

EASTWOOD CHARCOALS MATCH REPORT

PORT MACQUARIE RUGBY CLUB SEASIDE CLASSIC

3RD – 5TH MARCH, 2017

The Eastwood Charcoals and Charcolettes once again travelled to the mid-north coastal hamlet of Port Macquarie to attend the Vintage Ports Golden Oldies Seaside Classic. Other teams attending the Classic were the Stillbillies, Jolloy's Penrith Legless Emu's, the Coffs Harbour Gropers, Barraba, Walcha, Hastings Valley Rugby, South West Rocks and of course, Crispy's Vintage Ports.

If ever there was an indication of the magnetic appeal of this event, it was the surprise appearance of Wayne "Thelma no-ass" Hearps, who answered the call from our esteemed leader Lord Jim Dunn and begrudgingly relinquished his established marching position in the annual Mardi Gras parade in Sydney. Access to a secret cache of flowing feathered boas, fish net stockings, clip-on chest pieces and rainbow cod pieces located in a hidden compartment within Chez Hearps at Castle Hill will have to wait until next year's parade.

Friday night saw the Charcoals and Charcolettes gather at the Beach House Bar for drinks and dinner but primarily to welcome to the fold and embrace our newest members, Kevin "Easter" Show, Pat McConnell and their partners Annette and Marie. Following dinner, some Charcoals adjourned to the Port Macquarie Hotel to witness the mighty Tigers smash the Rabbitos much to the disgust of a certain die-in-the-wool Souths supporter. "Thunder" Teki had a noticeable darker tinge to his full beard and was in a most jocular mood after disembarking the Virgin flight from Sydney at 11.00 am that morning. Taxi! It was also duly noted that Stella Artois Lager is no longer served on tap in the Beach House Bar. (Folks this is an in-house joke from our 2016 tour. You just had to be there at the time!)

My spies (and I have many!) informed me that our fearless Club Captain was seen devouring three meat pies at midnight at the Port Macquarie Pie Shop which would account for his slow start on the paddock the next day! However, the piece de resistance was the rumoured sighting following dinner, of the legendary fluoro mankini paraded by a Charcoals player of voluminous proportions, stretching the said ill-fitting garment to unbelievable limits. Fellow hotel guests were seen scurrying for stair wells, drawing curtains and protecting children's eyes from the spectacle

On Saturday morning, the Charcoals joined the other teams at Stuart Park, the home of the Port Macquarie Pirates Rugby Club. The Gods were certainly kind to us as the weather remained clear and fine for the Classic despite the threat of heavy rain in other parts of New South Wales.

We were indeed honoured to have in our midst Charcoals Royalty namely, Prince Kaa and "Cecil" Feltham from the original 1983 Charcoals team (refer to pic on our website) and Terry Rust a long term member of the Charcoals. Cecil was playing for the Coffs Harbour Gropers.

The day started badly when our newest players, "Easter" and Pat were sighted undertaking vigorous warm-up routines and stretching exercises before the game. The recalcitrants were reminded in no uncertain terms that this behaviour would not be tolerated in future as the only warm-up routine permitted is the obligatory pre-game port and beer.

The Charcoals played three games including a Barbarians game against the Vintage Ports. We combined with Bob Webster's Stillbillies as we could not field a full side.

Whilst the lads were playing rugby, the Charcolettes undertook a tour of the Casegrain Winery just south of Port Macquarie. After being poured off the bus upon their return it was obvious a good time was had by all.

How fortuitous it was that one of our newest players, Pat McConnell scored his first try for the Charcoals. After receiving the ball 10 metres out from the line and despite having an unmarked player outside, Pat decided to do a jig and fall across the line to score. The fact that the unmarked player was Romeo probably swayed Pat's decision not to pass the ball! Later in the game, Pat received the ball around half way in front of the Charcoal's bench. He tripped on a blade of grass before losing the ball forward and landing on his arse. It was mentioned in muffled tones how quickly he went from the "penthouse to the shithouse"! **(A nickname has yet to be bestowed upon Pat. I understand our Club Captain has that task in hand!)**

There are no superlatives to describe the next spectacle which both players and spectators witnessed at the resumption of play. Greedy did a copybook kick off until it bounced and his foot struck the ball. Said ball started in a forward trajectory but by the time it hit the ground it was one metre in the Charcoals half.

Big hits and attacking flair from all Charcoals players including Tiny, Greedy, Pom, Morgs, Romeo, Muddy, Wyatt, Thunder, Lord Jim, Easter, Pat and the Stillbillie Boys ensured a rugby feast for all spectators. A Hastings Valley Wrinkled Horns player would still be feeling the effects of Tiny's calling card! However, there wasn't a dry eye in the house when Charcoals stalwart and club bean-counter, Dome "I know the words to YMCA" Read ran on to the pitch to join his fellow players in red shorts. The fact that he picked the ball up from Greedy's kick off and executed what can only be described as the worst pass of his Charcoals career, can only be put down to rustiness and lack of match play! All Hail Dome.

The writer was cautioned by the Ref for running too hard against the opposition in red shorts. A chastened Rabbs donned Morgs blue shorts and returned to the field of play as a very timely full time whistle was blown.

It was now "Easter's" turn to score his first try for the Charcoals in the Barbarians game. He had to wait 3 games before he had a chance to score but it's all about being in the right place at the right time. After a brilliant Charcoals back line movement of the ball to the right wing, "Easter" had his moment and grabbed it with both hands whilst carrying a defender over the line for his first try. Bravo.

It didn't go unnoticed that for the first time in "Wyatt" Hearps rugby career he had left the field without spilling a drop of claret. When challenged about this state of affairs Wyatt responded that as it was his first game of the season he was "lacking commitment".

A big thank you to our event photographer Maxxy Goiser who expertly captured the charged atmosphere of the Classic. We look forward to his spectacular pics on our Facebook page and website.

Golden Oldies players and spectators were treated to a wonderful exhibition of Seven's rugby by the Port Macquarie Women's team. The offer by 50 volunteers from the Golden Oldie ranks to back up as reserves for the game was politely declined by the team captain.

After the games, a ball-tearing rendition of the Eastwood Rugby Club song was ably conducted by Dome, closely followed by Jolly and the Penrith Legless Emu boys and their club song.

Club Captain Morgs represented the Charcoals in the after game presentation ceremony acknowledging the big effort put in by Crispy and the Vintage Ports Committee and those serving in the canteen.

A dinner organised by the Vintage Ports Committee was held at the Water's Edge Restaurant in Port Macquarie to cap off a wonderful weekend of rugby and country hospitality.

Thanks also to our Charcoalettes, Dazza Mathieson, Muddy O' Shea and "Paris" Raymont for their off-field support.

I hope I've covered everything.

Take care and remember:

"vir prudens non contra ventum mingil" – A wise man does not urinate against the wind.

I'll now take my leave and partake of a glass of hot Horlicks before bedtime.

Yours in rugby.

Rabbs.

Chronicler of Important Events.

