

Media Release

2019 DHL Hanoi and Vientiane 10s Kick off in January

15 Jan, 2019, Vientiane, Laos. In a historic year for rugby in Asia, rugby players and enthusiasts from the United States, Hong Kong, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam will come together in Hanoi and Vientiane for a new rugby 10s series sponsored by DHL.

January 2019 marks an exciting time for rugby in Southeast Asia. Building upon the success of the long-standing Vientiane International Rugby Championship, the Lao Rugby Federation (LRF) has partnered with a new competition, the Hanoi 10s, to create a multi-tournament series spanning two weeks in January, with opportunities for rugby outreach, recruitment, and education between tournaments.

In 2017, LRF staff and Coaches traveled to Kim Boi, Vietnam to support ChildFund Pass It Back Coaches in hosting their first international tag rugby competition. This year, the LRF is proud that its staff and Coaches will again return to Vietnam to support the first club 10s competition in Hanoi attracting senior international club teams as well as seeing the Kim Boi Wild Cats compete at the club level for the first time. “It’s an exciting time for rugby in the region with 2019 being a South East Asian Games year and also the first Rugby World Cup to be held in Asia,” comments LRF President Mr. Virayouth Rathikoun. “The LRF is proud of our role as a leader for ChildFund Pass It Back work in the region and in developing rugby in Vietnam in the lead up to South East Asian Games 2021 when the country of 90,000,000 will host the cornerstone games.”

The series kicked off in Hanoi, with a single-day tournament marking the first-ever DHL Hanoi 10s on January 19th. The tournament included local teams, teams from Hong Kong and Thailand, as well as representative teams from Laos, sponsored by DAC. In the following days, visiting international teams traveled to learn about the development of rugby in Vietnam by observing ChildFund Pass It Back coaching activities in the area which focus on rugby and life skills development for young people. International teams were also invited to experience local culture and cuisine and, of course, practice on local pitches to prepare for the second tournament in the series.

Before competing in the 12th annual DHL Vientiane 10s, however, visiting teams were given an opportunity to practice with rugby coaches from throughout Laos. A leader in rugby development in the region, the LRF’s partnership with ChildFund Pass It Back has spurred unprecedented interest among youth in Laos: since the curriculum’s implementation in 2015, the number of registered players in Laos has grown from 300 to 3,000. Visitors met the coaches at the forefront of this growth through their involvement in Lao club teams.

The DHL Vientiane 10s, previously the Vientiane International Rugby Championship, is a long-standing Southeast Asian rugby fixture, and competition this year will be held on January 26-27. 2019 marks the 12th annual DHL Vientiane 10s, and promises fierce competition in both the Men’s and Women’s divisions with 23 teams in the men’s and women’s elite divisions and in the men’s development division. Chao Anouvong stadium in downtown Vientiane will once again host teams and representatives from the United States, Hong Kong, Thailand, Australia and Vietnam.

For rugby enthusiasts, the importance of this tournament resonates beyond the January excitement. Rugby World Cup 2019, hosted by Japan, will be the first played in Asia. To coincide with this historic year, World Rugby has announced its Rugby World Cup 2019 partnership with ChildFund Pass It Back to grow the sport of rugby throughout Asia. Tournaments, and in particular, series, like the DHL Hanoi and

Vientiane 10s provide opportunities for local teams to compete at a high level and continue to grow the sport and inspire others to join.

Laos will be celebrating the partnership between World Rugby and ChildFund Pass It Back with its own youth rugby tournament on the first day of the Vientiane 10s - the Champa Ban powered by ChildFund Pass It Back League Finals. Youth rugby teams throughout Laos have been competing since early December for a place at the Finals tournament in Vientiane - the teams playing represent the provincial champions from Xieng Khouang, Vientiane Province, and Vientiane Capital. The tag rugby tournament will take place on January 26, coinciding with the Vientiane 10s, and young rugby players will have a chance to watch the international competition.

It's a particularly poignant year for players from Xieng Khouang, where the ChildFund Pass It Back program was first piloted in 2015. Since then, rugby has grown significantly among youth players - but this season marks the first time that a senior club from Xieng Khouang will compete. All of the players in the club have come through the LRF's ChildFund Pass It Back work. Thanks to the support of the Hong Kong-Based Pot Bellied Pigs RFC and the individual contribution of Chris Garvey of Habitual, clubs from Xieng Khouang will have the chance to compete at the 2019 DHL Vientiane 10s - a historical first for rugby in Laos and demonstration of sustainable growth of the game and the LRF's strong development pathways.

The LRF and Hanoi 10s Organising Committee would like to thank DHL and DAC for sponsoring the first annual Hanoi and Vientiane 10s series. The Vientiane 10s would also like to thank secondary sponsor ANZ, as well as Anakot Consulting for supporting the 2019 DHL Vientiane 10s. We would also like to thank all teams who have registered, including local Lao club teams the Buffalos, Wild Hogs, Canon Tigers, Lions, Buffalettes, and Xieng Khouang RFC and especially the DAC Weredragons and Rejectors, whose generous support has made it possible to send a representative team from Laos to Hanoi to compete. A very special thanks to ChildFund Pass It Back for important work growing the sport of rugby in both nations.

If you or someone you know is interested in participating in, volunteering at, sponsoring, or learning more about the DHL Hanoi and Vientiane 10s, please contact vientianetens@laorugby.com for more information.

DHL Series Sponsors



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Special Thanks to:



NOTES TO THE EDITOR:

About the Lao Rugby Federation

The Lao Rugby Federation (LRF) was formed in 2001. Since then, the LRF has gone on to gain full membership of Asian Rugby, associate member status of World Rugby and most importantly, registration with the Elite Sports Department of the Lao Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES).

The LRF is the governing body for all rugby activities within the Lao PDR. LRF activities are focused on developing the sport through a school and community development programme, supporting domestic and elite teams to improve and developing a sound structure to provide transparent and accountable financial and administrative support to the sport.

The LRF mission is: To provide opportunities for men and women, boys and girls, social and elite players and those in urban and rural areas to participate in the sport of rugby, whilst ensuring that health benefits and personal development opportunities are realised to their fullest extent.

The LRF understands that this can only be achieved by ensuring that we have the necessary capacities to deliver high quality playing and participation opportunities; this involves engagement with the government, communities, businesses, schools and other institutions to provide sustainable access to participation (playing and non-playing) opportunities.

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Editors: Images are available upon request.