a step inside the defender to score at the line with a suspiciously high arm being swung at her head unable to put her off. The trotting Oliver unable to convert this time left the full time score 12-5 to Quins Ladies.

AD Quins Ladies vs Dubai Hurricanes Ladies

Right from the offset this game was closely contended. Hurricanes looking for revenge and Quins looking to reinforce their previous result against the Dubai outfit. In the beginning it was a battle of defences. Neither team missing many tackles and both defending wide enough to make it difficult for either to skirt around the outside. In first half trading blow for blow in terms of attacking strikes until Quins managed to get their hands on the ball and shift some recycled possession wide to the left hand side of the pitch. An early ball to McCarthy gave her time and space to build up some momentum. She seized a straight line and drove through the would be tackle to make a break and managed to power home to score wide of the post. Jill Oliver, who had seemed to be kicking well to this point, managed to miss the conversion, that to her standards was a relatively easy kick.

In reply Hurricanes managed to score a try of their own before the half, a powerful drive and a clever offload saw them round the Quins defence to score. The Kicker was unable to convert the try and the score was 5-5 going into half time.

5-5 HT

The second half started much like the first, with an added air of drama and intensity. Quins really wanted the result, equally Canes did not want to lose another one to their AD counterparts. The AD



ladies early tournament tactics of moving the ball wide to stretch the defence was being worked and worked well. Several possessions were being swept from one wing to the other and recycled, showing a major improvement in the ladies ability to maintain possession of the ball. As the ball was being worked along the half way line from right to left towards the crowd, McCarthy found herself again the recipient of the ball about 20 metres from the crowd filled touchline. With no one outside her she turned and ran horizontally towards the touchline in an attempt to round the canes defence with sheer pace. With a former Quins lady defending wide on the wing it seemed as though McCarthy would be covered. However the blistering pace of the former sprinter was plain for all to see. Motoring around the outstretched arm of the defender, the her acceleration afforded her a metre only to skirt the defender and hug the touchline. Once past the initial line the only player that could catch her was on the far side of the pitch and would not make it across. With a score close to the posts and an even closer score line Olivers conversion was essential. She trotted in from half way line with a smile and an edge of concentration. Taking her time over the kick and dropping the ball perfectly struck the ball easily between the posts. Turning to raptures from the crowd she confidently cruised backed to the half way line for the retake.

Hurricanes were now down by 7 points and they rallied hard and began to crash the Quins defence. Wave upon wave of attack crashing against he Quins rock like defence. Special mention to go to Kellyann Davey and Mariead Holohan whose never say die attitude kept AD in the game on a number of occasions.

With virtually no possession in the last few minutes Quins eventually conceded a try. Helen Martin cleverly working hard to push the break wide to the wing to ensure a difficult conversion. In the end it was this missed conversion that proved the difference between the teams. Quins were able to defend the last few minutes of the game out and ensure the concentration and conversion provided them with another 'business time' win for Quins over canes.

Abu Dhabi Ladies vs Exiles Ladies

Having put in two commendable performances in the first two games Quins ladies were looking to produce a result against a team that they hadn't beaten I the league to date this season. However this was to prove difficult from the outset. Quins fell apart in the first few minutes with no real answer to the physical presence and direct approach of the exiles attackers. The ball was being run straight and hard with an offload in the contact situation virtually every time it was taken in. Before the first half was over the Exiles had scored 4 tries with no answer from the AD ladies.

26 – 0 HT

At half time a number of changes were made to try and make an impact on the game. One of these impact players started to make an instant impression on the game as she made a break from her own 22, two minutes into the second half. Roz McComish broke through and was almost clear when she was caught from behind by an Exiles cover defence. Pulled back by the shirt Roz landed awkwardly and



managed to fracture her leg and dislocate her ankle. With a lengthy break to make sure McComish was attended to, a dazed Quins team re-took the field. With little time to play Quins managed a consolation score through Davey, but ran out second best with a score line of 33-7. All of us involved with Harlequins Rugby wish Rozalyn McComish a complete and speedy recovery.

Abu Dhabi ladies vs Doha Ladies

This was the game that Quins had targeted to win, a 3rd place finish had seemed like a distant dream at the beginning of the season. A result in this game was essential to the continued development and growth of the players especially against a team that they hadn't been able to beat all season.

With the final game of the day looming and three tough physical games under their belts the AD ladies pumped themselves up one last time. Motivation was not difficult seeing as they hadn't managed to beat this Doha side yet this season. Taking the field with an air of determination the ladies were preparing for another huge physical battle. Doha tend to play much like the exiles with direct running and offloading in the tackle a strong element of their play.

The first half began with a lot of defending for the Quins ladies. Managing to prevent breaks but not managing to stem the flow of Doha attacks taking them up to the AD line. With several minutes of forced and unforced errors by both teams, Doha ladies finally managed to barrage their way over the line for the opening score which was converted. However instead of crumbling as they had in the past the Quins ladies struck right back with a break down the left from Paula McCarthy who was put away by Helen Martin. Managing to break a tackle she broke free and was untouchable to the line for a score. Jill Oliver ably converted as her almost perfect record remained in tact.

