

Emerging Nations Training Camp VI

+ Test Euro Champ Tournament

Women's 7's Rugby

Thurs. 21 – Mon. 25 April 2011



ZÁNKAI CENTRUM



TEAM AUSTRIA'S ENTC VI EXPERIENCE REPORT



THE WORLDS LARGEST 7'S RUGBY TRAINING CAMP FOR WOMEN!

Interest in Rugby still has a long way to go in almost every country in Europe and for Women's Rugby even longer. ENTC VI was an opportunity for young and ambitious players from various nations - some of whom have only had Women's Teams for a few years - to grow, to develop and to come together to learn, exchange knowledge and to play. Following 3 days of intensive training sessions, all of the rugby energy and fever boils over into a Test European Championship. This year's tournament Champion was the Czech Republic! But in actuality, as in all the previous years, each and every player, coach and referee leaves the ENTC a winner; and the biggest winner of all is Women's Rugby Development!



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ENTC VI

ENTC VI took place from 21 to 25 April 2011 in Zánka, Hungary. As in the previous 2 years, the Youth Centre on Lake Balaton was the perfect venue for hosting 12 Developing Rugby Nations and 14 teams. The entire camp consisted of about 240 players, coaches, referees and managers. Several nations brought along some U18 players to show them what awaits them in the very near future! The U18 players were given their chance to play in mixed teams in the stadium on Saturday afternoon before the Hungary vs Croatia men's national game.

The Youth Center upgrades to the housing, stadium and training pitches improved the atmosphere and value of this ideal 'all-in-one' venue and we are all very happy that we will share our perfect venue with the FIRA for the Division 3 European Championship to be hosted by Hungary for the first time on 4+5 June 2011.

This year's participating women's rugby nations were: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia (for the first time!!), Crovenia (a mix of Croatian & Slovenian club players). Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic and Poland each had two teams and made up the 2 mixed Barbarian sides that shared the playing time of the 1 Barbarian team that was entered into the Test Euro Champ Tournament. These teams were also flexible and provided players to teams whose players had suffered some minor injuries.

The Programme

As usual, the training camp kicked off on Thursday and kept us all busy until Saturday lunchtime at which point we all rewarded ourselves with an afternoon in or around the Lake Balaton to physically and mentally relax and also prepare ourselves for the Test European Tournament day on Sunday.

The Training Sessions

Thanks to the renewed IRB support this year two rugby coach experts were at our disposal: Graham Smith worked with the players and Simon Jones worked with the coaches and both exceeded expectations as always. A special coaching support star joined us this year and left an amazing impression on all of the players. Miss Sarah Hunter, who plays number 8 for the England women's side, paid her own way to join us, experience this empowering camp and to assist Graham with the almost 200 players with which the two of them were presented after lunch on Thursday! Together Graham & Sarah introduced and explained a wide range of rugby exercises to not only support the beginners but also to encourage advanced rugby players to coach their own team mates. The trainings were conducted in four intensive sessions per day, two before and two after lunch. One half of the players had a morning and an afternoon session with Graham and the other half with Sarah and then they swapped. The training days ended with friendly matches between the nations to give them the opportunity to practice their newly acquired skills.

Skills

This year's training focused on basic skills such as ball handling, tackling in 7s, body position, scrum, rucks, line outs, footwork, running lines, creating gaps and engineering opportunities on the field, etc. Also, they got us to visualise having "our heads in the fridge and our body on fire". Graham also introduced us to his newly patented training harness that he uses to train scrummaging with his England Squad. We can't wait to get our hands on it!!



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Evening Film Sessions

Every evening after dinner we concluded our fully packed learning day with the majority of participants watching women's games, Hong Kong Sevens, and then identifying and recognising individual skills, defence and attack patterns and little mistakes of the rugby players performing in the matches. Graham's presentation style was enjoyed by all and the players took every opportunity to question Sarah about her experiences with the England Squad and with the World Cup and how a high performance athlete trains. We realise they are perfectly normal players putting extraordinary time and effort into being the top athletes they are.

This year we also managed to fit in a short evening session to get feedback on the whole ENTC experience directly from the players' mouths!! This will also be written up for the FIRA and IRB and considered in the next planning phases for ENTC VII!!

