

# Lao Rugby Federation



## Mid Year Report 2008



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School  
Students Get  
Ready for a  
Carnival

# INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

The Lao Rugby Federation has had a busy start to 2008 and a number of significant achievements have already been reached. Nonetheless, the federation will be working hard to ensure that the second half of 2008 is as fruitful as the first and that the significant opportunities for the growth of rugby in the Lao PDR are taken full advantage of.

This report looks back at the activities undertaken during the first half of 2008 in relation to the 2008 annual plan. When necessary, the report also outlines any additions to planned activities and instances where planned activities were not implemented. When this has occurred, justification is provided.

It is hoped that this report provides LRF sponsors and supporters with a firm understanding of the work undertaken from January to June this year, as well as a sound understanding of the direction of the LRF for the remainder of 2008. As always, any questions can be directed to the LRF on [info@laorugby.com](mailto:info@laorugby.com) or to the LRF office on +856 (0) 21 223 812.

Students  
Prepare  
Support  
Banners at a  
School's  
Carnival



# RESULT ONE

## Result One

Planned Activities	Progress to Report
Expansion of weekly schools coaching sessions and monthly carnivals to 6 schools	6 schools are now included in the school's programme; Norn Saat, Bo O High, Bo O Primary, Chanthabouly, Vientiane High and Hong Kha. In addition, permission has also been requested to start the programme in Sikhot school although work is unlikely to begin until after the school holidays.
Establishing monthly schools mens XVs training and quarterly matches	Due to limited coaching resources and training logistics, boys fifteens training has been occurring with senior men's training. Efforts will be made to encourage school's fifteens training as a separate training event. Fifteens matches have not yet been held, however five rounds of sevens matches have occurred during school carnival events.
Establishing out of term rugby playing opportunities with school children	Norn Saad school continues to participate in the programme and work is soon to begin with Peuan Mit, the SOS Children's village and the Vientiane Youth Centre; all children and youth focused institutions. In addition, an open children's rugby session will begin in July to provide an opportunity for younger children to participate in the sport.
Men's club age grade XVs team selection and tour	Men's age grade rugby has played a number of games at sevens level so far this year. The opposition has been the French School in Vientiane, unfortunately there has not been a securing of sufficient funds to take a team on tour. However, the LRF will work to attract an age grade team to visit Vientiane so that games can be played. At present, age grade players are participating in senior rugby training sessions twice weekly; further efforts will be made to move to fifteens rugby.
Supporting clubs to secure independent sponsorship and management structures	The Lao Rugby Federation has supported the establishment of the first women's rugby team in Vientiane; the Vientiane Lions. The club has a functioning board and is holding monthly meetings. They have also been active in generating club funds and seeking sponsorship. In addition, the club has played a number of games and competitions in the Lao PDR and the Isaan region of Thailand. Furthermore, the club has also been successful in securing a shirt sponsor.
Seeking financial support to consolidate the school's programme including the establishment of core funding	Core funding for the school's programme has been secured for 2008 through a grant from Aus Sport. In addition, a number of sponsors have also given support for the school's programme to ensure that sufficient funds are available to continue the programme into 2009.

## Result One

Planned Activities	Progress to Report
<p>Identifying opportunities for promoting rugby in the armed forces, teacher’s colleges, the University and mine camps</p>	<p>The Vientiane Tens competition held in January saw the first invitation issued to a mining camp team, unfortunately, the mine was unable to field a team. At present, a letter from the LRF President has been signed is awaiting distribution to the armed forces, police and teacher training college inviting those institutions to establish a rugby team with LRF support.</p>

## Facts and Figures

A total of 86 coaching sessions have been held with children and youth during the first half of 2008; an average of 13 boys and 7 girls have attended each of these sessions.



Going for the Corner; School Children Play Sevens



The Vientiane  
Lions  
Women's  
Team (White)  
Takes on a  
Team from  
Thailand

