

TOKYO CRUSADERS



YEARBOOK 2015-16

A portrait of Stewart Henwood, Club President, a man with short blonde hair wearing a black polo shirt with a club crest and the word 'inspire' on the sleeve.

Message from Club President Stewart Henwood

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors, who have graciously supported the Club this year, and without whom we would not be as successful as we are. I would also like to take a moment to thank the wives and girlfriends of the players; ladies who have given up on having their man to themselves on Sundays.

On looking back on our achievements, I feel that the Club has had another successful season, on and off the field. We kept our place on the podium of the 1st Division of the Shuto League. We finally took the MacFadyen Cup from YC&AC after years of trying. We retained our own Meat Cup, gained promotion to the 1st Division of the Tokyo Cup, and capped off the year with a thrilling win to take the Turkey Cup. The social side of the Club was just as impressive, with numerous 'Bashes' and another annual Ski Trip, not to mention another Cru Tour!

I'm proud to be associated with a Club that is inclusive; where all players, regardless of nationality or ability, can get 'time on the field'. Sportsmanship and fair play, in victory and defeat, are important and respected aspects of our Club. I love this Club and may it never stop playing.

Message from Team Manager Travis Dixon

It was another highly successful year on the field for the team. Our record was 14 - 9 - 2 (W - L - D). We finished up third in the Shuto League, which isn't quite first but it means that we avoided relegation games and so we'll give it another crack next season. Arguably our biggest triumph was winning back the Mac Cup from the YCAC. This has been a few years in the making and it was nice to see the work going into our club behind the scenes paying off on the field. We went 3 - 0 in the Tokyo Cup, which also secured a promotion into the first division next year.

We average around 23 players per game, which is an excellent effort considering we played 25 games this season. We also bolstered our sideline ranks and support staff, which is always helpful.

We've got an enthusiastic group of new Executive Committee members coming on board, which will add some vitality into the club. I'm pleased to be handing over the management of the club to Reece Morgan, and I know he'll do a great job. Cheers all, Travis.

A portrait of Tom Cocks, Club Captain, a man with short blonde hair wearing a white and black jacket.

Message from Club Captain Tom Cocks

I think it's safe to say that this has been my favorite season so far for the Cru. At the beginning of the year, having just taken on the role of skipper, I was very concerned about all the top players and great characters that we'd lost over the previous season. I was worried that the great atmosphere would diminish and we'd struggle to get any results. However, I couldn't have been more wrong, we've had a staggering amount of new faces turn up. Guys coming from all over Japan and all over the globe, which has created a very diverse playing squad and a hugely enjoyable place in which to play rugby. This has translated into some great results on the pitch too. So next season, my hope is that the current core sticks around, helps the club grow further and I've no doubt we'll celebrate even more success. I'm pretty sure that we'll smash the hell out of the social side too!

TOKYO CRUSADERS

2015-16 schedule

FIXTURE

SEP. 6		SHUTO IOS
SEP. 20		KORYO RFC
SEP. 27		SHINJUKU JACK RFC
OCT. 4		DASEWA RFC
OCT. 18		ALL JINJAN RFC
OCT. 25		OLIVERS RFC
OCT. 31		YOMITAN BEACH BOYS RFC
NOV. 8		TOKYO GAIJIN RFC
NOV. 15		SHINJUKU JACK RFC (REMATCH)
NOV. 28		GARETH MACFADYEN CUP - YC&AC

 - A SHUTO LEAGUE MATCH

 - A TOKYO CUP MATCH

FEB. 7		ICHIKAWA RUSH RFC
FEB. 21		TOKYO DOCTORS RFC
FEB. 28		SETAGAYA RFC
MAR. 6		URAYASU BEERS RFC
MAR. 13		TODA OVER THE TOP RFC
MAR. 19		MEAT CUP
MAR. 27		MATSUDO CLUB
APR. 10		ACORN IOS
APR. 17		NS RUGGERS RFC
MAY. 1		MITAKA JPL RFC
MAY. 8		ALL FRANCE RFC
MAY. 14		FEVERS RFC
MAY. 15		TOKYO BAY RFC
JUN. 12		ALL JINJAN RFC
JUN. 19		TURKEY CUP - KICHIJOJI WILD TURKEY RFC

SOCIAL

★ HALLOWEEN

★ MOUSTACHE
BASH

★ XMAS PARTY
★ SKI TRIP

★ HANAMI
PATRY

★ BRAVE
HEART
BASH



Shuto League 10s tournament

CRU finish at QF

Pool Stage: 3rd

Cup tournament: lost at QF

Pool stage: 3 wins 2 losses 1 draw

#1: vs. Fuji RFC 0 - 1

#2: vs. Tentomushi RFC 1 - 1

#3: vs. Komaba WMM 0 - 1

#4: vs. Dandelions RFC 1 - 0

#5: vs. Aoyama RFC 3 - 1

#6: vs. Moccos RFC 2 - 0

Cup Tournament

QF: vs. Tokyo Gaijin South 0 - 1

Man of the Match

5pts Atsu 4pts Van 2pts Reece 2pts Ben 1pt Tom

After two solid practices with excellent turnouts (28 players over the two practices) our chance to play some real rugby finally came on Sunday the 6th of September in the form of the annual Shuto League Hub 10s Tournament. Last year we were knocked out in the first round of the playoff stage and we were keen to go further this year. However, with some sub-par performances in pool play, we made it difficult for ourselves.

Our first game was against Fuji Club, whom some of you may remember from the Tokyo Cup last year when they made an amazing fight back late in that game to come within one try of winning the game. Luckily we held them out on that occasion. But even with only 6 players turning up for the kick-off, the Cru somehow still struggled. Possession was going to be key for the whole tournament, as it is for every match this year, and two vital mistakes cost us dearly. Our first possession of the game was an excellent one and we marched Fuji about 80 metres of several phases, only to drop the ball in the red-zone while on attack. They capitalised on this and scored their first try, going ahead 1-0. They managed to hold us out and this remained the score for this opening game.

For some reason I can't remember much about the match against Tentomushi RFC, except we drew 1-1. Was this the match when Gibbo was put in the clear and ran over the dead-ball line? Even if it wasn't, that's worth a mention somewhere in this report. It's also a good time to welcome some of the new players to the Crusaders who played well all day. Reece Morgan, our new "prop" ran hard and put in good tackles. Yoshiaki was solid at 10 and looks like an excellent option to take over from yours truly at that position this season. Atsu, our smoking #9, played every minute of every match (the only player to do so) and never once looked like slowing down. Ben and Jerry are also great finds for the Cru, not for ice-cream, but for their excellent defensive work. Ben ran good angles out wide and Jerry showed his grit in defence in the final against the Gaijin with some big hits. Taichi showed his versatility all day, being able to cover backs and forwards positions, which will be a big help this season.

We always knew Komaba, our third match, were going to be tough and they eventually made it all the way to the Grand Final. We fielded our strongest team against them and had another excellent opening drive, stringing together several phases with good rockies (pick-and-gos), pods and a couple of maydays (backs ball). But yet another dropped pass and a turnover gave away possession in the red zone. Komaba made a break in mid-field and went on to score an easy try after we left our ruck exposed without a guard dog on the blind-side. These are the areas we've been working on in practice and we need to get them right for big games. We fought hard but could not overcome the 1-0 margin and this is how the scores finished.

We've played Dandelions in the past and we were able to give a few guys who weren't getting much game time a run out. Kenta played his first of rugby at the 10s, not only for the Crusaders, but ever! Well done, Kenta. We managed to squeak out a victory in this one, 1-0, with a try by Seth at the death.

We went up against two fellow Crusaders in our fourth match against the new club, Aoyama. Rei and Yusei are working hard to start a rugby club and we wish them luck with this. They gave us a scare early on, when we kicked away possession on the opening play and they went up 3-1. Luckily Van was there to bail us out with some storming runs, often with three guys hanging off him, and we went on to comfortably win 3-1. The points differential would later be quite important.

Our final match was against Moccos and we knew it was do or die. If we won, we'd be in the playoffs for the big prize and if we lost we'd be playing in the consolation pool. We played solid rugby and managed to win 2-0, which secured our spot against the Tokyo Gaijin South in the first knock-out match.

As the rain started to appear on the horizon, we kicked off in the final clash. Roy turned up at this stage, looking every bit the knight in shining armour rock-n-roller. It's always great to play the Gaijin, regardless of the format. With their flying Fijians across the field we knew good tackles

and defense would be key and we didn't let ourselves down in this regard. They scored one try from a reeling scrum where the half-back ran blindsided 40m to score. Again, unfortunately, this was the way the scores ended up and yet again we found ourselves knocked out of this tournament in the first round of the playoffs. We have the players in the squad to go far in this tournament next year; we just need a stronger turnout on the day.

The rain pelted down at this stage and the afermatches were rather subdued, with the Chippy that has become our surrogate club-house probably quite relieved only 8 of us or so braved the weather to have a few beers, chips 'n chicken.

As I said earlier, welcome to all the new guys to the Crusaders. With many old heads leaving last season we welcome new blood and will continue to do so all a. Thanks Megumi and Aiko who worked hard working for our team and working for all the teams, respectively. Thanks Gen for liasing with NHK and getting the Cru's only mugs on the TV. Thanks Tooley for getting to the ground early and pitching the tent (literally, not figuratively as per usual).

This was definitely appreciated late in the day. As were the likely ladies you brought along to spectate.

CRU on National Broadcasting

The team was on NHK (Japanese ver. of BBC) for a special program for Rugby World Cup





Shuto league match 1
CRU 12 - 39 Koryo
 Try: Roy, Rob

The Tokyo Crusaders got their Shuto League campaign off to a less than ideal start on Sunday September 20th, going down to an energetic and organised Koryo RFC side 39-12. Played in perfect conditions on the AstroTurf at Nakamine, it was a day where the Crusaders simply couldn't get their game out of second gear. Koryo RFC dominated possession for much of the first half and scored quickly to earn a deserved lead in the early stages.

Koryo played a quick and expansive game which the Cru tried to match with quick taps and quick lineouts, and this approach produced dividends early with a try to Rob Gailbraith around the 20-minute mark which was converted by Neil Howard. Things were looking positive for the Cru at this point as players like hardworking/hard-running no.6 Seth Robson and center Brendan Gallagher were starting to find holes in the Koryo defence. Unfortunately it was one-way traffic from then on as Koryo dominated possession and field position to take a 17-7 lead into halftime. Had it not been for some staunch defence at the end of the second half, the match could have been much further out of the Cru's grasp.

The Crusaders started the second half positively and built pressure on Koryo inside their own half. They started to get some go-forward with players like 2nd 5 Howard setting targets in the mid-field that provided, for the first time in the match, some relatively good quality second-phase ball for halves combination Atsu and Yoshiki to exercise a degree of control over the match with. The Cru were rewarded for their efforts with a try to no.8 Roy McGrath. At 17-12 behind, this was the end of the good news as Koryo took the game by the scruff of the neck and ran in a series of tries in the final quarter of the match to turn a close-ish game into a blow out. On the positive side, replacement winger Pierre looked likely throughout the second half, and will be even more dangerous if he can begin to bring distribution a a new dimension to his game. New players Andrew Corday, Lucas Grisotto and Sebastian also made their debuts and the Crusaders warmly welcome them. Some tough lessons were learned against Koryo, particularly in regard to holding possession to build phases/pressure, and playing to a pattern/ in an organized fashion. The Crusaders will also need to either develop a kicking game or be prepared to run the ball from everywhere (this reporter is hoping for the latter). With a few more games under their belt, this squad showed it has the character to push for the Shuto League Division One title.

Man of the Match 5pts **Roy** 4pts **Pierre** 2pts **Atsu** 2pts **Rob** 1pt **Brendan**

Sep.20 report by **Roy McGrath**



CRU 52 - 15 Shinjuku Jack
Try: Jon Ball, Coday, Brendan, Eric Seba, Atsu, Lucas, Tomo



Guest Player
Tetsuro
Japan/USA



Guest Player
William
France

It was another beautiful fall day in Tokyo and an exceptional ground laid ready in Tatsumi for another Cru battle. Unfortunately, our opponents were unable to field a proper 15man side so our former captain Travis and a few associates including Evan, Kenta, and Reece volunteered to support our rivals and donned opposing jerseys.

