

U of A Rugby club reaches semis at UVic



Things get pretty crowded inside of a rugby scrum. U of A beat the U S College champs during a recent tournament in Victoria.

With a squad of 37 players, most of whom had never played together as a team, the University of Alberta Rugby Club set out for the University of Victoria Invitational Rugby Tournament.

It would hardly have been surprising if the newly formed club had fared badly in a tournament containing a very high calibre of opposition, which included some of the best teams in North America. Instead, Alberta performed magnificently, completely outplaying Simon Fraser University and beating the U.S. Collegiate Champions, University of California at Berkeley before losing narrowly to the University of Michigan by a penalty goal in the last minutes of the semi-final.

The tournament, which included eight sides, saw Alberta grouped with Simon Fraser, the University of Victoria and Berkeley, Cal. with the top two sides advancing into the semi-final. The first game against Simon Fraser was barely 5 minutes old before some excellent forward play and some quick handling by the whole back line produced a try for winger Dave Bridgeman. Alberta never looked back and played some sparkling rugby to win 28-4.

In their next game, the U of A side, captained by Ron Horton, went down to a University of Victoria team that are well into their regular season and who included several Canadian international players. Alberta played well, holding Victoria to four points in the second half. The final score was 29-3 with Gareth Davies kicking a penalty goal for the U of A's only points.

Refusing to become disheartened, and knowing that a victory was needed to qualify for the semi-final, Alberta rose to the occasion and beat the defending U.S. Collegiate Champions, University of California at Berkeley, in an outstanding game. Captained by former Dublin University player Paddy Lamb, Alberta piled on the pressure from the start, opening the scoring with a superb drop-goal by visiting Japanese student Akira Tsuboi. Some tremendous forward play led by Ron Horton, and some astute kicking by Lamb kept the California side pinned back in their own half. No. 8 Doug Zutz and second row Kevin Swanson scored tries and Davies kicked 3 penalty goals to give the U of A a memorable 20-12 victory.

In the semi-final, Alberta came up against the University of Michigan. Unfortunately, the team lost in a closely contested game, going down 6-3 with Davies kicking a penalty goal. In the consolation final against UBC, the side once again faced opposition with ample match practice and who included several Canadian team players. Once again Gareth Davies kicked the only Alberta points in a 29-3 loss.



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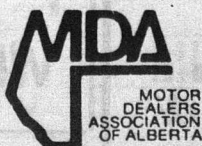
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