Recognition as priority task

Two presidents Jean-Claude Baque (FIRA / AER) and Dave McDonald (EGOR) signed the Agreement by which FIRA / AER recognizes EGOR as being key partner representing the Veterans Rugby in Europe – the players aged 35 plus who are not longer involved in competitive Rugby, but who would still like to continue with the sport in the spirit of creating and maintaining sporting camaraderie. This was the first ever successful approach between two organisations and the first ever recognition of Rugby Veterans as such. This Agreement opens and shows the way to be followed by National Rugby Unions / Federations and Oldies in each of European Rugby playing countries. EGOR has 30 member countries at the moment, almost as much as FIRA / AER, but Veteran Rugby is recognized by the National RUs only in France and Germany. Absolutely not enough, therefore the EGOR Committee sees as one of the priority tasks for countries representatives to act now - each of country representatives should approach his National RU offering discussion about possible recognition within its own organisation.

The Programme should include:
- actual stand of GOR in Country,
- GOR National Programme for the year 2005 and near future (period of the next five years),
- The need of Union’s support when candidating for the organisation of European Festival (every second even year),
- The need of Union’s support having a National Annual Veteran Tournament, for example as the UFAR Tournament in France,
- The need of Union’s support for the activities of national EGOR Country Representative (on the budget basis).

Of course this is at the first place task for the countries with developed GOR movements like Czech Republic, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain and Sweden.

But this is even more important for other countries (with smaller number of GOR clubs / teams) to seek and find the way for the recognition that should enable their further development.

It would be of enormous help for Rugby as the sport „to attract and bring back“ former players. They can be engaged from Club to the National level – as trainers, officials, administrators etc. Namely, there is no money that can pay voluntiers, and there is not enough money for all in Rugby to be paid....

Marko Protega
GOLDEN OLDIES RUGBY IN EUROPE

THE NETHERLANDS

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ORGANISATION AS PRIORITY

From about 85 clubs in the Netherlands over half of them are able to field an „old boys team“. Some of the players are still members of the club 2nd and 3rd teams, as for example RC Hilversum, Amsterdam AC, Haarlem, Alkmaar, Eemland and Amersfort, Castricum Kanibals, The Hague Masters, Purmerend Mermaids and Oisterwijk Boots are having GOR teams occasionally for special rugby and club events. Two most interesting „oldies games“ take place always on the first Sunday in January – National Team Over 35 is playing v. National Team U23 („Upcoming Stars“) and Die Bosbokken v. Amsterdam AC. The Country Representative, Piet van den Deijssel, Competition Manager of Dutch Rugby Union, has put as one the priority aims to organize some more GOR clubs/teams and to widen the calender of national events. His attempt will be also to attract Dutch Oldies to participate European Festival again, as it was already twelve years ago in 1992 when they organised first ever European Rugby Veterans Meeting and than participated the second one in 1994 in Heidelberg.

ESTONIA

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ESTONIAN GOR SEARCHING THE CONTACTS

Since we started formally to encourage vets rugby in Estonia we have been surprised to find that we have attracted players who never even played until now. Estonia during past years never took up the sport unlike Latvia, or Lithuania our nearest teams, so the culture of Rugby is new, but is getting there. 2004 has been good to us with the French now able to fly direct into Tallin, and what a difference they have made in regards to style. Playing against them is ceratinly a battle of wits. England has also sent over large numbers of truly social teams who all sneak back several weeks later with their wives to show the medeval old town off. With Easy-Jet now flying direct to Tallin many old friends have signed up to play when required, and are asking that more vets tournaments be included in 2005.

We try to explain that Tallin is small and its infrastructure needs more work, and sadly the stag party jobs are making it tough to sell to the City Goverment. The first team from Hong Kong will come next year, as will teams from Portugal, Netherlands and Sweden. It seems that Estonia rugby, or what Estonia has to offer its guests has the correct marketing mix. It has been said that when you’re tired of Tallin, you’re tired of life...... We hope to develop the ethos of senior rugby over next decade, and for those who make pilgrimage – a warm Estonian welcome awaits you.

Visit us on: www.rugby.ee
John Slade President Estonian Rugby

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FOR EVER TOGETHER

Rugby is a very hard game. Once you start to play it, either you quit after a couple of months, or you stay for the lifetime...... No better example can be found as by the foundation of Rugby Old Boys Grivita. Club was created by former international players from Grivita and other clubs in Bucuresti. The purpose of the foundation was to support and promote Rugby, not only among veteran players, but also to help former players with health and social problems. As the only well organised veteran club in Romania ROB Grivita has its own funding sources and carries out training sessions on the „Parcul Copilului“ rugby field, one of the oldest places in the country, exclusively destinatied to this game. Since its foundation in 2000 Rugby Old Boys Grivita took part at two well known international tournaments – Aalborg Rugby Sevens in Denmark (in 2001) and Chares Tournament in France (in 2002).

Romanian GOR players had not participated European Golden Oldies Rugby Festival yet, and Ioan Gheorghiescu set the aim to change this.

28th UFAR Tournament in Villeneuve d’Ascq

French Rugby Veterans are meeting once a year to play UFAR Tournament. 28th edition gathered this year 20 French teams and one team each from England and Belgium. 600 participants were satisfied with the Arlequins organisation. A real oldie spirit on the pitches and a lot of amusement and beer (Belgium) at the Farewell dinner made a great atmosphere. 29th UFAR Tournament will be held in Pierrelate, south of France on May 14th – 15th 2005.