The game started out in unusual fashion with the Cru winning a kickoff and controlling the ball handedly for a few phases, before quick ball out wide to our backs resulted in an early try. After a few splendid defensive efforts from a united Cru front, turnovers and hard running from Jon and Andrew broke the Jack's line and the tries started to pile on. The forwards had their day in glory as 4 different piggies were able to breach the try line including Jon, Andrew, Brendan and Eric. Not to be outdone, the backs had their fair share of try-zone real estate as Sebastian, Atsu, Lucas and Tomo all added to the rout. Tomo was an exceptional highlight in the 2nd half, as the young scrum half was making his Cru debut and proved more than apt for the challenge. Kasha and Teddy each made their debuts as well and displayed exemplary efforts and strong Cru behavior, particularly in the aftermath in Tsukishima.

The final result was 52-15 in favor of the Cru and once again it was an excellent turnout and display of rugby for the Cru against a short-staffed opponent, but nonetheless proved to be a quintessential demonstration of Cru sportsmanship, sound technique, selfless rugby, and selfish beer drinking and karaage eating in the after-match.

Man of the Match 5pts **Coday** 4pts **Seth** 2pts **Atsu** 2pts **Lucas** 1pt **Reece**

Last Sunday saw the Tokyo Crusaders, still glowing from their triumph the previous week, aiming to chalk another 'win' on the board against the boys from Dasewa RFC, noted for their physicality and tight playing style. Nor did the game disappoint: victory never seemed certain for either side, and both teams' physicality and aggression were neatly reflected in the final 31-31 scoreline.

Upon arrival at Araka Undo Koen ground on that fine October morning, the Cru were somewhat at a loss: memories of Shinjuku Jack's facilities quickly faded on seeing the pitch, a hybrid swamp and mountain range, and realising that the nearest tap was ten minutes away. Worse still, the team lacked a scrum-half, though heavy guilt-tripping and begging saw Cru stalwart Koki take up the mantle. The return of absentee captain Tom Cocks lifted everyone's spirits, and soon both sides eagerly took to the field.

The Cru machine roared into life straight from the kick-off. Inching up the field with a series of pick-and-goes, the forwards made enough space for Lucas – with his usual blistering pace – to breach the defensive line, and score within two minutes of play. Dasewa, bemused by the sudden shift, came out fighting with the swift counter-rucks and wide movements that would typify their gameplay for the day. Still, the Cru defence held fast – new boy Yuji, at 15, showed great promise with his deep kicking game, giving the forwards ample practice for their unorthodox 'dwarf-tossing' lineout. The mauls rolled on and the pods held together, and 8-man Van soon thundered over the line for a second Cru try.

At this point, fortunes started to shift, as Dasewa's counter-rucks stole more and more ball, and the speed at which they played out wide started to wear down the defence.

They were rewarded for their tenacity with a try of their own and soon tallied a second thanks to their work around the fringes.

In true Cru style, the boys in blue responded with strong runs from Andrew Coday and fresh-faced winger Ryan, making repeated forays into the opposition half. Takahashi, replacing an injured Lucas, showed great prowess in the centre position, too. Another new addition, Masa carried the ball over the line, but Dasewa soon responded in kind, and later capitalised with a penalty to take the lead, although neither side demonstrated real dominance at the turn of the half.

The second half brought some fresh legs to the pitch: Van was dragged kicking and screaming back to the centres, as Kenji filled out the pack; Yusei 'Shrek' Shimoda joined the front row; new boy Takuto stepped in as blindside; even a brutally hungover Matt Sparrow made an appearance, playing a thoroughly adequate five minutes before the previous night's drinks revisited. Manager Travis, relieving an exhausted Koki, put an early try on the scorecard – converted by Yuji, who made his move to 10 – but an impressive rolling maul from Dasewa scored in retaliation. As discipline started to wane, and more runners became isolated, the match became a war of attrition with the Cru in need of a try to draw level. Luckily, Tooley was on hand to fire up the team with motivating, if impenetrable, words of wisdom. A number of powerful crash balls later, flanker Yusuke sprinted through the defence and over the line, before collapsing of exhaustion. The remaining minutes ticked by without a great deal of fuss, and the match ended with a 31-31 draw. Although they have a lot to take from the game, the Cru will be looking to work on counter-rucking and fringe defence, the two attributes exploited so incisively by Dasewa, to perfect their style in the future.

Man of the Match
5pts Van 4pts Yuji 3pts Tom
2pt Coday 1pt Koki

CRU 31 - 31 Dasewa
Try: Lucas, Van, Masa, Travis

Oct.04 report by Reece Morgan

A beautiful day for rugby (at least until the sun burned through the clouds), the Cru took on the All Jinjan RFC, in our second Shuto league match of the year. Omiya Kempo was a nice ground, with none of the surprise divots, bare patches, or random metal objects so frequently located on a typical Japanese grass pitch. It was also the apparent hiding spot of all the meters of try zone (goal zone?) which are missing from every other pitch in Japan, with what seemed like 20 meter goal zones on either side of the pitch.

It was a good turnout for the Cru, with 23 players taking the field while still having one or two in reserve. This turned out to be rather fortuitous as the day suddenly became quite muggy which sapped the energy from many players, and clearly had nothing to do with a lack of endurance on the part of many of us... Lack of training aside, the game also marked the Cru debut (a deCru, if you will) for both Benjamin and Shunsuke, who both had solid outings.

All Jinjan, as with basically every other team in Japan, were a disciplined, and fit team. And as with most every Japanese team their only real downfall was the lack of size, as evidenced by beautiful scrums from our side which gained us turnovers, and set up some awesome runs from our backs.

Sebastian (Who I will now refer to as Seabass) scored on two occasions with nice bits of running, which I as a Prop can only perform in video games. Seabass also managed to receive a yellow card at around the 23 minute mark in the first half for a 'minor' retaliation against a player who punched one of our own, by grabbing him by the throat. Pat When also got into the mix by bulldozing through half of the population of Japan to pick up a try in the first half as well. However, for all the good we did in the first half, we also managed to turn the ball over a number of times, and the gap in conditioning was starting to show, leaving the game close with a score of 12-14, Jinjan on top.

The second half brought with it a number of changes to the line-up, as well as a change to the Jinjan props which, along with the much mentioned conditioning, made the second half much more difficult in the trenches. That said, Seabass still managed his 2nd try of the game within the first 5 minutes of the second half with some nice breakaway speed to help give us a more comfortable cushion of a lead. After some strong defense from the Jinjan, Cocksby drove his way in for a score at around the 58 minute mark for our final 'official' score of the day; Atsu also managed a great bit effort for a clear try which was called back by our other opponent of the day, the Ref.

Jinjan managed one more score on the day, but it was not to be for the feisty team with the final score in favor of the Cru 26(31)-19. A hard fought victory against a team we will look forward to playing in the future, our vote for the MVP of the Jinjan went to their No.2, Mr. Hirofumi Kuroya, who played an outstanding match, making the lives of our forwards that much harder. The All Jinjan voted Atsu our MVP, which was well deserved as he set up many of our scoring drives, and was all over the field making key tackles, and runs.

Man of the Match 5pts Atsu 4pts Seba 3pts Rob 2pts Pat 1pt Neil Howard



Shuto league match 3
CRU 26 - 17 AJJ
Try: Seba 2, Pat, Tom

Oct. 18 report by Eric Wilkinson

Walking from the station to the ground for our 3rd Shuto League game, you instantly knew it was going to be a windy day on the riverside pitch. Although, for one poor soul, it wasn't just the elements that were a bit windy...Crusaders stalwart, Matt Sparrow, had clearly eaten the three week old sushi from the fridge as part of a health cleanse, and proceeded to spend the whole warm-up running to and from the port-a-loo to 'open his gate'...

With the extensive warm-up concluded, which was spent mostly trying to work out which way the wind was blowing, it was time for KO, and what a KO it turned out to be! Yours truly, kicking high and with the wind holding the ball up in the air, dropped it perfectly into the rampaging Alex Howard's hands to be gathered uncontested (maybe Sparrow had left a present in the area)! Alex tumbled on at full pelt when the Olivers boys finally switched on, remembering they needed to tackle the big lad, which, after a couple of attempts, they finally did – but Alex showed the kind of hands Sonny Bill would have been proud of and shipped a little pop to Seba who touched down from 10 yards. Conversion unsuccessful, but Crusaders were off to a flying start.

Less than 10 mins later and the boys in blue scored again – Tomo showing his usual tenacity and trickery from behind the scrum, to dot down close enough to the posts that I simply couldn't miss!

With the half coming to an end, and Alex Howard having berated half the team for their inability to read the wind and bounce, there was still time to see one more try. Akihito was rewarded for a great first half, barreling over in the corner.

17-0 at half time and the Crusaders were very happy with their efforts, so much so that even Sparrow managed to go the whole half-time talk with sh***** himself! The second half can only be described as a demolition job of Olivers RFC: in particular, by Sparrow, running the show from his favoured number 10 spot with some very hard lines and keeping the defence well-marshalled.

I'm sorry that I've neglected to regale each one in detail, but there were 10 tries in all, with 7 successful conversions, though I have Andy Howard's beer consumption and flag to thank for one or two of those 'successful' ones! The only blight on the performance being that we couldn't hold them to nil, with a couple of sloppy moments to let Olivers slide in for two tries. Final score: 67-14!

Thankfully Tooley was on hand to do his usual, fantastic job of translating whatever nonsense Cocksy was spouting otherwise the opposition would still be trying to decipher Gen! MVP's of the day were the opposition No.12 Mr. Keishi 'Big Lad' Takebuchi, with Olivers quite rightly voting for Rockin' Rob Galbraith!

However, there has to be a few special mentions starting with Seba scoring a fine hat-trick of tries and looking particularly smug with himself. Matt "Imodium" Sparrow for a great game at 10 AND scoring his first 'proper' try for the Crusaders, and finally Yasuhiro for making a well-earned day-boo! The day wasn't without incident, however, with Taichi injuring his hamstring and Rob suffering the worst dislocated finger I've ever seen! Wishing both boys a very speedy recovery.

All that was left was for the boys to head to the Bel Ami Izakaya with an impressive 18 turning out including a couple of WAGS courtesy of Yusei "It Best" Shimoda, not before Tooley had very kindly rung Tokyo Gas to get me switched back on for the huge bill of JPY1,100!!

Man of the Match 5pts **Rob** 4pts **Seba** 3pts **Sparrow** 2pts **Tom** 1pt **Tomo**

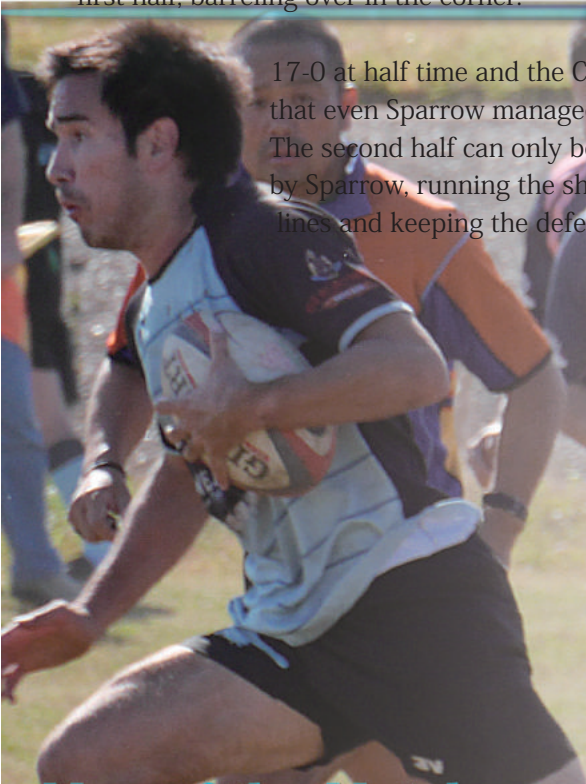
Oct.25 report by Neil Howard



Shuto league match 4

CRU 67 - 14 Olivers

Try: Seba 3, Tomo, Kashi, Rob, Sparrow





The Tokyo Crusaders kitted out for their fourth Shuto League match on 4th November against Tokyo Gaijin. The match was held at the Inagi Chuo Koen Sogo Ground. There was a huge downpour both before and during the match, but that did not deter anyone from either side as both teams had strong sides and full benches. Notably, there were two Cru debutants in our side for the day; flanker Ed White from the Uk and winger Rasmus Basilier from Finland. They both had outstanding games with their times on the field, but we are sad to say that this was most likely their first and final games for the Cru. The match kicked off in the pouring rain at 12:30. Both sides were a bit nervy to begin with, as both the Cru and the Gaijin knew the importance of this game. The Gaijin seemed to settle in a little bit sooner as they got an early try, which was converted to put them 7-0 up. However, the Cru managed to pull the finger out and started to apply the pressure. With the help of a yellow card to one of the Gaijin players, we looked a lot more comfortable and more in control of the game. Then suddenly out of nowhere, the Gaijin winger made a storming run up the sideline of the pitch, running over 50m. He was certainly in, but due to horrible conditions, just as he was touching down, he slipped and knocked the ball on over the line. A lucky break for us. Even though the sin binned player came back on suspiciously early, we still managed to keep pushing hard and kept the Gaijin under pressure. Then, Travis Dixon made a storming break, slicing through their defences and over the line. But, due to 'pressure' on the referee, the try decision was overruled as Travis was deemed to have gone over the very short (2m) dead ball line. Before the first half was over we had suffered a number of injuries. Prop, Akihito Kashiwaba, came off with a broken jaw, flanker, Sebastian Forastiere, came off with a knee injury and replacement flanker, Brendan Gallagher, went off to the blood bin due to his nose 'making contact' with a boot. Akihito Kashiwaba was replaced by Eric Wilkinson who had a stormer of a match with a number of big carries throughout the game. Sebastian Forastiere was replaced by Brendan Gallagher, who was soon temporarily replaced by Gen Hirano.

