

Tournament Report - APAC 2013 Shanghai Puxi

The tournament was another great success in terms of organization and operation of the event and the concluding prize presentation, and recognition and credit to people involved.

Our team of referees from Hong Kong started the tournament as a team and finished with great feeling as a whole team with each one bringing home some new experience both on and off the pitch. Everyone contributed both in execution of our refereeing duties and giving feedback and comments on the tournament so that fellow referees coming to this tournament in future will benefit the most out of this event.

In summary of the input given by Stan, Dawn, Steve and Ralph to the making of this report, the tournament can be looked at in 3 parts, namely the organization of the tournament, the teams of players and coaches, and the refereeing of the games.

The Tournament

No doubt the tournament was very well organized with attention given to every minute detail. Logistics in and out to the airport and daily pick-up and delivery were well arranged. Referees were highly respected and our efforts appreciated and recognised amongst players, coaches and students as displayed in the recognition given to us in the opening and closing ceremonies. There were ample opportunities for interactions between referees and coaches, both in formal and social meetings. The pre-tournament meeting with coaches was very useful with many key law questions asked and doubts clarified before the games.

Owing to the disparity in skills and law knowledge among teams, a suggestion was raised by referees to offer law knowledge session on each of the 3 tournament days with specific topic being focused. However, this offer did not materialize this time due to pre-set schedule of teams for the tournament. This suggestion should be considered as part of the APAC rugby tournament for next year.

Players and Coaches

The tournament was an exciting and challenging one, especially for young and new referees not only because it was an U19 boys and girls 10s event but also it involves teams of various levels of skills and experience. One team from Korea only entered competition of the game in the tournament the first time after months of learning and training on how to play the game. So educating of players was required besides refereeing, making it more challenging for not-so-experienced referees.

Most coaches have stayed with the same school and team for years; some of them knew

fair amount of the laws and expected almost fault-less performance from referees. Overall, coaches did respect referee's decisions and no issue of disapproval encountered.

Refereeing

This is the part most referees had the focus on in their feedback of the tournament. All have agreed that this is a great opportunity for young and new referees to get involved in intensive refereeing of games and polishing their skills through coaching by experienced referees on the spot. The set-up of 4-member team for each game (1 referee, 2 ARs and 1 4th official) allowed training of the different roles of a match official and encouraged half-time and end-of-game discussion on specific incidents in the game and immediate reference to solutions and alternatives. Since the tournament lasted for 3 consecutive days, time was allowed for digestion of discussed topics and new learning put to use in ensuing games.

As mentioned, teams were very different in skills and play techniques. That made management of scrums and dangerous tackles a bit difficult in the beginning. However, improvement was seen after teams were talked over the scrum engagement procedures and specific areas alerted to captains before game.

Several mistakes in refereeing were made but the referees involved were brave enough to admit the errors and relevant parties advised and situation explained. This proved to be a part of the learning and developing process of refereeing.

Every member was given even number of games of various difficulty levels to exploit their own potentials. Nobody felt under-utilized. Steve Green felt much this way that he commented that he was not being prejudiced for his young age and his integrity as a referee well kept.

Conclusion

The nature of this school tournament makes it a very rewarding overseas appointment for young development referees to gain overseas game exposures. All members selected this year enjoyed the tournament and would like to be involved again in future APAC appointments. Should the Society come across similar tournaments in other international school associations, it should seize the opportunity of getting invitation so that more development referees can benefit from such appointments.

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