New Zealand Wins 1989 Hong Kong 7s

by Ed Hagerty

Hong Kong April 1-2, 1989

New Zealand's mighty All Blacks won the 1989 Cathay Pacific-Hong Kong Bank 7s with a crushing 22-10 victory over Australia before 30,000 cheering spectators in Hong Kong's soldout National Stadium.

New Zealand broke a 4-4 halftime deadlock with three successive tries to put the game out of reach.

Scrumhalf Kevin Putt, with two brilliant tries, was the All Blacks' standout in the final. With the victory, New Zealand avenged last year's 13-12 loss to Australia in the Hong Kong championship match.

Considering the All Blacks' convincing 28-0 semifinal victory over the Wallabies a week earlier in Sydney, and the fact that they have won three of the last four Hong Kong titles, it is clear that New Zealand is the world's premier 7s side.

Prelims

In Saturday's round-robin play, the All Blacks racked up an astounding 92 points in just two games. They recorded a 54-0 victory over hapless Bahrain in their opener and then put away a competent Tunisian side, 38-0.

Australia's round-robin effort was similarly impressive, as they scored 84 points while limiting their opposition to 4. They destroyed Brunei 52-0 and then beat Japan 32-4, vividly illustrating the gulf in class which exists among the various competitors.

Quarterfinals
In their quarterfinal match, the



The All Blacks, seen here packing down in their 12-10 semifinal win over Fiji, went on to beat Australia 22-10 in the final of the 1989 Hong Kong 7s. (Photo-Hagerty)

All Blacks beat Western Samoa (22-6), the team they defeated for the Sydney 7s title the week prior. Scott Pierce (2), Eric Rush and John Gallagher scored tries for New Zealand, with Gallagher adding three conversions.

Australia, meanwhile, disposed of the Irish Wolfhounds, 22-8. Wallaby tries came from Michael Lynagh (2), Ian Williams and Brad Burke, with Lynagh adding 3 conversions.

Semifinals

Parity was finally achieved in the Cup Competition's semifinal round where both New Zealand and Australia were pushed to the limit in posting identical 12-10 victories. These were, without doubt, the competition's best matches.

Australia-Barbarians

Australia's opponent, the Barbarians, are a British invitational select-side. Led by new British Lions' captain Finlay Calder (Scotland), they featured internationals John Jeffrey (Scotland), Scott Hastings (Scotland), Mike Hall (Wales), Jon Griffiths (Wales) and Stuart Barnes (England), as well as Neil Edwards.

'The slick, well-schooled Aussies took a 12-0 halftime lead on tries by wing sensation David Campese and Steve Tuynman. It looked like Australia might run away from the Barbarians, who pride themselves on taking the field without the benefit of coaching or extensive preparation.

As Australian coach Bob Dwyer feared, however, the fast, fit and extremely talented Barbarians roared back in the second half with tries by Scott Hastings and John Jeffrey. But, the Brits came up short as a conversion was missed; 12-10 Australia.

New Zealand-Fiji

Anxious to redeem themselves after a poor showing in Sydney the week before, Fiji stormed out to a 10-0 halftime lead over the All Blacks on tries by Viliame Rauluni and Luke Erenavula.

As the second half got underway, the All Blacks, led by captain Zinzan Brooke, began playing aggressive, physical rugby and pulled to within four (10-6) on a beautiful converted try by John Gallagher. A try by Dallas Seymour and another Gallagher conversion then gave the All Blacks the lead (12-10).

But, Fiji refused to give in, launching furious assaults on the New Zealand line as the final seconds ticked away. Only a spectacular tackle by Gallagher, inches away from the line, on tournament MVP Waisale Serevi, preserved an All Black victory.

Final

The addition of Michael Lynagh to an Aussie side which had lost to the All Blacks the week before in Sydney, seemed to assure that Hong Kong would have another down-to-the-wire finish and this appeared to be the case at halftime, with the score deadlocked at 4-4.

New Zealand, though, put over the first three tries of the second half and went on to win easily, 22-10.

1st Half

The All Blacks took the lead in the 4th minute when John Schuster beat Acura Niuqila for a try, with John Gallagher missing an easy conversion.

Australia tied it at the 9-minute mark when Simon Poidevin touched down after taking a pass from David Campese, who had chipped over the defense. Michael Lynagh's conversion was also off the mark (4-4).

Second Half

Early in the second half, Campese tried to attack from deep in his own half with another chip kick. The ball, however, was taken by All Black scrumhalf Kevin Putt, who was called onto the squad the Monday before. The 24-year-old physical education teacher avoided several tackles and ran in for a try.

