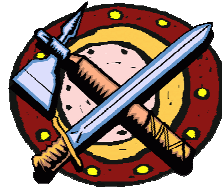


Gurkha Gab – Mar 31 2007

All the news that's fit (not)



Gurkhas



Barbarians



Bar-Bear-ians



Flying Penguins

Homecoming Day Edition

This is the second year we have held a homecoming day, and the first one where we've included teams from all age groups. Its unfortunate that it had to come at the end of the season, but the powers that be did not schedule all our teams at home until today.

Many of the younger players and parents are not very aware that their participation in Rugby this year was dependent on Gurkha Men's team providing coaching, organization and support, and funding to the Barbo's, BarBears, and Penguins. And of course to a few individuals who went above and beyond (you know who you are – if I try to mention you all – I'm bound to miss one).

We are the only club in Southern California to have youngsters through men's teams all playing for the same organization. And we intend to continue to add teams to our club in all youth age groups. Its a major benefit to all, that the club is a Registered 501(C)(3) public charity and non-profit corporation. This means that donations are tax deductible, as are time and mileage put in by club officers and coaches. Many thanks to Dan Beaulieu and Joe Clarke for getting this done. Because of it we recently received a substantial donation from Gurkha Scott Funaro. So thank you Scott, the directors and executive committee will meet to discuss how to best apply this generous donation.

M & M Travel Fund

Michael Lazarz and Mikie Linch are members of the North County Under 19 Barbarians Team. They have been invited to attend St. Paul's collegiate school in Hamilton, New Zealand. Mike and Mikie (alias M & M) will have the opportunity to study for one school term, April – August at an institution that will challenge them both academically and athletically. St Paul's is known for their fine rugby program and the boys will have the opportunity to practice, train and play on one of New Zealand's premier under 19 rugby teams.

We need your help to make this dream a reality for these fine young men. The estimated cost for this adventure is \$10,000. The money we raise through our fund raising events will help to off set the expense of travel, tuition, uniforms, books and boarding.

Please go to the Gurkha website to read more about this and make a tax deductible donation. This could be **your** son in a few years. If we raise more than we need – it will stay in the account to sponsor the next promising player in his junior year at High School.

A Night at Rio - Casino Night - - Saturday March 31 - 7PM to 11PM

Tonight is the 'Night at Rio' Casino night hosted by Jim and Kathy Linch at 2068 Ginny Lane Escondido. This is a fundraiser for the M & M Travel Fund, to help the two Mike's cover the cost of their semester in New Zealand playing Rugby. U19 Barbarian team players are manning the tables and dealing cards, so although this is an adult event, younger kids will be accommodated if you bring them.

The cost is \$30 single, \$50 per couple and you receive \$400 in chips, and drink tickets, and food is being donated by 'On the Border' Mexican restaurant. Come dressed in your finest Rio/Brazilian attire and receive extra playing chips. At the end of the night you trade in your chips for raffle tickets and place them yourself for the items you prefer to win.

Note – if you pay before the event – you will receive extra drink tickets

Give back to the people that support your club by attending this event

Travel Web Site

The Gurkha website (www.gurkharugby.com) has a link (www.ncrugbytravel.com) to an online travel booking engine similar to Travelocity or Expedia. Any travel (flights, hotels, rental cars, cruises etc) booked through our site earns us commissions to use on our programs. Please compare the prices on our site with the other sites, and if it's the same – why not book it through us? Why give the big companies the commissions? No freaking gnomes - Guaranteed!

San Marcos Street Fair – April 1 – Volunteers needed

The Gurkha men's team has made it a policy for a number of years to encourage members to volunteer at community events by giving discounts on club dues. We have seen the benefit from this in excellent relationships with the cities of Escondido and San Marcos, where we work the Encinitas 5K and Christmas parade, and the San Marcos Street Fair. This makes it much easier to get playing and training fields, especially at short notice.

San Marcos has moved this year's fair to April 1 and have asked us to provide people for our usual task of security at the beer garden (Rugby and Beer – how 'bout dat). A number of Gurkhas will be working off some of their unpaid dues but more volunteers are needed. Its really a lot of fun – and you get a free T-Shirt. talk to Club President Phil (Batman) Gardner if you are available for a few hours tomorrow.

End of Season Awards Banquet

One of the volunteer events that the Gurkhas were involved in last year was as security at the Viking festival in Vista. In return, the club has the use of the Norse Lodge hall for a day for our end of season awards banquet. The date is not confirmed yet, but it will probably be on Saturday April 28 or May 26. We would like it to be an event for all club members of all ages in the afternoon (with food and award presentations), then moving into an adult function with a dance band and adult beverages in the evening.

