



# TOKYO CRUSADERS

RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB SINCE 1990

*Yearbook 2013-14*

## Chairman's Report

Gentlemen, take a bow and pat yourselves on the back, it has been one emotional year and one fantastic season.

As a club, we have gone from strength to strength in every area. We have transformed ourselves into a championship winning squad and have earned respect from many local teams. Looking back on the previous season's success, with recent promotion in the Shuto League, few would have predicted the continued rise of the Crusaders. Winning the Shuto League on our first attempt is undoubtedly one highlight for me, but let's not forget some of the others. First and foremost, Crusaders participation and emphatic wins in the Tokyo Cup with a real shot of promotion, the final game set for June 22nd. Secondly, the recruitment and the influx of new players into the club has clearly benefitted our cause and strengthened our squad. We now have a very healthy looking team come any game day. Off the pitch, we have grown and are getting the Cru message out there. Thanks to our media team; on Facebook, our website and even Twitter, we are reaching new audiences in Japan and overseas. Finally, we continue to expand as a social club, providing a network of support for new players and their families in Tokyo.

A quick word of thanks to our main sponsors. At Synergy Travis and Kaori have done great work in keeping some of us in shape. Thanks to Jason and his team at the Meat Guy for his continued support and thanks to the Hang-over Bar and their staff for supplying "Man of

the Match" Tee shirts for an entire season.

Behind the scenes, the committee and a number of dedicated individuals have again worked tirelessly for you and the club. At the core a big thank you to Tooley, Jonas, Yorkie and Evan, (and their better halves, who have been very understanding.) Again this year the Cru committee/extended committee have done us proud. Club finances, recruitment, socials, Shuto League and Tokyo Cup paperwork, (thank you Aiko and Yutaka) all sponsorship deals, player registration, kit management, (yes new playing shirts are in the pipeline) opposition/game scheduling, (filling up the season with teams to play us and finding grounds to play on)...all has gone smoothly because everyone has done their job well. Indeed, a word of thanks is to all our supporters and volunteers who have played an important and essential part for the club. Without you we would not be where we are today.

The Cru has always enjoyed strong ties with the military especially those from Yokosuka and Yotaka. Thanks for your dedication and support. Special mention to Kyle Cotton and Chris Exstrom who were stand out players all season. Given that both are relatively new to the game, their performances have been even more outstanding. To Kyle, Chris... and in fact all the players that have been with us for the last year and are now moving on, we salute your effort and hope you will carry on playing. Don't hang up your boots. You are

now part of a global rugby community that is unique in its values of brotherhood and unity. Keep in contact and send us your stories.

Looking forward to the next twelve months, we have some great new changes in the pipeline. I am really pleased to announce we are setting up an online merchandise store for original goods. Partnering with sports and rugby maker 3V, this is coming soon. At the speed of the internet, you will be able to purchase from a range of Cru original goods. Club ties, team polos, playing shorts, kit bags, training wear as well as some supporters goods will soon be available, (anywhere on the world, handy for CRU old boys) and hopefully in time for the new season. Big thanks to Yorkie for managing that and having the vision to set it up. More details shortly. More socials, bashes, tours and "family events," are also being planned. Stay tuned! Bring your kids, wives, girlfriends or mates along, join in and get involved!

Looking forward to new challenges and more success next year and celebrating 25th years of Tokyo Crusaders rugby.



## Team Manager's Address

>> I have spent the year trying to build on our relationships with teams from last season, and form some new ones. Once again, we have met some great teams who are keen to play us again next year. As I said last year, we play two types of games: a tournament game, and a friendly game. A tournament game is where we need to win; we play hard and physical rugby. A friendly game is where we want to win, but we train up new players, we try new things, and we build a relationship with the opposition. Sportsmanship and treating the opposition with respect, even after massacring them on the scoreboard, is paramount to keeping these good relations. This year, I feel we have succeeded in doing this. We have become well-known for little things like tunneling up for the opposition after the game, and giving out t-shirts to our choice of their MVP. These little things that we do have been well-received, testament to which is my most satisfying moment of the season : being voted **Best Team** by the other managers of the Shuto League.

Another thing we seem to have done well this year is maintain our excellent team spirit. On the field, that is done by encouraging each other, and giving a pat on the back when it is deserved. Teaching when necessary, coaxing and cajoling but never abusing. We cannot all be good at everything. Each player has his faults. But

we all come together, we work together, we form a team, we form a club. Where possible, the after-match Izakaya at the nearest station has been continued and I feel that this is one of the major factors in keeping our team spirit so good.

Gamewise, we have done so much more than we had expected. We have a record of 21 games; 5 losses, and 16 wins, with one more 'win' to go. According to our website we have scored **909 points for**, and conceded only 393. We have become a team that knows how to win. Satisfyingly, in 2 of those wins, we held the opposition to 0. One of those games gave us the Shuto Trophy. We also had our first 'double header'; a game on Saturday night and one to follow on Sunday morning, both of which we won.

Achievement-wise, when we look back at the year, we were crowned **Shuto League 1st Division Champions**, Travis was awarded player of the year for the League, the Club was awarded Best Team of the League by the other team managers, and I was awarded for my work on the Shuto committee. We were 5th in the Champions' Cup. And last but perhaps more importantly, we have finished equal 1st in the 2nd Division of the Tokyo Cup, and we have put ourselves in the position to win our promotion/relegation game in 2 weeks to get us into

the 1st Division for next year. I say "perhaps more importantly" because this signifies that we are once again an 'official' team in the Tokyo rugby community and well on our way to being respected as a force to be reckoned with.

We will start next season as Shuto League 1st Division Champions and as a 1st Division Tokyo Cup team. Gentlemen, stand up and take a bow.

My goals for next season are to once again win the Shuto League, and put on a good show in the Tokyo Cup. We have won most of our games this season, but next season we will be taking an even bigger step up. This means stronger opposition, as stronger teams are now contacting us for games next year.

Speaking of which, it looks like I have once again been 'railroaded' into dragging you guys through another season. God help you.

**Stewart 'Tooley' Henwood**



## THE SEASON IN NUMBERS

# 22 GAMES

## 5 SOCIALS

## 0 DRAWS

## 17 WINS

## 983 POINTS FOR

## 414 POINTS AGAINST

## 153 TRIES

## 81 PLAYERS

## 5 LOSSES + 569 POINTS

## 2 PENALTIES

## 6 PRACTICES

## 9 NATIONALITIES

## 106 CONVERSIONS

Name	Evan Hitchman	Travis Dixon	Chris Ekstrom	Roy Yorke	Brandon Rogers	Kyle Cotton	Rob Galbraith	Steve Howden	Galdric Porta	Luis Hernandez	Paul Skurr	Sean Gibson	Brett Wallbutton	Luke Bradley	Seth Robson	Takushu Hayashi	Tom Ball	Connelius Smith	Frank Saffery	Gavin Smith	Jackie Wilson	Wyn Hughes	Yuuki Adachi	Tom Cocks	Alex Diaz	Andrew Doyle	Brandon Fought	Dylan Lee	Eric Wilkinson	Evan Kerr	Hiro Soga	Macer Van Allen	Masaoki Akimoto	Nathan McCutcheon	Neil Maclean	Jason Gall	Gareth Lim
Try	1	15	23	17	9	7	7	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Conversion	65	23	1	2	9	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Penalty	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	141	121	117	89	63	35	35	27	25	24	22	22	20	20	20	20	20	15	15	15	15	15	15	10	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	2



## Captain's Report

>> Well, what a year lads. We came into the season with one aim, which was to stay in the First Division and not get relegated. We only went on to win the championship! It has been another phenomenal year, with so much success on and off the field. There are so many people to thank for the success that we have seen. Firstly, thank you to my Vice Captain - **Travis Dixon**. He accepts my hospital passes with grace, and the medical bill for the broken ribs will be in the mail!

A massive thanks to **Jonas and Marc** for helping to increase the number of new recruits joining the team which is due to their hard work developing Japan's best rugby website. **Alex and Yorkie** have also done a sterling job keeping up the links with Temple University. A big thanks must also go to **Brandon Fought** for keeping the steady stream of players from the George Washington Navy side turning out for the Cru during a difficult year of leadership transition for them, and also to **Seth** for his work on strengthening connections with Yokota and Atsugi bases.

A huge thanks of course must go to **Tooley** for his work behind the scenes and on game day for booking all our games, grounds and referees. He works tirelessly and the fruits of his labour have shown this year. We now have teams calling us out to book fixtures which is a big turnaround from a few years ago.

One thing I have been extremely proud to see this year is the development of our depth and improving the standard of our fringe players, who may not have had so much rugby experience. We can show that the Crusaders can put out a different side in each half and still be competitive. Our team spirit has gone from strength to strength this season I believe, with the after match functions led again by Tooley being a great success. Both on and off the field I feel a strong sense of camaraderie and although we have strong characters and opinions, we have been able to put them to one side and do what is best for the club to achieve the great success that we have throughout the 2013-14 season.

To take the next step and be even more competitive next season I believe we need to work on our personal fitness and technique, especially at the breakdown as we cannot rely purely on athleticism and size against those stronger teams. If we can each make an effort to get that little bit fitter over the summer and improve our body height and ruck work we will be almost unstoppable! If we can do that, the return of the Macfayden Cup against YCAC and a big win against our local rivals Tokyo Gaijin next season will surely be on the cards. It has been an absolute pleasure to have been your captain over the past two seasons and I wish Travis and Tom all the best for the new year and what will hopefully be even more successful. **"1-2-3 Cru"**!

Yours in rugby,

Evan Hitchman

Event	Date	Score	Adam Birss	Adrian	Aiko Watanabe	Alex Diaz	Andrea Dovanzo	Andrew Doyle	Andrew Gracheck	Andy Howard	Anthony Quiggle	Benjamin Kunde	Brandon Fought	Brandon Rogers	Brendan Bolton	Brendan Gallagher	Brett Wallbutton	Chris Ekstrom	Cornelius Smith	Craig Gillett	Cristina Barrao	David Meisenzahl	Derek Simmons	Deven Lewis	Dylan Lee	Eric Wilkinson	Evan Hitchman	Evan Kerr	Frank Saffery	Galdric Porta	Gareth Lim	Gavin Smith	Gen Hirano	Graham McAuley	Hamza Ishikawa	Haruka Gunji	Hiro Soga
Practice	8/25				●					●											●							●		●							
Practice	9/1							●		●					●						●					●	●							●		●	●
Practice	9/8				●	●		●		●		●	●												●		●	●	●				●	●			●
vs. Tokyo Gaijin RFC	9/22	7-22 (L)			●	●		●						●							●		●		●		●		●								●
vs. Dasewa RFC	9/29	5-22 (L)				●																															
vs. Shinjuku Jack RFC	10/6	16-5 (W)			●	●		●		●												●					●	●	●		●						●
vs. Kurumi RFC	10/13	46-20 (W)			●					●								●			●	●				●	●	●	●				●				●
Zombie Bash	10/26				●	●		●		●	●												●						●		●		●				
Practice	10/27				●	●																				●	●										
vs. Olivers RFC	11/3	24-6 (W)			●	●		●		●							●	●			●	●				●	●	●	●		●		●				●
vs. Goddamns RFC	11/10	77-26 (W)			●	●				●					●		●	●							●	●	●	●	●		●						●
vs. Setagaya RFC	11/17	63-36 (W)	●	●	●	●										●									●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●				
vs. YCAC	11/23	7-52 (L)			●	●		●				●			●		●	●	●	●						●	●	●	●		●				●		●
vs. Dandelions RFC	12/8	61-0 (W)			●	●		●	●				●				●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●		
vs. Fevers RFC	1/18	40-25 (W)			●	●					●				●				●		●				●	●	●	●			●	●	●				
Practice	1/26												●											●		●	●					●	●				
vs. Swift RFC	2/2	19-47 (L)			●	●			●				●						●						●	●				●			●				
vs. Superman RFC	2/23	5-48 (L)	●		●	●											●	●	●					●			●		●				●	●			
vs. Setagaya RFC	3/2	55-5 (W)			●	●							●														●	●	●								
Practice	3/9					●	●						●													●	●							●			
vs. All France RC	3/15	41-5 (W)				●							●	●			●									●		●		●		●			●		
vs. Joto Donkeys RFC	3/16	47-0 (W)			●	●							●	●													●			●		●					
vs. Matsudo Club RFC	3/30	47-14 (W)				●							●	●				●								●					●			●			
Tokyo Cup Collaboration Day	4/6												●										●				●	●					●				
vs. George Washington RFC	4/20	42-12 (W)			●								●	●		●		●								●	●		●	●	●	●					
vs. Fuji Club RFC	4/27	66-17 (W)			●								●			●		●								●	●		●	●		●					
vs. Mitaka JPL	5/11	93-15 (W)			●					●			●				●	●								●	●		●	●		●		●			
vs. NTT Hibiya	5/18	49-19 (W)			●							●	●					●												●	●				●		●
vs. Doronko	5/25	99-7 (W)			●													●								●	●		●	●				●			
Annual General Meeting	5/31				●	●												●									●		●			●					
Formal Awards Dinner	6/7				●	●				●								●			●		●			●	●	●	●		●	●	●				
vs. NS Ruggers RFC	6/22	74-21 (W)			●	●						●						●					●			●	●		●	●	●		●				



## Cru vs. Quill RFC and George Washington by Benji Kunde

A slippery situation ensued. Not the first, after having just come off a long pre-season full of scallywagging. On this occasion the Cru faced their innermost fears...themselves! Well, at least for the first of...3 thirds?

>> It was all a little confusing. For crying out loud, we had our own **Evan “hitch those pants up nice and high” Hitchman** refereeing! There were Quills and George Washington RFC players thrown into the mix also. Speaking of which, a quick thank you to all those fellas for coming down to involve themselves in the madness of it all.

