

## KRFC U11s Press release 06/09/10

### **Last season review and preview of this season (looking back and looking forward)**

**How did we get on last season?** Very well considering the disruption caused by the previous year's IRFU change in the date of birth eligibility for teams. It (the DOB) shifted from mid-year to the beginning of the year and thus it split up teams that had been playing together for years at every age group. Some clubs in other parts of the country have operated to this threshold for quite some time now and so had a good head start in this regard. Although it took a while for the new squads to bond - they did so very well in the end.

There are no "competitive" competitions permitted at our level only "friendlies". We took a few major scalps from Dublin clubs like Lansdowne, Blackrock College & Seapoint (at their own home blitz). Early victories led to complacency though amongst some of the players last season and reality bit hard with a trip to the hills of Wicklow where our boys got a rude awakening in the 1st half of their tie by an extremely powerful Wicklow 8. But showing great character - they rallied to come back to match that physicality in the second half and come out on top in the end.

Next season we also hope to reacquaint ourselves with the "old enemy"- but now "old friends" Tommy Bowe's (not that one!) proficient Waterpark outfit. They are our trusty Munster foes whom we meet on a regular basis throughout the year and coaches on both sides are on very good terms with each other. We also successfully hosted our own home blitz in February.

Our season traditionally starts a few weeks later than other clubs so we face a race to catch up in terms of fitness and familiarity with new rules compared to the opposition at the beginning of the season. Our end of season tournament was the big affair that is the annual invitational *Seapoint Blitz*. This competition invited "streamed" teams to be submitted by clubs. The coaches were extremely satisfied with the rugby skills, discipline, fitness and depth of character displayed by our 3 teams on the day.

Our *Wolves* team were thrown in at the deep end against Naas "A" one of the most formidable clubs in the province. They took an absolute hammering in the 1st half but showed great character to rally and "win the 2nd half" against overwhelming odds. Also the mentoring coach reported that the most selfless and heroic tackling of our squad's entire season was witnessed on the pitch that day.

Our *Sharks* team acquitted themselves very well with a win and a draw in their first 2 games. However they were well beaten in the 3rd game by the Wicklow "A" team that we had met in a robust encounter earlier in the season. Morale took a bad knock after this but they showed great mettle whilst under the cosh yet again to rally and pull a draw out of the fire against a strong Waterpark "A" team in their last game. The mentoring coach was particularly proud of the strength of character shown on the pitch that day and great leadership ability displayed by certain individuals.

The *Tigers* won their first 2 games against the quality opposition of Buccaneers and Blackrock College but met their Waterloo against a well drilled Coolmine RFC outfit that were simply the best team on the day. The Tigers simply could not match Coolmine's turnover rate, fierce counter-rucking and their policy to put the ball wide at every opportunity. The Tigers restored some of their dented pride by beating their Seapoint hosts in a scintillating final game.

**What are the changes this season team-wise?** No changes only additions to the coaching staff this year in the form of newly Leinster qualified coaches, Peter Harte & Colin Hatt bringing our number up to 6. The outfit is still led by the legendary Marty Dwan supported by his trusty back room team of Jim Ryan, Eddie Russell and Lar Conroy. We will, as always, be relying on the assistance of parents on the side lines more than ever this year in the roles as pitch or substitute co-ordinators. In general we will reward commitment and effort shown by players. The major focus this year will be on safety, enjoyment, discipline and team-work. We are expecting a good turn out from our regulars and are hoping that some of our “strays” come back to us. Newcomers are always welcome and we will look after total novices with some dedicated coaching workshops to try bringing them up to speed.

**What are the changes this season rules-wise?** Lots of rule changes in this transition. We now progress to “Stage 3”. The lads will really need to focus from the start. Team numbers will increase by 2 from 8 to 10 with the introduction of “2nd rows”. The rucks and mauls will be much tougher environments. The much anticipated “hand off” is now legal though I suspect the lads forget that it applies to both side sides. The set-piece is now competitive with both packs allowed to compete for the ball at scrum and line out time and limited kicking comes in (god help us!).

**What are the changes this season location-wise?** We are hoping to maximise away trips by getting more game time at the far end, unfortunately last season we had a couple of trips where this was not the case. We hope to get an early look at our official game schedule which we will issue to parents in order to help them organise their dates in advance. The coaching team will then look at any obvious gaps in that schedule and try to fit in some games against several clubs that have requested additional challenge games

**What are the changes this season regarding training times?** No changes that we know of. Sundays will be the same as always from 10.30 to midday. We will train through most bad weather depending on severity. We will also try to wangle a mid-week slot for some “special workshops” – TBC. Similar to last year there may also be indoor training at The Wallslough Indoor arena in order to mitigate against the unpredictable January weather. This has yet to be confirmed by the committee.