

Emerging Nations Training Camp IV + Test European Championship



Women's 7's Rugby

Thurs. 09 – Mon. 13 April 2009

Zánka, Hungary



ZÁNKAI CENTRUM



TEAM AUSTRIA'S ENTC IV EXPERIENCE REPORT



The 4th ENTC (Emerging Nations Training Camp) took place from 9 to 13 April 2009 in Zánka, Hungary. ENTIC II and III were supported by the FIRA and their experts and for the first time ENTIC 2009 was supported by the IRB thanks to the kind recommendation of FIRA President, Mr. Jean Claude Baqué who believed in our regional women's development project. Mercie Mr. Le President!

The Youth Centre and ENTIC IV venue was like an all inclusive little city for kids that quickly earned its new name of "Kiddie College". It is huge and has everything that motivated, rugby spirited players need in order to develop - pitches, stadium, accommodation, cafeteria (great food, very flexible staff), drinking water, supermarket, coffee bar, bar, cross country/forest running paths, and the legendary Balaton Lake within walking/jogging distance! – An ideal "all-in-one" venue!

ENTIC IV participating nations in alphabetical order were:

Austria, Bosnia y Herzegovina (1.5 teams), Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary (2 teams) and Poland (1.5 teams).

The general purpose of these Emerging Nations Training Camps (ENTIC's) is actually to close the gap in performance levels between countries where Rugby has long been established and nations that are quite new to this sport but have a heart for the game and the drive to learn and play the sport against all odds and at their own expense.

The IRB support was well demonstrated by their initiative to provide us with some of the best experts to whom they have access. This time the RFU made coach expert Graham Smith available to us and the IRFU offered their referee expert David Wilkinson. About 95 players and 12 coaches worked under the guidance of Graham Smith, the co-coach of the England Women's National Team. For his profile please see:

http://www.rfu.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/RFUHome.Womens_Detail/StoryID/6621

In parallel, 8 referees worked under the guidance of David Wilkinson, one of Ireland's up-and-coming referees, to complete their official IRB Referee Certification. For more on David Wilkinson please see: http://www.irishrugby.ie/6855_11569.php

A big thank you to the IRB, RFU and IRFU for all their support that I hope they will agree brought our participating nations some rugby to which we would not otherwise have access.

The trainings were conducted in two sessions per day; one in the morning and one in the afternoon and were on average 2,5 hours each. At the end of every day, test matches were scheduled as a possibility to apply in practice what we had just learned during the day and, of course, to prepare for the TEST European Championship tournament on Sunday. Everything seemed very promising and we could not wait for the learning and rugby fun to begin.

On day one, which was "only" half a day according to the schedule but a very hot and sunny one, Graham focused on ball handling and passing. He also showed us his "Tower of Power" and what purpose it serves in the safety of our contact sport. All of the players seemed satisfied and exhausted from all the action, mind full of new ideas and techniques and fun exercises. After dinner Graham showed us some motivational videos and match videos of his team, giving us the opportunity to ask questions and pick his brain. The second day was going to be a long one, so we went to bed early after reviewing all the exercises we did on day one.



We were greeted by another sunshiny day as we rolled out of bed on Friday morning and we were informed we were going to have wonderful weather like this throughout our stay! Unlike some ENTC camps that end up taking place earlier in the year, depending on when we have Easter, where we are greeted by snow on tournament day!

Friday morning we went through some more ball handling exercises, hand-eye coordination exercises and some much needed footwork techniques. The afternoon session focused more on defensive work. After training and practice games we had the same schedule as the evening before. All the players were very exhausted after one and a half days of intensive training (physically and mentally) and most just fell into their beds while the coaches and referees went into rugby-overtime at the bar.

Saturday was supposed to be a slower day to give us some recovery time for the fully packed Test European Tournament day ahead of us. We conducted a light training session in the morning that involved standard situations and line-outs and scrums. It was quite technical but we learned a lot on how to implement these actions into our games. The afternoon was free for the players and most chose the relaxation option and eventually made their way down to the lake either for a swim in the cold Balaton water to refresh their tired muscles or to reenergise in the sun. The coaches and referees still had a serious session on coach etiquette, rules and regulations and procedures of tournament day before they could make their way to the lake. Back at the "Kiddie College" after dinner everyone seemed to be mentally preparing for tournament day.

Sunday: Tournament Day!

Our Test European Championship followed the same structure and procedures as the official FIRA European Championships. Every team got to play 5 games which is a great test of physical and mental endurance for the FIRA Euros.