Team Season Summaries

Gurkhas (Men): by Phil (Batman) Gardner

The Gurkhas season record is 3-6. This is disappointing - everyone would prefer more W's, but there is much more to the story than just these two digits. Five of our losses have been in games against the top three opponents in our division, who are probably ranked in the top eight nationally, and possibly two of them will make it to the final four. This is much like the year we were 7-3, with two of those losses against eventual national champion Riverside. In the first two matches of the season were heartbreaking losses, in which we scored first and led for much of the game, but ended up letting it slip away in the closing minutes.

Most years it's either feast or famine, either we have enough players to field a full B side or we barely have enough for the A game. This year we have benefited from an influx of many new players, a mix of rookies who had never played before along with some with significant experience in high-level competition. In the preseason, we were able to field a full team of new guys on the same day that most returning Gurkhas were at Matt (Turtle) Gardner's wedding. But from the sublime to the ridiculous - injuries have taken their toll even more than usual. The low point of the season was reached when we traveled to Kern and were forced to have two of our forwards start the game as backs, and played the last ten minutes with only fourteen. Without the new players the situation would have been dire throughout the season.

Notable this year is the coaching staff, led by enthusiastic head coach Joe Clarke, who has been ably assisted by backs coach Komisi "Al" Fariamo and forwards/fitness coach Tony Evans. Joe's focus has primarily been on defense, and the success of his approach has been evident in our ability to move the ball in the desired direction even when the other team has possession. Our weaknesses have mostly been seen on offense, when we sometimes get impatient and sloppy, forcing ill-advised passes and losing the ball.

Over the course of the season we've seen some ups and downs. Games that have ended up in routs for the other team's, as well as routs of our own (Gurkhas 50 OMBAC III nil). Bottom line is, after nine games we've done enough to remain in playoff contention. It all comes down to the one we have today against San Luis Obispo. If we win, we keep our season alive and are in the playoffs as the fourth seed. If we lose, we start playing touch rugby at Cannon Park a little earlier than we hoped.

Barbarians (U19): by Coach Ray (Pops) Steel

The North County Barbarians are in the tenth year of existence and are currently 2-2 in league matches with 3 matches to go against San Pedro, SOC and Fullerton. The team is captained by Mikie Linch and vice captain is Mike Lazarz. These players are in their 5th and 3rd season with the Barbarians (they have one more to go), and both are leaving soon for a semester at a New Zealand High School.

One season highlight so far has been last weeks amazing win vs. La Quinta HS (near Palm Springs). We left San Diego County with 16 players, but arrived with 14 after 2 turned around believing they were lost in the desert (though they had a map and directions). So we played 14 on 15 – being unwilling to forfeit the match by borrowing a player – with 7 forwards against their 8.

At halftime we were down 0-5, but early in the second half new scrumhalf Andrew Gillson scored from a lineout after being driven over in the corner by Cyrus Moayeddi to make it 5-5. For the rest of the second half we defended staunchly, but were rarely able to move the ball into the other half of the field. Seven minutes from the end, our fullback was yellow carded for a high tackle and so we were down to 13 vs. 15.

From that point on, Coach Ray Steel urged the boys to slow the game down and secure the draw. Wisely they ignored him (causing his hair to go an extra shade of white – if that's possible), and one minute from the end fly-half Steven (Frenchie) Linde charged down a kick from the La Quinta wing, vice captain Mike Lazarz picked it up and scored in the tackle under the posts. The conversion by LoCicero was good after time was up on the stadium clock, but the referee allowed LA Quinta to kick off again. However the kick went out on the fly and the Barbarian supporters (about a dozen among the hundreds) went crazy, while Coach Steel recovered from full cardiac arrest!

Another excellent weekend was had at the Fullerton International H.S. Tournament 2 weeks ago where we won the plate division and finished with a 3-1-1 record. Our only loss was to Mesquite HS, and we tied 0-0 with a very good team in the North LA County Wildcats. This match was judged to be one of the best of the tournament, and it featured the Mesquite players raucously supporting the Barbarians over the Wildcats (after Mesquite lost a close one to the Wildcats). For the rest of the weekend the two teams supported each other on the field and when both were presented their trophies at the same time (Mesquite won the Bowl).

Many thanks go to Kathy Linch for organizing most everything, and to other parents who have made the season so enjoyable. As always we struggle to get enough players to cover for injuries and unavailability, and now we are playing against clubs with 40-50 U19 players on their roster (Fullerton, SOC, Back Bay, La Quinta). We anticipate that our successful U14 program will start drawing those kids and others from the San Pasqual and Orange Glen HS into the Barbarians.

