



Kukri Marauders back on the Finals Trail in July.

Manchester 7's

The last two weeks have been very busy and productive for the Kukri Marauders on the road with 11/12 July seeing us compete at the inaugural Manchester 7s at Macclesfield Rugby Club.

For a first up tournament the organisers had put together an impressive line up for the International Invitational Tournament. All the usual suspects were there along with Sale Sharks and Le Blue from France and Benfica from Portugal.

On the Saturday we were drawn with the Portuguese side containing a number of International players along with Akuma Scorpions and Ronin Impact. 3 Straight wins with no points conceded saw us through to the quarter finals on Sunday.

Strong performances from Craig Hill (Wales World Cup 7s Winner), Alex Cuthbert and Max Rantz-McDonald along with our band of regulars brought the squad together and promised much for the knock out stages.

First up on Sunday were Kuru Kamikaze who took a surprising two try lead into the second half however player coach Howard Graham, playing out of position at scrum half steered the team to a comfortable win and a tough semi final in prospect against Kooga Wailers.

Once again we found ourselves a score down early in the first half against a Wailers side that have played a lot of 7s together, however with a strong defensive game and excellent ball retention Marauders got back into the game and ran out winners 4 tries to 2 and with Samurai International squeezing past Sales Sharks in the other semi the stage was set for yet another final between two of the most successful 7s sides around. Unfortunately we lost the influential Max Rantz-McDonald with a serious knee injury during this game.

Even with 4 New Zealand 7s Internationals in the squad Samurai had made hard work of the journey to the final including an injury time score to get through their quarter final against Akuma Scorpions.

In true Marauders/Samurai fashion it was an enthralling end to end final with Marauders taking a 12 – 0 lead, but Samuai coming back to level it at 12-12 and 17 – 17. Alex Cuthbert so very nearly closed the game out for Marauders in the dying seconds, but for a finger tip tap tackle. With the ball spilled Samurai gained possession and made their way down field to yet again win in injury time. Massive disappointment for the lads but once again Marauders were back on the finals trail.

Every member of squad played magnificently over the weekend but the “evergreen” Player Coach, Howard Graham took the Player of the Tournament Award. Congratulations Howie!

Manchester Squad: Howard Graham (Cpt), George Dixon, Craig Hill, Adam Bishop ,James Reilly, Nathan Williams, Bunny Burenivalu, Steve Taylor, Ifan Evans, Alex Cuthbert, Max Ranz- McDonald.

World Famous" White Hart Marauders