



PHILIPPINE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Philippine Rugby trial Down Under

Australia, Sydney, NSW – 23rd September 2007 -- The Philippine Rugby Football Union (PRFU) is a newcomer to International Rugby, but has surpassed many expectations with several outstanding performances at International level, establishing itself as a force in the South East Asian Rugby scene. Philippine Rugby teams have distinguished themselves by winning the first ever 2005 South East Asian (SEA) games Rugby 7s Gold medal in Manila; dominating the Asian Rugby Football Union (ARFU) Under 19 Division 2 tournament (in Taiwan) in December 2006, by going through unbeaten; and International Test Match victories in 2006 & 2007. The PRFU is to maintain this current momentum by holding Inaugural Philippine National trials in Australia, against the Parramatta Two Blues Rugby club at their Granville Park home ground on the 29th of September.

The trials will showcase the best of Filipino-Australian Rugby talent as the PRFU prepares to build competitive and champion teams for the forthcoming 24th SEA Games Rugby 7s competition in Thailand; the ARFU U19 World Cup qualification tournament in Brunei at the end of the year; and International test matches in 2008.

On show will be Filipino heritage rugby players coming from as far as Brisbane and Bundaberg in Queensland as well as local players from the Sydney Rugby Union and League competitions. They will be closely watched by PRFU SEA games Rugby 7s National Coach **Rick Hartley** (*the founder of the 2002 First All Filipino Rugby Union team the Philippine Warriors, from students of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific for Merchant Marines in Bataan*) coming all the way from the Philippines for this trial event.

Showcasing the wealth of Filipino-Australian rugby talent will be the highlight of the trial event, as many of the players have been playing at the highest level of Rugby Union and Suburban Rugby League competitions in Australia. **Matt Saunders** the 2006 PRFU U19 ARFU Div2 tournament leading try scorer Captained the Hills District U19 Rugby League team into a Parramatta district Grand Final victory scoring a try in the match, he will be accompanied by his fellow Filipino-Heritage rugby league team mate **Peter Decarualho** affectionately known as "PJ" at the trial. After winning the Rugby League grand final Matt Saunders had to rush to Concord Oval to team up with his older brother **Oliver Saunders** in the NSW Rugby Union 1st Grade Colts Grand final for the Eastwood RUFC against Sydney University. **Rupert Zappia** was another Filipino-heritage player who played both codes of rugby this season with his U19 Southern Districts Rugby Union club just missing out on the finals series and his U19 Menai Roosters Rugby League club winning the Minor Premiership of the Cronulla district competition but bowing out in the finals series. Coming down from Brisbane will be PRFU U19 player **Francis Duhig** of the Brothers Rugby Club whose team won the Grand Final of the 2nd Grade Colts rugby competition.

These potential Philippine senior International rugby players are joined by a host of current Senior and U19 PRFU Internationals such as **Jake Letts** who captained the undefeated 2006 PRFU U19 ARFU Div 2 team and his fellow Warringah Rugby Club team mate and PRFU International **Andrew Barbacetto** with their Warringah team bowing out of the NSW U19 Rugby semi-finals. **Mike Letts** also of the Warringah Rugby Club, **Mike Duhig** of the Brisbane based Brothers Rugby club and **Graham Catchlove** of the Gordon and Chatswood Rugby Club, are other senior Philippine rugby internationals trialing with **John Gardner** of the Bundaberg West Barbarians Rugby Club, in rural Queensland representing the Philippines with the undefeated PRFU U19 squad in Taiwan last year rounding off the current crop of Filipino-heritage rugby Internationals.





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The host of current Philippine rugby Internationals will be joined by **Charles Vicente** and **Juan Gabriel Castro** of the Southern Districts Rugby Club, **Rafael Zappia** of the North Sydney Brothers Rugby league club, **Patrick Kemkemian** of the Berala Bears Rugby League club, **Ben Saunders** of the Hills District Rugby League club and Semi Professional Rugby League player **Mark Mooney** of the Shellharbour Sharks Rugby League Club a feeder club to the St George Illawarra Dragons whose team reached the semi finals this season who are all attending the day.

This event would not be made possible with out the support of former Wallaby and Parramatta Two Blues Coach **Gary Ella** and the club and our event sponsor local Parramatta business **Focused Business Solutions**.

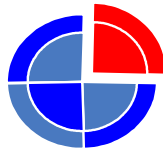
We welcome any public queries of the trial event and you will find contact details for PRFU Regional Representatives **Erick Elefante** and **Brett Hartley** on the PRFU website www.prfu.com

About PRFU

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

For Additional Information

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