RESULT: TWO

## Result Two

Planned Activities	Progress to Report
<p>Providing marketing and media support to all national teams</p>	<p>In terms of the men's fifteens national team, significant progress has been made in terms of the visibility of the team. Monthly news articles have appeared in English and Lao language newspapers, 6 press releases over 6 months have been made over the LRF's mailing list and live TV coverage was secured for the Lao PDR v Cambodia game held in Vientiane in May; this game was broadcast in the Lao PDR, Thailand and Cambodia. Women's national team rugby has taken a back seat to women's club rugby in the first part of 2008, however a women's national development squad has also benefited from live TV coverage of a game and frequent press releases.</p>
<p>Encouraging LRF clubs to play regular domestic matches (teams from the Lao PDR)</p>	<p>Nine internal matches have been played during the first half of the year. These have included a men's national development side against a local club side and a number of trial games to assist in national team squad selection. The women's club has also played a number of internal sevens competitions. The LRF has also secured commitment from the National University to field a team in the ASEAN University games in December.</p>
<p>Supporting LRF clubs to hold regular competitive matches (teams outside the Lao PDR)</p>	<p>The Vientiane Lions women's club was formed in early 2008 and has been very proactive in terms of securing games and entry to competitions. Games have been played in Roi-Et, Khon Kaen, Mahasarakham and a number of games have also been held in Vientiane against teams from Thailand and Cambodia. A total of 9 games/tournaments have been played in the first half of 2008 by men's club and development sides and a further 5 games/tournaments by the women's club.</p>
<p>Securing a dedicated rugby ground in Vientiane</p>	<p>Little progress has been made in securing a land allocation from the government so far, however, advocacy work continues in this regard through meetings with key government officials. However, the LRF in partnership with the National University of the Lao PDR now has post facilities at the University pitch so that rugby posts can be erected and taken down on the same day with no disruption to other sports activities; this was a major achievement given the cost and temporary disruption to the university pitch.</p>
<p>Seeking financial support to provide playing opportunities</p>	<p>2008 financial support is up significantly on previous years due to efforts to improve communication with potential sponsors. Most significantly, a platinum sponsor has been secured and a significant grant was secured through the Australian Government. It is also hoped a second platinum sponsor will be secured in 2008; significant efforts are being made to ensure that sponsors receive good exposure for their support.</p>

## Result Two

Planned Activities	Progress to Report
<p>Promoting and playing school carnivals and fifteens competitions</p>	<p>Five school carnivals were held in the first half of 2008. Competition, as always, was keen and the introduction of women's contact sevens brought a new dimension to the competition. Junior and youth contact rugby has also begun, however given the level of player experience, the focus has been on sevens rugby. However, the first junior fifteens game is planned for August against a side from Nong Khai, just over the border in Thailand.</p>
<p>Supporting the Vientiane Buffalos to host an international tens competition in January</p>	<p>The first successful international competition was held in Vientiane in January. Four women's teams and eight men's teams contested over a full day in January; the local first team also won the competition in a tightly contested final.</p>
<p>To ensure visibility of the first home international to be held in the Lao PDR</p>	<p>Significant effort was put into advertising the international match held in the Lao PDR in May. Live TV coverage was available in the Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand through Lao TV. In addition, significant web and press coverage was also evident. Work on the ground through flyers and posters was also rewarded with a full University stadium watching the game.</p>



The Vientiane Lions Women's Club

The Men's  
National Team  
Captain  
Celebrates the  
Lao PDR's  
First  
International  
Victory

RESULT THREE



## Result Three

Planned Activities	Progress to Report
National men's fifteen squad selection and training	The men's international playing season will end in mid-July with the inaugural HSBC Asian Five Nations competition. Training will begin again in November working towards the 2009 competition. So far, training commitments have been excellent with the LRF also securing the services of a dedicated fitness coach to further improve performances. A successful selection process was undertaken for the May test match, lead by the head coach, and it is anticipated the same system, which requires certain benchmarks of commitments by players, will again be utilised.
Men's team to attend international and domestic squad camp	Due to financial restrictions, an international squad camp planned for Malaysia prior to the Asian Five Nations competition has been cancelled. However, a successful weekend was spent in Vang Vieng with a heavy focus on fitness and team building activities (including paddy field runs, kayaking, climbing and vehicle pushes). This weekend was invaluable in preparation for the July tour as it provided a distraction free environment for the squad.
Media exposure of national team	Significant exposure of men and women's teams was provided through the May test (detailed above). Regular press communications have also ensured that sponsors and supporters are regularly updated of national team progress.
Men's national team to play Cambodia in May and Indonesia and Cambodia in July	A successful first international test match was held in Vientiane in May. Arrangements for the Indonesia tour in July are at an advanced stage and it is expected that the tour will be completed as planned.
Men and women's nationals sevens team selection and training	To date, men's rugby has been focusing on the fifteens form of the game; this will change in the build up to regional sevens competitions in the second half of the year. Women have been focusing predominately on sevens competition building up to an August attendance at the Midnight Blacks competition in Singapore. Squad selection will again be based on commitment benchmarks that include fitness levels and training/match attendance.
Men and women's development squad sevens teams attending competitions	A women's squad will be attending the Singapore Midnight Blacks competition in August, it is also likely that men and women's teams will attend the regionally significant Bangkok Sevens in October. Further competition opportunities will also be sourced in Isaan and the Lao PDR.

## Result Three

Planned Activities	Progress to Report
Fundraising activities	Merchandise sales have made a much more significant contribution to funds this year. This is particularly the case for women's rugby where an admirable fundraising drive has seen significant stock shifted. The input of a graphic design volunteer also assisted as improved products were made available for sale.