The second half began, with it still raining hard. During the second half, we made a number of substitutions, bringing on: Matthew Foster, Ed White, Shunsuke Murayama and Edward Downer. The Cru began strongly with a number of solid carries and line-breaks by both backs and forwards. Tom Cocks, forever leading from the front, spearheaded the attack, with more runs coming from Reece Morgan, Eric Wilkinson, Seth Robson and Travis Dixon. Our scrums and lineouts were extremely solid throughout the match, cleanly winning most of our own ball off the lineout. Sadly, we could not convert our opportunities, but the Gaijin took theirs, managing to get a converted try soon into the second half. The score is now 17-0 to the Gaijin, which included a penalty kick. The Cru did not let their heads drop and continued attacking and defending valiantly until the very end. No more scores were made in the match.

It was a day made for the forwards and it was truly a tough fight up front. After the match, both teams probably had many sore bodies, all in need of an ice cold pint.

We would like to thank the referee Mr Hiroshi Taniguchi for officiating the game in such horrible conditions.



Guest Player
Ed White
England



Guest Player
Rasmus Basilier
Finland

Shuto league match 5

CRU 0 - 17 Tokyo Gaijin

Man of the Match 5pts **Yosuke** 4pts **Travis** 3pts **Seth** 2pts **Tom** 1pt **Yuki**

Nov.08 report by **Matt Foster**



CRU 20 - 22 Yomitan Beach Boys

The Tokyo Crusaders had their return game against the Okinawa Beachboys. We knew it would be a physically demanding game, but at least most of the Cru wouldn't be as hung-over as the last match against the Beachboys. Numbers were short for both sides and after warming up, thinking we would play some 10's, we had a few late arrivals and spotted Edoryu RFC training next to the pitch. After sending some envoys over (including Andy for some reason), we had 5 extra players and were able to play 14's with 30-minute halves. We lent the Beach boys Seth Robson & Gen Hirano, something we would later regret doing! We had 3 players making their debut for the Cru, Mathew Foster, Edward Downer & Hiro Kondo. The game had a strong start from the Beachboys but our forwards were too much for them in the scrum, winning the first 5 or so scrums against the head and driving them back a good few meters. A great effort from the forwards. Andy got an early try from a good break with the forwards. 5-0 to the Cru. 5 minutes later, the Beachboys countered from a stupid kick from Ed Downer and ran it in for a try 5-5. Their backs were not as comfortable when they got the ball, and a few quick rushes gave the Cru a few turnovers but we were not able to turn these into points. In open play, Seth (the traitor) made a few good rip and steals and gave the Beachboys a few turnovers in good field position. 5 minutes after their last try, the Beachboys broke through again and bagged a second try by Yujin (Edoryu RFC ringer). They missed both of their conversions so the match was at 10-5 to the Beachboys. Dom and Pierre had some great runs and broke the line of defence with almost every run. Eventually, this turned into points for the Cru with a darting, side-stepping, in-and-out run from Dom, who took it over the line to bring it level at 10 all. The forwards put up a great battle at the front and were setting over the rucks well. This gave the Cru lots of possession, and if it weren't for the pesky Seth Robson, we might have got a few more points before half time. The Beachboys were testing the back 2 (no fullback) and we did well to get back and recover, but from open play the Beachboys ran around the outside with a quick run from their winger to put them up 15-10 at half time.

The half-time talk consisted of some heavy breathing, and a reassuring of the lads that we need to keep doing what we were doing, keep it tight in the forwards and then get it to our speed demons (Dom & Pierre) at the right time and the match is ours. Tooley must have said something right 'cause we came out of the blocks hard, and a few big runs from Matthew Foster and good work from the forwards gave us good field position where Dom, with a jingle and a jangle, cruised over the line for his second try. Unfortunately Andy didn't convert this try, either... but 15-15, GAME ON! We received the kick and kept possession, and worked our way back up the field. The Beachboys gave away a penalty right in front of the posts and Andy had the ball in hand ready to give it to the forwards to smash over the line. I am told it is quite rare for Andy to have such vision but he had a look wide left and saw Ed Downer had only one man to beat. He took the tap did a big looping pass, and Ed went over for his first try for the Cru.

Man of the Match 5pts Pierre 4pts Foster 3pts Dom, Eric 1pt Ed, Coday

Oct..31 report by Ed Downer

Andy's brilliance ended there as he missed the conversion. 20-15 to the Cru. Our lineouts were letting us down a bit and we gave away a fair bit of possession from turnovers and knock-ons. Their scrum had strengthened, so we weren't winning much against the head, either. The last 15 minutes of the game was a big effort from everyone, lots of big hits and carries from Reese, Eric and Matty Foster. We made a break from within their half and Eric made it over the line but it was deemed that he had lost the ball before grounding it. Anyone who knows Eric can guess that he wasn't a happy chappy after that. The Beachboys kicked the ball out of their half but we lost it in a lineout and they had possession back. We then forced a turnover from a ruck but then gave a silly penalty away in the middle of the pitch just inside our half. With 1 minute to go, Seth decided to take a quick tap and put all of the Cru offside, this bald kiwi ran 40 meters to score under the posts and tie the game at 20-20. And of course, to add insult to injury the Beachboys converted the try to win the game 22-20. We all felt the same after the game, SETH, YOU BLOODY TRAITOR!

In summary it was a good hit out with all the Cru playing the full 60 minutes. Special praise to Matthew Foster on his debut who went down a few times with an injury but got back up (not that we had any subs anyway) and Dom and Pierre in the centers who chased the kicks and put some rush defense pressure on the Beachboys. Good scrumming, rucking and carrying from all the forwards, but lineouts need a bit of work. We then headed to an Izakaya close to the pitch for a bit of grub and beers with the Okinawa boys. Later, we met up in Roppongi for the RWC Final, where most of us (except Captain Cocks) were looking mean in our Halloween costumes. Some of us kicked on from there and the rest of the night was a bit of a blur! That is all we need to say about that!!



Rugby World Cup viewing on halloween night



Shuto league match 2 (Rematch)
CRU 31 - 31 Shinjuku Jack
Try: Yusei, Yuki, Reece, Foster 2



The script for the Cru's last Shuto League match of 2015 was supposed to be similar to the one for their 52-15 victory over a depleted Shinjuku Jack RFC team in September. The 17 Crusaders who showed up for the sequel on a sunny Autumn day in Katsushika no doubt expected that they would be running through huge holes in the defensive line and shrugging off tacklers like they were paper-dolls. If that was what they were fantacising about (Tooley was thinking about naughty nurses and strict policewomen) as they ran onto a nice astroturf pitch on Nov. 15 then their reverie was about to be rudely interrupted. At first, it appeared that things were proceeding as expected.

Soon after kickoff stand-off Travis Dixon made a line break and a nifty off-load that lead to a converted try under the sticks for prop Yusei Shimoda. And it wasn't long before the Cru were back in Jack's red zone. When lock Matt Foster rushed to take a quick tap 5 meters out with only a couple of smallish backs staring him down it seemed as if the floodgates were about to open. That was when things began to diverge from the script. As Matt rushed to tap the ball it appeared to take on a life of its own and, as if by magic, leapt out of his grasp. The defenders who had been preparing to be smashed into the ground quickly transitioned to offense, toeing the ball deep into Cru territory. From there the Jack stayed on attack and crossed the line. It was a pattern that repeated itself throughout the first half. The Cru forwards would build momentum before a turnover, a deep kick and a bumbled return. Each time the Jack were left deep in Cru territory and they quickly racked up the points, leading 19-7 at halftime.

It dawned on many that ShinjukuJack RFC were a different beast than the lame donkey of a team who had taken the field with borrowed players in the first game. With a full bench and playing to keep their place in the first division they had transformed into a something resembling an aggressive billy goat. The goat continued to chew through the thorny Cru defense, butting aside defenders until it had scored five unanswered tries to lead 31-7 with 15 minutes remaining. Perhaps it was the thought of playing a relegation match in freezing conditions in January that spurred on the Cru but at that point something changed. On defense, Travis – named man-of-the-match by the opposition – moved to the backfield and negated the Jack's kicking game. At last, passes started to stick and gaps opened up for Cru runners including wing Toshi Takada, who made a good fist of his first ever game of rugby. Versatile prop Reece Morgan, who found himself in the centers after Neal Howard twisted his knee, scored. Fellow front-rower Yuki Adachi crossed the line soon after. But it wasn't until yours truly bumped off two defenders, spun like Baryshnikov and touched down under the posts that the possibility of an improbable Cru victory entered people's minds. Amazingly, in the last stanza of play the Cru drove to within a couple of meters of the Jack's right-hand corner. This time no voodoo could save the defenders from Matt – judged top man on the field by his fellow Crusaders – as he scooped up the ball from a ruck and waltzed into the end-zone.

The scores were tied at 31-31 and Travis had a chance to win it with his kick. Ice cool, he struck the ball nicely and it was only a post bending in the wind to bat down the ball that stopped it from sailing over. It can only have been divine intervention that stopped the kick from sealing the win but it was, perhaps, the fairest result. The Cru finished their Shuto League season with two wins, two losses and a draw leaving them mid-table on points with a place in the first division assured for next year.

Man of the Match 5pts Foster 4pts Seth 3pts Travis 2pts Reece 1pt Sparrow

Nov.15 report by Ghost Writer



Gareth MacFadyen Cup **CRU 38 - 29 YC&AC**

We couldn't have asked for a sunnier Winter's day in November to play our annual MacFadyen Cup match against the YCAC in Yokohama. I think the streak might have been long as six years in a row having lost this fixture, so the Cru, as always, were pretty keen to get their hands back on the cup. With the YCAC having pulled out of their league this year, we had heard reports that they were not as strong as previous years and that if we fielded a strong team we'd have a fair crack at the Cup.

With over 30 players showing up for the match, selection was tough. Cocksy and I decided to go with size in the forward pack, as historically we've been beaten at set piece and by their running through the centre of the field. With Van, Seth and Pat making up the back three, we were confident they wouldn't make many metres around the fringes, and we were right.

However, they did have a very strong centre who opened the scoring with a clean line break at the 22. Scoring under the posts, the try was converted and the YCAC took an early 7-0 lead. For the next 10 - 12 minutes the Cru dominated territory and position, seemingly forever parked on the YCAC 22m, but we just couldn't convert it to points. They did a good job sacking our mauls from lineouts and stopping our forward runners. After a few phases, I managed to get over with my patented dodge, duck, dip, dive and dodge (narrowly missing two flying islanders who were quite intent on decapitating me!). Neil converted to level the scores. The YCAC fired right back again with their centre scoring another converted try.