Bar-Bear-ians (U14): by Coach Mark (TT) Richards

Our U14 team is a group of largely first-year players, 8th graders from Bear Valley Middle School in Escondido who play 10-a-side rugby on a full size field. We started practices in late October, and almost immediately had a group of 30-40 U14 kids coming out for touch and ball-handling drills twice a week. By late December we had started limited contact drills, but not until our first scrimmage at San Clemente in January had we done any real game-style play. Since that time we have had the following results:

First ever league match @ Hacienda Heights Phantoms: Loss 17-19, Record: 0-1-0

Our first match saw the players & parents nervous, and coach unprepared, as were our hosts. The players weren't sure how to respond to the host strategy, coach wasn't sure how to motivate/teach them on the fly, and the hosts didn't realize that young boys need to eat. Steamroller Hickerson and Eggbeater Otero were key on offense and defense.

First ever home match vs. Fallbrook Braves: Loss 7-46 Record: 0-2-0

Our first home match wasn't ideal, but our players stayed valiant until the final whistle. The two sides were largely unchanged for a B-side match, where we were outscored by only one try. Tornado Toth scored for the Bar-bears in the A-side match.

First ever league win vs. San Diego Mustangs: Win 78-10 Record: 1-2-0

WOW! Our boys played like champions, with 6 tries in the first half, and 6 more in the second half, gaining San Diego bragging rights until next year. Scrumhalf Mad Dog Pupilava scored 5 times, Steamroller and Superball Hickerson combined for four tries and Fullback Boots Sullivan kicked NINE conversions in very windy conditions.

Bar-Bear-ians (Cont)

First ever win streak vs. Westminster Aztec Warriors: Win 24-22 Record 2-2-0

Our boys scored after full-time to win by two. Newcomer Torrent Tarrant scored twice, with Hands! Smith kicking the conversion for the winning margin. Though Mad Dog broke his tibia, Shrieker Rabbani came in at scrumhalf and rallied his team to victory.

So here we stand at an even 2-2-0, with 8 points, fourth in the standings for South Division. We have games remaining against Daniels Dragons (3/31), @ San Clemente Gators (4/14), and @ Fullerton Lions (4/21). The fact that we still have a very good chance at making So Cal playoffs makes coaches Pi and Sleeper very proud. Hopefully, we can put an exclamation mark on an already successful season.

Flying Penguins (U12): by Coach Ven Griva

This year marks the first that the Southern California Rugby Football Union has sanctioned full-contact rugby for Under-12 boys and the NCRC U-12 Flying Penguins have made the most of the change.

Currently, the Flying Penguins boast a 14-3-1 record. We kicked off the season by placing second in the 10-team Fullerton Youth Rugby Tournament in February and followed up with a first-place finish at the San Diego Mustangs eight-team tournament in March.

For the most part U-12 rugby is instructional and is played 7-a-side on a 40x60 yard field. For that reason, the Flying Penguins' coaches have strived to get the team as many matches as possible and to divide playing time as equally as possible among the players, based upon attendance at practice and matches. Judicious use of a B team with no stigma involved has been beneficial in that regard. Most players have played on both the B and A teams. The B team is 2-3 on the season.

The Flying Penguins are coming off a 50-5 victory over the San Diego Mustangs on Saturday, March 17. The B team also won 20-15 that day.

Coached by former Gurkha David Warczakowski and Ven Griva, the Flying Penguins' numbers have remained steady at 18 and have consistently fielded an A and B side at tournaments and dual meets. While there is no league specifically for U-12, the Flying Penguins have won all three of their "league" matches played in conjunction with the U-14 Barbarians in the Southern Division of the Southern California Youth Rugby League.

The team consists of Derrick Cooper Jr., Damon Donahue, Kade Earls, Jake Euhus, Brett Glaze, Alex Griva, Trey Hondo, Peter Lazarz, Scott Lipitzke, Grayson Marble, Saul Mendoza, Jacob Nieblas, Noah Rabbani, Cameron Richards, Matthew Watts, Austin Warczakowski, Nathan Wickham and Kevin Vo. All but five of the boys attend Bear Valley Middle School in Escondido.

Vo and Rabbani are team captain and vice captain by vote of their teammates, and Vo was named Most Outstanding Player in the U-12 division of the Fullerton tournament. The Penguins have benefited from the contributions made by the four boys who have been involved for two or more seasons with the U-10 and U-12 non-contact Flying Penguins program -- Donahue, Lazarz, Griva and Warczakowski -- and by the skill and cleverness of Richards, whose father coaches the U-14 Barbarians.

If their record is any indication, the Flying Penguins have indeed learned quite a bit about rugby and applied it successfully on the field. It is to their credit that they started non-contact conditioning and instructional drills in November and will complete their season in April having played close to 30 A- and B-team matches. At times it has been grueling, like at the Fullerton tournament where the Flying Penguins played six matches in one day, including a thrilling overtime victory in the semifinals. But overall it has been a fun season for both players and coaches.