Let's see, we warmed up in lovely cool weather, to take the field just as the sky opened up and chundered all it had been saving up upon us. Not an eye was bat (can't say the same for other body parts) as we embraced our war with the weather, and each other.

We broke up into two crews of Cru plus some Quills too (try saying that 10 times over.) **Paul “put in too early” Ralph**, was the first casualty of these circumstances pulling his thigh before

even getting on the pitch. Next, **Benji “snap-crackle and pop” Kunde** was the second to go, as he succumbed to the ferocity of the inferiority complex driven 'B' team defence.

The first points came about from what looked to be a perfectly rehearsed line-out move executed by the Cru 'A' team forwards. **Andy “happy as a pig-in-mud” Howard** received the battered-down ball and scampered down the touch line to barrel over for the try taking a couple of the 'B' team players with him.

Eventually, the George “Where the hell are ya” Washington players rocked up. It seemed the Americans had lost their way somewhat and found themselves wandering around in foreign territory. Anywho, with their arrival, the second of the three thirds began. More bone crunching

defence and rampant runs were seen. One of the more memorable runs saw **Roy “boys quit your jibba-jabba and play rugby” Yorke**, wind his way through the defence and go in for a try.

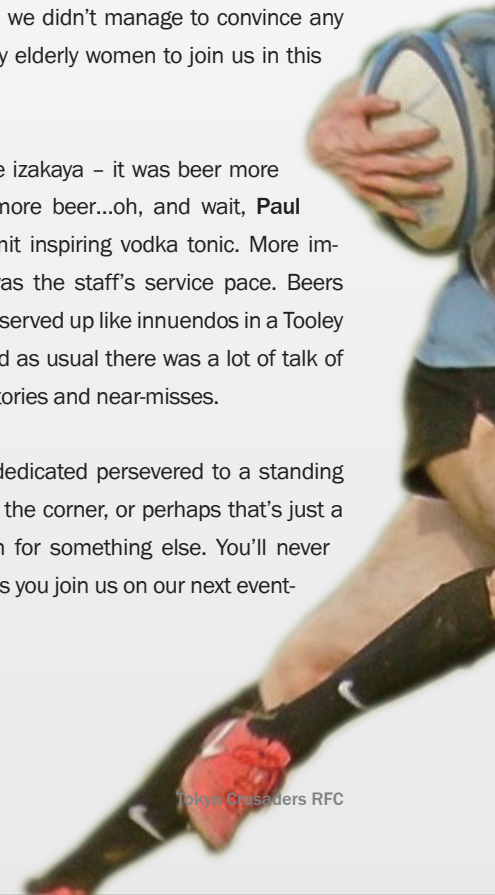
The final third was more like a mud-wrestling free for all, which the George Washington players had obviously seen their fair share of, as they came back at the Cru with new-found gusto. Their persistence paid off with a well worked team try on the back of a flurry of nicely-timed passes. At the final whistle it looked as though no one had anything left in the tank, and the weather the winner.

With the closing of the match we made our way to the nearest bus stop to head to the night's watering hole. We surprised the bus-riding public with our shirtless public transport policy. Try

as we may, we didn't manage to convince any of the lovely elderly women to join us in this pursuit.

Once at the izakaya – it was beer more beer and more beer...oh, and wait, **Paul Skurr's** vomit inspiring vodka tonic. More impressive, was the staff's service pace. Beers were being served up like innuendos in a Tooley speech. And as usual there was a lot of talk of off-field victories and near-misses.

The more dedicated persevered to a standing bar around the corner, or perhaps that's just a euphemism for something else. You'll never know unless you join us on our next eventful outing.



**Our first Shuto League match of the season against the Tokyo Gaijin RFC was always going to be a doozy. Unfortunately our preparations were a little disrupted with an important practice game the week before being called off due to a typhoon. Nevertheless, the Crusaders fielded a very strong side for their first challenge in Division One.**



>> Despite the small field, the tempo was rapid from the get go and it was evident that yet again fitness may prove to be an Achilles heel of the Cru. True to last season's form as well, our poor work and technique at the break-down was exposed throughout the game. We conceded numerous turnovers and had the ball stripped from us at vital times. The Gaijin utilized the wind they had at their backs and scored three unanswered tries in the first 30 minutes of the match.

Without much possession, the Cru were forced to make tackle after tackle and luckily we were up to the task. Our tackling has always been a strength, especially when we have guys run straight at us! The frustration the team was feeling in the first half was probably best personified by **Evan 'Anger Management' Hitchman's** spat with the opposing centre. While some may remonstrate against his gratuitous use of foul language and loud cries of "smash that c#\*t...." You have got to admire the bravery of a man reverse-bicycle kicking at four opposition members while lying on his back. Luckily **Sean Gibson** was there by his side quicker than if Evan's aggressors were pretty, 21 year old bar-broads.

The backs looked impressive when we were able to spin the ball wide and get on the outside of our opponents. This was highlighted by an impressive try from a mid-field move between

**Taku and Andy.** It was Andy's first game for the Cru and he made the adjustment from his more familiar rugby league with apparent ease.

With the wind at our backs in the second half, the Cru were more competitive and managed to control the tempo of the game. We kept the Gaijin scoreless and forced them to resort to taking 3 points when they were on offer. Unfortunately we were also unable to string enough phases together to mount any sort of attack on the opposition's try line.

Crusaders debutants for the match were **Masa-ya, Paul R, Andy D, and Hiro.** These guys played vital roles and we hope they're be a part of the Crusader's regular squad. It was good to see the likes of **Louis, Brendan B and Ryuji,** who we hope will be able to make it to more games, especially our highly competitive Shuto League matches.

Despite the on-field disappointment, we once again had a blast at the Bel Ami Izakaya after the match and drank a team record setting (on last year's effort) 98 beers drunk and some horrendous karaoke being sung. It was good to see

a few supporters also make it out to the izakaya afterwards.

Games between Cru and the Gaijin are few and far between, but it's apparent that this is well-spirited rivalry will continue on in future seasons. Let's hope we can get some more practice matches against them as well, as we now have a target for the level at which we need to be competitive. With some improved work at the breakdowns and better fitness, we will be able to beat teams like the Gaijin.



#### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Travis  
2 p. - Taku  
1 p. - Yorkie



## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Dasewa RFC 5-22 (L), by Neil Maclean

**Dasewa RFC frustrated the Crusaders for yet another year with a 22-5 win over us in hot and humid conditions at their Saitama ground.**

>> Dasewa got the game underway, and were 5-0 up after only a few phases being played. The ball came loose from a ruck and fortuitously bounced into the hands of an opposition player and spread wide quickly for the opening try. This unfortunately became a habit for us; poor ball retention leading to the Dasewa backs picking up our loose ball with loads of space in front of them to run in some soft tries.

However, the Crusaders easily dominated possession and territory, and we had some fantastic goal line defence that repelled the Dasewa forwards for phase after phase. Our game plan was to control play up front and set the pace through our much bigger forward pack, which worked well for long periods of time. Our undoing was in our open play where too often we tried to throw an unnecessary final pass or we took a wrong option.

Although when our passes did stick, we managed some excellent long range runs, one of which ended in a great try for fullback Yorkie. It was some sweet revenge to hear the last Dasewa defender mutter the word “hayai” as **Roy** blew past him and went in under the sticks. It was a great way to end the half and close the gap to 10-5 to Dasewa.

That was as close as we were able to get though, as the second half got away from us and we were unable to score any further points, while the opposition added two further tries and a conversion.

Despite the loss, we managed to play some decent rugby at times, particularly the forwards who protected our own ball very well at ruck time, and without doubt would have been dominant in the scrums had we not been forced to



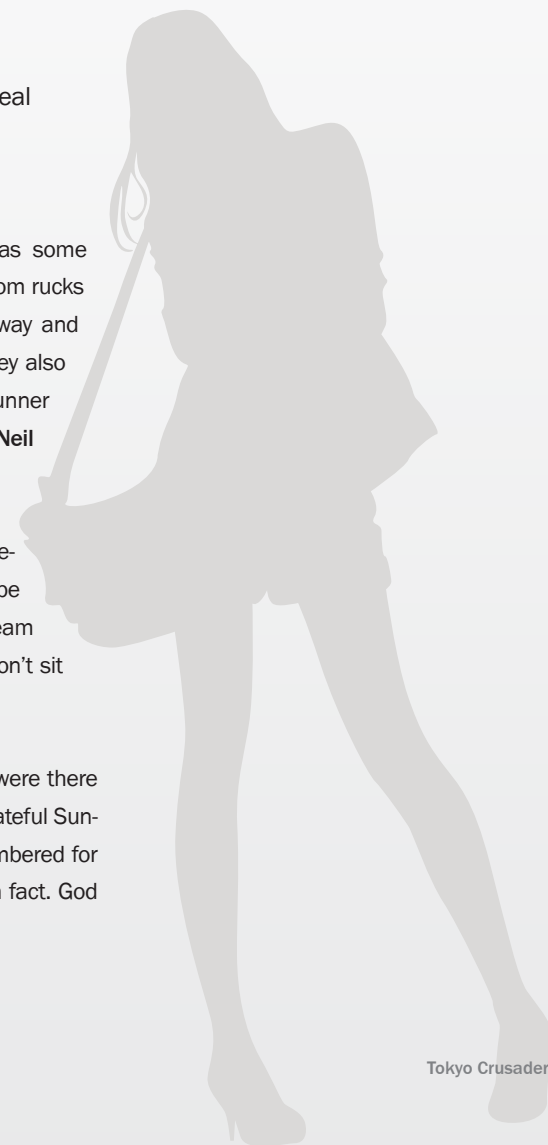
### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Louis  
2 p. - Skurry  
1 p. - Yorkie / Neal

play uncontested scrums. There was some excellent running off short passes from rucks with **Louis and Skurry** leading the way and making good meters every carry. They also took out man of the match and runner up m.o.t.m respectively. **Roy and Neil** shared the spoils for third place spot.

We'll all be looking forward to the return fixture next season where we'll be after Dasewa blood! 0-3 against a team we're certainly capable of beating won't sit well with any of us.

Now, on a final note, for those who were there that Sunday (you may even call it a fateful Sunday), this game will always be remembered for another reason...a pair of reasons in fact. God bless you, Taku!





## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Shinjuku Jack RFC 16-5 (W), by Frank Saffery

After a little problem with kick off times, meaning we all had to drag our tired carcasses out of bed much earlier than expected, the troops turned up in numbers.

>> We remembered the stadium we played at well, in fact the last time we were there we had a great win over All France RC. After a standard warm-up session run by Yorkie, we had some time to get our set pieces together and really warm up the top two inches in preparation for the game. This match we could not lose; we had no option but to win and play to the best of our abilities. We stepped up to that mark so much so that choosing 3,2,1s at the end of game was high on impossible. Every player who wore a Cru jersey left everything they had on that pitch and with such efforts comes victory and the spoils of war.

The points were led by myself and my "octopus arms" after a quick feed by Evan "the mouth" Hitchman, who after missing the conversion came back with a stunning penalty kick (some-

thing that the Cru have not utilised in several seasons). The forward pack continued on after this with smashing runs and quality clearing out allowing for smooth ball to be passed out to the backs (when I say smashing, Mr Skurr managed to run clean over at least 3 opponents before being taken to ground).

The scrums were a similar story, at one point we managed to get an opposition prop clean off the floor and at that moment we knew that even with the opposition having the feed, the outcome was ours. This brutal punishment allowed the backs to really show some flair with a tremendous weave allowing for Hiro to grab his first try for the Cru in the corner.

The backs started to really put themselves around the field with the centres cutting lines

and making yards before shipping it out wide. Nothing more could highlight the rash the backs made on the field by none other than our resident hater of antiquities Trav Dixon and his sliding-scoop mark call.

After the match there were bumps and knocks to several players, we had jolted necks, bruised ribs and mostly to note would have been Mr Manila himself Sean Gibson's flattened nose, which would nearly have let the ladies of Tokyo have some respite. Heads held high but totally knackered we proceeded to wander to the car park to have a couple of beers and review our game. This is a little unheard of for the Cru but as it was 11:30am, no Izakaya would open for our normal after match debauchery.

### Players Men of the Match:

- 3 p. - Evan Kerr
- 2 p. - Skurry
- 1 p. - Travis





DAY	MONTH	YEAR	
13	10	13	
CRUSADERS	KURUMI RFC		
46	20		
TRY	CONVERSION	TRY	CONVERSION
08	03	04	00
MAN OF THE MATCH			
CHRIS EKSTROM			

On a beautiful autumn afternoon on November 3, 2013 the Tokyo Crusaders faced top-of-the-league Olivers RFC, in a much-anticipated match. Every man knew he must give it his all to even make a good showing against such a formidable team. And every man delivered.

>> The match started out a bit rocky as some poor discipline and silly penalties inside our own 22 gave Olivers a couple of easy 3-pointers within the first fifteen minutes of the game. However, that would prove to be the extent of the Olivers' scoring as the Cru pulled themselves together and put in a more-than-solid effort, both offensively and defensively. The tables were turned less than five minutes later when **Andrew Doyle** found a hole in the oppo's backline a few meters out and went over the line, followed by **Evan Hitchman's** conversion. Ten minutes later an attempted penalty kick by Evan came oh-so-close but ricocheted off the post. Not yet done for the half, however, **Chris Ekstrom**, who put in a dazzling performance in only his second game of rugby, scoring his first try of the day, and 4th try in two games so far, sped down the wing just before halftime to

leave the score Crusaders 12, Olivers 6 at the break. A few substitutions at halftime saw the Cru prepare for the second-half, which we knew would be a struggle against a quality opponent. Indeed, it was a struggle from the whistle, as both teams hit back hard but couldn't quite find their opponent's try line or posts for the next 30 minutes. Awesome defense from the Cru seems to be a recurring and improving theme lately (touch wood) as many men stepped up and put in the hits and the chase-downs we needed to stop a feisty Olivers backline. However, with less than 10 minutes to play **Chris (X) Ekstrom**, going from strength to strength, added his second try of the day after taking a wide pass from **Travis** and powering down the left wing to touch down. 17-06 the score, Crusaders on top and in sight of victory. That might have been enough, but the Cru had a bit more

## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Olivers RFC 24-6 (W), by Sean Gibson

in store. On a tap-and-go at the opponents 22, **Frank Saffery** created what was likely everyone's highlight of the day by crashing the ball up at great cost to his body (and jaw), and leaving two Olivers bodies on the floor after the recycle. Be sure to watch the video on CRUtube – it's likely to go viral. Shortly after, with no time left on the clock, **Brett** scooped up the ball on the right wing and sped past his opponent for the fourth try of the match to give the Cru a bonus point in the league tables. The successful conversion saw the score Crusaders 24, Olivers 6, and greeted the final whistle.