At this point in the match, with the blistering pace of the game, it's fair to say that a lot of the starting 15 were doubting if they'd be able to last the full match. We were sucking some pretty heavy wind as the tackling was as fierce as the running. Pat made some storming runs through the middle, not so much fending off players as assaulting them. This gave us good forward momentum and attacking opportunities. We were often out of position though, and running individually, as opposed to working in pods. This is partly due to fitness and also having different combinations each week.

But, after many years of frustration, I've finally come to accept that that's just how the Cru will always play - we'll make individual breaks and then just hope that someone's there for the pop pass; building pressure through phases just ain't our thing. At this point in the match, at least, it seemed to be working. So, only a few minutes left in the half, Seth scored and then Neil scored his first try for the Cru, taking the score at half-time to 17 - 14.

We made no changes at the half, as the game was such a dogfight that it would have been hard to come in cold and match the intensity from the beginning of the second half. The half-time message was pretty simple though - be patient and maintain possession and we'll win. We put ourselves in difficult situations in the first half through basic mistakes, so we needed to eliminate these in the second and simply hold on to the ball. We came out firing in the second half and in the first 20 minutes it was pretty one-sided; it really did feel on the field that we had more to play for than they did. It began with Andrew Coday scoring a converted try within the first minute. Reece, who had some storming runs and worked hard all game, got over the line for (I believe) his first try for the Cru. The wheels seemed to be falling off the YCAC machine as they then dropped a pass in mid field and Pierre showed a safe pair of hands and a clean set of heels to run 50+ metres and dot down over the line for another converted try. The score was now out to 38-14 and if there were any non-believers in the club they were now converted.

Man of the Match 5pts **Travis** 4pts **Pat** 3pts **Pierre, Reece** 2pts **Tom** 1pt **Van**

Nov.28 report by **Travis Dixon**



Recent GM Cup Result

2011 CRU 12 - 27 YCAC

2012 CRU 5 - 62 YCAC

2013 CRU 7 - 52 YCAC

2014 CRU 21 - 61 YCAC

Gareth MacFadyen Cup

CRU 38 - 29 YC&AC

However, the remainder of the game possession and territory were dominated by the YCAC as they kept us hard on defence in our own 22. The fact that we conceded 13 ded 13 penalties to their 4 in the second half didn't help either, and Dom was given a yellow card for repeated off-side offences. A minute after this the YCAC scored and then scored again quickly afterwards with strong work in the forwards. This brought the score to 38-29. We watched the conversion anxiously as it could have put them within one try. Thankfully it missed and we knew we just had to wait out the clock and not make any mistakes.

But their tails were up and they knew they were in the game. Both teams had made a number of subs by this point and the game had a whole new level of tension to it. The YCAC were desperate to get back over the line and their flanker (#7) seemed to have a whole new level of energy with ball in hand in the second half as he made storming runs around the park. They were running it from their own 22 line and the ball was going side-to-side across the park. We had to dig deep and do some serious work in those final few minute to hold them out. Thankfully, three minutes after their last try Mr. Lewis blew the final whistle and the celebrations began. Final score: 38 - 29.

Having played in the last five cup matches that we've lost, it was a pretty nice feeling being out there with the Mac Cup in our hands at last. For me it's a just reward and vindication for the amount of work that has gone into the club behind the scenes, led by Tooley and the Committee. We have a dedicated committee of guys who put in a lot of hours organising fixtures, getting sponsors, updating the website, recruiting, etc. I felt that was the difference on the field in that game - we were playing for our club, they were playing for a team.

During the usual speeches in the club house Cocksy was voted our MVP and their #7, Mike Muripora was voted as theirs (by their own captain, but we would've given it to him anyway as he led from the front on attack and defence in the second half).

We then tried our best to drink the YCAC out of beer as we had four hours to kill before our moustache party. By the end there were 30 + Cru members left in the bar, with the only others left being Simon Ryan (the YCAC Manager) and Steve the referee.

On that note, it's important to acknowledge Steve's efforts on the day. I wouldn't be envious of anyone having to referee this fixture. He did his best to keep a lid on things, with the pot boiling over just once, which is a pretty excellent effort.

After the YCAC match we headed (noisily) to Sakuragicho and had some fun on the way with the world's slowest traveller as a seemingly never-ending conveyor belt of pretty girls floated past. The party carried on at the Hard Rock Café where we had our annual moustache party. Earlier, Tooley had announced that through the Facebook 'Like' voting system, whatever that means, Aiko won the best moustache (that's the internet for ya).

Whoever didn't have a moustache at the party had some soon drawn on by Cocksy or Neil; even the waitresses were getting amongst it. It was a bloody fun night actually. Within five minutes of turning up and standing at tables belting out some Bon Jovi classics and serenading girls who had lost that loving feeling, I asked the manager if we needed to be quiet. He smiled broadly and told us we were awesome and as long as we were having fun he didn't have a problem (or at least that's what I think he said; I don't speak Japanese so I might've been mistaken). Nevertheless, this was the green light we didn't need and the epic conga line around the restaurant a few minutes later (the video is floating round the interweb somewhere) was the icing on an awesome Mac Cup cake.



**GM cup winning patry
Mustache Bash**



CRU XMAS
Christmas party at our sponsor
pub Hobgoblin Roppongi

CRU SKI TRIP
2nd annual skiing trip to hakuba



SYNERGY
PERFORMANCE





The Tokyo Crusaders headed out to Chiba to face off with Ishikawa Rush for the second season in a row. This year the weather was thankfully better than the minus 5 and pouring with rain that we had last year, and our team manager had also made the clever decision not to book a ski trip on the same weekend with half of our players out of action!

This time come kick off, with no ski trip scheduled or other excuses we still only had the bare minimum, only Trav and Tooley on the bench! We said welcome back to Chris Ford, a Tokyo Crusader from way back who joined us for this game and who normally plays Scrum Half who stepped up to the plate and slotted into the front row to play prop for the very first time! He says helping to run the US Sevens in Las Vegas he had lots of experience at hookers, so he should be fine in the front row! Also another welcome back to Alex Herrera after a long stint abroad who is back in Japan with the Cru. Coming off a 40-0 thrashing last year vs Ichikawa, who are supplemented on big game days with the lads from Superman, we knew the opposition would be a tough outfit and from the off the Rush put us under a lot of pressure winning turnover ball at the ruck and getting quick ball out to their backs. In a tight first half, the Cru battled away after a quick start by Ichikawa with a good try to Lukas but were still down by 2 tries at half time. In the second half the scrum (with our #9 doing a sterling job at loose-head) was one of our highlights as the rest of the play was poor, with handling errors, silly turnovers and regular penalties handing too much possession and territory to a skilful, well-drilled and aggressive Ichikawa team. Our defense did its best to hold out the opposition for as long as it could and did well to only concede the 6 tries in total, bagging a breakaway try to John Akiba out-wide who looks a classy player and one to watch in future games. The final score was 38-12 to Ichikawa, closer than last year, but still a disappointing result. Hopefully with a fully fit and full strength roster the Crusaders can give a better account of ourselves next year and make it a bit more competitive. Hats off to the first time players who made their debuts for the Cru this week, Yahye, Genta, Moses and John – all had storming

games and showed glimpses of what is to come from them. The points went to John Akiba, who had a fine game playing in the centres and on the flank just ahead of our new Fijian recruit Moses and Rob, who was consistent as ever in the forwards.

CRU 12 - 38 Ichikawa Rush



Landing at Misato-chuo, many Crusaders could have been forgiven for feeling like they were in a dream. Thanks to the efforts of 'Sonny' Dill and the navy boys, the team sheet was overflowing with names – more than thirty blokes were there, boots in hand, keen to play for the badge. And what better day for the new boys to have their first game of rugby, when everyone on the opposite team is a medical professional?

The Cru hit the ground running with early tries from John Akiba and Alex Herrera, but both had to be earned: the Doctors came flying from the gates, eager to beat the Cru's pack, usually its strongest point. Still, the Cru's no-nonsense, no-talent approach to pushing through the midfield paid off, only for some atrocious handling on the wing to then give the boys in black the perfect opportunity to swan-dive over the try line (cheers, Downer). Foster, annoyed by this intrusion, picked up two of his own in short succession, only to be answered by the Doctors once more. The half time whistle went, and the game changed completely when the teams retook the field. The forwards, knackered from their exertion in the first half, asked the backs to pick up



CRU 39 - 34 Doctors

the slack – and they answered the call.

With Sparrow and Dill starting to marshal the game, the Cru found more ways through the Doctors' defence, with new boy Cody headbutting his way under the goalposts. True to form, however, the backs then also let two tries in, before Jon Ball bunny-hopped through the defence and finished the game with one more try for the Cru, winning 39-34.



Guest Player
Laurant
Australia
3 games

After the game, the Doctors took the highly unorthodox step of joining the Cru for beer and food: unfortunately, Tooley's excitement at seeing barmaids meant that he'd booked Saizeriya, for two stale pints and half a sausage each. Disgruntled at such treatment, the Cru then headed back to their home turf – the Matsudo ojisan bar – for fish 'n' chips and flagons of ale.

Warm(ish), sunny weather greeted 24 Crusaders, their 6 supporters and Setagaya RFC on the afternoon of Sunday, February 28th for, what has been over the past few years, a friendly but close-fought contest between the two sides. Things got off to a shaky start in the first few minutes when a few basic handling errors afforded Setagaya the opportunity to punish said offenses with a try within two minutes. It took the Cru a few more minutes to find their rhythm but, when they did so, there was no looking back. After the Cru's initial try from Sebastian Forestiere (and what would go on to be the first of three from him) 8 minutes in, the Crusaders would fall into a pattern of scoring a try every 6 minutes, on average, while holding the opposition to 20. It was one of the most notable performances in recent history, with the forwards wreaking havoc in the middle before giving it up to the backs, thereafter featuring some brilliant linkage from our South American contingent (Lucas and Sebastian) and continuing through the hands of a number of players for several 60-meter+ tries. As mentioned, Sebastian scored a hat trick, whilst Matt Sparrow and Seth Robson scored two each. Also scoring tries were Kenta Sakano (his first ever), Matt Foster, Jon Ball (his second in as many games), Reece Morgan and Alex Herrera. There were also quite a few debuts on the day: Andrew Burton (unfortunately injuring himself in the first five minutes – take care, Andy), Hirokatsu Mori (also injured early on – come back soon, Hiro), Yuichiro Takahashi, Ryota Kano, Yuma Matsuda, Paul Martingell, Kei Takakura, Alex Sigler and Mizuki Tani. Hopefully we'll see more of these guys in the future, as all contributed greatly to the victory.

Final score: Crusaders RFC 69, Setagaya RFC 20.

After the match it was on to the local Okonomiyaki restaurant for beers and a feed for about 18 of us, including 4 of the Setagaya boys. The sanjikai was a few road beers on the train and a solo mission to a Hub (though I won't say who that was.)



CRU 69 - 20 Setagaya

Try: Seba 3, Sparrow 2, Seth 2, Herrera
Kenta, Foster, Lucas, Jon Ball, Reece

Man of the Match 5pts Foster 4pts Ryota 3pts Reece 2pts Sparrow 1pt Moses

Feb.28 report by Sean Gibson



Guest Player
Satoshi
Japan/UK

After the club kicked off the 2016 spring season with an average of 25+ guys on the field for the first 3 games in February, the Cru were going to have tough road games during March.

The team would face the Chiba champions, Urayasu Beers; Saitama champions, Toda Over-the-Top RFC;

and Chiba's No. 2, Matsudo RFC. All these would be very important fixtures to test ourselves before the Tokyo Cup in April. So game #1 for March, here we go.

It was an early Sunday morning, meeting at 9am at Maihama Station, where the team saw many young girls who had come to visit Tokyo Disney Land. The stadium and sports complex of the city of Ichikawa, which is located next to TDL, are totally outstanding. On the approach to the ground, the team spotted about 30 of the Urayasu Beers players already doing warm-ups. As has become quite common now, many of the top clubs want to play against the Cru, for the opportunity to play physical rugby. The Beers were well prepared for the fight. They fought physically well in contact, stayed in Cru territory, and scored a few tries via driving maul from line-outs when they got inside the Cru's 22m. Beers had scored 38 points by the half time. The Cru could not find a way to get inside their 22m: it was all about territory, 30/70 to the Beers, with possession at 40/60.