Putt scored again moments later and then sensational hooker Eric Rush took off down the right wing to tally the All Blacks' 4th try of the match.

Gallagher converted all three tries to put the game out of reach at 22-4.

Beaten but not broken, Australia tallied the game's final points when Campese chipped over the defense, fielded his own kick and touched down. Lynagh's conversion brought the final to 22-10.

Zinzan Brooke

All Black captain Zinzan Brooke commented after the match, "We owed them that one after last year. It's great to be winners here again. This is a well-balanced side. We'll be here for sure next year to try and win it again."

Bob Dwyer

Australian coach Bob Dwyer added: "Compared to them, we appeared to be lacking in conditioning. Also we didn't scrummage well. We won only one scrum in the final and you can't do much with so little possession."

New Zealand Australia Brooke (c) Tuynman Rush Miller Pierce Poidevin Putt Burke Schuster Lynagh (c) Seymour Niuqila Gallagher Campese Referee: Gareth Simmonds (Wales)

Plate

In the Plate Championship, contested among teams which came out second in round-robin play, Tonga destroyed Japan, 32-14.

Paula Toupou (2 tries), Peniola 'Ahofono (2 tries), Moeaki Toma (2 tries), and Tomasi Lovo (4 conversions) handled the scoring for Tonga.

To reach the final, Tonga squeaked past Tunisia 8-7 in the quarterfinal round, and then beat the U.S. 19-6 in the Plate semifinals...

Bowl

The Netherlands beat Spain, 20-16, in an exciting Bowl Championship final. The Bowl is contested among the 8 teams which came out 3rd in roundrobin play.

To reach the final, the Netherlands recorded victories over Italy (8-4) and Bahrain (24-4), in the quarter and semifinal rounds.

Serevi - Best and Fairest
Exciting young Fijian Waisale
Serevi was awarded the Leslie
Williams Trophy for the Best and
Fairest Player of this year's
Sevens. Serevi scored 6 tries during the competition.

It was some consolation for the Fijians whose Cup hopes came to an end in a thrilling semifinal loss to the All Blacks.

Serevi, a 20-year-old electricity meter-reader from Suva, burst into the limelight in the recent Sydney Sevens where he goosestepped past David Campese in Fiji's sensational 18-4 triumph.

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HONG KONG 7s CHAMPIONS **Year** 1976 Plate Cantabrians (NZ) Hong Kong 1977 1978 Bahrain Papua New Guinea Australia 1980 1981 Fiji Barbarians Tonga Australia Korea 1983 1984 Australia Korea Sri Lanka Australia Hong Kong Papua New Guinea 1985 Australia Tonga American Eagles French Barbarians New Zealand New Zealand 1986 Hong Kong Kwang Hua Taipei Netherlands 1987 1988 American Eagles New Zealand Tonga

U.S. Posts 2-2 Record In Hong Kong

by Ed Hagerty

Hong Kong April 1-2, 1989

Having won the Plate Championship in 1988 and intending to move up in class this year, an inconsistent Eagle team posted a disappointing 2-2 record at the 1989 Hong Kong 7s.

The Eagles beat the Netherlands 24-4 in their opening round-robin game, but then dropped a 16-6 decision to a mediocre Hong Kong side, becoming the only seeded team not to make it through to the Cup Competition.

The U.S. then posted a substantial 28-0 victory over Thailand in their Plate quarterfinal, but were eliminated after a mistake-ridden 19-6 loss to Tonga in the semifinals.

KEY FACTORS

A number of factors may have contributed to the Eagles' poor performance.

Barry Williams' Injury

First and foremost, was the loss of star wing Barry Williams to a devastating knee injury on the final play of the Eagles' first

Williams scored six tries at Hong Kong last year and the team had come to depend upon his spectacular running and scoring. His departure was a major blow to the U.S. squad.

Kevin Higgins' Absence

In addition, the Eagles missed both the offensive and defensive contributions of Kevin Higgins, who was out with injury. Higgins was a major reason for the Eagles' success at both the Hong Kong and Moscow 7s in 1988.

Two Separate Sides Another key factor affecting the Eagles' performance was the decision to send separate sides to Sydney and Hong Kong, rather than picking one team and using Sydney as a tune-up for Hong

Unproven Halfbacks

Finally, there was the decision to go with youth and speed over proven veterans. The halfback combination of Andy Dujakovich and Chris O'Brien was picked over the more seasoned duo of Tommy Smith and Charlie Wilkinson, who led the U.S. to victory over Wales in Sydney.

Hindsight, however, is always 20-20.