HT 7-7

The second half began with another huge defensive effort from the Quins ladies. Mariead Holohan and Kellyann Davey with huge defensive work rates really keeping Quins in the game. Both girls putting in last ditch on the line defensive tackles to ruin Doha chances. Holohan putting her body on the line to stop a certain try was one of the highlights of the day. Both teams swapped scores to leave a cliffhanging final few minutes. McCarthy with the second Quins score and Oliver with yet another conversion to leave AD up by two points.

The final fury of the second half proved full of tension for players and supporters alike. With Doha surging for the line and Quins making tackles like their lives depended on it, AD managed to steal possession. The ball was recycled through a couple of phases until Davey managed to hit a straight line out wide and her pace and superior fitness took her past the last defender and onto the Doha line for another score. With a difficult conversion lined up, Oliver again stepped up to the plate to knock over the conversion. Her reliability with the boot coupled with the teams defensive efforts and wide attacking game plan secured their highest finish of the season. Tired and delighted with their performance this confidence can be carried through to the finals where with a determined performance, a radically changed AD ladies team can believe they have a chance to bring home some silver wear.



TSB Day April 15th

Update on Trevor Stott-Briggs:

On behalf of Trevor and his family, I would like to thank everyone who has donated an item for the auction, made a monetary donation, or offered their assistance. The Club has raised over 20,000 dirhams to date thanks to the generosity of the rugby community, but we still have a long way to go to raise the funds Trevor will need.

Our main fundraising day will take place on April 15 at Zayed Sports City. We will have an afternoon and evening of fun for the whole family, including a touch rugby tournament, games for the whole family, a Souk area, hair braiding, a play area and obstacle course for the younger children, an auction and raffle and much more. You can even take aim at some of our coaches with a wet sponge while they are imprisoned in the stocks! The evening fun will include a DJ and lovely dinner. All of the proceeds of the event will go to support Trevor and his young family.

We still need your help! We are in urgent need of sponsors to sponsor a booth or game at the event, and in urgent need of auction and raffle items. If you can be a sponsor or can donate an auction or raffle item, please contact Debi Douglas at debidouglas@msn.com ! We look forward to seeing all of you on April 15th for a fun family day in support of a great cause!





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As you would have witnessed by now the rugby club is huge, almost like a small business. We run age grade rugby from Under 5 to Under 18 as well as 1st, 2nd, Vets and Ladies teams. We are very fortunate that we have a number of sponsors whose generosity helps with the running / funding of the club and obviously we have membership fees but the cost of running the club still remains a very expensive operation. Apart from supplying kit and equipment for players we have considerable expense with pitch hire, transportation, medical supplies etc. If you would like to or are in a position to make a contribution to the club then please contact any member of the Committee. This can be a donation of a few thousand dirhams to a larger amount which can be a sponsorship; we have several packages for sponsorships and various means of exposure for potential entities. Any assistance would be much appreciated by the club.

For more information about sponsorship packages please contact Steve Arnott 050 3351250

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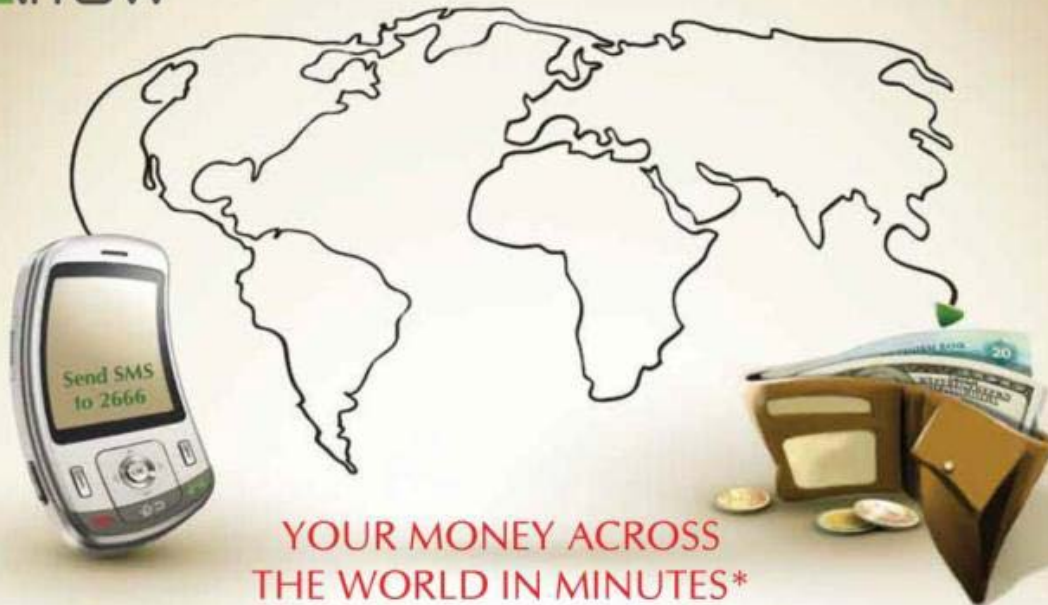
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