The Beers made several changes, and their front five all looked like second rowers. Perhaps because the referee took a 10-minute break at half time for a suspected toilet stop, the Beers might have lost a bit of focus, and a well-rested Cru started to fight back. Game captain Rob Galbraith, Reece Morgan, and Matthew Foster often broke their defensive line, and made it less and less organized. Finally Foster nailed down a try by running over a few opposition players from their 10 meter line. Another try for the Cru was produced from a series of line breaks by Rob and Reece, then Takafumi finished, scoring his first try for the Cru in only his 2nd game for the club. The Cru continuously created opportunities, yet could not score another try because of small mistakes. The final score was 12-64, but as the second half scoreline (12-26) reflects, there was a marked improvement to our gameplay after the first forty minutes.

This match was the last game for Laurant, who played 3 games for the Cru this spring while he was on an internship in Tokyo. Hopefully, we will see him back on another occasion. The initial aftermatch plan, crushing with girls at some restaurants around Disney park, was changed, as most of the places were full on the Sunday afternoon. Instead, the after-match drinking took place in Shin-Urayasu in a quiet little Japanese restaurant, which certainly did not expect to be flooded by a hungry and thirsty rugby team. Finally, several guys went to Matsudo, for their favorite Ojisan bar afterwards.

Man of the Match 5pts **Foster** 4pts **Rob, Reece** 3pts **Yayeh** 2pts **Ev** 1pt **Jon Ball, yoshiki** Mar.06 report by **Glen Taylor**



Toda Rugby Festival Invitational


CRU 29 - 10 Toda
Over the Top

Try: Foster 3, Tom Ball, Travis

It was a nice breezy over-cast day for the match against TODA Over the Top. You could just tell rugby was in the air as the match would be part of a rugby festival with skill and age groups ranging from little kids all the way up to the bigger kids such as The Cru. Spirits were high in the first half as The Cru were playing into the wind. The Cru showed great discipline through executing pod work and continuing their weekly running support improvement. TODA had excellent back defensive work as they had the closing speed on the fringes and forced The Cru to use their interior size to break through the line. At the end of the first half TODA was surprised with the score being 22-5 in favor of The Cru as the pace of the game had felt closer. The defensive match-up with the backs continued on into the second half as both teams made their adjustments to gain an edge for victory. Both teams seemed to have opted for a defensive pace as only 1 try aside were scored ending the match 34-10 with The Cru coming out with the win.

Two players made their debut today for The Cru, Tsukasa coming on as a wing and Kazushi at fullback who also scored a try. A few familiar faces returned to the line up. Tom Ball, whom was called up from the Philippines for an unrestricted single match contract, connected with Lawrence through excellent chemistry in the mid-field. There was also a cameo appearance on the pitch by one of The Cru patriarchs, Travis D. with his Jedi like skills to gravitate the game around himself.

The Man of the Match for The Cru went to Matt Foster. His efforts for the match are definitely something to write about. Each of his four tries amplified by the color commentators over the P.A. were a delight to witness. Poems and songs had to have been written about the beauty and grace of the big man charging down the pitch. But it wasn't all about charging down the field. It had to have been his hair, feathered and lethal. Something you just don't see in the sports world anymore.



Nonetheless, with plenty of grumbling, groaning and early opening of tinnies, a ragtag group of thirteen or so made their way to the Akigase ground, dreading the kicking that their washing machines would take later that day. Sure enough, the ground was 'playable' in the British high school rugby sense of the word: suitable for swimming. With a drenched pitch, almost zero opposition and no meat in sight, the day looked beyond saving. After a brief warmup and heated discussion over whether or not you can make two 7s teams from thirteen people (answers on a postcard, please), the day was finally organised: a three-team 10s tournament, featuring the Crusaders, NTT Hibiya, and a combined force of the JSDF, All France and Ottawa. Much to their horror, the Cru and NTT Hibiya were the first to take to the pitch, wondering how best to keep their boots shiny-clean.

Cru vs. NTT Hibiya

The Cru sprang into life from the kick-off, with John Akiba and Alex Howard (two pints in by this point) roaring over the try-line in quick succession. Some surprisingly smooth hands from Matt Sparrow, combined with Lawrence's phenomenal footwork, kept the tries flowing. Finally remembering that you're not supposed to kick toward your own goal line, Sparrow also slotted all nine goal attempts in this first game. Of course, the Hibiya boys weren't cowed by the Cru's speed and strength, responding with gusto and scoring two tries of their own. Score: Cru 63 – 12 NTT Hibiya

JSDF/All France/Ottawa vs. Cru

With a slightly altered line-up to allow certain players to catch up on their drinking, the Cru returned to the pitch to play against the combination team. As expected, the opposition were quick from the off, startling the exhausted Cru squad. Nonetheless, the boys promptly found their rhythm after Sebastian's opening try – catch from the kick off; a couple of forward phases; out to Matt and Lawrence, then do it again. It was by no means an easy game, however, with the combined squad putting in excellent work around the fringes and making the most of their speed down the wing. Some excellent defending from Tsukasa kept the sheet clean, allowing John and low-rent Bruce Willis impersonator Sean Gibson to rack up a try each as well. Score: JSDF/All France/Ottawa 0 – 41 Cru

NTT Hibiya vs. JSDF/All France/Ottawa

Both teams were eager to come back from their losses, with some excellent hands and big hits on show. As the mud churned more and more, it became very difficult for the two sides to make big breaks, leading to a fair amount of on-the-floor play and a more physical game than the previous two. Ultimately, the combined team's unfamiliarity with each other became their undoing, as Hibiya put their well-drilled approach to good use, scoring three tries and keeping their opponents off the scoreboard.

Score: NTT Hibiya 19 – 0 JSDF/All France/Ottawa

Like some kind of Power Rangers-style robot, the combined team then joined up with NTT Hibiya for a big finale, with the boys in blue eager to take home their trophy for another year running.

Cru vs. the world

Seeing the final stretch ahead, the Cru were quick to take the lead from another Sparrow sidestep. Having bullied Yaya for his terrible hands during the break, the Cru suddenly found themselves with an extra scrum-half on the pitch, giving Reece his first try of the day (to cries of 'I told you I can pass!'). The combination squad held tight around the fringes – the Cru pick-and-go being a centerpiece of their play – but couldn't keep up with the constant pressure, with Andy and Sebastian both scoring after big breaks. As both teams grew more tired, the Cru switched to a wider style of play: Lawrence, as ever, sprinted off into the sunset, with Tsukasa and Reece picking up a couple more as well.

Score: Cru 43-0 the world



3rd Annual Meat Cup
CRU Retain the Cup



As the games drew to a close, unsung heroes Seth and Jerry appeared with a military base's worth of beer and meat, and stalwart Sebastian manned the BBQ. The raffle, filled with some phenomenal prizes from the Cru's sponsors and friends, was a big hit, and a great day was had by all. In true testament to the rugby spirit, everyone gathered together for that most noble of traditions: the boat race. Finally given a task they've trained for, the Cru romped home for victory. As the taxis went their separate ways, the Cru contingent made its way to Ikebukuro Hub, where absentee Matt Foster had his pint for MVP avoidance and the usual antics began.

Massive thanks to everyone who helped organise the day, as well as our sponsors, but ultimately the applause must go to NTT Hibiya, the JSDF, All France and Ottawa RFT. Not only did they turn up on such a vile day, but were outstanding sportsmen from start to finish and never backed down. We look forward to the next game, gents!

Meat Cup MVPs

Player of the tournament: Mr. Kawasaki (JSDF)
 NTT Hibiya – Mr Harada; Mr. Yamagata; Mr. Tanaka
 JSDF/All France/ Ottawa: Mr. Kawasaki; Mr. Ishikawa; Mr. Yagi
 Tokyo Crusaders: Matt Sparrow; Reece; Lawrence




The Tokyo Crusaders would like to thank the following sponsors of the Meat Cup raffle...



CRU 12 - 39 Matsudo

Try: Sebastian, Sparrow



Unfortunately much of that positivity was evaporated by a Sunday morning 11am kick-off, which must surely be a handicap of at least 20 points against the Cru to start with. Indeed arriving at the ground it soon became apparent that we had barely managed to scrape together 15 players, mostly of whom were forwards, with several players letting us down, despite confirming their attendance. This meant that we had no subs and therefore our fitness (and hangovers) would be really tested... Matsudo also had a number of players missing, including their prop forward, so it was decided that scrums would be uncontested, effectively nullifying one of the Cru's recent areas of strength.

Anyway into battle we strode, with the managers inspirational final words still ringing in our ears "don't get f*#!ing injured!"

Perhaps it was the early kick-off, or the number of players forced to play out of their regular positions, but the game got off to an untidy start, categorized by a number of errors and breakdowns, with Matsudo being quick to win loose ball and especially strong at turning over Cru possession. Despite such a scrappy start and Matsudo dictating territory, keeping us pressed back in our own half, the Cru held on resolutely for over 20 minutes, including a fantastic try saving tackle from XXXXX(?) who managed to force their player over the line, when already clean through. After 25 minutes Matsudo finally made their pressure count, with some nice work by their backs allowing them to finally score the first try of the day. Unfortunately after holding out for so long, the flood gates opened, with Matsudo scoring two more tries and adding one conversion, to cap off a devastating spell of seven minutes and seventeen unanswered points. At this stage things could have become really ugly, but the score didn't seem to reflect the quality on both sides of the pitch and the Cru did well to regain composure, exert some concerted pressure and rounded off a good spell, with Sebastian Forestiere scoring a nice breakaway try, right on the stroke of half time. Despite the failed conversion attempt, the strong finish lifted the spirits as we entered half time with the score 5-17 and some momentum back in our favour.

As the second half got underway, we knew that we needed to keep things tight and try to close the gap. We started the half strongly and found ourselves camped just 5 metres out from their line, unfortunately we continued to make too many individual errors and after another turnover led to a Matsudo try, the frustration started to grow, both with ourselves and with some decisions that we felt didn't go our way. We began arguing with the referee and it was during one of these moments that Matsudo reacted properly, taking a quick tap-and-go penalty and running the ball the length of the pitch to score, while several of our players were still interrogating the referee. After the game we were reminded in no uncertain terms, of the importance of playing to the whistle and only the captain talking to the referee and as we look forward towards the Tokyo Cup we will have to cut out this indiscipline. With no subs and some tiring bodies, the second half followed a similar pattern to the first. We were rarely outplayed, however we lacked that little bit of quality, or good decision making at vital moments. Finally we got some better support for our forwards and a couple of good pods and a strong rolling maul, led to an opportunity for Matt Sparrow to break and score under the posts, which he duly converted himself. However before any chance of a stunning fightback could materialise, another try and a nasty accidental injury to Christian Carillo, who had to be stretchered off, took the wind out of our sails and left us further exposed, allowing Matsudo to add insult to injury with a final score right on the full-time whistle. We later heard the sad news that Christian broke a bone and tore a ligament in his ankle and is now in plaster and unlikely to play rugby again. We all wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him at social events or on the sidelines as he will always be part of the Cru.

The final score was Crusaders 12 - 39 Matsudo RFC. The game was played in a great spirit throughout and there was a real sense of frustration from the Cru after the game; knowing that if we had just had a couple of extra players and could have cut down on some of the errors, we would have had a very good chance of giving them a close game. That said the 15 players who were present come out of it with a lot of credit for lasting the full 70 minutes and for the willingness of so many to play out of their regular positions.

