



## **Rugby Sevens scores top points to become an Olympic Sport!**

Congratulations to all of you Marauders supporters who completed the poll a few months ago for Rugby sevens to become an Olympic sport. The decision was made today, 9<sup>th</sup> October, by the IOC Congress in Copenhagen with 81 votes in favour and eight against. IOC president Jacques Rogge told delegates: "Time will show your decision was very wise."

The White Hart Marauders, and other Clubs in the Sevens fraternity have been campaigning strongly for the sports inclusion for some time now, and we are positive that this will lead to even greater exposure to the world of Sevens Rugby, especially at a time when the sport is growing substantially in terms of skills, spectator interest, and revenue generation. Last night at the Hart's "Thursday Roll Up", the bets were on that the vote would be passed but no one wanted to appear over confident, especially as the "copper and five" had caught a few of the lads out!

Howard Graham, the Marauders Captain and Coach is delighted as this will "bring greater attention at all levels of Sevens Rugby and will enable the whole game to raise the bar as far as overall standards are concerned".

Some of the latest quotes were very upbeat with Bernard Lapasset, president of the International Rugby Board, saying the Olympics would be "the Pinnacle of our sport" and Ex-Argentina captain Agustin Pichot adding "We want to play our part in strengthening and growing the Olympic movement - rugby is reaching out. This is a historic moment for our sport and for the global rugby community, who were united in support of our campaign"

Rugby union was last part of the Olympics in 1924 in the full 15-man version, so the return to the fold is well overdue. The inclusion means that the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio De Janeiro, will be the first games in 92 years at which the sport will have been played. Rugby sevens was represented on the day by stars including All Black legend Jonah Lomu, former Argentina captain Agustin Pichot, Kenya captain Humphrey Kayange, and Australia women's captain Cheryl Soon.

A number of delegates preferred to praise the sport rather than question the panel, but among the queries posed was whether the game's top stars would play in Rio. Lomu, a former Commonwealth Games gold medallist, said: "To see my sport in the best arena would be fantastic for rugby, men's and women's. "I can speak for all of them - they will turn up." Well said Lomu!