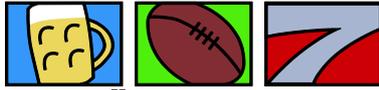


OKTOBERFEST SEVENS



MÜNCHEN

Report from: Scott Warner

Matchreport München Rugby Football Club Herren

With the introduction of the International Elite Oktoberfest 7s tournament for the first time, the 39th Edition of the Classic Oktoberfest 7s was surely the most anticipated event in the tournament's long history.

The final of the Classic tournament was to be played in the Olympic Stadium alongside the Elite Finals. This was a huge incentive for all teams involved and meant the quality of the tournament was higher than ever.

München RFC came into the tournament feeling confident after a strong start to the 15s season. Coaches Scott Warner and Alan Moughty were able to select the strongest 12-man squad in recent years and were boosted by the return of Peter Morris.

München RFC vs. TV Memmingen

MRFC started the tournament against a well organised Memmingen team. Despite the well organised Memmingen defence Munich came out flying and put down a marker for the rest of the tournament. Captain Robert Schuster leading in both attack and defence as well as Maxime Gelly and Sebastian Schüppel showing physicality up front while Alex Schranz and Morris displayed pace and finishing quality out wide. Munich ran out clear winners without conceding.

München RFC vs Bataillon d'Amour

The 2nd Group game was against a very strong Barbarians team of Bataillon d'Amour. Munich were well aware of the strength of Bataillon with experience playing against them in a number of tournaments in the past. The game was a close affair from the start with the 2 teams trading tries. At half time the scores were level. Just after the start of the 2nd Half Munich were able to take advantage of the strength in depth and the bench players injected some new energy. Nik Graf was able to score in the corner thanks to a sensational pass from Fred Begards, this was followed by a tremendous individual effort from Schüppel to extend the lead to 2 scores. The game finished with a vital Munich win which also meant MRFC would take the top spot in the group.

München RFC vs VfB Ulm (Quarter Final)

Munich were now into the knock out stages and were growing in confidence after the successful morning. The hosts came out of the blocks flying taking an earlier 20-0 lead thanks to individual scores from Morris, Begards and Schüppel. Ulm then began battling back into the game. Scoring a well worked try before the break. Munich needed to inject energy and so made 3 changes at half time. The changes worked as English Flyer Jacob Fafiolu and Italian Dancer Giacomo Bernobi brought much needed energy to the team. The highlight of the game being the final try where Munich went from downtown to score. The industrious Nik Graf making a sensational try saving tackle which led to a turn over from the dynamic Fafiolu, the turn over led to a break from the powerhouse Yassin Barik who in turn off loaded to Bernobi. Bernobi used his trade mark 'Giacomo Step' to go round the sweeper to score under the posts and finish the game.

München RFC v Bataillon d'Amour (Semi Final)

Finally, the hosts had reached the semi-final and were one game away from a history making final in the Olympic Stadium. With the crowd noise from the stadium in the background the dream was getting closer and closer. After success in the group stages MRFC knew they could not be complacent against a team who were looking for revenge. After a cagey start to the game Munich took the lead with a magnificent try under the post from captain Schuster with a successful conversion MRFC took a 7-0 lead. Bataillon slowly came back into the game with a breakaway try just before half time taking the score to 7-5 at half time. Bataillon then added another try to take the lead for the first time at 12-5. Time was slowly ticking away and the big home crowd was beginning to grow nervous. With the game moving into the closing stages it looked like the dream final was slipping away as friend of MRFC Mawuli Amefia continued making try saving tackles and attack with power and strength. His one on one battle with Schüppel being a highlight of the day. It was the last play of the game and Munich won a penalty for a high tackle. The 300 strong crowd was vocal in support and finally MRFC got a breakthrough as Tobi Lefherz scored a fantastic try out wide to take the score to 12-12. After missing a tricky conversion, it meant sudden death extra time. Extra time started with end to end action, both teams attacking and defending well. Alex Schranz was introduced and gave MRFC much needed pace out wide. Schranz and Sam Cross were causing lots of issues for the Bataillon defence and it was the combination of the 2 that led to the winning try, a magnificent finish in the corner from Schüppel. The home crowd went wild as Munich secured a place in the final and the opportunity to play in the Olympic Stadium. Referee Radchenko described the game as 'one of the best games he had ever refereed'.

München RFC vs. Schusterhausl Inn Barbarians (Final, Olympiastadion)

After a fantastic tournament Munich stepped out onto the Olympic Stadium turf in front of 15,000 spectators to take on Susterhausl in the final. Led by MRFC Veteran Den Gilles, Schusterhausl had dominated the tournament and that was clear to see in the opening exchanges as they took an early lead. Munich then came back into the game thanks to a magnificent finish from the electric Cross who was cool under pressure despite the large crowd. Munich then drew level after a barn storming run from Barik. Munich were behind by one try at half time as Moughty and Warner made changes. Gelly brought in some much needed physicality against a big team. This opened more space on the field which Morris was able to take advantage of as he went the length to score. Confirming his rightful place as player of the tournament. The first time a player from MRFC had won the award. Unfortunately, it was not enough for the home side as Schusterhausl were able to score again on the break with the last play of the game.

Schusterhausl went home worthy winners but München RFC can be proud of an incredible performance in front of a home crowd. The final in front of more than 15,000 spectators at the Olympic stadium will be a moment to be remembered for a long time (at least until next year!).