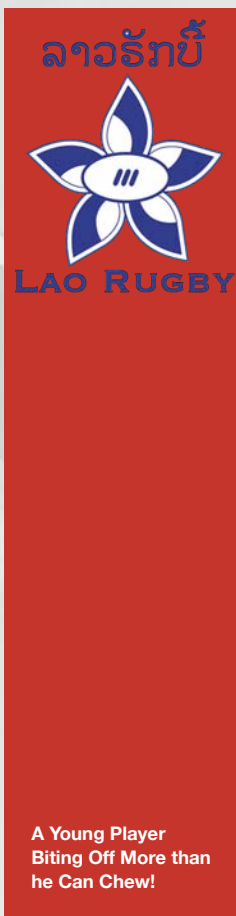


2009 MID-YEAR REPORT

September 21, 2009



January - June 2009

The Lao Rugby Federation has had a busy but very successful start to 2009, with a number of significant achievements having already been reached. Nevertheless, the LRF will be working hard to ensure that the second half of 2009 is equally as fruitful as the first, and that the every opportunity to promote the growth of rugby in the Lao PDR is taken full advantage of.

This report looks back at the activities undertaken during the first half of 2009 in relation to the 2009 annual plan. The LRF continues to expand rugby participation opportunities, with an increasing focus on children's and youths rugby supporting healthy child development. The LRF also continues to operate a very efficient operation, with only 13 per cent of costs going on overheads for this reporting period.

With the onset of the global financial crisis, the LRF has been negatively affected, with the LRF still searching for a platinum sponsor for 2009/10. It is hoped that a sponsor from the business community will step forward to take advantage of this opportunity in the near future and the LRF is working hard to communicate with a range of businesses that could benefit from supporting rugby development. Finally, the LRF is also organising fundraising events and looking to increase merchandise sales to offset some of the loss of sponsorship revenue.

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 grasp of the direction of the LRF for the remainder of 2009. As always, any questions can be directed to the LRF on info@laorugby.com or to the LRF office on +856 (0) 21 223 812.

Result 1; Increased Participation of Children and Adults in Rugby

| Planned Activities | Progress to Report |
|--|--|
| <p>Expansion of weekly schools coaching sessions and monthly carnivals to incorporate eight schools and community centres.</p> | <p>The first half of the year saw the LRF work with five different schools and one community youth centre: Tha Ngon, Non Saat, Bo O High, Bo O Primary, Chanthabouly and Peuan Mit respectively. Although the programme was stopped in the two Bo O schools due to a schedule clash, the LRF began work with Peuan Mit, and is due to begin work in three more schools (Ban Hom, Meuang Noi and Nakhouay) and the SOS Children’s Village in late July. The LRF will also seek to retain the two Bo O schools in the near future and is currently discussing the possibility of working with a community centre for people with disabilities and a drug rehabilitation centre. Transportation remains a key challenge with the LRF unable to afford new motorbikes to replace old machines to cope with the increased number of schools/community centres. A total of 3,332 attendees (1,327 girls) have participated in 128 sessions from January to June.</p> |
| <p>Establish monthly schools men’s 15s and women’s 10s training and quarterly matches.</p> | <p>As a result of limited coaching resources and training logistics due to the international season, boys 15s training has been occurring with senior men’s training. Efforts will be made to encourage school’s 15s training as a separate training event. 15s matches were held at the Vientiane 10s Tournament in January and 10s matches at the Indochine Cup in April. A mixture of 10s and 15s matches have been held during school carnival events as well. In addition, a new women’s 10s team – currently named the Cheetahs - has been formed and will begin playing 7s and 10s training matches against the Lions in the latter half of this year.</p> |
| <p>Establishing out of term rugby playing opportunities with school children</p> | <p>The Community Rugby Initiative has been a huge success, with large numbers of participants training on the Tuesday and Thursday sessions, as well as training and playing matches during the Sunday session. On average, 80 participants attend each session. The LRF is aiming to strengthen the Initiative through the involvement of more community and youth centres.</p> |

