

RUGBY UNION Duckett Memorial tournament

Smit: Police family tradition going strong

Sam Murley

Stephan Smit spoke of the importance of preserving the tradition of the Rugby Duckett Memorial matches after the annual at North Field, National Sports Centre, yesterday.

The tournament has been played since 1973 in memory of George Duckett, a former Commissioner of Police, who was assassinated in 1972. Duckett was a popular, larger-than-life character and an ardent rugby fan.

Both men's and women's police teams faced off against the best of the rest with four matches taking place culminating in the Bermuda Police Rugby Football Club men's first team playing the BRFU Presidents XV.

On the field, it was the Presidents XV who claimed the spoils in hard-fought 24-17 victory, despite playing with a one-man numerical disadvantage for more than an hour after Aldo Campbell was shown a straight red card in the first half for an off-the-ball incident.

However, despite relinquishing their crown, Smit, the BPRFC captain, highlighted the greater significance of what the match represents off the field.

"This is a great day for us because it allows us to acknowledge and pay our respects to not only George Duckett but also all the past police members who represented this club going way back and kept this blue family tradition alive," he said.

"We were expecting a nice relaxed afternoon but those guys came out the blocks and attacked from the off so we had to up our game because it was a very competitive match.

"The only real disappointment for us was not being able to take advantage of having the extra player. We spoke at half-time about trying to keep the scores close and then kick deep to put them under pressure but we just couldn't build on momentum.



Photograph by Akil Simmons

Spreading the play: Dan Cole, of the men's Police team, passes the ball against the BRFU Presidents XV at North Field, National Sports Centre, yesterday. The Presidents XV won the match 24-17

"However, the result isn't the main thing, we had a large crowd come down and also a lot of the old players come and so it was a great day.

"The most important thing is to keep this tradition alive. Days like this remind everyone how special rugby can be and it would be amazing to keep this going for many more years."

It was the Presidents XV who broke the deadlock as Bermuda international Jamie Baum

charged down an attempted kick, before collecting possession to crash over in the corner for an unconverted try after five minutes.

Police rallied and were level after 12 minutes through a brilliantly taken individual try with the winger evading two tackles before racing clear. The conversion was missed again leaving the score at 5-5.

Building on that momentum Police found themselves ahead

five minutes, breaking the defensive line to score in the left corner. They failed to take the extras leaving them with a five point advantage.

It was a lead that did not last long though as a period of prolonged pressure resulted in the Presidents XV scoring their second try.

Phase after phase took place right in front of the try line before the ball was eventually worked from left to right with

Baum again forcing his way over. This time the conversion was successfully added to put the visiting side 12-10 ahead midway through the first half.

The advantage was extended with five minutes of the first half remaining as Baum turned provider, chipping the ball over the Police defence, allowing his team mate to race through and crash over in the right corner for an unconverted try and 17-10 lead.

Just before the interval, the Presidents XV were reduced to 14 men as Campbell clashed with Danny Pell on the side of the field, off the ball, resulting in the former being dismissed for his reaction.

Despite the numerical advantage it took Police more than 20 minutes to capitalise, finally scoring another try following some strong pressure, with a brilliantly taken conversion levelling the scores at 17-17 in the 63rd minute.

However, it was the opposition who rallied and scored the decisive try. Encamped on the Police try line for a prolonged period, the pressure finally told as the referee awarded a penalty try, gifting the Presidents XV a 24-17 lead with only five minutes remaining.

Police finished strongly but it proved in vain as the visiting side defended doggedly in the closing stages to hold firm and clinch victory.

"The guys did a really job of understanding how to adapt to being a man down and all credit to them," said national coach Jamie Barnwell, who was acting as the Presidents XV coach on the day.

"Considering this is the first action after Christmas the standard on show was actually a really good spectacle. The most important for everyone here though was to help pay respects to George Duckett. It's a huge day for the entire rugby community and particularly the Police."

In the other matches, there was also a victory for The Rest against the Police men's second team, running out eventual 42-28 winners, while the Police women's second team and The Rest second team had to settle for a share of the spoils in a 17-17 draw,

However, there was joy for the Police women's first team who took the honours in a close fought 15-10 success over the The Rest women's second team.

SPORT SCOREBOARD

BERMUDA

FOOTBALL

Table with columns for Premier Division Saturday and Yesterday, listing teams like Southampton Rangers and Robin Hood.

Standings table for Premier Division with columns P, W, D, L, F, A, Pts.

Table for First Division Yesterday, listing teams like Dev Colts and Vasco.

Standings table for First Division with columns P, W, D, L, F, A, Pts.

BOXING

Table for Fight Night Champion Fairmont Southampton Saturday, January 18, listing professional and amateur fights.

RUNNING

Table for Goslings to Fairmont Southampton Race Runner (Adult) Sunday, listing participants and times.

Main sports results table listing various events like Junior Race, Karting, and other sports with participant names and times.