It was definitely a proper day out and a proper night out as well. Special thanks to all the supporters who came, particularly **David Meisenzahl** and his bevy of supporters, and to those who helped set up the ground. Also thanks to Cru old boy **Luke Catenacci**, who was in town from Hong Kong for the long week-



### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Chris  
2 p. - Travis  
1 p. - Frank

end. Come back soon, Luke. Next match this Sunday (November 10) against Goddamns. Another solid opponent who should give us a good run for our money. Kickoff at 14:30 at Edogawa Rugby-jo, across the street from Edogawa Byoin (Edogawa Hospital). Hope to see many players and supporters there.



Feedback, 2013-14

10 November, 2013

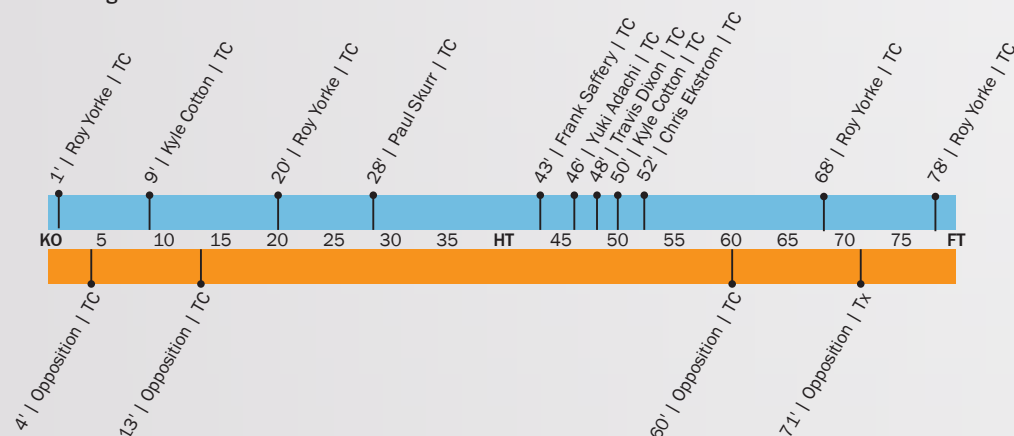
### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Yorkie  
2 p. - Travis  
1 p. - Kyle



## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Goddamns RFC 77-26 (W), by Jonas Hult

### Scoring Timeline



TC = Converted Try; Tx = Try, missed conversion

### Possession



### Penalties



Position	First Half	Second Half
Prop	Paul Ralph / Pat Wheen	Pat Wheen / Marc Sherratt
Hooker	Yuuki Adano	Yuuki Adano / Ryuji Matsuzawa
Prop	Kiyoshi Hamazumi	Kiyoshi Hamazumi / Yutaka Yazawa
Lock	Frank Saffery / Brendan Bolton	Frank Saffery / Brendan Bolton
Lock	Alex Diaz	Alex Diaz
Blindside	Sean Gibson	Sean Gibson / Eric Wilkinson
Openside	Evan Kerr	Evan Kerr
No.8	Paul Skurr	Paul Skurr
Halfback	Takashi Hayashi / Naoto Kato	Takushi Hayashi / Naoto Kato
Firstfive	Travis Dixon	Travis Dixon / Takushi Hayashi
Secondfive	Seth Robson	Seth Robson / Takushi Hayashi
Centre	Kyle Cotton	Kyle Cotton
Wing	Hiro Soga	Brett Wallbutton
Wing	Chris Ekstrom	Chris Ekstrom
Fullback	Roy Yorke	Roy Yorke



**Sideline Support:** Andy Howard, Gaz Lim, Dylan Lee, Jonas Hult, Stewart 'Tooley' Henwood and Aiko Watanabe.

## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Setagaya RFC 63-26 (W), by Alex Diaz

**Delayed trains interrupted the usual pre-game warm up, but that still couldn't stop 22 Crusaders from 'boots & shorting' up to play the Setagaya RFC.**

>> The All Blacks vs England game the night before was considerate enough to be a midnight showing in the Japan time zone to make sure more than a few of the Cru were able to enjoy the entire night in Roppongi. They even seemed to have picked up one of the X-Men, or at least a man named Adrian who could challenge Wolverine for most body hair. It was more of a still drunk than hungover feeling for them, but it was a sunny day and great weather for rugby.

The Cru scored the first after six minutes into the game when **Yorkie** returned a kick for a try. Keeping the ball inside their 22 helped the forward pack secure a try as **Skurry** chested his way through defenders and over the try line for the second score. The next two tries for the Cru came from **Travis** "The Old Travis" **Dixon** as the phases began to help get the backs the ball. After going up 4 tries to none, Setagaya scored their first try with eight minutes left to go in the half. The Cru was able to regain possession af-

ter a good scrum and Travis put in another try just before the end of the half. Halftime score: Cru 35 – Setagaya 7.

The 2nd half started with a lot of energy as both teams substituted fresh players on eager to get some. It was 17 minutes until the first try of the 2nd half, when Yorkie made a couple of defenders miss and sprinted for a try. Not long after, was **Ryuji's** yellow card. Setagaya scored the next three tries as they took advantage of some Cru defensive breakdown's. **Jackie** "His name is not Winston" **Wilson** helped the Cru regain control of the game as he returned a high kick and showed his speed off scoring his first try for the Cru in his first game of rugby. With less than eight minutes in the half, Travis found holes in the defense and generously gave **Alex Diaz** a try and scored the last try of the game himself with one minute left. Full time score: 63 -26



### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Travis  
2 p. - Skurry  
1 p. - Alex

It was truly another team effort as everyone who showed up to play did play.

**Evan Hitchman** converted all eight of his kicks and The Chairman **Gaz Lim** converted the last kick of the last try of the game. Opposition team's man of the match was Travis Dixon.

Cheers to **Gavin Smith**, **Brendan Gallagher**, and **Jackie Wilson** for playing their first games for the Cru. They played great, especially for coming out in mid-season. Looking forward to more games!

**Taku**, **Frank**, and **Aiko** represented the Cru at the Shuto Rep Team Trials.

The aftermatch was held in the Shoryu Chinese restaurant near Edogawa Station for a couple hours where we shared gyoza, fried rice, and a lot of beer. A couple of the Setagaya boys joined in as well. After that, we all moved to the standing bar near Koiwa Station to meet Frank and Aiko who turned up after the Shuto Rep Trials.





On a perfectly still and sunny day in November and with not a gust in the air both teams took to the field for the 2013 Gareth MacFadyen Cup.



>> YCAC, plying their trade in Division East Three, were to take on the CRU who with some new found form were off back-to-back wins in the Shuto League Division one. For this year's encounter both teams were missing some key personnel, so how would they fare on the day? This year there was a decent number of supporters from both team watching on the sidelines and after a respectful minutes silence for Gareth, this much anticipated game began.

From the opening whistle it was the visitors who were giving a more solid performance in defense. The score remained at stalemate in the opening 15 minutes and the CRU defend-

ed magnificently, not missing a tackle as YCAC opted to kick for territory through their fly half, **Jamie Henry** (a Japan 7s national star player who would have a huge impact on the game.) It proved to be some darting runs by their centers that saw the deadlock broken on the 16th follow by tries in the 25th and 33rd minute.

The first half saw some untimely injuries with **Yorkie** dislocating his finger and **Alex** tearing a shoulder muscle. Despite this the Crusaders fought back strongly, winning some key lineouts and moving forward in attack. It was on the 38th minute when, with the CRU camped at the YCAC 22, a forward move led by a determined and rejuvenated **Paul Skurr**, saw CRU power over the line to put points on the board. **Evan** duly converted and the teams went into half time at 19-7. Now all to play for in the 2nd half YCAC opted to bring in their big guns and first team players. The opening 10 saw an increasingly physical battle ensued in the middle of park. Those on the sidelines could feel each crunching tackle being put in on both sides. It was YCAC to strike again and enjoy their most dominant period of the match. Scoring 3 quick

tries in 14 minutes with fluid rugby and their star player Henry in top form. The CRU were against a confident YCAC. To CRU credit we did not give up the chase. **Brett** and also new boy **Cornelius Smith** making some timely tackles to bring Henry down to earth and show he is after all, "only human." In the 2nd half Brett, Cornelius and Travis were involved in carrying the ball over the chalk. Without the benefit of TV replay. Brett's try decision was given against us (Good on the ref. for later admitting he had made a mistake tho..). Not long after this...Cornelius found some space on the right side and blazed down the line, only to be held up by Henry over the try line. Travis too was held up and unlucky to have not scored his try.

Despite some valiant play and surging runs – often led by **Luke**, YCAC again penetrated our line – final score: 7 – 52.

CRU boys can take heart from this game. Had some decisions gone our way the score would surely have been closer. However, it was one of the first games of rugby EVER for small handful of CRU players and considering this we can look

forward to making improvements for next year. Highlights include Cornelius's crunching tackle on Jamie Henry, Skurry and Frank's gritty play throughout the match and opposition man of the match Luke Bradley, playing his first game in CRU colours and having a storming game. In fact, Luke Bradley, Cornelius Smith, Hamza Ishikawa and Craig Gillet played their first games for the Cru and all players got game time. We look forward to seeing more of them in the new year.

Hats off to YCAC for providing a high standard of opposition – well done to the CRU for showing a determined spirit until the final whistle. This year was a good festival game and rugby was the winner. In the after match speech, the YCAC President summed up the mood of the afternoon saying. "Gareth would have been proud of both teams." Indeed he would!

## Tokyo Crusaders vs. YCAC 7-52 (L), by Gareth 'Gaz' Lim



### Players Men of the Match:

- 3 p. - Yuuki
- 2 p. - Luke
- 1 p. - Brett

## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Dandelions RFC 61-0 (W), by Yutaka Yazawa

**It was a cold grey day on 8 December in Nishi-Urawa, Saitama Prefecture. For those without the sense of geography, Saitama is to Tokyo what New Jersey is to New York.**

>> As you come out of Nishi-Urawa station, the biggest thing that comes into your sight is the overhead expressway that jets out of Tokyo for north, without any exit in Nishi-Urawa's neighbourhood. The next thing you notice is the tacky neon sign of a "dance club".

As I came out of turnstiles, breathing out white mist with each breath, I was met by the wide-eyed **Brandon "Rodeo Man" Fought**. Fresh back from the Philippines, he couldn't play on the day due to injuries. But he couldn't stay away from the occasion. To be in Nishi-Urawa in time before 12:30, he said, he had to leave Yokosuka around 9:00am. He wanted to be on the sideline for his team.

The whole team turned up before the meeting time of 12:30. And the team looked big. We had more than 30 players available for the day. The mood was sombre, yet determined. After all it was a big day. This was our last league game of the Shuto League and we were in with a shot at the championship in our first year of being promoted to the league's first division.

It took the whole taxi fleet of Nishi-Urawa (about 5?) two trips each to shuttle our players from the station to the pitch in Akigase park, on the riverbank of Arakawa River. Another Shuto League game was on before ours and it was running late. Few were distracted, however, by the on-going game, played between our opponents of previous weekends. One after another, the players quietly suited up. Boots and shorts. Our minds were on this weekend's game and on the championship.

**Stewart "Tooley" Henwood** summoned the team and explained the situation, which had by then become familiar to the most of us. There was a three-way tie at the top of the league and we needed to win the last game against Dandelions RFC by scoring more than 4 tries without conceding a point in order to claim the league championship in accordance with the league rules. More experienced players amongst us were more concerned about not conceding a point, rather than scoring 4+ tries. We knew

we could rout the opposition in a try fest of a game. Our team had been joined this season by awesome try-scoring talents such as **Chris "X-Man" Ekstrom**, **Luke "Midnight Bus" Bradley**, and **Brett "Surely-He-Played-Loki-In-Thor" Wallbutton** in our backline, in addition

to ever reliable **Travis "Raging Hemingway" Dixon** and **Takushi "Okinawa Cheek-to-Cheek Dance King" Hayashi**. On the other hand, defence is all about co-ordination and practice, rather than individual talent and flair. We realised that we were going to be tested individually on our commitment to the game and to each of our teammates no matter how well the game was going for us, from the beginning to the final whistle.

**Roy "Kit-master General" Yorke** laid out the markers on the ground for the now familiar warm-up routine. Roy was yet another on the injury list but he made it to the pitch on the day. Going through the warm-up, the tense atmosphere was broken loose by ever high spirited antics of **Evan "Ned Kelly with Mirror Ball(s)" Kerr** as well as **Jackie Wilson** and **Cornelius Smith** grooving to their headphone music.

The team selection for the day was announced by Tooley, as per usual, but it started with an apology. It was clear from the sheer number of available players, as well as the "no risk" stance we had to adopt in or-



der to achieve 0-point defence, the team selection had to be conservative with minimal substitution opportunities.

