

Introduction

Every year the P7 Group (u-12) of players from the Selkirk Rhino Mini Rugby team undertakes a short tour. This marks the end of that group's playing for the Rhinos before entering High School.

This year the team went to Dublin to play in the Seapoint International Rugby Blitz, Ireland's largest mini rugby festival. 125 Teams entered the tournament from all the provinces of Ireland, Holland and Selkirk, representing Scotland. A full itinerary for the Tour is provided as an appendix to this report.

The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Selkirk Common Good Fund with details on the benefits of their contribution towards the costs of the Tour.



The Selkirk Rhinos operates teams from P1/2 level to P7. The Club is managed by a Committee of parent volunteers. Each team has two coaches, also parents

The Party

15 players participated in the Tour, accompanied by the two coaches and two parent helpers. There were 11 P7s and 4 younger S1 pupils that played. The 'top up' from S1 players was on account of there being insufficient numbers available/ experienced within the P7 level. All the boys were from Selkirk and the Lilliesleaf and Etrick & Yarrow catchments.



The Tour Party with the Heineken Cup at Seapoint RFC (Back Row from left: Sanders, Young, Bain, Dixon, Cockburn, Beattie, Davidson, Nicholl; Front Row from left: Maceira, McFadzen, Mallin, Cottrell, Sweetnam, McDonell, Kimber)

The Event

We entered one squad of 14 players for the Under 12 competition, and were drawn in a Group of Seapoint RFC (Leinster), Wanderers FC (Leinster), Kinsale RFC (Munster) and Old Crescent RFC (Munster). In addition, the tournament organisers selected a 'Barbarians' Team, from the best players of these clubs, to play an additional game against Selkirk. Results: Played 5; Won 1; Drawn 1; Lost 3.



The boys played a total of five matches. Here they are in action against Old Crescent from County Limerick

From a playing perspective the boys were exposed to a different set of rules and higher competition to what they were used to. With this, and the inevitable 'nerves', they started slowly, but even in the games they lost, they remained competitive to the end.



Disappointment following defeat at the hands of the hosts, Seapoint RFC

Costs

The team travelled by bus and ferry to Dun Laoghaire, in Co Dublin. They stayed in a hostel for two nights. These costs amounted to £2,700. Total subsistence costs were £1,100, and sundry costs of £400 included the price of a tour of the Aviva Stadium (formerly Lansdowne Road), train fares and drinks.

The Selkirk Common Good Fund provided a contribution of £700 towards these total costs of £4,200.



Pre Match Meal – Noodle Café, night before the Tournament

Support

A key objective for the organisers was that no child would be unable to travel for financial reasons. As such the contribution per household was restricted to £20. This would not have been possible without the efforts of fundraisers and supporters, and it could not have happened without the generous support of the Selkirk Common Good Fund.

The Selkirk Rhinos were also appreciative of the financial and 'in-kind' support and sponsorship from: ASDA, Bill McLaren Foundation, Bowhill Estates, John Rutherford, Oregon Timber, Susan Cottrell and Rhino Reactive Services.

Benefits

Before the tour, the anticipated benefits were:

- International travel experience for the boys.
- Improved rugby performance and development.
- Self-esteem - responsibility of representing the club and the town at an international event.
- Learning and enhanced aspirations – of rugby and travel and the link between participation in sport and wider opportunity.

These benefits were delivered, and in addition a number of other benefits were secured:

- Profile – links to Seapoint and other Irish clubs and the possibility of their attendance at Selkirk tournaments.
- Camaraderie – spending time with each other on a Tour; meeting new people – after the Tournament itself, it was noticeable how the Selkirk and Amsterdam teams mixed.
- The ‘art of the possible’ – the effort made by a large number of parents and supporters was evidence to other teams and the children that the efforts were successful.
- Legacy – raising the aspiration of future teams and other sports.
- Learning – the Aviva Stadium Tour also involved a tour of the press and media facilities and showing the boys how reports are filed, press rooms, IT equipment etc.
- Lessons – for the Club, participating in the Tournament, we have identified a number of examples of how we could improve our own rugby and tournaments and increase participation.



The boys visited the new Aviva Stadium in Lansdowne Road on the Saturday



The Stadium Tour involved a visit to the Press Room – here a few of the squad prepare for questions from the travelling press!

Conclusion

The Tour was a valuable experience for everyone involved, the Selkirk Rhinos, but particularly the players. They will never forget the experience and will always have that ‘common bond’ of participating in the International Mini Rugby Blitz.

The following week, the players attended a ‘farewell dinner’ at the Rugby Club where they were presented with various playing awards. The speakers at the dinner included a playing member of Selkirk RFC, Calum Johnston, a former Selkirk Rhino himself; and John Rutherford, the incoming president of Selkirk RFC. Both reminded the boys how lucky they had been to go on a rugby tour and described the benefits to them, as adults, of playing rugby. They underlined the importance of hard work and commitment, and how rugby introduced them to new people and new experiences. As a result of being on Tour these messages had an even greater resonance.

John Rutherford also brought a selection of his jerseys to the dinner and described the different jerseys and the countries they represent.



John Rutherford (President Selkirk RFC) with the team and a collection of his international jerseys

On behalf of the Selkirk Rhinos P7 Tourists, the children, we are hugely grateful to the support and interest of the Selkirk Common Good Fund. Thank you for your support.

For more information please contact:

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APPENDIX – ITINERARY

Can we get details of the trip?

The following provides details of the proposed itinerary. These times are indicative.

Saturday 27th April:

Meet Selkirk Market Place:	300am
Depart Selkirk Market	315am
Arrive Holyhead	930am
High Speed Ship Departs	1030am
Lunch on Boat	
Arrive Dun Laoghaire Port	1245pm
Check in to Hostel	100pm
Meet Dublin Area Rapid Transit Station (Dun Laoghaire)	200pm
Stadium Tour	300pm
Restaurant	500pm
Walk on Dun Laoghaire Pier	700pm
Lights Out	900pm!!

Sunday 28th April:

Meet Coach at Marina Hostel:	830am
Arrive Seapoint RFC	900am
Tournament Start	930am

Have requested that Selkirk is in a later group/ registration so this may change

Tournament Ends	400pm
Meet Bus Driver	500pm
Restaurant	600pm
Lights Out	1000pm

Monday 29th April:

Morning free to explore Dun Laoghaire – shops/ cafes etc	
Meet Coach at Marina Hostel:	1230pm
High Speed Ship Departs	130pm
Lunch on Boat	
Arrive Holyhead Port	345pm
Tea Stop	6pm
Arrive Market Place Selkirk	10pm