Man of the Match 5pts Foster 4pts Rob 3pts Sparrow 2pts Tooley 1pt Seba, Paul

Mar.27 report by Paul Martingell

It's been six months since I donned a Crusaders shirt and although faces change, waking up at the crack of dawn with a hangover to travel out to the middle of nowhere it seems is a constant with the mighty Cru! Soka University was going to be the location of the battlefield in which younger, fitter, faster and better drilled Japanese university teams would run rings around us at Rugby 10's (Which is as I'm sure you know, not much like its big brother Rugby Union). This then was rather worrying when we turned up with 13 forwards and 4 backs, which is a bit like turning up to a tank battle with a butter knife, utterly bloody useless. Now it is worth noting that this university is a lush campus embedded in the mountainous area around Hachioji, with a rich history, vaults of money, picturesque surroundings and the slight issue of it being a cult. This however did not perturb our mighty leader Sgt Tooley as he strode off towards the changing rooms with the vigour of a young stallion, ignoring calls from the team that we were not getting changed there. It later came to light that they were using the main changing rooms for the girl's health exams. Planned? Whilst warming up there was a slight whiff of confidence (possibly stale booze) in the Crusaders camp, we had played our opponents Acorn before and had come away victorious. This however was 10's the different beast that favours the fit and fast and doesn't make a great use of power and brute force. We knew if we could keep the ball in hand we had the game wrapped up. The first half was close with just 5 points in the Crusaders favour from Tsukasa, we at this moment realised that we needed to play smarter rugby as every forward was out of breath huffing and puffing so much that the three little pigs were sighted running into the distance. We regrouped and decided that no matter the reality that we would bite down and show true grit! The second half opened with a beautiful try from the returning Brendan G who we are pretty sure just

turned up to show his visiting mother he did play sports on a weekend and didn't just binge drink. The score line held till right at the dying moments when Acorn scored a much deserved consolation in the corner, finally that sweet sweet whistle!

Next came the other joy of a tens tournament waiting around for our next match (the two hours was the perfect amount of time to get our breath back). However we sprung back into action for the next warm-up session. Next up were a young, fit and keen university side who wanted to stuff the old fat fools. The first half we dominated with tries from Reece "I did warn him" Morgan and Yahye and a lovely conversion from Matt Sparrow. However the half time team talk certainly made the oppo come out fighting with three quick succession tries with no reply from the Cru, we were defeated, deflated but we still had some juice in the tank. Waiting, waiting, waiting for it to end and a beer to arrive. However we stepped up for a final game and I think interest had been lost. We were to play Soka university in the plate game. It started badly with the spritely sods running circles around the entire team, it finished just as bad with them running more circles around the entire team. The goat they sacrificed prior to the game must have really worked them wonders as they were an unstoppable force, and by force I mean speed. The highlight of this game however was the wonderful recently wed Captain Cocks who stepped in as full back for the last 5 minutes of the game. Now all that beer in Thailand mixed with the elation of being a married man must have gotten to his grey matter just at the moment the ball was kicked over our heads and the Soka university squad chased it at warp factor 9. Where was our esteemed Captain and replacement full back? At the bottom of a ruck! Game, set and match Soka.

A very formal presentation followed with speeches and something that was almost passable as beer (where on earth did they buy that stuff?!?). Then came the drinking games with bottles of Pepsi, at which point the wife turns to me and says "You really were not lying, rugby players are all idiots no matter where they are from". Special mention to Matt Sparrow who inhaled a bottle of Pepsi, years of drinking finally coming to some use to show up the younger fitter boys. At least we won something!



**CRU Hanami
@yoyogi park**

Acorn 10s Invitational
CRU : 4th Place



This week's opponents were Nippon Steel Ruggers. The day started off with fairly reasonable weather, albeit slightly overcast – the decent weather was not going to last though, because by the end of the game, we would be playing in what I genuinely thought was a full blown (forgive the pun) tai-fun. As this was the first game of our Tokyo Cup campaign since our relegation to the second division, the Crusaders were keen to put down a marker to show that our relegation was undeserved. Despite the early start everyone managed to show up on time, and we lined up for the somewhat over-officious Tokyo Cup pre-game inspection that the senior players are now all too familiar with. Having made sure that our nails were beautifully manicured and we weren't making the grievous offence of wearing non-navy, black or white undershorts, we were permitted to get underway.

The Cru took advantage of the only positive of a ridiculously early start, which was having some space to warm-up, so we started the game ready to go. As such, it is surprising that Matthew Foster took so long to score his first try... 1 whole minute! Poor show! Matthew then managed to get his second try about ten minutes later with another storming run. This was followed with fairly evenly spaced tries from Neil, cutting through the back line on a nice angle, John Akiba with a quick tap and go, and finally Reece smashing through the defence. Neil had a solid kicking game with 4 out of 5 conversions going over, making the score at half-time 33-0 to the Cru.

The second half brought more solid work from the Cru, as well as the debut of everyone's favourite Bavarian – Jacob Basiliyos, who was to be integral in the Crusaders defense of our precious clean sheet with some head-rattling tackles. The first try of the half was scored by Tomonori, coming into the back line from full-back to put it under the posts. Tomonori obviously enjoyed being back after being unable to play for a while, as he then proceeded to be the second Cru member to pick up a brace of tries (within three minutes of each other!). Travis Dixon then broke through the defense to score two tries, although quite honestly he looked disgusted at having to run over half the length of the pitch for his second try. The highlight of the second half was seeing the giant white arse of Matthew Foster as his boxers somehow managed to disintegrate in a tackle; he then had to play boxerless (and rather carefully – lest little Matt pop out to greet everyone) for the rest of the game.

Unfortunately, Genta took a knock to the head and went off with a split eyebrow, devastating his future modelling career opportunities. Two consecutive yellow cards for high tackles reared their ugly head – one for NS Ruggers and our own Reece Morgan (is he actually tall enough to high-tackle anyone?) leaving both teams with just 14 players. Not to be disheartened, Luke Bradley scored the Crusaders final try of the game. For the remainder of the match we seemed to be pinned in our half, battling a determined NS Ruggers who were desperate not to get nilled. Some solid tackling from the Cru – particularly noteworthy were Jacob and Luke Bradley – ensured that we kept a clean sheet. Neil Howard kicked a further three conversions this half, leaving the score at the final whistle a convincing win of 64-0. A great start to the Tokyo Cup campaign.

Man of the Match

5pts Travis 4pts Foster 3pts Reece 2pts John Akiba 1pt Neil Howard

Apr. 17 report by Matt Sparrow

It was a calm sunny Sunday morning when our boys showed up to the Rinkai Kyogijo Stadium pumped up and ready for another solid performance at the Tokyo cup. It was the 2nd Tokyo cup game, which was a must win for the Crusaders if we are to keep our hopes of promotion alive. We arrived at the field with exactly 23 to fill the roster. While the team went to go get gear checked by the referees, they announced some good and bad news. The bad news was that Mitaka rugby club didn't have enough players to play a 15's match, so they had to forfeit the game. The good news was the Cru received another W in the books which was equivalent to a 35-0 win.

Due to the default loss by Mitaka, both teams decided to play a practice game. Some Cru members volunteered to play for the other team, while some other teammates had no choice. The 1st half was an exciting one for the Crusaders. Making it over the gain line almost every phase, we consecutively drove it down the field on every possession. Furthermore, our offloads, after we broke a couple of tackles allowed us to play a faster style of rugby. Sometimes it got sloppy with silly senseless knock-ons and penalty calls, for hands in the ruck, but we were diligent enough keep on playing Cru style rugby. (Try scorers, first half: Brendan G, Reece M, Matt F, John A (2), Tsukasa K, Amhed Y, Jackie W).

In the 2nd half Cru made some big changes. Four of our big and talented backs and forwards went to the other team, but Mitaka still didn't have a fair chance against the Crusaders.

The Cru's forwards methodically ran over the gain line so we could get a clean ball out to Travis (10) and the rest of the backs. From then on, The tries and conversion kicks points were raining down on the scoreboard. (Try scorers: Travis, John A, Jackie W).

At the end of the day the Man of the Match for the Crusaders was Travis Dixon.

For Mitaka it was Mr. Atsushi Ono.

All in all it was a great day. A win under the belt and no one getting injured. Thank you for a fun day of rugby and let's go get that last win for the Tokyo Cup. P.s. Thank you to the supporter who came out to watch the game, the water and tee girls, cameraman Gen. Finally, thank you Aiko-san for your support all throughout your time with the Crusaders. (It was her last day with Cru) You brought energy, hospitality, and a great attitude to the Crusaders team. We will miss you dearly. Please come support us again soon. As always, "Once a Crusader, always a Crusader."

Tokyo Cup match 2

CRU 35 - 0 Mitaka JPL

**Try: Sebastian, Tomo, Sparrow
Foster 2, Reece**



CRU 50 - 22 All France

It was the best of Halves... It was the worst of Halves... The Cru was out on a lovely Sunday to play the venerable All France RFC (AF). Despite AF only having 14 guys, they valiantly did not go "Cheese Eating Surrender Monkey" on us and played a very lively 14 on 14 match. The Cru opened with the match kick-off by Flyhalf "Fast Eddie" Downer. All France (AF) scooped it up and after a few phases turned it over. The Cru won the scrum, ran a few well-

moved phases, and then spun the ball wide to Jackie "Chan" Wilson, who went the length for the score. Unfortunately, he didn't ground the ball DIRECTLY underneath the posts which gave the kicker a rough go of it in very windy conditions. In a theme you may see play out over the course of this write-up, the conversion was no good. AF gamely answered back not 3 minutes later with a well worked try down the sideline. 3 minutes after that the Cru fired back with another backline try where Shunsuke finished it off nicely. Conversion was no good. 17 minutes in, the Cru was once again knocking on their doorstep due to strong rucking from Sean "They call me Bruce Willis at the Porn conventions" Gibson and Captain Reece "I'm half Welsh, but mostly Scottish" Morgan. In addition Matt "My real calling in life is at Flyhalf" Foster was thundering through the defense with some strong runs. After several phases the backs swung to the weak side and John Gorman finished the move. This is when Ahmed "They call me NO-NO when it comes to conversions" YaYa took over goal kicking duties for the rest of the match. Conversion NO-NO good. A few minutes later the Cru kept to the game plan and after several successful Pods sucked in a few defenders, the backs quickly shipped it to Jackie who went in for his brace of the day. Conversion NO-NO good. With 5 minutes left in the half, Sebastian "I'm not keen on zee French" Forastiere broke for a nice try up the middle (Conversion... you guessed it NO-NO good). AF kicked off with just 2 mins left in the half. After some initial sloppiness off the kick, the Cru was rewarded with a penalty on their 22, which went straight through the hands, across the field to a waiting Sebastian who made a fantastic tip-toeing run down the sideline. Conversion was... Well let's just move on to the second half. Half time Score : 30 - 7

**A quick halftime note: it has to be noted that Tooley went above and beyond this particular Game Day. One of the French kicked the ball into the river 3 minutes before halftime. Vowing to "not lose a Cru match ball", Tooley dropped his pants and dove in to get the ball. (Jerry has the You tube clip of it. It's a great watch. The ref was filming on Jerry's go pro and all you hear over and over is "Very Dangerous!!")*

The second half was a much sloppier affair. Aside from a shoulder-charge penalty in the first half, both teams were penalized 5 times each in the second half. Despite the penalties and some sloppy handling, there were many bright spots. AF kicked off and managed to somehow steal the ball in the first ruck, quickly taking it in for a score which went unconverted. It was a needed wake-up call and our second favorite Flyhalf Matt Foster took the rock straight to the house and righted the ship. Not to be outdone by himself, 7 minutes later he did it again. Into the fray on both instances, stepped our picture of consistency, Ahmed.....and missed both conversions. After a quick water break, something, which I have never seen on the rugby field, happened. A try was scored and it broke the hearts of BOTH teams. In one of his many bruising runs of the day Jon "I will be very sad if I don't get the" Ball powered through the defense and over the try line only to cough the (no pun intended) Ball up. However he did it while turning towards the middle of the field to get close to the posts. In doing so he dropped it backwards, then fell on it. The ref said it wasn't a knock on in goal, Try awarded. It broke AF's hearts because they knew that that was the nail in the coffin. It broke the Cru's hearts because 16 guys thought they had free pints at the chippy after the game.

You'll never guess what happened with the conversion.. ..In fact, Ahmed swears it went over the posts. The rest of the planet assured him it went under...With 3 minutes to go Matt Foster slotted in at Flyhalf and proceeded to not touch the ball once. With the game winding down Big Jon Ball blasted one more over just to clear the air and make himself feel better about going on leave this week and abandoning his mates for next week's game.. but no, we're not bitter. OH, and Ahmed missed that one too.