A School Girl in Savannakhet Enjoys Her First Taste of Rugby (left) and Two School Teams Compete in a Line-out in a Vientiane Community Rugby Weekend (right)



| Planned Activities | Progress to Report |
|--|--|
| Establishment of an age-grade domestic tournament | The LRF is working toward establishing four new junior men's teams, two U18s and two U16s. The teams will draw from the schools and be divided according to regional proximity. The teams will begin playing 10s rugby before moving up to 15s. The teams will act as a channel through which players can work their way up to the senior teams as they grow older, as well as providing a platform for player development. The LRF also plans to implement a similar framework for the junior women as shown by the establishment of the Vientiane Cheetahs women's side. |
| Supporting clubs to maintain independent sponsorship and management structures | The Buffalos and Wild Hogs have re-secured sponsorship for the 2009/10 season. The Lions are also close to securing a minor sponsor for the coming season as well. All three teams have fully functioning boards which continue to run their respective clubs. Due to the strength of the School Rugby Development Project a second junior women's team has been formed from players from Tha Ngon and Non Saat schools. The team will be managed by the LRF until a Board is formed and sponsorship is currently being sought. |
| Seeking financial support to consolidate the school and community programme, including the establishment of core funding | Core funding for the school rugby development project throughout 2009 is being provided by AusSport, who also funded the project in 2008. In addition, a number of sponsors have also given support for the School Rugby Development Project, including the Asian Rugby Football Union and Vientiane College. Silver Heritage is continuing to support community rugby through the Silver Heritage Community Rugby Initiative. A number of smaller sponsors have also come onboard to support individual schools and activities. |

The Lao PDR Men's National Team in Savannakhet Celebrating their Triumph Over Cambodia and Brunei to Win their First Ever Asian 5 Nations Divisional Title



Result 2; Increased domestic and international competition opportunities and exposure of the general public to rugby across the Lao PDR

| Planned Activities | Progress to Report |
|---|---|
| <p>Providing marketing and media support to all national teams</p> | <p>The men's 15s national team has continued to feature in TV and print media. The HSBC 5 Nations Tournament held in Savannakhet in March was televised live. In addition, the Total Rugby television programme ran a small feature on rugby in Laos and included footage of the men's team in Savannakhet; the footage was aired across Asia and Europe on Star Sports. Monthly articles and adverts from sponsors covering the recent successes of the men's team have appeared in English and Lao language newspapers.</p> <p>The women's national team was also featured strongly in the press. Victories in the inaugural Mekong Shield held in Cambodia and IRB Asian Women's 7s Development Division in Thailand, earned the women coverage in local television and print media through a press event held by sponsor ANZV to congratulate the girls. Total Rugby also aired footage of the women's team in Thailand, and several Thai newspapers and Asia-based websites included details of the girls' victory in their reports. Seven press releases on the national teams were distributed during the first six months of the year. In addition, an ANZ promotion video was also aired showing the women in action in the Asian Women's 7s tournament.</p> |
| <p>Encouraging LRF clubs to play regular domestic matches (teams from the Lao PDR)</p> | <p>Fourteen 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 Lions women's club has also played a number of internal 7s training games against the newly formed Cheetahs junior women's team. More matches have been scheduled for later this year; in particular all four teams will compete in exhibition matches in Luang Prabang in November for the first time.</p> |
| <p>Supporting LRF clubs to hold regular competitive matches (teams outside the Lao PDR)</p> | <p>The Vientiane 10s (January) and Indochina Cup (May) 10s Tournaments saw teams from Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia playing against our local teams in. Both tournaments were very successful and the Vientiane 10s 2010 Tournament will prove to be an even bigger spectacle. The three senior domestic teams also travelled to Thailand to play XV's rugby against teams from the Isaan region in June. Return matches have been scheduled for the second half of the year. A select-men's 7s side is also due to play in the Isaan Seven's in Surin in July. The LRF is still working toward forming an Isaan men's league with neighbouring teams from Thailand. Financing the competition remains the biggest hurdle at present. Regular domestic games will begin in the second half of the year.</p> |
| <p>Securing a dedicated rugby ground in Vientiane</p> | <p>This objective continues to prove difficult, especially as the SEA Games have occupied a number of pitches for their events. However, the possibility of acquiring a dedicated rugby pitch looks more promising post-SEA games. The LRF is currently looking at potential options and is in discussion with government authorities to take advantage of the new pitches that will become available early 2010. In addition, the Government appears to be warming to the idea of allocating the LRF a plot of land to develop for rugby.</p> |