Tournament Champion ENTC IV is..... HUNGARY!!

2nd place was claimed by a tough playing Czech Republic team, followed by Poland in 3rd place. Austria came in 4th and Finland 5th, Bosnia won 6th place, Croatia 7th and the European Mix team (mix of Hungary, Bosnia and Poland players) finished in 8th place. After they won the tournament, the Hungarian team called all the participants onto the pitch and we all chanted together repeating after the Hungarian girls.

The heat did begin to take its toll by the end of the day and we unfortunately did not have the time or energy to announce and play out the All Stars Team against the Tournament Champions, Hungary. We managed this last year in Austria where the weather was not as hot and the All Stars team played together and won over the ENTC III Tournament Champion, Finland. It was a most exciting game and we would love to repeat this at future ENTC's to give the All Star players the opportunity to play as a team with those that are usually their toughest opponents. After the photo shooting session the lovely Zánka Stadium was left empty and relatively clean by the well disciplined women's teams!!

Later all the ENTC IV participants met up for the awards ceremony and celebratory banquet. This is where the All Stars Team was announced. As usual, coaches and referees had been asked to select the best players from each team throughout the tournament and in the end the final selection was left up to Graham! Some nations even had the honour of having two of their players selected as All Stars. After the ceremony everyone still standing was invited to continue the third half at the "Kiddy College" bar. It was a great night and many new friendships among different nations were won.



The Emerging Nations Training Camp, always initiated and organised by Renée Carmine-Jones from the Austrian Rugby Union who represents the 7's emerging / developing nations of Europe, was once again a huge success. Renée told us that she could not have pulled this off without her Tournament Director and co-organiser Csaba Priskin, Secretary of the Referee Society of the Hungarian Rugby Union. "He was a great help last year in Austria and even greater this year in Zánka!" exclaimed Renée. She also said it was a pleasure working with Hungarian Women's National Team Coach, Ferenc Gyolcsos, with whom the first ever ENTC was organised 4 years ago and who took care of all the technicalities on tournament day in Zánka. Coach Graham did an amazing job all by himself with 8 "women's" teams that all communicate in different languages and he managed to teach us and our coaches so much in a very short time. The referees informed us that it was wonderful working with David as well and they hope to have the opportunity to work with him and learn from him again. All the players and coaches who attended the camp hopefully appreciate how much they learned and improved in these four days and will hopefully take this knowledge home and share it with those players that could not make it this year.

In the name of all ENTC IV participants, Team Austria, who happens to have volunteered (or been volunteered) to write up this report, wants to thank everyone that was involved in making this camp as successful as it was. The Emerging Nations Training Camps that have always been initiated and organised by our Women's Development Officer and NT Coach, Renée Carmine-Jones, have brought all of our women's teams further in our common goal to improve our game, but it is the participation of all of these women from their nations that make it all possible. Team Austria only has positive feedback and congratulates the entire organising team for this exceptional regional project and wishes all the teams the best of luck in their European Championship Tournament! See you all next Easter, wherever that may be!

We are grateful to all who supported ENTC IV:

Official Thanks go out to the IRB and the FIRA for their vote of confidence in what began as a little project and has since developed into quite a large, regional project. We hope we can count on renewed support to keep the rugby ball rolling for our developing nations!

Special thanks go to the wonderful beer sponsor Arany Ászok for sponsoring the beers for our Banquet and to BRW & BDF (Budapest Rugby Watching & Beer Drinking Fans) who also gave us much support. Thanks as well to "Ueda Tomoko and her friends" who sponsored a sum that enabled us to provide the participants with bottled water and soft drinks for the tournament and banquet. Thanks to the Hungarian Rugby Union for covering the accommodation costs of the experts and for the lovely trophies and union giveaways. Thanks to Csaba Priskin and Ferenc Gyolcsos (and his Székesfehérvár Rugby Club) for the Ambulance and Medial Services for the tournament and to Csaba as well for the Teams and All Stars Wine giveaways and for the Referee and Coach Polo shirts. Thanks to Dixi for the fruity energy tablets they provided the teams on tournament day.

A huge thank you from all the participants to the Zánka Children & Youth Centre and their staff for all their hard work, flexibility (bending over backwards to make things work) and support and of course for giving us a special "get to know Zánka" price to make sure we got the maximum participants possible.

Thanks to XPatLoop for their article:

http://www.xpatloop.com/gallery/womens_international_rugby_union_development_camp_and_7s_tournament_zanka_12_april/