Referee & Coach Training

Coach and referee educators ran IRB Level 1 and Level 2 seven's training sessions in parallel to the player training sessions on the pitch. The mix of new and experienced referees were guided by Viorel Popescu on detailed Rugby situations. The new referees had the opportunity to put their training into practice and whistle their first games and be guided by the more experienced referees while being assessed by our brave Referee Educator, Viorel who enlightened us on the 3 dimensions of the rugby game that involve players, coaches and referees.

The coaches of the participating nations had the honour of working with the very experienced Coach Educator, Simon Jones. The course ran more than smoothly in spite of the intensive programme we had set ourselves. Akos Harmat was being assessed throughout the course for his IRB Level 3 Certificate and as an educator as well. In the educator role he took the Level 1 coaches through some of their coursework, also under the guidance of Simon. The main concentration throughout the course as always is on the importance of everything being about the players and the team and in the ideal role of the coach as a facilitator. The ideal coaching style to ensure the maximum learning takes place should be somewhere between asking and delegating.

The tournament

After 3 days of spring warmth and sunshine, match day was cool and cloudy with some minor showers – perfect Rugby weather. Fourteen teams participated in the tournament and the tight game schedule was kept throughout the day. The 2 Barbarian teams, made up of development players from four nations, got to play 2 games each.

The champion of the tournament was the Czech Republic, followed closely by Poland and then Hungary in third place. All games were played in a friendly atmosphere. After the finals an 'All Stars' Team was selected and announced: a team picked by the Coach Experts and this year with the recommendations from each nation. This tradition helps identify and give recognition to one player from each nation that demonstrated exceptional skill and talent and rugby spirit! Then the All Stars Team played a friendly touch match against the Test Euro Referee Team! The All Stars playing together always makes for an exciting game!

Not only the Champions, but all teams were applauded at the final banquet at the end of tournament day. A great third half where the rugby party celebrations were enjoyed by all! Team Captains were presented with a lovely package by our hosts Balázs Böhm and Akos Harmat from the Hungarian Rugby Football Union. Their President, Turi Pal, had made it to Zanka but unfortunately we did not have the honour of his presence at any time.



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THANK YOU

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Thanks to everyone who made this possible! Most of all to the players and their enthusiasm without whom none of it would ever have materialised over the years!

Thanks to Zanka for their great staff and fabulous facilities and services! Three cheers for Angyal Balázs for his support, cooperation and wonderful, on-site organisation! We wish him all the best for his first European Championship in June.

Many thanks again to the Referee Expert Viorel Popescu for his valuable input and encouragement, to the Coach Experts Graham Smith and Simon Jones for the great work with the girls and the coaches and to all the work Sarah did with the players, having paid her own way to help out and share her experiences and knowledge, but especially for being such an inspiration to us all! GO ENGLAND WOMEN!

Thanks to Douglas Langley for providing us with IRB support and for the progress and development that his support has facilitated.

Thanks to Renée Carmine-Jones for the organising and initiating the ENTC for and with the Emerging Nations, with its beginnings as a small test project with Ferenc Gyolcsos, the Hungarian National Team Coach, which has now become an important fixture in the National Team calendars of many nations and players and coaches and referees to which everyone looks forward every year.

Thanks again to Bence Szalontai and Balázs Böhm who had to take responsibility since our official and experienced Tournament Director, Csaba Priskin, was refereeing at the U18 European Championship in France at the same time and they had to coordinate the Test European Championship Tournament on their own for the first time.

And thank you over and over again to the players from all the participating nations and to the spirit and empowerment they bring with them and share at ENTCs and the Test Euros!

As this ENTC Development Project continues to mature and grow, each year we see the number of participants and nations increase and the need for additional resources becomes evident. In order to keep this project alive it will be necessary to consider amending the resources allocated to this largest of women's development projects, including an increase in the number of experts, in funding and in organisational support on the part of an official rugby entity. It is slowly becoming too much for one volunteer person taking initiative to handle alone during the course of the year. We look forward to learning about what might be done to keep this initiative running smoothly.

Yours in Rugby,
TEAM AUSTRIA

Further requests or information please contact:

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