Final Score: Cru 50- All France 22

Man of the Match

5pts Seba 4pts Jackie, Reece 2pts John Gorman 1pt Yahye

May.08 report by John Gorman





So, we were playing against the Fevers; ironically named, given that the mid-May temperature was hotter than a junkie's teaspoon, meaning the artificial turf was at serious risk of melting. After displaying a morbidly average level of enthusiasm in the 5 minute game of touch rugby that formed the basis of the warm-up, we were feeling confident enough to mix up the team positions a little. Secondrows became fullbacks, scrumhalves became backrows, and Sparrow became a hooker. (Not for the first time apparently, wink wink)

It should be noted that the ground staff had already decided that putting up posts would be a bit too much effort, meaning that Ahmed 'Yoyo' Yayhe was unable to repeat his kicking performance from the previous week. It should also be noted that this was my first game for the Cru, so I didn't see Ahmed's kicking the week before, but I did play with him at YCAC so I can imagine his kicking was as accurate as a George Lucas remake of Braveheart. Alongside myself in the debutants corner, were also Gareth Tait, Tomoki Ikushima and Mamoru Adachi. It would be a bit presumptuous of me to welcome us to the team, so I'll leave that for someone else to do.

The first half kicked off, balls were caught, tackles were made, and pods were practiced. It didn't take long before the Fevers line was broken, with Reece warming to his role at stand-off by running through the defence and going over somewhere near where the posts would have been for the first try of his first half hat-trick. Loads of other tries were scored in the first half, and I don't want to list them all, instead I want to focus on Matt Foster's touch-kicking. On the first penalty, the Cru were awarded in their own half, Matt, playing at fullback, stepped up to the plate. Now, despite never having seen him kick before, I hope I'll be forgiven for not being filled with confidence about his kicking abilities, and the Fever's winger seemed to match my pessimism as he set himself a mere 15 meters down the touch line from where the penalty was awarded. But once Matt put hoof to ball it was clear that his less-than-lithe build was just an elaborate mask, and he slammed the ball to just short of the opposition 22. It was a thing of beauty. He tried the same a few minutes later and ended up surpassing even his own expectations by putting it dead behind the Fevers goal-line.

Anyway, the second half got underway, though after only a few minutes Cru had their first injury of the game, with Tooley injuring his abdominal muscles after being hit in the head. If anyone can explain this, please let me know. More tries were scored, with Yoyo going over to complete a hat-trick, which resulted in a call from the side line of "Ahmed, you're handicapped" as though that was new information. In fact, after a while, so many of the backs were restricted to 'five steps before passing' that the back line was more handicapped than a crippled golfer. That didn't stop us though, with the forwards taking up the try-scoring mantle; the noteworthy one being Sparrow catching the ball from a kick off and running at the defence, which parted like a Geordie's legs, allowing him to run from our 10 meter line to the try line before any other Crusader could really be bothered to move.

I don't want to focus too much on the other tries, instead I want to focus on Matt Foster's second half kicking. It was a spectacular return to the form you'd expect from a second row, at one point almost missing the ball entirely. The final whistle came, and the final score was 70 – 10. The opposition flyhalf – Mr Honda – got our vote for their MVP, whilst Matt Foster was voted as the Cru MVP for being so big that no-one could tackle him.

CRU 70 - 10 Fevers

When the communications went out that the Cru would be doing a “double-header weekend” on the 14/15 June, there were a few eyebrows raised as to whether we’d be able to get the numbers for both games…more specifically for the Sunday game, which followed our annual “social fixture” against the Fevers. However, get the numbers we did, but it wasn’t particularly helped by the author of this report, who slept through his alarm and turned up just before half time…

The Sunday fixture was against Tokyo Bay RFC, a team who’d reached out to us and about whom we didn’t know a great deal. We had a squad of 16, meaning total rugby and putting square pegs into round holes, whilst they had a squad of around 25 with youth very much on their side. Within the first 15 mins we were two tries down; the opposition seemed to love the quick tap and their style resembled a game of 7s at times. Seba managed to get a try back before half time – a neat individual effort, a side step and pirouette followed by a jinking run and chip-and-chase before touching down under the sticks (…or at least that’s how I pictured it – I was in the taxi at the time). The score was 7-15 at half time to Tokyo Bay and they rang the changes, including moving their No. 8, who’d been fairly effective, out to the wing. The second half started as the first had finished with a Cru try, Matt Foster barging over to narrow the gap to one point. The gap widened but with 8 minutes go it was an eight point game and all to play for. However, some poor defence by the Cru and the pace, fitness and skills of the Tokyo Bay backs in particular proved too much and the game ended 19-39 to Tokyo Bay.



CRU 19 - 39 Tokyo Bay

During the post match speeches, the Tokyo Bay management dropped in the fact that they’d also borrowed players from PSI – a semi-pro 7s outfit who regularly play against Top League 7s teams – and one such player was their number 8, who was a Tongan 7s international who had played at the Hong Kong 7s a few months previously. Thank you to Taka for being ever-present on the sidelines and best wishes for a speedy recovery to Paul Martingell, who came off injured with chest pains, later diagnosed as 2 fractured ribs. All in all, a great day and I hope the start of an annual fixture against Tokyo Bay. Difficult to really know how good Tokyo Bay are per se, but I believe a full-strength Cru side playing against Tokyo Bay/PSI would be a very competitive fixture and I look forward to that next season.



**Meanwhile..
@AGM**

Tokyo Cup 2016 Result

Division 1

Superman
Dasewa
Koryo

Tokyo Gaijin
Kurumi
Olivers (*)

GWRC

Hurricanes

Division 2 (promote to Div.1 for 2017)

Crusaders

Yellowbucs

Wildturkey (def. Olivers)



Tokyo Cup match 3

CRU 48 - 31 AJJ

**Try: Sebastian, Tomo, Sparrow
Foster 2, Reece**

Last Sunday's fixture saw the sunny Sankei Misato ground become the battlefield for the Crusaders vs. AllJinJan promotion clash. The boys in blue were keen to round off their excellent year – a Shuto league podium finish, winning back the Mac Cup and retaining the Meat Cup – with a final jewel in their crown, but AllJinJan had given them a solid game earlier that year, and were not to be underestimated. After all the unnecessary officious rubbish ('pull your socks up, boys! He keeps going on about it!'), AllJinJan came flying out of the gates at kick-off, keen to use the Cru's lack of fitness and talent to their advantage. However, with Tooley's advice about fellatio

and arse-biting ringing in their ears, the Crusaders slipped neatly into their pod-heavy gameplay, and banged away enough for Matt Sparrow to sprint off into the sunset and chalk up the first five points; unfortunately, he pulled a Yusei, and failed to convert.

Packing down into their first scrum of the game soon after kick-off, the Cru forwards rolled back the AJJ pack, fried chicken and beer foam giving superhuman strength to the asthmatic brutes. However, their inability to move around the pitch soon gave AJJ the chance to slip through the defence and score, then slot, one of their own.

Responding quickly, swift hands through the backs set up MVP Sebastian for the first of his two stellar tries, slipping through numerous tackles; Reece rode eternal soon after, shiny and chrome, into the gates of the AJJ try area. After a water break, the onslaught continued, with juggernaut Luke Bradley and Matt 'BoJo' Foster gaining try time of their own. Finally, the pygmy skirt-chaser Yoyo took a pass from Travis just before the line, and scored in his final game for the Cru. The kick was converted, but unfortunately the kicker's name has been scrubbed from the records. At any rate, it certainly can't have been No-No. Aside from one last organ-rearranging tackle from Luke, the last two minutes slipped by without incident, the Cru leading at 36-7 into the half.

The second half saw plenty of changes – prop Ed 'Complete and Total' Downer taking up the 11 jersey, Brendan, Yuki and Genta taking to the pitch, a few back line changes, and the return of Kashi, finally able to eat solids again. The first ten minutes passed in the same way as before – the mighty Cru pack steamrolling the scrums, while the backs talked about boys and dress sizes. Still, half-back Tomo continued his rampage across the field with five points of his own, and – true to form – Seb took to his new place at centre like a duck to water, scoring his second of the day. At this point, however, the constant scrummaging started to take its toll, and the forwards began to die off. EXILE TRIBE came on for One Direction as Hiro took over the 1 jersey, and BoJo returned to the Brexit campaign, replaced by local degenerate Sean Gibson. All agreed, apparently, that the Cru should do their best at this point to throw the game away: and sure enough, the AJJ machine roared into action, keen on inflicting some damage. With their far greater fitness base and speed at the breakdown, the purple shirts scored 24 points in almost as many minutes, the same time-frame in which the Cru gave away 8 of their 10 penalties on the day. Nonetheless, the boys held out, and at 48-31 the final whistle blew, and Division 1 promotion was assured.

Man of the Match 5pts Seba 4pts Reece 3pts Tomo 2pts Travis 1pt Luke

Jun.12 report by Tom Cocks

2nd Annual Turkey Cup **CRU 36 - 33** Kichijoji Wild Turkey

Man of the Match

5pt **Seba** 4pt **Reece** 3pt **Foster**

2pt **Sparrow** 1pt **Luke**



It was a greyish Sunday afternoon. The Crusader members assembled at the Musashino Rikujo Kyogijo for what was regarded as a friendly game with the legendary Kichijoji Wild Turkeys RFC. As I had heard earlier in the week that it was a rugby "festival" I envisioned Candy floss, Karage and chocolate bananas. Wasn't to be. With kick-off set for 11:50am we started getting into our warm up at around 11:37am, much to the displeasure of in-form utility Matthew Sparrow. After a few stern words the boys managed to squeeze out a 5 minute intense warm-up including the now famous "opening of the gate" 11:50am rolled around and it was time for kick-off. With a 'sell-out' crowd in the stands, it was hard to take this game lightly. Shunsuke Kaneda was the match official for the day and he made his intentions clear early.

The Crusaders took the paddock humbly oozing with confidence after taking out our division in the Tokyo up the week before. However, the bubble was soon to be popped as the Wild Turkeys crossed the line for 2 quick tries in the first 15 minutes. With looks of concern and a new found sense of urgency, the Crusaders struck back with a try to the kick-and-chase King, Sebastian Forastiere, which was converted by Mr Sparrow. With 10 minutes left in the first half the Turkeys hit back with an impressive try. Right on the last minute try-scoring phenom Matthew Foster scored a try, taking the Cru into the tunnel with the scores sitting at 14-19 in favour of the home-crowd favourites. After a somewhat emotional halftime chat from Tooley the boys came out firing. Unfortunately, the opposition scored in the first minute of play. What followed was a sky-blue tidal wave with tries to Reece M, Jerry S, Matthew F, And Sebastian F. The Turkeys fought back valiantly towards the end but the will to hold up the 'Turkey Trophy' for 30 minutes was too strong and our defence was able to hold them out, taking the game 36-33.

Luke's List – memorable moments

- Big Bad Jacob Basiliyos played his last game of 15s for the Cru, what a way to go out.
- The Human Bullet Joe Flagler and Takaaki "The Tank" Onuma played their first games for the Cru
- Jerry "The Silent Assassin" Sysourath crossed the line for his first try for the Crusaders
- Uncle Seth copped a gash to the head even Buck Shelford would be proud of.
- Turkey Trophy presented by Mayor of Musashino city
- Formation of one of the most-feared groups in Kanto "The Crusader Babies Club"





Braveheart Bash

@Japan vs. Scotland 2nd test
@Roppongi

After countless days of searching second-hand shops, sex dungeons, the missus's wardrobe, and that shop in Akihabara for tartan skirts, the Cru finally assembled at Tobitakyu station. Some were true Scotsman,

with kilt and sporran; most were horrifyingly overweight high-school girls; Tooley, for whatever reason, had gone for 'pirate chic'.

At any rate, with woad daubed, beer bought and underwear dropped, the horde made its way to Ajinomoto Stadium for the clash between the Japanese and Jockanese.

The match passed by largely unnoticed by the beer-swilling barbarians, and soon it was time to head to Roppongi. Despite getting horrendously lost, annoying everyone on every line, and Cocks becoming unable to navigate escalators, the Crusaders – bagpipes in hand and Flower of Scotland in their lungs – managed to make their way to the Hobgoblin.

Few sights will ever beat the glory of the Cru, in variegated tartan with a bagpipe-player at the helm, waltzing into every bar on the strip and ruining people's nights. Luckily, we soon ended up at Geronimo's, where more alcohol was consumed, clothes were lost or ruined, and future drama-bombs wheeled slowly into position. All in all, it was a cracking night, and we look forward to smashing it even harder next year.