The circumstances, in turn, provided the added awareness on those who were selected to give 100+%. Personally, I was touched and inspired by the trust shown in all Japanese front-row selection, alongside **Kiyoshi "Yes-That-Is-My-**

**Girlfriend-Sitting-In-That-Volvo** Hamazuni and Yuuki **“Oddjob with Heart of Glass”** Adachi.

With the renewed urgency, the forward players were set to pace by the pack-leader, **Paul “Big Unit” Skurr**, practicing lineouts and scrums, while the backs galloped around to the orders of Travis. The captain’s speech was short and to-the-point. The lack of colourful expletives from **Evan “Soon-To-Be-Married” Hitchman**, by

of the occasion felt by all of us. We were the warriors on a working day.

The Cru had the kick-off and **Evan “Jockey” Hitchman** stepped up in the middle of Akigase pitch. Despite the green shrubbery of woods surrounding the rugby field, we could feel the icy wind sweeping down from the northern mountains and the grass underneath our feet were half-brown.

Evan’s kick found the unlucky Dandelions second row player who was immediately creamed by a massive tackle from **Pat “Smiley Giant With Posh Ac-**

**cent” Wheen** on the second row duty for the day. The game continued with the Cru main-

taining the pressure in the Dandelion’s half and, soon enough, at about 7-minute mark, **Chris Ekstrom** on the wing drew the first blood, scoring a try from his usual sheering run on the side line.

The Cru had made the requisite 4 tries within the first half, with a try contributed from each of **Neil “Grey Ghost” Maclean** at scrum half (at 10-minute), **Brett Wallbutton** at wing (at 19-minute), and **Luke Bradley** at outside centre (at 36-minute).

There was a hairy moment when a series of offside infringements around rucks by the forward players allowed the Dandelions to approach the Cru’s 22-metre line just about the halfway through the first half. A single kick at goal would have torpedoed the Cru’s championship dreams. Luckily, the Dandelions opted to test our defence line. From the solid maul base within the Cru’s 22-metre line, **Paul Skurr** made a breaking run on the blindside and brought the Cru back to the halfway line and into the opposition’s half.

We did talk about giving away penalties in ruck situations before the match and it was a good thing that the Cru had escaped the danger early, learning the lessons without paying dearly for

the wisdom. Another weakness in the Cru surfaced in the closing minutes of the first half. As **Paul Skurr** took on a determined tackle from an opposition player, he tried to pass the ball on to **Travis Dixon** as he went down. Unfortunately and uncharacteristically, **Travis** fumbled the ball. **Evan “Pommy-Basher” Hitchman** screamed “No Pop Passes!” to which **Paul “Lion King” Skurr** quickly retorted “He asked for it!”. There was an uneasy silence from the teammates as two continued arguing from their mental quick replays. Soon, both fizzled out and returned to normal, just like an old couple. The British Empire cast its long shadows in that corner of a rugby pitch in Japan that moment whilst not a few Americans in the Cru fold watched on as they counted their blessings of the Founding Fathers.

Luckily, it was almost the last play of the first half.



the usual standard, reflected the seriousness



>> CONTINUED... More of the same was the order during the half-time break. Accordingly, there was a minimum of changes to the team lineup, ex-



cept  
for Yuuki  
Adachi being re-  
placed at hooker  
and Yuuki replacing

yours truly at loose-head in the front row. The new man, **Tom Cocks** had been on and off, roll-subbing Pat Wheen in the second row. Eventually in the course of second half, Neil Maclean was replaced by Evan Hitchman who returned to his usual position at scrum half and the full-back position was assumed by **Andy “Surf ‘n’ Turf” Doyle** in his last appearance for the Cru before his departure for sunny Perth. Takushi “Taku-san” Hayashi was also eventually replaced by Luke Bradley, who moved from outside centre to inside centre, and the vacancy at outside centre was more than filled by **Kyle “NBA” Cotton**.

The second half continued the Cru’s try fest. Chris Ekstrom opened the account in his usual style within 5 minutes. 10 minutes in, there was a hairy moment when a Dandelion player was apparently concussed and stayed motionless on the ground for a while. He was eventually carried away in an ambulance and we later learned, to our great relief, that he was checked at the nearby hospital and found to be OK.

Tries kept coming in from the Kiwi combo of Travis and Luke both scoring 2 tries each in the second half, eventually carrying our scoreline to 61-0, helped by Evan’s steady goal kicking (he only missed one conversion out of 9 attempts).



### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Travis  
2 p. - Luke  
1 p. - Paul Ralph, Evan Kerr, Chris

It must be mentioned, however, that the way the Dandelions played their game and their composure throughout deserve much respect and praise. They were the team facing the relegation and were conceding huge points. Nevertheless, they kept at it like true sportsmen. There were no silly infringements in rucks and they were consistently putting up some respectable attacking phases throughout the game. There were more than a couple of plays towards the end where the Cru’s defence line was severely tested and was only saved by handling errors on the Dandelions’ part. It was, as had been promised, a tight game until the end.

Eventually, the final whistle went and the Cru celebrated the famous victory. Because of the silly (or profoundly wise?) league rules imposing the 0-point hurdle on the Cru, it was more of relief than jubilation that overcame most of our players. Truth be told, we were not yet sure if the Cru had won the league at that point, as it had

to be confirmed by the league’s great and good. (The confirmation came through on the Tuesday morning.) In any event, we were all proud to have achieved what we had set out to achieve and to be part of that collective effort.

After munching down the panettone and dundee cake baked by **Aiko “Pint-size Venus” Watanabe** and yours truly, respectively, and Pat Wheen managing to lose his shorts somewhere on the pitch, the Cru adjourned to Ikebukuro for a victory izakaya session in the basement dungeon provided by one of Watami Group’s more sinister branches.



Position	Team	Points	W	D	L	PF	PA	+/-
1	Tokyo Crusaders RFC	20	4	0	1	185	59	126
2	Olivers RFC	20	4	0	1	177	67	110
3	Tokyo Gaijin RFC	20	4	0	1	110	68	42
4	Goddamns RFC	11	2	0	3	131	197	-66
5	Shinjuku Jack RFC	6	1	0	4	67	115	-48
6	Dandelions RFC	1	0	0	5	48	210	-162





## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Fevers RFC 40-25 (W), by Paul Ralph

**Fevers RFC provided the perfect opposition for the first game after the Christmas/New Years season, in what proved to be a high-scoring, open, good-natured game of rugby. After a little (in some cases obvious) overindulgence during the proceeding few weeks, a large contingent of Cru players arrived at Mitaka Station keen to burn off some Christmas turkey.**

>> The objective of the game for the Cru was to develop some new and inexperienced players, and increase the depth of talent that has been a feature of the Cru's 2013-14 season. The game saw **Luis Hernandez, Masaoki Akimoto, and James Payne** all making their debuts for the Cru. The good-natured game provided an opportunity for all of those who wanted to get some game time, albeit not always in a position they were familiar with. A few bindings may have gone astray in the early scrums as new combinations packed down, and **Marc 'stop grabbing me there!' Sherratt's** ability to father children may have been compromised. The forward pack was also notable for the return of **Jonas 'out from behind the camera' Hult** after a lengthy shoulder injury. With a number of the Cru's more established players starting from the sidelines, **Tom 'follow me lads' Cocks** was

given the captain's role, and proceeded to lead from the front in what proved to be a man-of-the-match effort. **'Glen Taylor'** also proved to be a rock at hooker, capturing a point in the 3-2-1s. With usual 1st five **Travis 'can't believe she said yes' Dixon** happy to pull up a chair, open a beer, and observe proceedings from the sidelines, the ball was actually passed out wider than first receiver, and **Gavin 'now I can show you what I can do' Smith** was able to cut a merry caper through the Fever's defence to earn two 3-2-1 points.

The game was off to a quick start with **Dylan 'may have lost a finger to frostbite' Lee** showing his pace to score in the first minute. With a festival feel to the game, and no one willing to put in the effort to put the goal posts up, conversions were dismissed. The game was

developing into an exchange of Cru speed versus Fevers experience, and the Fevers began to show the benefits of experience and technique, scoring two well constructed tries including one from a rolling lineout maul. **Luke 'I'm dressed like this for a job interview' Bradley** was soon able to step through the Fevers' defense however, to even the score. The Cru's next try came from a bustling, long range run from **Brandon 'couldn't actually see where he was going without his glasses' Fought**, who despite getting knocked down was able to remember he wasn't playing the American version of football, and regained his feet to continue the run to the line. Fevers came back to score again, and then **Masaoki 'on debut for the Cru' Akimoto**, was able to score another long-range try, despite a very persistent pursuit. First half score; 20-15 to the Cru.

Like Italy during the war, **Evan '-11 metre kick off' Hitchman** decided to swap sides at half-time (although he had been wearing a Fevers jersey under his tracksuit for much of the first half). After an evenly matched opening to the second half, Tom barged over after ten minutes. This began a period of sustained Cru dominance, with **Evan Kerr** scoring soon afterwards, and **Jackie Wilson** and **Cornelius Smith** both showing exceptional speed to also score. The final fifteen minutes of the game saw Fevers

come back with two more tries, with the game ending 40-25 to the Cru.

The astro-turf of the Mitaka Yokogawa Denki Sports Ground provided an excellent playing surface. And while the game started in late afternoon, all enjoyed the novelty of playing under lights, especially the contingent of photographers on the sidelines, who were able to capture a few blurred shots of Jackie and Cornelius exhibiting the superpowers of the Flash. Credit should also go out to the Fevers' players, a group of more senior men who inspire and prove that rugby can provide enjoyment no matter what your age (kind of like Tooley, but without the bad jokes). The Fevers' No. 8 was awarded man-of-the-match by the Cru.

After the game, a large mixed contingent of Cru and Fevers players headed to the Fukufukuya Izakaya. Rugby stories were traded, beer was drunk, and Travis was left behind. Not wanting to see the end of a great day, the majority of the group proceeded to another izakaya, for yet another round of nomihodai. Everything after that is a bit hazy. Thanks again to Fevers RFC, hope to do it all again soon.





### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Tom C.

2 p. - Gavin

1 p. - Glen "Gen" Taylor



## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Swift RFC 19-47 (L), by Eric Wilkinson

On a warm and surprisingly – given the location of the pitch – windless Sunday afternoon, which started out in question due to a light rain that was threatening to put a halt to the game entirely, the Cru arrived at the Edogawa Rugbyjo ground expecting to come away with yet another win over a team that was perhaps taken far to lightly in the Swift RFC.

>> The Swift proceeded to give the Cru an 80-minute education on the dangers of over-confidence, and outstanding defensive play (perhaps as an omen on how the following day's Superbowl would play out).

To be completely fair to the Cru, the day started out badly with many of the regular starters dropping out due to reasons ranging from work to hangovers, so there was a noticeable lack of experience and size, especially among the forwards, which was felt all game long as many of the Cru's newer players received a full-game's worth of lessons on how to play a number of different positions, as injuries and inexperience caused position shifts throughout the day.

The opposition flew out of the gate, scoring the first try of the game within the first 2 minutes using the age-old tactic of not dropping passes, running with purpose, and attacking with their

backs 5 against 3; a recurring problem that would rear its head throughout the course of the game.

Following the first score, the Swift certainly didn't let off the gas scoring 3 more tries within the first half of play. It was at this point that the Cru decided to stop arguing amongst themselves and play a bit of defense, holding off the Swift for the final 16 minutes of the half.

By the second half, the Cru had already had a number of stingers force players into unfamiliar positions, which was leading to a lot of lost scrums and miscommunication. Neil "Why won't these guys listen to me" Maclean, and Paul "The Gentleman (according to my Wife)" Skurr, was doing their best to get people into a proper defensive line all game but didn't have much success in that regard until the major damage had already been done.



>> The second half started off with yet another mental error for the Cru, as within a minute from kickoff there was a scrum in the Swift's favor which led to a score before the forwards could even finish disengaging from the scrum, leading to some rather colorful commentary amongst the group. The Cru's scoreless drought was brought to an end however, thanks to **Luis Hernandez** at around the 4' mark. This was followed by a beautiful bit of running on the parts of **Jackie "Which way is straight?" Wilson**, and **Cornelius "All I do is score" Smith**.

At this point in the game however, the injuries started to pile up and the Cru had to go to uncontested scrums as both props and one lock were unable to continue playing at their positions, and other players were shuffled to the flanker positions. The Swift took advantage of this and some very poor tackling, to come away with 2 more tries to put an end to any hopes of a second half comeback.

The game ended on a positive however as the Cru demonstrated some effective forward play and (finally) some proper passing and ball control to push through and add one more try to the scoreboard via Cornelius.

The Cru can learn a lot from this game. The Swift RFC played an outstanding game and they

kept the pace at their speed the whole day. They demonstrated great tackling and ball security, but most importantly they showed incredible discipline; they swarmed the Cru's larger forwards whenever they carried the ball to ensure minimal penetration, but never so many players as to adversely affect their defensive line which was always on the spot, and they were quick to capitalize on the many mishandled passes provided for them.

The 3,2,1's for the Cru ended with Cornelius Smith taking the top spot after some outstanding running...whenever the ball was actually able to reach him; Followed by a tie between **Neil Maclean** and **Luke Bradley**, both of whom helped keep the team together throughout the game; Last but not least there was Skurry, who did his best keeping the forwards under con-

trol as well as taking Evan Hitchman's place as team captain in his absence.

Some good news to come out of this game however was the long awaited return of **Koki**, after months of being kidnapped and held hostage. He was finally able to 'grow a pair' and secretly sneak out of the house to play a game before surely being beaten later for disobedience. All joking aside, it's great to have you back and everyone hopes to see you return on a regular basis.