April 1, 1989 Game I:

UNITED STATES 24, NETHERLANDS 4

In the Eagles' first match, they faced a Dutch side featuring the four Marcker brothers, and the eldest Marcker, Hans, opened the scoring with a try in the third minute (4-0).

With three rookies (Andy Dujakovich, Tom Billups and Tony Ridnell) making their debuts before a packed house, things were, understandably, a bit unsettled, and it wasn't until 61/2 minutes elapsed that the Eagles got on the board.

From a drop-out at the 22, Barry Williams tapped to himself, sidestepped two defenders and broke for the line. Mark Williams' conversion gave the U.S. a 6-4 lead, which they carried into

Second Half

Steve La Porta touched down



The Eagle 7s squad in Hong Kong: (FRONT, L-R) Carl Weiss (doctor), Chris O'Brien, Steve LaPorta, Andy Dujakovich, Tom Billups, Barry Williams. (BACK, L-R) Emil Signes (coach), Gary Lambert, Tony Ridnell, Mike Siano, Mark Williams, Ed Ayub (trainer). (Photo - Hagerty)

one minute after the interval and then Andy Dujakovich scored two minutes later, after a break by Barry Williams.

6'5", 240 pound Tony Ridnell took the ensuing kickoff and set sail for the line to tally the Eagles' fourth and final try.

Mark Williams, fully recovered from a serious leg injury last October, slotted all three second-half conversions to bring the final score to 24-4.

On the final play of the game, however, tragedy struck. Wing Barry Williams made a break and attempted to go around the big (227 lbs.) Dutch wing, Bernd Verhofstad. The Dutchman, though, managed to grab Williams' jersey and force him out of bounds, where Williams suffered a serious knee injury.

A preliminary investigation by team physician Dr. Carl Weiss indicated that surgery would be necessary and that Williams would be out of action for at least 9 months.

Williams indicated that he was not covered by medical

United States Netherlands Wierenga Lambert A. Marcker Billups P. Marcker Ridnell Dujakovich Eman H. Marcker La Porta M. Williams 6 M. Marcker 7 Verhofstad B. Williams Referee: John Brown

(Hong Kong) Game II

HONG KONG 16, **UNITED STATES 6**

At 6 in the evening, as darkness descended, the Eagles took the field against the host team, Hong Kong. At this late hour the humidity finally gave way to moderate rainfall, making the footing treacherous and the ball extremely difficult to handle.

The Hong Kong side, comprised almost entirely of expatriate Brits, adapted to the conditions much faster and better than the U.S. and came away with the tournament's major upset.

1st Half

The Eagles started out well enough, when Mark Williams touched down after a 20-yard run, 47 seconds into the match, and then Chris O'Brien converted (6-0). This, unfortunately, was all she wrote for the U.S.

Hong Kong's Mark Ashall

scored an unconverted try in the gave to Mark Williams, who corner four minutes later (6-4).

Eagle flyhalf Chris O'Brien just missed a spectacular score when he boomed a kick into Hong Kong's end zone from his own 22, and was just beaten to the ball by Eamonn McManus.

Second Half

Thirty seconds into the second half, McManus and Neil Barclay dribbled the slippery ball 70 yards downfield, where Barclay fell on it for the go-ahead try. The conversion by Pieter Schats gave the hosts a 10-6 lead.

Hong Kong, sensing an upset, defended fiercely against the bigger, stronger Americans and then iced the game in the 3rd minute when Mark Ashall scored his second try. Schats' conversion brought the final score to

Hong Kong thus advanced to do battle with Fiji in the Cup Competition while the U.S. was left to face Thailand in the Plate.

United States Hong Kong Lambert Ashall Cross Billups Barclay Siano Dujakovich Kilazoglou O'Brien Schats M. Williams 6 Pain La Porta McManus Referee: D. R. Harvey (Canada) April 2, 1989 Game III UNITED STATES 28,

In the Plate quarterfinal, the Eagles utilized the largest pack Ridnell (240 lbs.), Siano (235 lbs.), and Lambert (235 lbs.) in the competition, and it worked with devastating effect against the much smaller Thais. The Eagles' big men simply ran at or over the Thais, drawing two or more defenders, and instantly creating an overlap.

THAILAND 0

The Eagles' got on the scoreboard in the first minute when Ridnell took a lineout at the Thai 30, broke a tackle and headed straight for a touchdown in the corner. The conversion failed (4-

The Eagles' second try came 2 minutes later on an 80-yard movement off the kickoff. Mark Williams made the initial break and then fed Steve La Porta, who set up Chris O'Brien for the try. Mark Williams converted (10-0).