Information at e-mail adresse andre.plante@wanadoo.fr

The UFAR President.

Bern hosted „Georg Holek Cup 2004“

2nd Central European Golden Oldies Rugby Tournament was held in Bern with participation of three countries: Germany (RBW Oldies), Czech Republic (Old Boys Praha), Switzerland (Nord Suisse Team). Memorial Cup „Georg Holek“ was awarded to the German veterans who are organising the third edition of this event in Rottweil on September 17th – 18th 2005. Information available at e-mail: kartheinz-Eigenmann@arbeitsagentur.de;

Lars Ott, Tournament Organiser

Thank you for helping us to issue this Number
Rudolf Eberle, Heidelberg
COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES OF E.G.O.R. COMMITTEE

As the link to the GOR clubs/teams the Committee has, up to now, representatives in 29 countries. Those interested in addresses and contact persons of each of the clubs (348 at the moment) from the countries listed below should contact EGOR Secretariat at E-mail marko.protega@arcor.de

The actual list of EGOR Country Representatives is the following: (*new countries entered)

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**In Memoriam**

Jeffrey Butterfield

England International who in the 1950s helped to set the template for midfield play

Jeffrey – Jeff Butterfield was born in Heckmondwike, Yorkshire, in August 9th 1929 and educated at Cleckheaton Grammar School and Loughborough College, where he trained as PE teacher. His national service with Duke of Wellington’s Regiment interrupted his years as a student but his native county Yorkshire, recognized his ability and when left college to work at Loughborough Grammar School, he joined Northampton RFC which was then the leading club in England. Jeff’s début (photo) for England was on February 28th 1953 at Twickenham v. France when he played alongside with established internationals Lew Cannell, and scored first of his five tries for English national side. His last game for England was on March 21st 1958 v. Scotland. He played 28 consecutive games for his country, 16 were England victories and only 7 were defeats.

Jeff was an integral member of the team that won the Five Nations Championships four times, two Triple Crowns and one Grand Slam, not to mention 5 Calcutta Cups. For British Lions Jeff played in 1955, on South Africa Tour, four internationals, scoring tries in three of them and also dropping a vital goal in the third International in Pretoria which the Lions won 9:6. It was the only such a goal he ever scored. In 1957 and 1958 England played nine internationals and were unbeaten in all of them, including the victory over Australia much of which was played only 14 men after an injury to Phil Horrocks-Taylor. Jeff had the mental strength and physical qualities to hold the back line together and proved a tower of strength throughout the two years. In 1959 he was rewarded with the captaincy in all four matches and was picked for the Lions tour to Australia, but recurring thigh injury kept him out of the international series. 

Early 1960s Jeff and several colleagues came up with the notion for a Rugby Club in the English capital – London – as a watering hole for the like-minded individuals. It came to fruition in Hallam Street and after only a year, Jeff took over the management of the Rugby Club of London and stayed for 25 years, assisted greatly by his wife Barbara.

1982 Jeff met with Paul Gleeson from New Zealand to discuss the possibility of organizing World Golden Oldies Rugby Festival for the first time in Europe (London 1985). Jeff was very supportive but did not point out in his quite, but firm way, that local „competitions“ called Golden Oldies already existed in Europe and in England.

Jeff saw the wisdom of taking the concept worldwide and the rest, is history. Over the next 20 years Jeff Butterfield continued to lead the growth of veteran rugby in Europe right up to his “retirement” in 2002 when he was honoured with Honorary Life President of European Golden Oldies Rugby. Only two years later, a couple a days before the start of 7th European Golden Oldies Rugby Festival, Jeff died from a heart attack on April 30th 2004, aged 74.

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**CROATIA**

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**Restart and Consolidation**

Rugby has been played in this country since 1954, when the students from Zagreb University started Rugby League Game. In 1964 Croatia changed to XV a Side game and only ten years later the first GOR club was founded in town of Split – Ragbi Klub „Ragbi ’59“. This club (1959 is the year when Rugby started to be played in Split) is very well organised and its motto „The time is on our side“ has been proved in last thirty years – at the very beginning with only 48 members, now a days with 118 active players, this Club can form a team of any veteran age. The Club has played 151 games of which 62 were internationals. Ragbi’59 participated at European Golden Oldies Rugby events in Heidelberg (1994), Verona (1996) and in 2002 Town of Split and this Club have hosted 6th EGOR Festival. On that occasion they put two teams on the field.

In 1980 another veteran club was founded, this time in Zagreb under the name „Veteran’54“, to remember the year when Rugby in Croatia started. Three years later Club changed the name to „Zagrebacki Veteranski Ragbi Klub“ – ZVRK. Both clubs are members of Croatian Rugby Union and are occasionally participating in the National Cup Competition. There are some initiatives to form the veteran clubs in towns of Makarska, Sinj and Sisak where rugby is played average more than 30 years, but due to „unsufficient“ number of GOR players ready „to return“ to their favourite sport, this process is moving slowly on. Oldies from these towns are mostly playing either for „Ragbi’59“, or ZVRK, but on special occasions they organize themselves as teams too.

It is to hope to see at least one of these teams in Zurich in 2006 at 8th EGOR Festival.

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