

Under the guidance of Rod Speed (tour manager), a squad of 12 academy players were finally selected for this tournament with approximately half of the squad having already made themselves available earlier in the season for the Middlesex 7s, which was won for the second year in succession by Millfield old boys.

The selection process was made more difficult by 20 players making themselves available, which resulted in Rod having the unenviable task of having to inform a number of players that they were initially selected as non-travelling reserves. Leading up to the tournament five players then subsequently withdrew which resulted in a number of last minute approaches to players and the resultant squad being perhaps a little forward dominated.

The composition of the squad did however have a truly international feel with many players having not only having represented their countries at schoolboy level, but with their prior and current clubs ranging from Luxembourg to Singapore cricket club, to the University of Queensland and even Cardiff and Oxford Brookes.

All but one member of the squad duly assembled at our Hotel in Central Amsterdam on the Friday evening to attend the club dinner, held at a new venue this year. The Millfield 'legends' squad also attended the dinner. They were representing Millfield in the international veterans 10s competition that ran alongside the international 7s. The presence of the legends lent an air of 'maturity' to the proceedings which was only then enhanced by a brief welcome speech by Alan Burns which was followed by a further speech of a duration that we were more used to. It was then an early night for the academy players ahead of our 3 matches the following day and an 8am departure from the hotel to the ground the next morning

We woke to a seriously hot day and the arrival of our final squad member, who was unable to leave the UK on the previous day and who travelled directly from the airport to the ground to complete our squad. Our first game was against a German side (NRV) which offered an initially a comfortable start and, with Millfield quickly adopting our traditional passing, width based style resulting in a number of tries without conceding. A raft of substitutions was made at half time and which gave the full squad some game time and a chance to impress but this resulted in a rather disjointed second half and very close finish with the score line being 26-19.

The second game was against a well-drilled Dutch side, AAC Amsterdam, the home club. This was a highly competitive match with both sides playing a good brand of attractive 7s and with resolute defence. The final score of this match was 39-14.

In the final game of the day, we selected again the same starting 7 against the Powerbombs who were a Scottish side made up from various Clubs in the Borders and who I subsequently ascertained had already played in 5 tournaments with the same squad. This was initially a very close contest but as the game went on, their superior organisation in defence left us struggling to make territory and it seemed as though none of the 50:50 passes in our attack went to hand. We eventually came out second best with a score line Millfield 12 - Powerbombs 29.

This result meant that we went through to the final day as second in the group and therefore into the Canon Cup competition with a minimum of two further games on the finals day.

The first game of the second day was against DSR-C, from Delft University. We produced a very good first half performance followed by a strong second half with all squad members getting good game time. The final score was 31-10 to Millfield.

Our next opposition was an invitation side based in the Netherlands named O'Reilly Nike Bowerman, who as the name suggests were sponsored by Nike. We knew little about this side and perhaps underestimated them as they came out very strongly and it quickly became obvious that they certainly comprised of some handy young players. The game was in the balance at half time but we then conceded two quick tries after half time and the game was gone. I took the opportunity of then sending on all of our 'finishers' to offer all a reasonable amount of game time on the second day with the eventual score line reading a rather unflattering 5 – 19.

The tournament was then effectively over for us, allowing the boys to let their hair down a little whilst watching the remainder of the tournament, which offered some first class 7s to watch with the national 7s teams of Italy and Ireland offering perhaps the most entertaining viewing.

The squad for the tournament:

Chester Allen, Nick Bromley, Jack Bentall (Captain), Dafi Davies, Lloyd Delahunty, Tom Stewart Yared Katema, Hamish Malone, Angus Millar, Lewis Malloy, Max Palmer-Jeffery, John Radford

Top try scorers were Tom Stewart (5) and Lewis Molloy (3), with Jack Bentall proving to be an excellent skipper for the side. Both Rod and I agreed that if there was a most valuable player of the tournament award, it would go to Yared Ketema.

During the tournament the side played some excellent 7s and as usual they were a credit to the school.

We would like to thank Millfield and the Old Millfieldian Society, and Danny and Joey O'Keefe for their generous sponsorship of the trip, and Alan and Angela Burns for their continued support.

Coach: Ben Potheary

Manager: Rod Speed