At the end of the game a beaten and bloodied Cru returned to the usual watering hole to lick their wounds and try to figure out what, exactly, went wrong. Along with the players who attended was also **Aiko**, who expressed her own feelings of guilt on how she believes she caused the Cru to lose (Remember the red ones next

time), and **Mrs. Ada Wilkinson**, who said that she really enjoys watching the games, and likes the camaraderie between the players during the after match festivities. She also claims that Skurry is a gentleman, and she is married to me, so her judgment is clearly in question.

A final thanks to the Swift RFC for coming out and showing the Cru that we aren't invincible, we look forward to playing you again and wish you the best of luck in your future fixtures...unless of course you're playing the Cru.



**After a two-week break due to heavy snowfalls in Tokyo, The Crusaders were facing one of their biggest campaigns in recent years.**

>> Following victory in the Shuto League championship, the team had been invited to take part in the Cup-winners' Cup, which is a competition of all the regional champions. Many of the opposition teams are currently playing in Tokyo Cup Div.1 (or a higher league), which the Crusaders are trying to challenge for in the coming Spring season. The Crusaders must show that it was not kind of a fluke to win the League, but that they are good enough to be playing at this level.

Superman RFC is certainly not an easy opposition, as the name suggests. However, the Crusaders had a few superheroes of their own, like **Alex "Cru Ironman 2012-13" Diaz**, and **Aiko "Wonder Woman" Watanabe**, but not a full line-up, as we were missing a few of our more notorious comicbook heroes – for example, **Pat "the Hulk" Wheen** or **Paul "maybe Clark Kent lookalike" Skurr**.

The Crusaders started the first minutes tremendously, even after losing the ball at the kick off, turning over the ball in the scrum right after though, and finishing over the tryline with a try scored

by **Chris "X men" Ekstrom**. Cru 5, Superman 0 at 2 minutes.

Superman attacked for the next 15 mins, but the Crusaders fought back against them, making hard hits on defensive, especially by **Tom Cocks, Travis Dixon, and Luke Bradley**. However, the well-drilled Supermen know how to play phase by phase. This 'drilled' play sapped the Crusaders' stamina and gained meters little by little. At the end of the first half, the number of tries went Superman's way, 5-1. (Half time score, 31-5 to Superman RFC).

**"Professor X" Seth Robson** and **"Juggernaut at times" Adam Birss** came in as replacements at half time. Although the team lost **Travis 'I-don't-want-to-play-with-this-ball-anymore' Dixon** for 10mins for the Crusaders' first official sin bin in 2 seasons, a 14-man Crusaders side regained strength and kept the opposition scoreless for the next 15 mins. However, Superman played well, keeping the ball, with possession over 60%, and attacked the standing-too-high Crusaders defense. As was apparent throughout the whole 80 minutes, Superman RFC are superior in contact and fitness, which is a great lesson for the Crusaders

## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Superman RFC 5-48 (L), by Gen 'Glen Taylor' Hirano

to show us what we need to compete at this level.

Considering the second half, the Crusaders played better, as they kept the Superman scoreless for half of the first 40 mins. Another thing to note, **Marc "Cy-clops" Sherratt** and a few other subs showed a 'quality

super powers instantly by a spider bite, but by training hard with old-school methods within the mountainous terrain of Siberia like Rocky Balboa or ....perhaps the dusty/muddy terrain that is Edogawa river-side.



of performance' after waiting on the sideline for 60 shivering minutes.

Superman RFC beat a marvelous Crusaders this time, but surely The Avengers will come back strongly next time around. Not by obtaining

### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Tom C., 2 p. - Gavin, 1 p. - Glen "Gen" Taylor

## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Setagaya RFC 55-5 (W), by Sean Gibson

Sunday's match against a very keen and determined Setagaya RFC could be described in many ways, but I think the most descriptive word would be "COLD", with "muddy" coming in a distant, but by no means insignificant second.

>> More or less on time (for a change), 19 players, one medical assistant and two hearty

supporters (**Brandon Fought's** parents visiting from the US) turned up in Shin-Shibamata at 09:30, most still surprised that

the game had not been cancelled due to inclement weather. It was hard-going from the start, everyone struggling to even get through the warmups, much less take the pitch. But duty called, and take the

pitch we did. Being the second game of the day on that particular pitch, the natural surface was already well-churned up for our pleasure – or disdain, depending on your point of view. Things were off to a great start from the kick-off, with **Seth Robson** running a cracking angle and breaking through tacklers to touch the ball down only three minutes into the game. After a successful conversion by **Evan Hitchman**, Seth returned for an encore, scoring his second try only four minutes later. Evan's conversion made the score 14-0. The next try took a bit longer, after some great ball retention and recycling by the forwards but a visiting **Tom Ball**, filling in for a shortage in the backs, scored his first of three tries on the day just eight minutes later. **Travis and Tom** were superb all day in the back-line, running some great angles of attack and mesmerizing the defenders at every turn. Tom's





next two tries over the following 25 minutes and another conversion by Evan saw the halftime score 31-0 to the Cru.

Despite the amount of running we did in the first half, the halftime consensus seemed to be that we wanted to shorten halftime so that we could continue running to keep warm. The scrums, which are normally a source of warmth in cold weather, only added to the forwards misery, as everyone was well-coated in slick mud. However, that didn't stop the pack from doing a great job in the set-pieces, nor from providing great support to the backs and providing good ball retention. Setagaya opened the scoring in the second half 4 minutes after the start, but that would prove to be the last time they came anywhere near the try line.

The Cru struck back 6 min-



#### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Tom Ball

2 p. - Travis

1 p. - Frank

utes later with a try down the wing by Jackie Wilson. Another six minutes later and it was **Roy Yorke's** turn to add 5 points to the score. **Alex Diaz** was superb all day in the lineouts, not to mention taking (I think) every restart in the first half. It really paid off 25 into the second half when, on a lineout 5 meters from our try line, the Cru pushed over the line to be touched down at the back of the maul by **Sean Gibson**. Evan's brilliant conversion made the score 48-5. The final try of the match was scored by **Frank Saffery** on an unlikely 40-meter sprint by the big man. Personally, I don't think I've ever seen a giraffe gallop, but now I think I have a pretty good idea what it would look like. Successful conversion by Evan Hitchman and the score was 55-5, where it remained until the final whistle 4 minutes later.

Adding to the day's fun, the ground on which we played had no facilities, so we had the pleasure of moving on to the pub whilst caked in mud. The good news, however, was that it was too bloody cold to sweat. So we didn't smell as

bad as we would have if we had been playing in, say, above-freezing temperature. So, on to our semi-regular standing bar near Koiwa station, where the waitress has forced me to re-examine my slight aversion to tall girls, for a few (read: many) beers. I have vague memories of a train ride at some point after that but details fail to come to me.

In summary, a great win and a great (albeit COLD) day for the Cru. There was some great teamwork exhibited and Setagaya RFC, despite the score, gave us some very determined and spirited opposition to make the game that much more enjoyable. Thanks to all those who came out, players and supporters, to endure the arctic conditions. Looking forward to the next one.

## Tokyo Crusaders vs. All France RC 41-5 (W), by Travis Dixon

As the team waited outside the train station, our new French import, Laurent, made an astute observation: he looked at the All France team waiting and looked back at our team, which included the likes of Frank, Pat, the Toms and Skurry and said, "I'm happy to be playing for the Crusaders today".

>> It was apparent very early on that we would be fielding a strong team. With such a strong squad, we chose to lengthen the halves and rush through the warm-ups to get the games underway early so we could dash to the pub to watch the Six Nations games. It turned out to be the right decision as the game proved to be yet another positive step in the development of the Crusaders, as a team, and as a club.

Before the match began, **Travis** told the lads that we didn't need to worry about our attack; it would come naturally with the size we had in the forwards and the class we had in the backs. It didn't take long to see what he meant. From the opening scrum **Tom and Trav** ran a switch, with Tom breaking a tackle and offloading back to Travis who scored in close to the posts. It was the beginning of a bit of an onslaught of tries.

Following close behind was a try from **Wyn**, who we are pleased to have back in the squad after dealing with a few niggling injuries last year. **Eric** also managed a try for the Cru, which is a just reward for the hard work he has been putting in week in and week out. We managed to send Tom back to the Philippines with not just a fresh supply of penicillin, but also a try. He and **Luke** combined well in the mid-field all game. It was a welcome return to the Cru for Tom who played a couple of storming games for us in the mid-field, reminding us what a class player he is.

So with the attack clearly taking care of itself with the Cru scoring 31 points in the first half, the goal for the team from the beginning of the match was to keep the opponent scoreless. Despite making too many turnovers from poor offloading decisions and handling errors,



### Players Men of the Match:

- 3 p. - Tom Ball
- 2 p. - Brandon 'Ricky' Rogers
- 1 p. - Travis

the Cru played with spirit and All France never threatened the try-line in the first half. The talk at half time then was simple: keep it that way! It speaks volumes about the Cru's fortitude, and depth, that we were able to practically swap our squad with 12 changes made at half-time and still keep All France to just one try in the second half. Well done to **Gavin** who picked up a double in the second half. The score finished up 41-05, in only sixty minutes of rugby.

A huge improvement can now be seen in our defensive line and our decision making at the breakdown. In particular the forwards did an awesome job of controlling the ball and working in pairs and threes to make sure we retained possession. Good stuff, Cru!

We now need to make sure that we are communicating on the field more, both on attack and defence, as well as trying to make better decisions with pop passes. The Cru will always live and die by the pop pass, but we do need to try to reduce the amount of handling errors that arise from this aspect of our game.

Congratulations and welcome to **Laurent, Nathan and Ricky** who all played great games on debut for the Cru. Special mention to Ricky who picked up 2 points for the Man of the Match honours in just one half of rugby. His awesome try saving tackle earned him many nominations. It was perhaps one of the best tackles I have seen in the Cru, and it shows the level of determination and commitment we all need to show on defence.

The 30-minute league game that followed the match was lost by 22 - 20 (4 tries each; we missed 2 kicks, they only missed 1). This is a top effort for the Crusaders to almost beat the Warriors in a game a lot of us clearly are not sure how to play. It was good practice for working on maintaining our defensive line, as well as running straight on to the ball at pace.

The after-match function was held in the Kakko Izakaya near ShinKoiwa station with some All France RC and Warriors players. Thanks to the 4 Crusaders who represented us there as the others went to Legends to watch the Six Nations, or home to rest for the following day.

There were many dry throats and sore heads at the sparrow's-fart on Sunday morning when we assembled in some random train station in the Tokyo 'burbs for the second match of our big weekend's double-header. Some lads managed to get home and rest, while others took the less orthodox approach of sleeping in a Roppongi Karaoke bar.

>> Regardless, we managed to get a good turnout of players and even had some to lend to the other team. The Cru were extra motivated to have a good game for **Taku**, who may or may not play again for us before heading to Okinawa. He has been a great asset for us in the mid-field, and it's been appreciated by me especially, as I can play with a regular #12 each game. The pre-match talk was little different to the previous night's: we'll score plenty of tries, don't worry about that – let's just make sure they don't score any. We were disappointed to let our guard down against All France and let them get a try, so we were determined that it wouldn't happen again.

It was a great Spring day for rugby and so the ref was keen for an 80-minute game, but thankfully both teams managed to talk him out of it.

From the opening kick-off the forwards worked hard at securing our own ball at the breakdown and the backs finished off plays strongly. With our fearless Captain back in action (barely),

**Luis** was put on the wing and showed his versatility, finishing off two great team tries on the wing to get the Cru out to an early lead. This was followed by another good team try, finished off by **Ricky**, who chalked up his first of what we hope will be many for the Cru. Taku also managed to score in the first half.

So, at the half, the score was 26-0, despite the relentless attack from the opposition and their rapid defensive line, and the fact that we had the breeze in our faces. So we were faced with the challenge of keeping the attack at bay and maintaining the clean slate that we failed to do against All France. With the breeze at our backs, the Donkeys barely spent any time in our 22 as **Evan** and **Travis** managed to win the territory battle with well-placed kicks behind the defensive line. This was a key in our defensive plan. And naturally, the attack looked after itself as Ricky continued to run kicks back from full-back and Luke made storming runs in mid-field, showing **Skurry** what Evan wanted him to do when he was screaming earlier in the first half.

## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Joto Donkeys RFC 47-0 (W), by Travis Dixon

Taku ran effective angles in mid-field and managed two more tries in the second half, making it a hat-trick for the game. This may turn out to be a nice leaving present for Taku.

The score ended up being 47-0. Well done lads for keeping the defence strong and playing until the final whistle. It was a highly successful weekend and another big step for the club. We are improving in the basics of the game, such as retaining our own ball at the breakdown, running in groups and making good passes. We are giving away too many penalties, though, at defensive rucks, so we need to either learn the rules of the ruck or just stay in the defensive line and leave the ball alone.

Special thanks for **Naoki** who played flanker in the first half and helped out the opposition. Thanks also to **Nestor** who also played a half for the donkeys. Congratulations and welcome to **Rei Morimitsu** who played his first game for the Cru. He made a couple of brilliant, textbook tackles in the second half and we hope to see more of him in future games. Thanks to **Yorkie**, **Stu** and **Wyn** who made the trip even though they didn't play. Thanks also to the Navy lads

who came a long way to play, as they do most weeks.

In the absence of a nearby Izakaya, the team stayed at the ground and made the most of the sun by drinking beers and watching the matches that followed, including the Champions' Cup Final. Congrats to **Tooley** who managed to break his post-retirement try-less streak, picking up a try in the Shuto League Committee team game.



### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Travis

2 p. - 'Ricky'

1 p. - Gen, Luke, Taku, Skurry



## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Matsudo RFC 47-14 (W), by Seth Robson

When the historians sit down to write the chronicles of the Tokyo Crusaders they will probably look back on last weekend's game against Matsudo RFC and say: "That was a particularly significant match!"

