

Budapest Touch Tournament – September 12th 2009.

(Report by Phil R.)

Once upon a time in the east...

A bunch of 11 fearless touch-players, one ref and the spirit of Tom's hangover left the capital of the former Habsburg Empire on a beautiful Saturday's morning to bring back home "sports worlds' most ridiculous trophy" (cit. Ben Gilson), the *Central European Touch Ashes*.

Ridiculous in size, since consisting of the mortal and burnt ashes remains of the Wooden Spoon (you get this as a prize for coming in last place...) that the Central European Barbarians Team (Austria+Czech+Hungary) had won at the EUROS 2008 in Paris, this trophy still incorporates the strong and friendly attachment of a whole subcontinent.

The training pitch of the Ferencvaros Budapest stadium was a condign place to play a perfectly organised tournament (big CHEERS especially to Ben and Gabi!!). The order of the games was defined by the teams' arrivals, and since the Slovenian team car lost its exhaust pipe on the way to Budapest and local Darvak team overslept a bit, Islanders and Vienna started the event with a pretty tight game.

Still a bit sleepy we had to struggle especially first half time against a fit and pace-forcing green power. But especially Hans M. and a physically and vocally strong Kathi S. kept us in the game. Kathi also fixed the final winning score of 3:2, initiating and finalizing a magnificent combination over several stations then a quick dump and split with Hans M.

Ref Dan and organizer Ben gave us exactly 6 minutes to prepare for the next game, so after a short experts poll we decided to skip the next warm-up.

Budapest Darvak was a team that especially for this tournament adapted their rules to the rest of the worlds'. At half time Vienna was 3-0 ahead. Since Darvak had no subs Shani and Phil swapped their colours and played 2nd half in Hungarian red and white, which could not avert the final result of 5-0 for Vienna but accounted for a friendly atmosphere and a nice game.

Our last group game was against Slovenia also known as "Selma's all stars", since backed up by Ben, Michi P., Graeme Smith (a.k.a. *Europe's touch bitch* because of his appearances for so many different nations) and a couple of very good Hungarian players like Hungarian Michael, who has been elected "male player of the tournament" in the very end. But Slovenia's Selma, Eva ("female runner-up of the tournament") and Colin represented their colours very well too and contributed an important part to Slovenia's great 7:4 win against Vienna.

Facing a possible elimination of the tournament some Vienna players supported Slovenia not only in their group game against Darvak, but also against Islanders. Ben (before kick-off Islanders-Slovenia): "Guys, just a short information: if you let us win by a small margin, you would kick Austria out of the tournament...! ;-)"

It didn't happen, Slovenia was the only team that won every game in the group and consequently faced Vienna in the finals. But this time our team was more focussed, did very concentrated work in defence and some pretty creative moves in offence.

We also had Michi P. with us, Hans who did some amazing diving, Brett who was many a time breaking the defence with short dummies, followed by long runs, a tireless Kathi S. and last but not least with Tracy the “female player of the tournament”! Vienna won the final and thus “the Ashes” by :3-0 .

Another highlight was the following trip to the thermal baths and where whirlpools, sauna and the huge 37° pool in the middle of a Schönbrunn-like architecture were offering all possibilities of relaxing.

The evening closed with a perfect original Hungarian Goulash, chocolate pancakes and one or two beers...

On the way back Dan couldn't resist to verbally molest some peaceful Hungarian football supporters at a gas station and the legend also says that Phil had a rather unquiet sleep on the backseat of the Skoda... WHATEVER!!

All in all it was a magnificent trip, a glorious success and a tournament that definitely should not be missed next year! - History has started! Special thanks to Dan for reffing, Kathi, Brett and Shani for driving and Ben and Gabi for organising everything so well!

Alisa
Brett
Dan (ref.)
Hans M.
Judith
Kati S.
Michi P.
Owen
Phil (Captain)
Tracy
Troy
Shani