| Planned Activities | Progress to Report |
|---|--|
| Seeking financial support to provide playing opportunities | 2009 has proved difficult to date due to the global economic crisis. The LRF lost one of its two platinum sponsors, which has had serious repercussions for the LRF's operations during the second quarter. In addition, ANZ, the second platinum sponsor, will be dropping to a gold sponsor due to sponsorship limitations in their budget. The majority of Gold, Silver and Bronze sponsors have also matched their previous year's financial support and many small businesses in Vientiane have also offered financial support. The LRF is extremely grateful for the continued appreciation of the LRF's work that companies, small business and individuals have shown during such difficult times. Their support is central to our activities and the LRF hopes it can strengthen these relationships further. |
| Promoting and playing school carnivals and 15s competitions | Four school carnivals and one youth camp were held in the first half of 2009. The junior men played several contact XV's games and the women played contact 7s and 10s throughout the carnivals. As a result, a new junior women's side has been formed and an under-20s national team is in the process of being selected for an IRB tournament in November in the Philippines. The LRF plans to establish age-grade district teams in the near future to consolidate these successes and continue to provide the opportunity for youths of all age to play contact rugby within a formal competition structure. In addition, a Thai/Lao school carnival will be organised in the third quarter of the year in Vientiane. |

Result 3; Increased participation in elite rugby

| Planned Activities | Progress to Report |
|---|--|
| National men's 15s team and women's 10s team international matches | The men's national team drew from the largest pool of domestic players so far for selection this year. The results were exceptional, with the men winning two of their three matches to take home the HSBC Asian 5 Nations Regional Tournament Trophy and retain the Mekong Cup. The women's team also played their first international 10s match to win the inaugural Mekong Shield and competed in the IRB World 7s Qualifiers in Thailand, where they won the development division. An under 20s national team is also in the process of being selected to compete in the IRB under-20s qualifiers in the Philippines in the development division. The senior national teams now have two domestic teams as their player-base to select from, and the under-20s team has a pool of over 50 players from five schools. |
| National men's fifteen squad and women's ten squad selection and training | The LRF fielded a men's 15s National Team and women's 7s and 10s teams at the National Level. |
| Media exposure of national teams | Significant exposure of men and women's teams was provided through their international matches and tournaments. Regular press communications have also ensured that sponsors and supporters are regularly updated of national team progress. The LRF has also updated the website regularly, produced sponsor videos and established a Facebook group. |
| Fundraising activities | Merchandise sales have made a limited contribution to funds this year due to a lack of capital. Sponsorship levels have been maintained at all levels except the platinum level and extra effort will have to be made to secure a National Team sponsor. The LRF has increasingly relied on individual sponsors to support activities and has also established an on-line donation tool on the LRF website. |

Result 4; Increased capacity of the LRF to deliver rugby participation opportunities that meet international sound practice standards

| Planned Activities | Progress to Report |
|--|---|
| National team coach recruited | The 2008 head coach for the men's and women's national teams returned again for 2009 and has signed on for 2010. The post is voluntary with accommodation provided by the LRF; funds will need to be secured to ensure this is possible in 2010. |
| 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. The LRF currently has two volunteers working with the LRF staff, a Princeton in Asia volunteer who is focusing on women's rugby (May 09 to May 10) and an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development who is working with staff and operations development (leaves Oct 09). |
| Maintain IRB and ARFU links for sound practice | Regular communication is undertaken with both the IRB and ARFU. The LRF hosted the IRB/ARFU sanctioned HSBC Asian 5 Nations Regional Tournament in March in Savannakhet with great success. The LRF also entered a women's 7s team into an IRB/ARFU sanctioned tournament in Thailand in June and will field an under-20s side in another tournament in the Philippines in November. The LRF is also planning to participate in an additional tournament later this year but is yet to confirm which tournament. |
| Rugby development Officer support | In January and February, two volunteers from Hong Kong worked with the LRF Rugby Development Officers during school and community sessions. The volunteers made a big impact and transferred many new skills and ideas to the LRF staff. In July the LRF was also fortunate to secure a volunteer from Singapore for the month. The volunteer had a wealth of experience in teaching and sports development and is also a national representative for the Singaporean team. Her work with the LRF staff and the Lions team was exceptional and the knowledge and ideas concerning sports education have been of huge benefit to both staff and players. The LRF hopes to continue to attract new short-term volunteers of this calibre. |
| Sourcing capacity building opportunities for the LRF | Office staff are being supported to improve their English levels with regular classes provided by a sponsor at reduced rates; the Head Rugby Development Officer is the main beneficiary of these classes. In addition, for 3 months of the year, a volunteer provided 3 weekly English classes to staff at the office continuing to develop language skills. These skills are essential as English is the common language across the Asian Rugby Football Union as well as providing access to an increased pool of sponsors. In addition, the presence of volunteers on a permanent basis in the office also provides staff with the opportunity to learn and develop their skills, whilst also providing support to volunteers to learn about working in the Lao PDR context. These mutually beneficial relationships are key to staff development within the LRF. |
| Continued consolidation of administration and financial procedures | The LRF's rapid growth during late 2008 and early 2009 created the need for increased office space. The LRF will be moving into a new office in July, which can better facilitate the LRF's activities. The new office will greatly aid the new financial and accounting procedures recently developed, which will 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. However, poor quality IT equipment still continues to impede the LRF's productivity. The LRF hopes to purchase two new computers to address this issue in the near future. |