The Lao PDR Men's National Squad After Victory Against Cambodia in Vientiane in May

Rugby  
Development  
Officers at the  
LRF Office in  
Vientiane



**RESULT FOUR**

## Result Four

Planned Activities	Progress to Report
Secure a national team coach (qualified with experience)	The 2007 assistant coach agreed to comeback in 2008 as the head coach for the national team. He has nearly 20 years of coaching experience and has overlooked significant improvements in the national team so far. He will see the team through to the conclusion of the July tournament and will then return to Australia. The post is voluntary with accommodation provided free of charge by an LRF supporter and a small monthly stipend being paid to support living costs.
Secure a technical director (with development and coaching experience)	Due to funding restrictions, it has not been possible to recruit someone to this post. Although candidates are available, they are unable to work on a volunteer basis. The vast majority of development activities have been lead by volunteers within the LRF working with Rugby Development Officers.
Maintain IRB and ARFU links for sound practice	Regular communication is undertaken with both the IRB and ARFU. The LRF is also working hard to gain more recognition on the regional rugby scene, for example by offering to host international events.
Regular networking with regional stakeholders	April saw the LRF attend a regional ARFU meeting in Bangkok. This not only provided the opportunity to meet regional stakeholders, it also provided the opportunity for a Rugby Development Officer to see how ARFU works. The meeting was invaluable for coordinating activities and gaining support on key issues such as the inclusion of rugby sevens in the SEA Games in 2009.
Rugby development officer support	For four months of 2008, a full-time volunteer has been available to work with rugby development officers to provide them with support to develop within their roles at work. At present, it is not clear if this arrangement will continue, however, the improvement in staff during these four months provides ample evidence of the importance of providing close staff support.
Sourcing capacity building opportunities for the LRF	One RDO has attended an IRB Rugby Ready course, in addition, office staff are being supported to improve their English levels with regular classes provided by a sponsor at reduced rates. IT study fees for an RDO have also been provided by a sponsor.

## Result Four

Planned Activities	Progress to Report
<p>Consolidation of administration and financial procedures</p>	<p>The establishment of a dedicated LRF office has greatly aided improved administration of activities. A space now exists for administration and documents for example are easily accessible. In addition, much improved financial procedures have been put into place to ensure that the LRF is more accountable to supporters. These procedures have also assisted the LRF to have a better understanding of activities, budgeting and planning.</p>
<p>Securing financial and technical support to improve LRF programme delivery</p>	<p>The improvement in fundraising and sponsorship has provided more resources for improving programme delivery. In addition, volunteers have been secured in the areas of graphic design and programme planning, implementation and monitoring; these inputs have been invaluable in improving the quality of activities. The lack of resources to secure longer-term technical assistance is however a concern to be addressed by the LRF.</p>
<p>Securing level 1 coaching and/or officials training</p>	<p>The LRF has not been able to source a level one trainer for either coaching or officials courses. It is hoped that the second half of 2008 will see this issue addressed.</p>



A Rugby Development Officer at Work

The LRF  
President and  
the  
Ambassador  
for Australia at  
a Grant  
Presentation  
Ceremony



# RESULT FIVE

## Result Five

Planned Activities	Progress to Report
Further development of links with the National Sports Committee	Links with Government have been improved with the employment of a part-time advisor with Government experience and close links to the National Sports Committee. Part of his role is to advise on how links with Government can be improved. Evidence of improved links include financial support from Government to elite players and squad access to the national gymnasium. The presence of senior officials at the May test also indicate that links are improving.
Working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to secure player insurance	Negotiations are at an advanced stage with a sponsor that is able to provide federation-wide medical coverage to all players registered. Due to this development, access to the the Government scheme has been postponed as efforts are made to secure private coverage.
Maintaining regular communication with the IRB and ARFU	Regular contact is made through reports and press releases all of which are provided to the IRB and ARFU; constant communication is also maintained over regional issues.
Partner feasibility study	A number of partners have been identified; the SOS Children's Centre, the Vientiane Youth Centre, the National University and the Peuan Mit Centre. In addition, a number of potential new schools have also been identified and preliminary work will begin with them in September when schools return. In addition, initial exploration of the potential links with the Police, Army and Physical Education Teacher Training College have also been undertaken and will be built upon.
Developing stronger links with Lao sponsors	International companies continue to be the main source of sponsorship support for the Lao Rugby Federation. However, some local sponsorship has been secured. For example, a local travel company provided the LRF with free outdoor activities during a squad camp. Discussions have been held with a number of large Lao companies, but so far no agreements have been possible. Efforts will continue to secure more local support.

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### Accounts Information

The LRF has been working hard to secure a wide base of financial support for rugby development activities and is proud of the improvements that have been achieved from January to June in 2008.

The following information is a summary of income and expenditure for the first 6 months of 2008:

#### Income

Line	Amount (USD)
ARFU Grants	10686
Sponsorship	35298
Fundraising	944
Merchandise Sales	2504
2007 Remaining Cash	1693
Other	3413
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54538</b>

#### Expenditure

Line	Amount (USD)
Admin, Support and Staff	4604
Schools	4231
Elite Rugby	31496
Club Rugby	1705
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42036</b>

Remaining Balance = 12,502 USD