



**PHILIPPINE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Successful Inaugural National Trials in Australia**

*The Sons of Lapu Lapu take on OZ Club Team*

Australia, Sydney, NSW – 1st October 2007 – The team call of “*Sons of Lapu Lapu*” kick-started the Inaugural Philippine Rugby Football Union (PRFU) National Trials in Australia on Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup> of September. Filipino-Heritage Rugby Union and Rugby League players coming from as far away as Bataan and Cebu City in the Philippines, Bundaberg and Brisbane in Queensland Australia, joined a host of players from Sydney Australia, to showcase their rugby talent. This was the first step for some to being part of the Philippine National Team, for the South East Asian Games (SEAG) Rugby 7s in Thailand; Asian Rugby Football Union (ARFU) U20 World Cup qualifying tournament in Brunei; and 2008’s International Test matches.

With the inspiration of a Manny Pacquiao presentation from SEAG Head Coach **Rick Hartley** and to the music of ‘*Pinoy Ako*’ ringing in their ears, the Inaugural PRFU Filipino-Australian Trial team stepped out from the Parramatta Two Blues Rugby Union Club dressing room, for Rugby 7s trial matches against the **Parramatta Two Blues 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Professional Rugby 7s team**. The young squad of Filipino-heritage players were going out to do battle against a *Parramatta Two Blues* team fielding two Fijian National 7s players and an Australian School Boy Representative - a team that made the Finals of the prestigious Kiama Rugby 7s tournament from 2004 to 2006.

With some of the Filipino-heritage players only arriving in Sydney from the Philippines and Queensland the day before the Saturday trials, it took them a while to work as a team, but by the end of the mornings play they were able to give as good as they got from the *Parramatta Two Blues* side.

All in the team performed admirably, from the barn storming hit ups of **Mike Duhig** and **John Gardner**, to the organizational skills of **Jake Letts** and **Matt Saunders** who led a team that took the hits and made the runs against a bigger and more experienced Parramatta side. **Noel Flowers & Jasper Ching** coming all the way from the Philippines, **Francis Duhig, Charles Vicente, Andrew Barbacetto, Rupert Zappia, Mike Letts** and **Oliver Saunders** played with a skill and determination which gained them the respect of their *Parramatta Two Blues* opponents.

Surprise packets in the Filipino side were the 1<sup>st</sup> time Rugby Union players, **Peter Decarvalho** and 15 year old **Ben Saunders** (*a State level Touch Football player and member of the Parramatta Eels elite junior Rugby League Harold Mathews squad*), both having only ever played Rugby League. While **Gabe Castro** played in the trials after just coming off a two month Grade 3 Crucial Ligament injury. All three showed great courage and skill during the trials.

This NSW Rugby Union sanctioned event would not have been made possible without the support of former Australian Wallaby and Parramatta Two Blues **Coach Gary Ella** and the Parramatta Two Blues Rugby Club. They have further extended their support for the growth and development of Philippine Rugby through their offer to provide further training and support for the Filipino-heritage rugby players, as they approach the end of year SEAG and ARFU U20 tournaments and 2008’s test matches.

Thank you to all the Parents and local Filipino residents that turned up on the day to support the players, especially current PRFU International **Ron Pena** (*who had a knee operation the previous day so could not trial*); the PRFU Development Officer **Murray Domb** (*who came all the way from the Philippines*); the two event sponsors, local Parramatta business **Focused Business Solutions** who funded the event and **RJH Consultancy Inc** in the Philippines; the Australian based volunteer group of tournament organizers **Nigel Saunders**, and PRFU Regional Representatives **Brett Hartley** and **Erick Elefante**.

MORE



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Special thanks must also go to the following people without whom the day would not have run smoothly. Linesman **Raf Zappia** (*who was suppose to trial with the team but has been out injured all season*); the Ball Boys **Aidan Hartley** and **Bryce Bondfield**; **Rozanne Hartley** who collated all the Filipino-heritage rugby players profile; and **Robert Tolson** and **Grant Osfield** (*both of Focused Business Solution*) for taking care of all the odd jobs that needed to be done on the day. As well as to Gary Ella and his officials and players from the Parramatta Two Blues Club who helped put on the day.

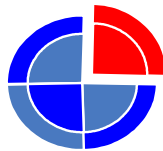
The rugby talent on show from the sons of Lapu Lapu augurs well for the future development of rugby as a sport in the Philippines and its competitiveness at International tournaments and events.

### About PRFU

The Philippine Rugby Football Union (PRFU) is the governing body of Rugby Football in the Philippines. Its mission is to encourage rugby development among Filipinos and for Philippine Rugby Football Union clubs to be competitive players in the Asian Rugby environment. It is tasked to support the promotion, development and efficient administration of the sport of rugby union in the Philippines. They are a non-stock, Non-profit Volunteer organization. The Philippines is a member of the Asian Rugby Football Union (ARFU) and an associate member of the International Rugby Board (IRB) based in Dublin.

### For Additional Information

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