On the ensuing kickoff, another 80-vard movement again resulted in a U.S. try. Lambert reduced the deficit when he returned the kick 20 yards, and 1st Half

Tonga opened the scoring 50 seconds into the match. Mark Williams was caught in a tackle with no support, inside the U.S. 22. Tongan defenders stripped the ball from Williams and Siaosi Atiola touched down.

Chris O'Brien regained the lead for the Eagles with a try in the 3rd minute, which he also converted (6-4). The play started when Mike Siano stole a Tongan lineout and fed Gary Lambert who ran over a defender. The ball then went out to Tony Ridnell, who fed O'Brien for the try.

Just before halftime the Eagles were awarded a penalty near midfield, with a chance to start drive. Scrumhalf Andy Dujakovich failed to get the ball into play promptly, however, and the referee turned possession over to the Kingdom of Tonga.

Ten seconds later Tomasi Lovo scored under the posts and converted his own try. So instead of going into the half with a 6-4 lead, the Eagles were now down by four (10-6).

2nd Half

made a break and passed to Andy

Dujakovich for the try. Chris

Second Half

dominated by the Eagle big men

as first Ridnell and then Lambert

scored on set-ups by Mike Siano.

Mark Williams converted the

first and Chris O'Brien the

second to bring the final score

Referee: John Brown (H. Kong)

TONGA 19,

UNITED STATES 6

the Eagles faced Tonga in the

Plate semifinals. The Eagles had

won in 1988, but this year Tonga

turned the tables, registering a

19-6 victory on three tries, 2 con-

versions and a penalty

converted try for the U.S.

For the second year in a row,

Thailand

Watanasin

Thongplub Onphet

Sutta Wongratana

Laksanasompong Boonruxa

The second half was again

O'Brien converted (16-0)

to U.S 28, Thailand 0.

United States

Ridnell

Lambert

Jujakovich

O'Brien M. Williams La Porta

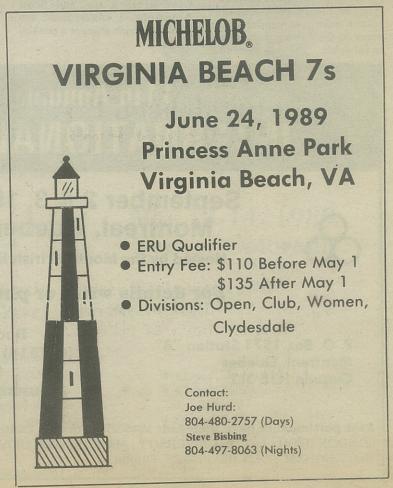
Game IV

Two minutes into the second half, Tonga was awarded a penalty 20 yards out and immediately in front of the Eagle posts. Lovo made no mistake, increasing the Kingdom's lead to 13-6.

Tonga iced the game in the 5th minute when wing Kolianita Feke scored another try and Lovo converted (19-6).

The U.S. was thus out of the competition, while Tonga went on to take the Plate Championship with a 32-14 win over Japan.

United States Tonga Tuivailala Ridnell Toma Siano Tupou Lambert Dujakovich Ahofono Atiola O'Brien M. Williams Lovo LaPorta Referee: John Brown (Hong Kong)



US Beats Wales At Sydney 7s

by Emil Signes (U.S. 7s Coach)

Sydney, Australia March 25-26, 1989 U.S. 15 WALES 12

The Eagles' Sevens season was highlighted by a 15-12 victory over Wales at the 1989 Sydney Sevens, the first time the U.S. has ever beaten an IRB national team at any variation of rugby. Highlights of the game were a 100meter try by Rory Lewis, a Tom Smith try from a perfectly executed "double switch" penalty play, and a clutch penalty kick by Tom with no time remaining and the game tied at 12-12.

One surprise to those of us familiar with Rory Lewis' speed, was seeing Ieuan Evans run by Rory to score a 110-meter try. The try started with Evans' feet just inches inside the back of the dead ball line. Rory never got within 10 yards of the flying Welshman, but in his defense, Rory had been ill with the flu and was taken out at halftime when he could barely stand.

Strong Welsh Team The Welsh team was a strong one, including four players who will participate in this June's British Lions tour of Australia: Mike Hall, John Devereux, Robert Jones, and Ieuan Evans, as well as David Waters, David Bryant, John Morgan, Richie Collins, and Paul Turner. Five had played in Wales' great victory over England the previous

It was a great way to start the tournament, and gained the respect needed by the Australian Rugby Union, who promised us an invitation next year.