>> Recalling the contest, Stewart Henwood had this to say: "It rained... it was a really nice pitch. Brandon R (aka Ricky) scored a double. Galdric and Steve both scored on debut for the Cru. The opposition put on some pitch-side beers for an after-match. The penalty count against us is still way too high..." Nice one Stew! You summed it all up in a few simple sentences.

However, the historians will likely want to know a bit more than that mate. There may be some important detail that they will need to explain exactly how monumental this match was. Well, historians, for the record: there were no schoolgirls in short skirts. If anyone else claims that they saw them, they are full of shit. That's just a fantasy that was playing out in Tooley's head (along with the ones about the naughty nurse

and the nun who is also a hooker) in the weeks and months leading up to this fixture.

It would be historically accurate to say that schoolgirls did attend (and listened intently as Sean Gibson regaled them with tales of his own high-school days in the '80s) but they were both very modestly attired.

It's also a fact that there was rain. However it had little impact on the pitch because it was a "really nice" Astro-turf one at Senshu Daigaku Matsudo Koko.

For the record, the 30 True Men who tramped onto the field didn't let the schoolgirls down.

The Cru's much larger forward pack were dominant with strong runs from prop Yuuki Adachi

putting Matsudo on the back foot throughout the match. Takushi "Tako" Hayashi, filling in for Evan "AWOL" Hitchman at halfback seemed to have eight arms as he plucked the ball from the back of scrums and rucks to unleash a potent backline.

First to cross for the Cru was Captain America – Kyle Cotton – who made the defense look like a troop of demented snow monkeys trying to break into a 7-11 as he rampaged his way to a place that he calls "the end zone."

Moments later Brandon Rogers picked up a nicely weighted kick from Travis "Ned Kelly" Dixon and sprinted in for another try. And then Nathan McCutcheon delighted the schoolgirls with his own "touchdown."

Before the match someone had remarked that it would be wonderful if the Cru could keep the opposition scoreless but that dream was dashed when Matsudo struck back with their own try.

Brushing aside his disappointment at the faux pas fired-up Frenchman Galdric Porta added his own piece of je ne sais quoi to make it 26-7 at the break.

The second half went the same way as the first.

Brandon added a second try before Steve Howden scored his first for the Cru. Matsudo got another back before Travis found himself in possession a few feet from the line. Snarling like a rabid Tanuki he bashed his way over make it a 47-14 win for the Cru.



#### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Galdric

2 p. - Travis

1 p. - Luke, Seth, 'Ricky', Steve, Tom C

The players jogged off the field to find a table laden with cold Asahi courtesy of our generous hosts– the perfect reward for a job well-done.

On a sad note, Chris “Chandaliers” Eckstrom lost one of his diamond earrings in the shower afterwards. If any historians read this and know any archaeologists I'd recommend digging around the ruins of the old high school and looking for something shiny.



## Ground Duty for Tokyo Cup by Evan Hitchman

Over 15 hardy souls trekked out early in the morning for our Tokyo Cup ground duty. The best of the best would be meeting to decide the best amateur rugby teams in Tokyo. So of course, the games were played on a muddy field, in the middle of nowhere in Saitama, almost closer to Chiba and Ibaraki than central Tokyo!

>> The lads did the hard work of setting up the ground, doing the line markings, putting up tents, even filling in holes in the pitch that hadn't been looked after by the local homeless ground steward living next to the pitch! All the important prep work was done in time for the first game and the Tokyo Cup organisers were pleasantly surprised with the dilligence and capability of the Crusaders players working under the amazing supervision of on-site foremen, **Messrs Kerr and Payne** whose horizontal, stationary and silent (apart from a few snores) management skills stunned the locals!

After a long day we travelled back to the Akihabara Hub to celebrate **Ralphy's birthday** and discovered a new favourite round of drinks, Hub Milkshake and shots of vodka! (although Ev got

a tad upset when refused to have them served in pint glasses!)

Our one ground duty out of the way, its back to the real action soon and the important business of securing promotion to the 1st Division for next year's Tokyo Cup.

A big thanks to all who made the trip out, especially to **Gen**, who was Tooley for the day and did a sterling job marshalling the troops.



## Tokyo Crusaders vs. George Washington 42-12 (W), by Evan Hitchman

**A hardy group of over 20 Crusaders made the journey down to Yokosuka base to play our friends from the George Washington Rugby Team. Without Seargent Tooley, we somehow managed to all arrive on time; a good 2 and a half hours before kick off!**

>> Luckily for us, we have such an officious team manager,... as it took us about 2 hours to get onto base and onto the field! The last of us trickled on to the ground only 10 minutes or so before the game got under way, and our less than ideal warm-up seemed to fire up Yorkie who kicked the ball at Skurry's head in frustration! That frustration seemed to continue for our star fullback who also almost got himself sent off for some less than discreet rucking, directly next to referee Steve Lewis!

The Cru were certainly asleep in the first 10 minutes or so as a fired up Navy team took it to them with some strong running and aggressive tackling, with Jordan Dill and guest player Brendan Gallagher particularly impressive. Luis, from Navy, scored the first try after some lapses in defence, and that seemed to wake

up the Cru who then went on to score 3 quick tries in succession to Steve bagging a double, running good angles and showing good hands and pace, and Seth smashing over from close in with a trademark barging run. The GW were making it difficult though and certainly weren't easy opposition, as they scored a try just before the break, with Brendan G scoring under the posts,... and who was lucky to escape unscathed after Evan Hitchman's vicious head butt straight into Brendan's outstretched palm!

The second half saw the Cru return to basics, winning ball at our own ruck, forwards clearing out at the ruck and not hanging out in the backs and backs running good lines and not throwing miracle passes. That formula worked a treat with the GW not scoring any further points due to some excellent defending, and us racking up

some more points with Gavin and then Yuuki. The last try for Yuuki came as he made a great bust down the middle with Taku, who was playing his last game for the Crusaders on his shoulder eagerly waiting for the expected, generous pass to give him a try in his last match. That pass never happened as Yuuki feigned to pass, showed it a few times just to give Taku a sniff, before sprinting off in the other direction to score the bloody try himself! Well done Scrooge McYuuki!

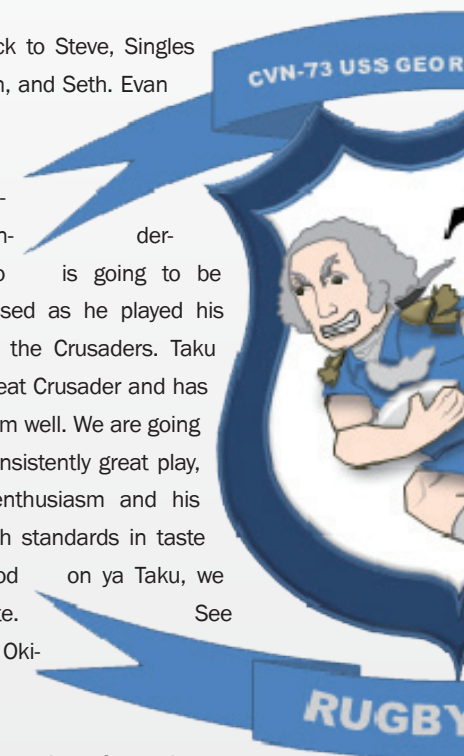
Steve bagged himself a hat trick to finish it all off with an unusual try scored from within the in-goal area! Steve tackled an unsuspecting Navy novice over the try line who then very kindly gave Steve the ball in the tackle, and Steve fell down and apparently scored a try! No doubt that try will be a 90m effort, stepping through 8 players before the year is out!

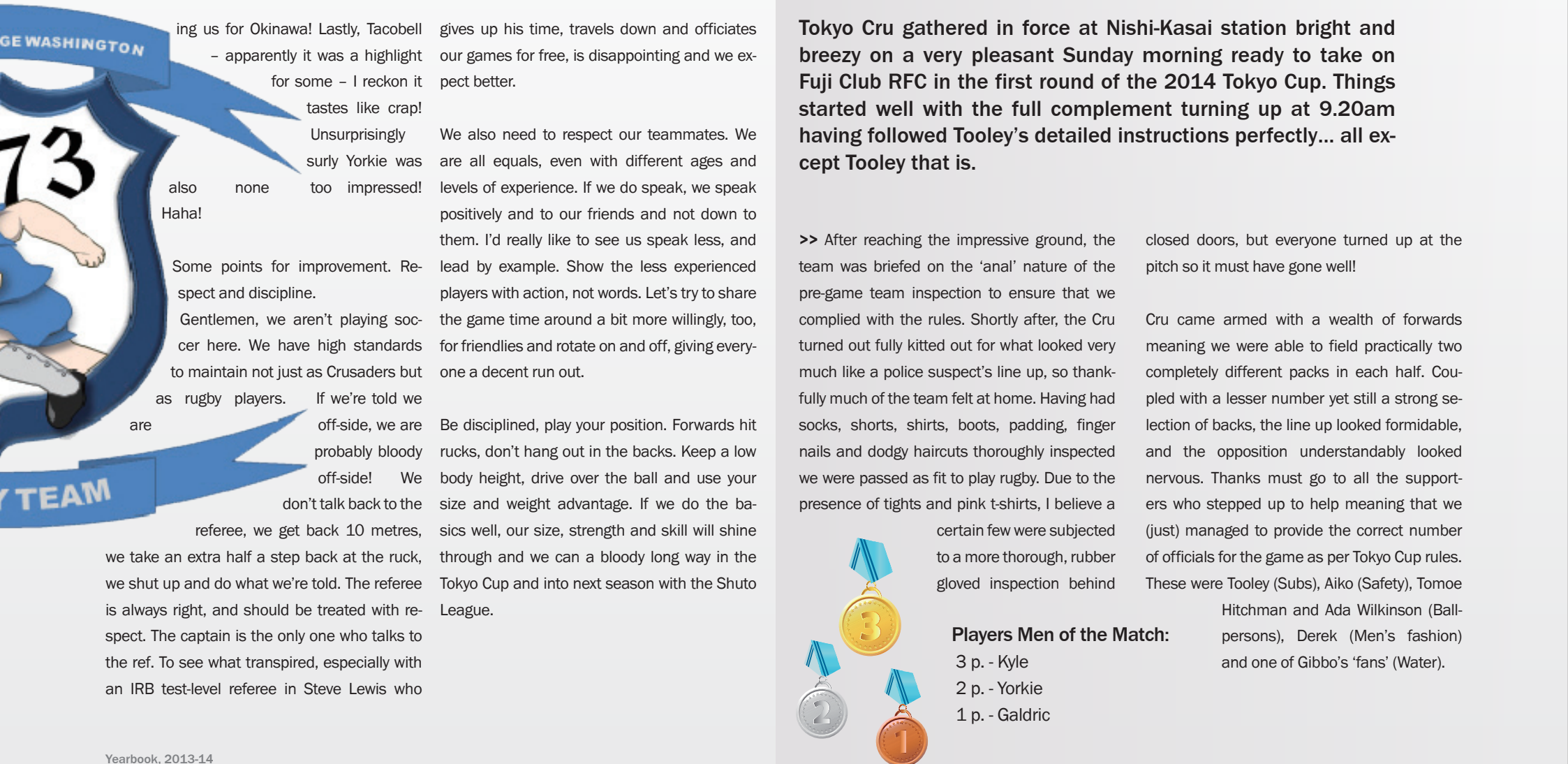
Undoubtedly a highlight for many was Gaz's storming run down the left hand side only to be stopped in his tracks by Paul Ralph's 64 year old dad, Jazzy Jeff who looked a picture of athleticism in his blue jeans and trainers!

Tries: A hattrick to Steve, Singles to Yuuki, Gavin, and Seth. Evan 6/6 conv.

A special mention to the wonderful Taku who is going to be massively missed as he played his last game for the Crusaders. Taku has been a great Crusader and has served the team well. We are going to miss his consistently great play, his positive enthusiasm and his stubbornly high standards in taste of women! Good on ya Taku, we love you mate. See you soon in Okinawa!

Some positive points from the game in particular was seeing us bring down 21 players, without our Navy friends and arriving on time without Sgt. Tooley, which was a good showing. Steve looking like he may lock down one of our centre positions with Luke's unfortunate injury, and that bastard, traitor Taku leav-





ing us for Okinawa! Lastly, Tacobell  
– apparently it was a highlight  
for some – I reckon it

tastes like crap!

Unsurprisingly  
surlly Yorkie was

also none too impressed!  
Haha!

Some points for improvement. Re-  
spect and discipline.

Gentlemen, we aren't playing soc-  
cer here. We have high standards  
to maintain not just as Crusaders but  
as rugby players.

If we're told we  
are off-side, we are  
probably bloody  
off-side! We  
don't talk back to the

referee, we get back 10 metres,

we take an extra half a step back at the ruck,  
we shut up and do what we're told. The referee  
is always right, and should be treated with re-  
spect. The captain is the only one who talks to  
the ref. To see what transpired, especially with  
an IRB test-level referee in Steve Lewis who

gives up his time, travels down and officiates  
our games for free, is disappointing and we ex-  
pect better.

We also need to respect our teammates. We  
are all equals, even with different ages and  
levels of experience. If we do speak, we speak  
positively and to our friends and not down to  
them. I'd really like to see us speak less, and  
lead by example. Show the less experienced  
players with action, not words. Let's try to share  
the game time around a bit more willingly, too,  
for friendlies and rotate on and off, giving every-  
one a decent run out.

Be disciplined, play your position. Forwards hit  
rucks, don't hang out in the backs. Keep a low  
body height, drive over the ball and use your  
size and weight advantage. If we do the ba-  
sics well, our size, strength and skill will shine  
through and we can a bloody long way in the  
Tokyo Cup and into next season with the Shuto  
League.

## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Fuji Club RFC 66-17 (W), by Tom Cocks

**Tokyo Cru gathered in force at Nishi-Kasai station bright and breezy on a very pleasant Sunday morning ready to take on Fuji Club RFC in the first round of the 2014 Tokyo Cup. Things started well with the full complement turning up at 9.20am having followed Tooley's detailed instructions perfectly... all except Tooley that is.**

>> After reaching the impressive ground, the team was briefed on the 'anal' nature of the pre-game team inspection to ensure that we complied with the rules. Shortly after, the Cru turned out fully kitted out for what looked very much like a police suspect's line up, so thank-fully much of the team felt at home. Having had socks, shorts, shirts, boots, padding, finger nails and dodgy haircuts thoroughly inspected we were passed as fit to play rugby. Due to the presence of tights and pink t-shirts, I believe a

certain few were subjected  
to a more thorough, rubber  
gloved inspection behind

closed doors, but everyone turned up at the pitch so it must have gone well!

Cru came armed with a wealth of forwards meaning we were able to field practically two completely different packs in each half. Cou-pled with a lesser number yet still a strong se-lection of backs, the line up looked formidable, and the opposition understandably looked nervous. Thanks must go to all the support-ers who stepped up to help meaning that we (just) managed to provide the correct number of officials for the game as per Tokyo Cup rules.

These were Tooley (Subs), Aiko (Safety), Tomoe Hitchman and Ada Wilkinson (Ball-  
persons), Derek (Men's fashion)  
and one of Gibbo's 'fans' (Water).



### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Kyle

2 p. - Yorkie

1 p. - Galdric



>> The game kicked off at 11.31 and the ball was neatly gathered by Frank. The pre-game chat had been very much about focusing on our defence, along with intensity and discipline at the breakdown. It was therefore very encouraging to see the pack charging into the rucks and clearing out right from the get go. This meant that quality ball could be enjoyed by the backs and no one had to feel the wrath of Ev's spikey tongue. Not surprisingly, having battered Fuji club from the off, Skurry powered over the line under the posts after just 5 minutes, which was converted by Ev. Frank then gobbled up the restart and set the forwards loose again, culminating in the ball being spun down the 5 metre line for Wyn to neatly finish in the corner just 2 minutes later. Our Stats man, borrowed from the collaboration team, denied Ev the conver-

sion but those that were actually watching know that he kicked it.

The next phase of play saw Cru on the back foot and the Fuji Club lock managed to drive over from a line out on 11 minutes, converted by their number 9. In doing so they exposed our weakness in defending against the rolling maul. This is something that clearly needs to be worked on in the coming weeks as they did the same again 12 minutes later, again converted.

However, their second try was sandwiched by two Kyle Cotton tries as he smashed through the middle in trademark fashion, clattering defenders like skittles in a bowling alley. Ev slotted both conversions and the half closed after 35 minutes of rampant Crusader rugby with the

score at 26-10. After a rousing half time speech, the team took to the field with a new pack. Only Gen and Galdric stayed on and Van came on for Wyn a few minutes into the second half for the backs. This ensured that all players enjoyed a decent amount of game time. Despite the new look side, nothing was lost in terms of commitment and intensity. The forwards continued to dominate at the breakdown, the defensive line was destructive and big hits went in all over the park. Kyle smashed his opposite man into last week and Steve punished a Fuji Club forward with a textbook and very legal dump tackle.

Chris, frustrated by his numerous dummy runs in the first half, made amends by scoring twice, 2 and 10 minutes into the half with some crisp finishing. Trav bagged an opportunist's try under the post from a missed throw in on 19 minutes. Yorkie chose some great lines from deep and exposed the opposition's dodgy defence with two scores of his own, on 12 and 22 minutes. The last try of the game was a lovely team try run from kick off, passing through a number of Crusader hands, being finished by Gibbo with a crowd pleasing salmon dive. Clearly he had a certain Water Official in mind along with the potential 'rewards' that would follow later on.

Ev knocked over 4 of his 6 conversions and the only smear on the half was a third try for the

opposition lock on 24 minutes after a penalty was foolishly given away on our line (by me). All in all, it was a disciplined, spirited and encouraging performance by the Cru which rightfully drew admiration from the opposition Captain and the Referee.

Straight after the final whistle the usual post game thank yous took place along with Tooley's timeless joke. Inevitably, the Fuji Club number 4 picked up their MVP award for his 3 tries, while the Cru 3,2,1's were Galdric (1), Yorkie (2) and Kyle (3)....well played fellas. Hurricanes RFC were in need of some rental players in the next game as they were short, so our 'rent boys', Frank, Van, Galdric, Eric and Gen all volunteered and somehow found the energy to play a whole match.

The team then re-convened in the West Ikebukuro HUB for post-match Nomihodai, food, highlights/lowlights and the long overdue Shu-to Champions Party. Regrettably my team lost resoundingly in the Boat Race, largely down to Gaz Lim preferring to wear his beer rather than drink it and Tooley taking about 3 minutes to down his, albeit very neatly! I can't really recall what happened after that but I'm sure it was fun and I can confirm that the Trophy did make it home. As for Gibbo's fan, who knows?...

All in all, a top day!



On a hot Sunday 11th May the 'Cru' descended on Nishi Kasai Station for their second game of the Tokyo Cup. The "ridiculously" early start of 8am didn't seem to catch people out, as most were there at the scheduled time, albeit some more hung-over/drunken than others. An army of taxis delivered the team to the ground and we soon realised that the promises of a grass pitch were true as at least a ¼ pitch did indeed have grass on it.

>> An army of taxis delivered the team to the ground and we soon realised that the promises of a grass pitch were true as at least a ¼ pitch did indeed have grass on it.

The team began its warm up only 2 hours before the game which gave us plenty of time to get cool again before we started. The 30 mins finger nail check by the stewards before the game contributed to this as well. Luckily, it was a beautiful day and the perfect setting for a fast and expansive game of rugby. At 1 stroke past 10am a slightly more sober Travis put the ball high into the air for the Crew's galloping pack to chase and the opposition soon realised that on top of being twice their size we could also play rugby. The first points were put on the board within 4 minutes by Travis after he took advantage of an opposition put on the back-foot by the aggressive running and rucking of our forwards.

As always seems to be the case, after scoring the first try the team switched off and the opposition were able to push us back in the maul and bundle the ball over the line. A few stern

words by the captain and a reminder of what was said in the team talk before the game – "we concentrate on the simple things first" – gave us the impetus we needed to get back on the front foot.

Within 15 minutes we had scored another 3 tries and this set the tone for the rest of the game. The backs continued to capitalise on the superior effort made by the forwards to hit the break down hard and recycle ball quickly. This is something that we have struggled with in previous games and will catch us out when up against stronger opposition. After 28 minutes Chris Ekstrom complained to his inside backs that he was yet to touch the ball. Seven minutes later he had scored his hatrick, demonstrating his pace and ability to beat almost anybody in a 1-on-1. He and the rest of the US military boys will be sorely missed when duties require them to leave Japan shortly.

At half time the score was 55-5 and half the team was replaced to make way for the rest of the squad that had made the effort to turn up for the early fixture. As ever the turnout was

good and a special mention must go to the travelling support that enabled us to easily fill all of the staff requirements for the Tokyo Cup. I don't think there was a single stoppage when all of our waterboys and girls didn't rush on to the pitch to hydrate the team.

The second half continued in much the same way as the first half and the 'Cru' continued to put points on the board. The opposition were able to pull back two tries, which was a measure of the effort they made and their refusal to give in. Even after the number 11 was taken off with concussion after being put to bed by a wicked hand-off from Ricky Rodgers, the opposition continued to put their bodies on the line. This was one of the many acts that earned Ricky his 'man-of-the-match', closely followed by brilliant performances by Chris Ekstrom and Neil Maclean.

The game finished 93-15 but, despite the floodgates opening at times, the main positives were what the team did in the loose and the way in which we conducted ourselves on the field; two areas where we have been found wanting in the

past. A sterling effort by the referee and his two linesmen allowed for a cracking day of rugby. And, contrary to the norm, there was even a clubhouse where we could shower (some players), drink beer and gob-off after the game.



#### Players Men of the Match:

- 3 p. - 'Ricky'
- 2 p. - Chris
- 1 p. - Neal

## Tokyo Crusaders vs. NTT Hibiya 49-19 (W), by Kyal Hill

I still haven't gotten used to putting on sun screen before a rugby game—as apparently hadn't a patchy pink Marc Sheratt who played in the morning heat last week—but the sun and blue skies did make it a sweet day for rugby.

>> The 2:30 kick off was also welcomed by those who had gotten up with the birds for the last game. Not everyone was smiling, however, as Safety Assistant for the day **Aiko Watanabe** was less than impressed with **Galdric** “You're supposed to wash these?” **Porta's** forgetting to clean the water bottles and **Kyal** “Oh, so that little pink bag by the door wasn't mine” **Hill's** forgetting the med kit. But we did get some co-medical relief when in the pre-game brief Ref **Yoshioka** asked us to help remove the gravel from the ground. As **Frank Saffery** remarked (out of ear shot of the Ref) “there's more gravel than grass on this ground!” (not to mention a couple of concrete grates). All in all, though, as far as Crusaders game days go, it was a relatively uneventful morning.

20 rugby-hardened Crusaders turned up for the game, but with **Tooley** sticking to sub

management duties, **Travis Dixon** and **Seth Robson** taking a well-deserved rest on the sideline, and **Benjamin Kunde** wisely deciding to let his still-tender broken leg heal, we were left with only one sub for two 30-minute halves. Nevertheless, any concern anyone had for a full dusty game in 25-degree heat dissipated when **Tooley** reminded us that “there will be beer afterwards.” And so it began.

Crusaders received the kick off and the forwards crashed it up the guts. Halfback **Roy Surita**, on debut for the Cru, worked the ball out wide and in short time the backs worked their magic, putting strong wingman **Chris Ekstrom** around the opposition's defense to notch the first of 7 Crusaders tries for the day. Taking over conversion duties from the usual but absent **Evan Hitchman**, **Brandon 'Ricky'**



### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - 'Ricky'

2 p. - Yorkie

1 p. - Galdric

**Rogers** had a cracker of a day with the boot as well as on the wing, kicking 14 points for a 100% success rate for the day, at least a couple of which were from out wide.

It all seemed too easy: 2 minutes down, 7-0 to us. But what happens when you think that? You start to play exactly the kind of rubbish **Trav** told us pre-game not to play. A loose pass went astray shortly after the re-start and a Cru knock-on led to the first scrum of the day, 20 meters out. Cru forwards came in with an anxious hunger for a good shove. “They've probably got us in the forwards,” **Frank** had said in the pre-game warm up, as we'd noted that they could have a size and experience advantage. So it was a shock to hear the opposition's plea for non-contested scrums. “You're kidding, right?!” So instead of a bone-crunching set and meat-grinding shove, we locked heads for sweaty neck kisses and they spun the ball wide. Our defense held for the first few phases, until we conceded a penalty under the posts 5 meters out (not rolling away or not letting go; I couldn't hear, I was too busy holding on to the meat pack I'd just brought down... sorry guys...). Quick tap and

they spun the ball further wide, scoring in the melee of our disorganization.

**Trav** comes out with some water and a rev up. “That's exactly what I was telling you not to do!” We all knew it. We didn't need to hear it. But hearing it dug it in just that much deeper. We gave them a short re-start and they seemed surprised, unwilling to take the ball, as it bounced around amid a pack of bumbling bodies. We claimed it, and star fullback **Roy Yorke** stepped and weaved in for the retaliation try. 10 minutes down, 14-7 to us.

It was like the scent of blood to a shark; now we were really hungry for it. From there, Cru forwards were happy to direct all their energy into crashing it up, backs tightened up their passes, and phase after phase we punched it up and spun it sharply through safe hands. 10 meters out from the line, bang in front of the posts, the call was to move it left. Big man **Macer 'Van' Allen**, Cru no. 8 for the day, heard the call, but insisted on going right. He must've smelled something, and his premonition paid off, as the big man crashed heed-



lessly through opposition forwards for a powerful try. 21-7.

10 minutes was now the average between Cru tries. But the backs weren't happy with that. 3 minutes later, after a few sweet passes out wide from the re-start, Ricky lightning-feet Rogers outclassed their wing and full back, notching up the 4th Cru try. 28-7.

5 minutes to half time. We wanted one more, just to slide the dagger in a bit further. Jonas Hult was hungry for it, too. So hungry, in fact, he couldn't hear his team mate's screaming call for the ball on the re-start. Jonas ran the right angle, positioned himself perfectly under the ball, but unfortunately on top of his team mate's toes. They crashed arms and shoulders, and he spilled it forward. Our defense held for several phases as the clock ticked slowly down, but at the last second they got lucky, or we got sloppy; it didn't matter: they scored. The conversion was no good, but it was the hit back they were looking for. 28-12.

Keen to prove the first half would not be repeated, NTT Hibiya came out hard in the second half right from the get-go.

We seemed caught on the back foot, and they ran through a skillful try on the wing only 3 minutes in. Add the conversion, and it was now 28-19. It was still our game, but it was threatening to be a very different game to the one we had fought for in the first half.

15 minutes of solid, relentless rugby followed. Their big no. 8 made some powerful barnstorming runs up the middle, quickly earning our respect and ultimately the nomination for MVP. Their backs were spreading the ball wide well now. But our defense held, and their attack failed, as their backs clashed with a solid Cru defensive line and conceded a knock-on. From there we re-gathered, fed the backs clean ball, and put Ricky around for try no. 5. After the longest scoreless period

of the game, it was the physical and mental battle that we needed to win. 35-19.

Determined to make the rest of the game ours, we took the re-start cleanly, hit it up, secured the ball, and worked it to the backs. Chris powered through one man, then another, and with a swift step and burst of acceleration past the third, he was away. 3 minutes between tries, and we were 42-19.

