

Emerging Nations Training Camp II Katowice, Poland 27 April – 1 May 2007

*Participating Nations:
Austria/Bulgaria/Croatia/Czech Republic/Finland/Poland /Bosnia*

Raising the level & standard from the "Bottom" up for a better rugby challenge for all!

CLOSING THE GAP

And how! The ENTC II in Katowice, Poland proved to be a great success. All teams that participated learned a great deal and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Players learned a great deal about the specifics of 7's rugby and how it certainly is played differently than 15's rugby.

The Emerging Nations Rugby Community would like to thank Renée Carmine-Jones, coach of team Austria, and Jaroslav Bator, coach of team Poland for making it all possible behind the scenes and to the Polish Rugby Union for hosting such a unique camp.

The preparation and organization ran smoothly just like last year's ENTC I in Hungary (where Renée almost gave birth on the pitch), but this year many more nations participated helping to make it an even greater success.

"Jaroslav was wonderful to work with and also likes everything to run according to plan making everything seem so easy in the end in spite of Murphy's Law of: *If something can go wrong, it will!!!* Jaroslav and his wife Agnes did everything alone while we were in Katowice and they make a great team as well as a couple!" commented Renée. The two of them organised the pitch, the hotel and all the on site coordination of the camp while Renée worried about the camp programme, team correspondence, getting all the nations signed up, getting FIRA on board and all other non-host nation matters way in advance of the camp date.

We would also like to thank FIRA for sending us Benoit Oszustowicz. He provided us all with much incentive for training, warm-ups and just plain fun with 7's rugby as a team. Last year we were sent Gary Street, English national coach, by the RFU and we thought no one could ever match his work. Benoit rose to the challenge to work with over 100 women, with the assistance of the eager women's national team coaches of the participating nations, and he did so in style, French style! All participants agreed that they made some good progress with Benoit, now we all have to put to practice what we learned and close the gap between the A and B Groups. We will miss both Benoit and Gerry until the next time they guide us through another ENTC.

On Monday 30 April 2007 our ENTC culminated into an Emerging Nations Tournament where all participating nations could immediately implement their newly acquired 7's skills and get some practice games in before the European Championships (A & B Groups) taking place within 2 to 3 weeks of the camp. The ENTC Tournament was set up in 2 groups:

A
Finland
Croatia
Poland I
Bosnia

B
Bulgaria
Czech Republic
Austria
Poland II + Czech Republic II

The most unexpected but pleasant surprise of the tournament was first time participant to the European Championships and ENTC Tournament winner.... SUOMI FINLAND!!! They had just begun training for 7 a side rugby a short while before, had just fought some rugby battles at 15 a side and stepped up to the plate and won in Katowice.

They definitely showed off what they had learned from Benoit and managed to outplay Croatia, Poland and Bosnia to win their group and then to go on and beat Bulgaria in the finals. WOW!

Finland's participation enriched the tournament and the camp in general with their presence, enthusiasm and commitment. They were a wonderful addition to the Emerging Nations and were simply nice to have around as individuals and as a team.

The final tournament positions were as follows:

Final:

Finland beat Bulgaria

3rd place

Czech Rep. beat Croatia

5th place

Austria beat Poland

7th place

Bosnia beat Poland/Czech Rep. II

"The camp was a great success. The organisation, attendance and enthusiasm of the players and coaches, all of this together ensured its success. We can only hope that ENTC III will be even bigger, even if it means more work for Renée, who enjoys bringing nations together, especially after such a visible success that will be felt all the way to the FIRA and hopefully be noticed at the European Championships.

We need to know when next year's European Championships will be to determine when next year's ENTC will be. Then we start taking bid for the 2008 venue.

In anticipation of ENTC III, I remain,

Constantin Carmine
Manager, Team Austria