U. S. Team

- 1. Poquette 5. C. Wilkinson 2. Brewington 6. Hein
- 3, J. Wilkinson 7. Lewis
- 4. Smith (O'Brien replaced Lewis)

U. S. Scoring: Tries by Lewis and Smith; 2 conversions by Smith; PK by Smith.

NEW ZEALAND 32 UNITED STATES 0

In the following game, despite three minutes in which we had New Zealand backed up inside their own 22, the All Blacks not only came back to win, but scored 32 points in the remaining

They also scored 32 points against Wales and Korea, and defeated Australia 28-0 in the semi-finals the next day!

U.S. Team

- 2. Brewington 5. C. Wilkinson 3. Poquette 6. O'Brien

UNITED STATES 24 KOREA 6

In our final game of the day, Korea's speedy winger (he had run by New Zealand rocket Terry Wright earlier in the day!) scored early to put the Eagles down, 6-

A potentially more serious threat to our chances was an injury on the same play which put skipper Tommy Smith out of the game. With Charlie Wilkinson moved to scrumhalf, we were penalized at the first scrum and there was cause for worry.

One Rory Lewis try followed by three Gary Hein tries, how-



The Eagle 7s squad on an outing in Sydney. (FRONT, L-R) Gary Hein, Will Brewington, Jimmy Wilkinson, Emil Signes (coach), Tommy Smith, Russell Ortiz, Dave Poquette, Charlie Wilkinson, Chris O'Brien. Not pictured - Rory Lewis.

ever, sealed Korea's fate, and put us into the quarter finals against Western Samoa.

U. S. Team

- 5. C. Wilkinson Poquette '
- 2. Brewington 6. O'Brien J. Wilkinson 7. Lewis

(Hein replaced Smith)

U.S. Scoring: Tries by Lewis and Hein (3); 4 conversions by

WESTERN SAMOA 18 **UNITED STATES 10**

The U.S. has never matched up well against the island teams (Fiji. Samoa, Tonga), as their constant pressure often takes us out of our control style game. So we planned a very conservative game against them, to the extent of kicking to touch whenever we were in trouble. We worked the game plan to perfection in the first half, and led 10-0.

In the second half, however, lack of composure and the inability to win our own scrum ball (which also plagued us in our 1987 match vs. Samoa) cost us the game.

Samoa took a ball against the head, and scored early in the 2nd half, making the score 10-6. Later, with a gap at midfield, an ill-advised cross-field football pass was picked off by the Samoans and put them ahead,

A poor decision following a penalty play took away our last chance of winning the game.

U.S. Team

- 1. Poquette 5. C. Wilkinson Brewington 6. O'Brien
- 3. J. Wilkinson 7. Hein 4. Smith

U. S. Scoring: Tries by Brewington and Hein; conversion by

Quarterfinals

Elsewhere in the quarterfinals, Wales blew a chance to make the final four by missing an easy kick that would have put them ahead of Australia (7-6) with one minute to go.

Western Samoa

Western Samoa was the team of destiny that weekend; coming from behind with three tries in the last two minutes to beat Argentina; coming from behind to beat the U.S.; and then playing like world-beaters in the semifinals. In the most exciting game of the tournament, they beat, by a convincing 23-18 score, a Fijian team that had already thrashed

Australia (18-4).

NEW ZEALAND 26 WESTERN SAMOA 16

In the tournament final, Western Samoa held a 10-4 halftime lead over New Zealand (it should have been 10-0 but for a referee error), but the All Blacks, with their composure and superiority, pulled off a 26-16 victory

It was an exciting tournament, and the Australian Rugby Union, which has taken over the event from the New South Wales Union, has promised a much better organized tournament in the future.

Club Tournament

One interesting aspect was a separate club bracket, intermingled with the international

matches, that featured the top eight Sydney clubs.

Hosts

In addition to playing in the tournament, each of the eight Sydney clubs also hosted a national team.

The U.S. had the good fortune to be hosted by Randwick, the best rugby side in Australia. Not only did we get to scrimmage Randwick, and enjoy an evening in their sumptious clubhouse, but we also got to run against the full Australia side, which was great for the team.

Gary Hein - MVP

The entire Eagle team played well in the tournament, but my vote for MVP would go to Gary

"Slow-sters"

In the forwards, special mention to "slow-sters" Dave Poquette and Jimmy Wilkinson, who have to be among the best decision makers in the entire country.

Tommy Smith

Tommy Smith is certainly the best captain of an Eagles' side, and possibly of any side, I've had the pleasure to work with. He has a brilliant understanding of the game, the respect of his players, and is one of the most confident, focused competitors in sevens.

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