The re-start was short, but we were ready. The ball quickly found its way to the backs, and then in what was undoubtedly the play of the day, the backs displayed their awesome skill and finesse in bursting through gaps, drawing in opposition tacklers, and linking beautiful passes to put Ricky Rogers, 3,2,1 star of the day and opposition-nominated MVP, in a gap for a 50-meter dash to score the 7th Cru try, and his 3rd of the game. 49-19.

NTT Hibiya made a valiant attempt to regain some dignity in the last 8 minutes, but it wasn't to be. Solid Cru defense held to the end. Making those conbini beers afterwards taste even better.

Special thanks to **Cristina Andres Barrao**, **Incha Robson**, and **Aiko's 3 lovely friends** for turning up to support, and to another Cru friend who ran water for us. Rugby players alone do not make a team, and we are grateful for your support and help. The penalty count was 6 for, 10 against—"not too bad" according to Tooley—and the ref was pleased overall with the game, mainly only commenting that he had a hard time keeping up with all the running we made him do. Thanks also to NTT Hibiya RFC for a physical game played in good spirit, and for really teaching us the importance of securing ball in the ruck. We'd definitely enjoy a re-match! Lastly, cheers to **Galdric**, who did a great job on debut as captain, keeping us focused and only trying to change the ref's mind once (I think).

A great game, and a great day out. Up the Cru!





## Tokyo Crusaders vs. Doronco RFC 99-7 (W), by Wyn Hughes

It was hard not to feel a bit sorry for our opponents Doronco RFC, they are a better side than the final scoreboard suggested, but if you are not able to get the ball, then you are always going to be up against it, as they found out, with the Cru keeping the pill for the majority of the match.

>> The day started with the usual officious checks of boots, pads and fingernails before a slightly abbreviated warm-up due to time and space constraints. The cru had a good turnout with a squad of 21 including a handy looking bench.

The lads were a little apprehensive as this was a semi-final and the first step towards the Cru being back in the Tokyo Cup 1st Division. The intent of the team was shown in the first 3 minutes of the game when first **Rob** went over, followed by **Travis** just 90 seconds later. Doronco seemed a little shell-shocked at the individual power that many of the Crusaders had, constantly getting across the gain-line. Doronco finally began to get some phases together, but some sturdy Cru defence and Doronco knock-ons kept them in their own half. The Cru were

doing really well in capitalizing on territory as each time we got into their 20, a try followed. **Chris** and **Wyn** bagged tries in quick succession and the Cru were 28-0 up after just 12 minutes. Despite this, there were some areas of concern, in particular, support at the breakdown was lacking as players were getting isolated and turned over. **Evan** was letting the team know he didn't approve, and he has a point, against stronger teams we will get punished.

**Galdric**, who was a real workhorse all day, got himself a reward for his graft before the flood-gates closed for a while, as a series of errors by both teams meant that a run of set pieces dominated play. Doronco started to show that they can be penetrative, especially in broken play, however, with Cru cover defense, their endeavours came to nought, and their spirit





### Players Men of the Match:

3 p. - Rob

2 p. - Galdric

1 p. - Travis, Steve

was broken by Rob grabbing himself a brace and **Kyle** and **Yorkie** touching down just before half-time to go 54-0 up at halftime. The only lowlights of the half being a lack of support at the breakdown and **Yuuki`s** (who had a storming game otherwise) attempt to score under the posts resulting in him getting held up after having already crossed the line.

At halftime, being so far up on the scoreboard, **Tooley** decided to empty the bench with **Gen** and **Paul Ralph** on for **Yuuki** and **Yutaka** respectively, **Marc** departed the front row with **Eric** coming on. **Sean Gibson** came in for **Frank** at lock, **Seth** replaced Rob on the blindside with Rob moving to the wing to replace Wyn. The Cru also swapped one massive unit in **Pat Wheen** for another in **Jason Gall**. The new boys showed they were fired up with Seth in particular putting in some big hits. **Steve** scored a cracker of a try almost immediately from the kick-off with his hard running being difficult to contain. Kyle and **Chris** showed what phenomenal athletes they are by both completing their 'brace of tries' in quick succession. Galdric also doubled his try

tally for the day and looked to really be enjoying himself out there. With a twinge in his hammy, Kyle came off, leaving the Cru with 14 men for the remainder of the match due to Tooley's 2nd half bench-clearing move. Shortly after, Doronco scored a try of their own following a barrage of phases on our line. It was commendable that Doronco continued to play hard despite the scoreline. With about twenty minutes to go the game began to lose shape as some tired bodies began to drop passes and Doronco frustration began to show with some off-the-ball niggles.

The final 15 minutes may as well be christened the Rob Galbraith show as he scored three more tries to take his tally for the day to 5. His play in the loose was excellent and resulted in him being the Cru man of the match. The day ended with the Cru one point short of a ton, with a score of 99-7. Galdric Porta received two points and Travis and Steve getting one point in the team man of the match. Honourable mentions go to Evan Hitchman who had an 81% success rate with his boot (especially impressive given everybody seemed to score in the

corner) Yuuki who was destructive in the loose and Frank who made some hard yards with the octopus arms.

Despite the scoreline, the Cru have a few things to think about before our play-off game. We have to be more decisive at the restart and claim the ball. Also the support for the ball carrier wasn't up to the high standard we have been showing this season. On the bright side, the penalty count was 7-3 in our favour and this is a massive improvement from a few months ago. Also, it was good to see the boys keep their composure and discipline despite some niggles from the opposition with wayward hands in the ruck and some impeding of players off the ball.

Cheers to **Jessie**, **Oskar** and **Incha** who were our ballpeople. Also thanks to **Elizabeth**, **Rui** and **Chiemi** who ran the water for us. Thanks to **Aiko S** for being our records person and **Aiko W** as usual for her efforts on the medical front. It was good to have some support to from some of the Airforce boys, as well as **Cristina** and **Evan Kerr** for his ever-helpful comments on the

sideline. From there, it was off to an izakaya in Nishi Kasai where we piled 19 people into a glorified closet, most of whom smelled appalling, but plenty of meat was eaten and more than a few beers had.

On a sad note, it may have been the final appearance for the Cru for Chris Ekstrom and Kyle Cotton who have been awesome for the club, not just because of their natural athleticism and try-scoring ability, but also their willingness to learn a new sport and quickly adapt to their position. Hopefully they will be able to play our final game of the season in June, but if not, thank you gentleman and good luck with your moves.

## Tokyo Crusaders vs. NS Ruggers 74-21 (W), by Rob Galbraith

The stage was set for the climax to the season- the Tokyo Cup Promotion/Relegation battle for a place in Division 1 next season. The opponents would be NS Ruggers RFC whom we knew little about, apart from the fact that in order to bring up their results on google one would need to type in NS Lager RFC.

>> The location would be the Komazawa Olympic Park and as we strode in, we heard a boisterous crowd watching a game played on a pitch surrounded by grandstands. However, we would be playing on the rather less glamorous football pitch next door, with an imaginary half way line and an in-goal area more akin to sandpaper than fourth generation astro.

Nonetheless, the Cru turned up in good spirits, and numbers, with some better prepared for the wet weather than others – notably Tooley sporting the latest wet-weather head gear straight off the Milan catwalk. The pre-match kit-check went without a hitch and after running through some drills and re-starts, the Crusaders were ready for their last competitive match of the 2014 season.

From the off, it was noticeable that NS Ruggers, like any Japanese team, would not roll over against the relentless pressure they faced- in fact they wouldn't roll away from the tackle either. This led to penalty after penalty being awarded to the Cru within their opponent's 22, yet the strong NS Ruggers' defence, coupled with some handling errors due to the wet conditions, meant the score remained 0-0 for 13 minutes. It would appropriately be **Chris**, in his last game for the Cru, who broke the deadlock, and following this there seemed to be a greater air of composure to the Cru attack. A **Galdric** double soon followed as well as a try for **Yorkie** but the half would be remembered for two moments of equal disparity – a spectacular try and a spectacular miss. As Galdric strode through to cap off another fine team move, to his astonishment and all those around him, time seemed to stand still,... as he spilled the ball and con-

ceded a 5 metre scrum. Sacre bleu! The try of the match soon followed as **Jason**, on for **Kyle** (who suffered an eye-swelling facial injury), and playing in the unfamiliar role of outside centre, broke through and beat a man before throwing the perfect looping pass out to **Chris** who finished in style. At half time the score stood at 33-0; NS Ruggers had seen little of the ball and the prospect of the Cru shutting out their opponents for the whole game looked a very real one.

The Cru started the second half where they left off, with **Chris** touching down early after a lofty pass by **Travis** ("akin to the Cruden pass which put Savea away the day before", according to **Trav**). This was soon followed by **Jason**, who's try epitomized the Cru spirit. Despite only having to trot in unopposed from the 22, Jason was supported by 3 or 4 Cru players who jogged alongside him until he scored the five points.

NS Ruggers were starting to look weary and had conceded four tries in the first fif-





teen minutes with Travis frequently breaking through. Cru legs were also getting heavy and much needed changes were made at half time and throughout the second half including **Alex Diaz** coming on for his last game in a Cru shirt, excluding Okinawa. Although three tries were conceded after **Tooley** had cleared the bench, and against an NS Ruggers team gaining in confidence with every phase, the Cru battled until the end, when Tra-

vis touched down for the final try of the game. Given his season, there was only one man who was going to be taking the final kick – step up Chris Ekstrom. Would it end in a fairytale ending, icing on the cake of what had been a stunning season?... 'Course it did! The final score read 74-21 with the penalty count in favour of the Cru by 14-4.

The Cru had clinched promotion to the Tokyo Cup First Division with something to spare but that is not to discredit our opponents who

fought right to the end. The usual post-match pleasantries included their No.8 being nominated as their MVP, and farewell speeches by Chris, Kyle and Alex. Less pleasant scenes followed in the showers as **Frank's** presence left **Eric** feeling somewhat uncomfortable.

The post-match function was held in the Umaiya Izakaya near Komazawa Daigaku Station with 30 players, staff and supporters in great spirits taking full advantage of the nomihoudai and tabehoudai. Highlights/Lowlights, several boat races and the 321s followed with Galdric being voted our Man of the Match yet again.

At the end of what had been a great day and a great occasion, there are a lot of thank-yous to be said – thank you to the brilliant turn out of Cru players, and in particular **Jonas**, who was very unselfish in volunteering to be a supporter for the day after the squad was oversubscribed. Thank you to the staff (**Tooley, the two Aikos, Derek, Alex, Yusei, Rui, Kanako and Tomoe**) and supporters (too many to mention, but who included **Seth, Christina, Eri, Aiko, and my old man**, as well as numerous WAGs) who togeth-

er are the backbone of the club and without whom the club would not be nearly as successful. Lastly, a special thank you to the departing Chris, Kyle, and Alex – three quality players and top guys. I'm sure I speak on behalf of the Cru when I say you have been a great asset to the club and an absolute pleasure to play alongside, and we all wish you the very best with your future endeavours. As for the Cru's future, a step up to the Tokyo Cup Division 1 awaits, and although we are losing some class players, we look in a great position to step up and compete at the highest level next season.



#### Players Men of the Match:

- 3 p. - Galdric
- 2 p. - Travis
- 1 p. - Neal





## Awards

The End of Season Awards and Formal Cru Dinner was held at the ANA Intercontinental Hotel in Akasaka.

Dressed for the occasion, more than 80 players, friends and family members gathered for the evening - hosted by Team Manager Stewart 'Tooley' Henwood.



*Travis Dixon*

>> For the second year running, Vice Captain **Travis Dixon** gathered the most 3-2-1 points throughout the year to pick up the **Player of the Year** award. Not only that, Travis received the **Shuto Player of the Year** award by the Shuto League Association earlier in March. There's no reason his prowess won't continue as he takes on the captaincy of the team for the 2014/-15 season.



*Chris Ekstrom*

>> Scoring a hat-trick in his first ever rugby game, fly-boy **Chris** has been a marvel on the wing this season. Running circles around the opposition and beating almost anyone 1-on-1, Chris contributed to the team with 23 tries in only 13 games. Being selected for the Shuto All Star Team that beat Santama League on 1 December, Chris was selected Man-of-the-Match by the opposition.

## Most Improved Player



Eric Wilkinson

>> **Eric** has greatly improved his play throughout his time at the Crusaders but particularly this year where his ball carrying skills and ruck work have gone from strength to strength. Eric has also shown his versatility playing almost every position in the pack! Only injury has stopped him from progressing further and we are looking forward to seeing Eric develop into the fearsome runner and scrummager that we know he can be. He has at least learned Evan's #1 Golden Rule for forwards that will put him in good stead - "Forwards don't pass the bloody ball!"

## Captain's Award



Gen Hirano

>> **Gen** has been a great help to his captain and to the team this season by assisting the team manager in his absence, by translating with the referee and game organisers, by volunteering his time regularly and agreeing to every request we ask of him to represent the team at various events. He has also improved his game play immensely and both on and off the field can be described as "reliable" and that's exactly what every Captain needs! Thanks and well done, Gen. Special thanks of course go to Glen and Gary who assisted Gen this season in his work!

## CRU Ironman



Roy Yorke

>> **Yorke's** dedication to the Cru shows on and off the field. Apart from his position as Kit Manager, making sure we have great looking jerseys and training wear, he almost never misses a game or practice and makes sure the rest of the team pushes the limits of what they can achieve. With 16 tries throughout the season he finished a respectable 4th in overall scoring for the Cru.

## Clubman of the Year



Jonas Hult

>> The club website has gone from strength to strength over the past few seasons and that has been down to the work of **Jonas**. We are now the number one rugby club website in Tokyo and through it we are getting many new players from overseas who attracted to the great photos and content. A lot of hard effort has gone into this and for helping us grow on and off the field as a club, Jonas is a fitting winner of this year's **Clubman of the Year**.