Sunday 3rd July will go down as probably one of the hottest days any of us have ever played rugby in. However, the impending doom of inevitable sunburn did not deter our spirits, as we all had some Factor 50 and we were too busy trying to stay awake, given that the day started at 08.30 in the morning. The boys mostly made their own way to the Edogawa rugby field, being led by a sea of soon-to-be-extremely-sweaty rugby players all donning their game faces and going to for pre-match fags. It wasn't a day to be taken lightly, and we all knew that.

Game 1: Doronco RFC

After an intense warm up, consisting of the opening and closing of many gates by Matthew 'Captain-ish' Sparrow, we took to the field against an unknown opposition. Right at kick off, Reece 'Power Dwarf' Morgan put the fear of God into the opposition and caused a retreat to their own line and an eventual turn over, leading to Jacob 'The Bavarian' Basileynos going over the line for the Cru's first try of the day. Within the next minute, Reece 'I went to Cambridge' Morgan made a break and was through, but had drawn



Shuto 10's '16



a blank on where to put the ball down. Luckily for him, the referee was nice enough to show him. Other highlights of the match include Matthew 'Sledgehammer' Foster and Jacob 'The Machine' Baseliyos going over for two more tries, and Luke 'Fred Rogers' Bradley being too nice to kill his opposite number. It should also be noted that Sean 'The Sheep' Edwards made his first start for the Cru. The management decided that the natural-born centre should scrum-half, and he had a fine day setting down the marker with a monstrous first hit in Cru colours. It should be noted that none of us realised that the games were only 6 minutes long until the final whistle.

Game 2: Cabs

After a strong first match, we were looking to repeat the fortunes of earlier. After a tight first minute, Jackie 'The Professional' made a sprint for the line, giving the opposition no chance of catching him. A couple of minutes later, Joe 'Wannabe Prop (for some reason)' Flagler touched down for his first try for the Cru. In the last minute, the Cabs got a last minute try thanks to a break from their fullback. Other highlights include a front-peel line-out being called and ACTUALLY WORKING and Genta 'Sea Lion Tamer' Tanabe pulling off one of the best clearance kicks any of us have seen in a long time, easily making 60m in the process. Finally, it must be noted that Jon ',' Ball made a very unorthodox covering tackle, whereby he put one hand on the speeding opposition and dragged him into touch. Fine stuff.

Game 3: Tokyo Gaijin South

The game started off tightly with neither team giving nor letting up. But then, during a Cru attack inside the Gaijin 22, Luke 'SBW' Bradley produced a beautiful offload to set up Matthew 'BoJo Hoffman' Foster for the try. What followed was a serious defensive display from the boys. The Gaijin were pushing hard, but we stayed strong. An extremely enthusiastic Travis 'One Can Down' Dixon, Luke 'Who is Fred Rogers?' Bradley, Reece 'Quadzilla' Morgan and Joe 'Lion's Mane' Flagler put in a particularly strong defensive effort, even saying hello to some familiar faces among the Gaijin ranks.

Game 4: Nerima

It was a tight game from the start. Sean 'The Only Welsh in the Village' went over for his first try for the Cru. However, it was quickly followed by a Nerima try caused by Reece 'Butterfingers' Morgan gifting the opposition an interception. The game got extremely tight but superstar Robert 'Rob, Robbie, Bobby? I Never Know Which One It is' Galbraith secured a last minute try to secure the victory. There were many notable moments here. Firstly, at kick off, Hirokatsu 'Ramenator' Mori got smashed, but held onto possession. After the intercept try, Reece 'Roid Rage' Morgan got a bit upset after his successful music career – and burgeoning modelling career – were put under threat by a small boo-boo on his cheek. The last play of the game was very interesting. After the last-minute try, there was still some time left. Nerima were putting the pressure on and Joe 'The Professor of Pain' Flagler put in a huge hit to eventually force the turnover. All that was left to do was to put the ball into touch. That task was left to the very capable Jon'ny Wilkinson' Ball who proceeded to miss the ball in an effort to kick it. The referee, thankfully, deemed the ball to be dead in the middle of the pitch, and the final whistle was blown. Score: 10-5 to the Cru

Game 5: Aoyama

This, too, was another tight match. The game could have gone either way if it wasn't for a stunning break by Tsukasa 'Speed Demon' scoring the only try of the match. The highlight reel includes Anders 'That Makes Two Swedes' Heiles and Takaaki 'The Monster' Onuma making their firsts starts for the Cru. Mr. Onuma made a dazzling break, taking the hit like a champ, only to have the magic taken away by Seth 'Canonball' Robson flying off his feet in the ruck earning himself a yellow card. The incredibly fast and tight game was ended by a somewhat confusing dance by Travis 'He's a Father Now' Dixon to take the ball into touch. It should be noted that dance is the closest word I can think to describe what it looked like. Think of the 'sideways skips' in slo-mo and that should give you a better picture.

Intermission

After five games, we had topped our group and we were looking strong. At about midday, we had a short break and the opportunity to enjoy a unique rugby match. It saw all the club's presidents going up against a team of props, one from each club. We had offered up Stuart 'El Legando' Henwood for the presidents' side and Jacob 'Mr Versatility'

Baseliyos for the props side. The crunching match saw a close game between the two sides and an unprecedented 15-a-side 15 minute match. For anyone who was present that day, fifteen minutes in that heat takes a special effort. We saw some big hits and turnovers from Tooley and we saw Mr Versatility plying his trade at prop, hooker and number 8.

No-one was paying close attention so the score is lost to history.

Game 6: Kawagoe Fighters

After two minutes, Reece 'Prop Life' Morgan went over the line putting us ahead, but the match was far from over. The Fighters continued their push for our line, but then completely against the run of play Matthew 'Shemale Slayer' Foster made a break for the line. His surprising turn of speed caused the winger chasing him down to become confused and start doing cartwheels. He couldn't catch him. The last two minutes saw a huge defensive effort from the Cru, who at this point were beginning to look a little worn by the heat, and they kept the sheet clean.

Game 7: Ashitaka

Before the game kicked off it should be noted that Travis 'Lost Count' Dixon was having some very one-sided banter with the referee and the opposition, taking several practice kick offs before we were officially meant to begin... but finally, we got underway. The match was at deadlock as soon as the whistle went. Early on Seth 'No! Seth Wait!' Robson put in a monster of a tackle, much to the pleasure of the crowd, but much to the horror of his lovely wife. This was emulated by fellow Kiwi, Luke 'Bosh Merchant' Bradley, literally murdering the opposition with tackles and fends. However, our strong defense could not be translated into a strong attack and the match ended at 0-0. Much to the confusion of everyone present – and especially our captain, Tom That's his Real Name' Cocks – the match ended on a penalty to the other team. After much deliberation, it was decided that the winner would be decided on which team could kick the ball out into touch the furthest. After selflessly allowing the other team to go first, Matthew 'Scholes' Sparrow stepped up to the mark. Ashitaka had put in a good effort which would take some beating. Sparrow's kick was a good one, but it fell short by a couple of meters. We were knocked out. The final score was 0-0 (0-1 on penalties...kind of...)

Epilogue

After the loss, we all went for a swim in the river, holding our heads high in the knowledge that we were unbeaten all day and only let in two tries against us. It was a tough way to go, but we can be proud of ourselves. Following the formalities of the tournament, we made the weekly pilgrimage to the chippy where we sang many songs, including – courtesy of Sean 'Sensei' Gibson – a very NSFW rendition of 'The Candy Man'. We also made a new very friendly friend; broke the beer machine (from ordering too much beer...it was inevitable really); witnessed a grown-ass man eat a bowl of mayonnaise without using his hands; gave Basi a makeover, and had such good craic that everyone else in the bar put earphones in! We would like to thank everyone who played and supported the lads at the tournament. It was a long day, but it was good fun for everyone. We would also like to announce that Luke Bradley is on trial for manslaughter next week, and needs everyone's support.

Man of the Match

5pts Sean Edwards 4pts Joe 2pts Luke 2pts Foster 1pt Reece

Pool stage: 6 wins 0 loss

#1: vs. Doronco RFC 4 - 0

#2: vs. CABs RFC 2 - 1

#3: vs. Tokyo Gaijin South 1 - 0

**Shuto League
10s tournament**

CRU finish at QF

Pool Stage: 1st

Cup tournament: lost at QF

#4: vs. Nerima RFC 2 - 1

#5: vs. Aoyama RFC 1 - 0

#6: vs. Kawagoe Fighters RFC 2 - 0

Cup Tournament

QF: vs. Ashitaka 0 - 0 def by PK

Jul.03 report by Matthew Foster



Most Improved Player Jonathan Ball

Jon Ball was awarded Most Improved Player for 2015-16 season. The military man joined the Cru under the guidance of long-term clubman, Seth Robson. He started playing rugby in the middle of the season, but was soon to become one of the club's great assets, with his superb tackling skill and powerful ball-carries. Both John and runner-up MIP Jerry Sysourath performed very well on and off the field, and often enjoyed socials with the club., despite the fact that they always had to travel such a long way from their base, every weekend.



Clubman of the Year Genta Tanabe

Genta Joined the club from the beginning of the Spring season, after he had been off from rugby for several years. His reliable plays on the field and personality fit the Crusaders well. His 'greatness' at socials also helped the team to recruit more Japanese players this year. He brought his former university teammates, Hirokatsu, Takafumi, Yusuke, and many more. And helped the new players feel comfortable being with the team (as long as his missus allowed him to go to rugby on weekends)



Captain's Award Matt Sparrow

After struggling during the season last year, with sitting on the bench for long stretches due to a couple of injuries, Matthew Sparrow made a great comeback this year, stepping up to leading the team while Team Captain Tom Cocks was absent due to a series of injuries. Matt lead the team for warm-ups, on the field, and was also a superb 'leader' at socials. As a result, he has been nominated as Vice-Captain for next year, and Kit Manager. We look forward to his taking another strong 'social' lead due to the fact that he always turns up in great costumes he makes himself.

Crusaders 2016 by Numbers



3 Cup Wins

MacFadyen Cup, Meat Cup
Turkey Cup

Shuto League 2015 **3**rd place
Tokyo Cup Division II Winner

14 Wins **9** losses **2** draws

Top Point Scorer
Matt Sparrow

107 Points

9 Tries **31** Goals



Player of the Year
Matt Foster

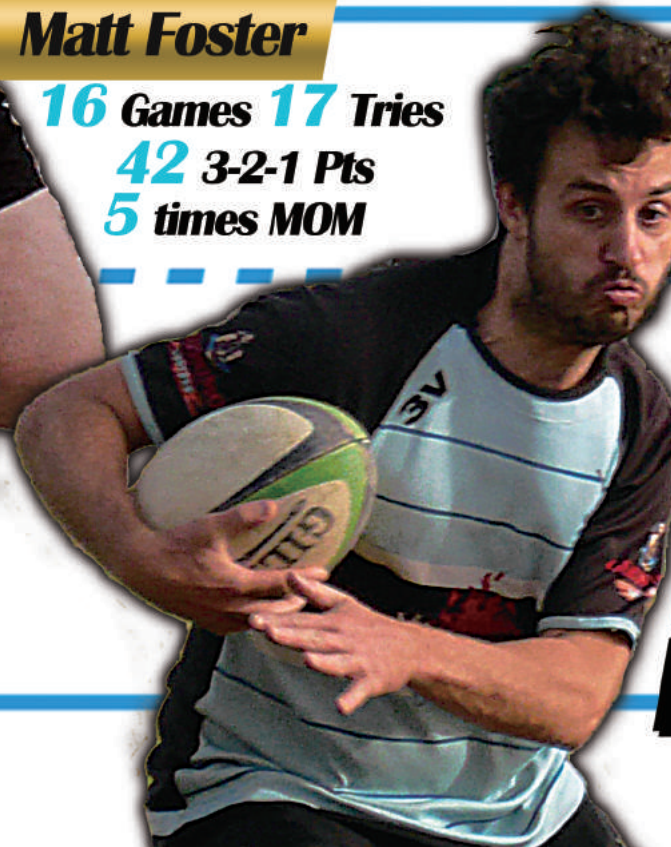
16 Games **17** Tries

42 3-2-1 Pts

5 times MOM

Ironman Cru
Reece Morgan

30 Appearances



Top Try Scorer
Sebastian Forastiere

18 Tries



Play Rugby