| Planned Activities | Progress to Report |
|--|--|
| Securing financial and technical support to improve LRF programme delivery | The lack of resources to secure longer-term technical assistance is still a concern to be addressed by the LRF, particularly given the lack of willingness on behalf of sponsors to support institutional development. |

Result 5; Increased Lao institutional involvement in the sport of rugby union

| Planned Activities | Progress to Report |
|---|---|
| Further development of links with the National Sports Committee | Links with Government continue to improve as a result of the LRF's part-time advisor. Unfortunately, even with these improved links, rugby has been dropped from the Lao SEA Games due much wider issues around the games and pitch availability in Vientiane. Nonetheless, as a Government Federation, the LRF continues to work with partners across the National Sports Federation and seeks to continue to develop these links. |
| Securing sponsorship for player insurance | Progress toward securing a Federation-wide insurance policy remains stalled due to a lack of funding. The LRF is continuing to purchase insurance for individual tournaments, but the cost of providing permanent insurance coverage has proven unaffordable at present. This remains a key issue and the LRF will continue to work towards obtaining insurance for the Federation and its members as soon as is feasible. |
| 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. |
| Develop partnerships with youth development, education centres and NGOs | The LRF is currently working successfully with Peuan Mit, a centre for vulnerable children. The LRF is also in discussions with the Lao Disabled People's Association and a drug rehabilitation centre regarding the provision of opportunities for rugby participation. |
| Developing stronger links with Lao sponsors | The LRF continues to draw the majority of its funding from foreign government agencies, businesses and individuals. However, with the recent successes of the Lao national teams and better circulation of Lao language information about rugby, a number of Vientiane businesses have begun supporting the LRF. The LRF plans to continue increasing its presence in the Lao business community through better coordination and access to information. |

Finances

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 six months of 2008:

Income

| Line | Quarter 1 (USD) | Quarter 2 (USD) | TOTAL |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 2008 Balance | US\$2,908.85 | US\$0.00 | US\$2,908.85 |
| General Donations | US\$3,429.03 | US\$655.93 | US\$4,084.96 |
| School and Community Rugby | US\$5,561.10 | US\$1,500.00 | US\$7,061.10 |

| Line | Quarter 1 (USD) | Quarter 2 (USD) | TOTAL |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Domestic Rugby | US\$3,300.00 | US\$400.00 | US\$3,700.00 |
| Elite Rugby | US\$32,110.00 | US\$13,856.33 | US\$45,966.33 |
| Institutional Development | US\$0.00 | US\$0.00 | US\$0.00 |
| TOTAL | US\$47,308.98 | US\$16,412.26 | US\$63,721.24 |

Expenditure

| Line | Quarter 1 (USD) | Quarter 2 (USD) | TOTAL |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Staffing | US\$3,636.24 | US\$2,637.00 | US\$6,273.24 |
| Office Costs | US\$257.06 | US\$1,470.88 | US\$1,727.94 |
| School and Community | US\$1,502.27 | US\$5,064.05 | US\$6,566.32 |
| Domestic | US\$3,742.59 | US\$0.00 | US\$3,742.59 |
| Elite | US\$31,482.79 | US\$12,206.07 | US\$43,688.86 |
| Communication | US\$24.71 | US\$275.53 | US\$300.24 |
| Institutional Development | US\$0.00 | US\$0.00 | US\$0.00 |
| Merchandise | US\$0.00 | US\$0.00 | US\$0.00 |
| Short-Term Expenditures | US\$0.00 | US\$0.00 | US\$0.00 |
| Bank Fees | US\$92.98 | US\$62.46 | US\$155.44 |
| TOTAL | US\$40,738.64 | US\$21,715.99 | US\$62,454.63 |

Closing Balance Q2 2009 = 1,266.61 USD

CURRENT LRF SPONSORS



SILVER HERITAGE LTD



NAGAVISION
Lao video production



Bob Gordon and Family



Education & Adventure



The Lao Women's National Team Take a Line-Out Against Cambodia in the Mekong Shield (left) and a Men's National Team Player Coaches at a Weekend Rugby Camp

