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Monte Carlo Magic...



Prince Rainier presents the Glenlivet Trophy to Murray Mexted.

WARBLERS SING THE SWEETEST SONG!

The Glenlivet Monte Carlo Sevens

AS THE international sevens circuit begins to grow apace *The Glenlivet Monte Carlo Sevens* stands out as the most lavish and ambitious of projects.

The aim: to establish a European tournament to match the cosmopolitan camaraderie of the Hong Kong Sevens. Certainly Monaco has the location, money and facilities to deliver the goods – and this year Ian Brackenbury and his organising committee drew many of the best exponents of the abbreviated game from around the world.

With international caps among the eight teams spread as liberally as blackjack chips in the famous Casino the standard of sevens played was extremely high – as was the standard of the pre and post-match hospitality including a sumptuous Gala Dinner in the splendid Hôtel de Paris.

Poule A was topped by hosts **Monaco**, an invitation side featuring Wallaby flanker Simon Poidevin, American winger Willie Jefferson and a host of France "A" internationals. In second place were The **English Wanderers** who fielded Oxford antipodeans Bill Calcraft and David Kirk and counted among their number Cardiff's Richard Cardus, Bath's powerful running centre Jeremy Guscott and lively Leicester hooker Harry Roberts.

Bringing up the rear were a sadly flat **Crawshay's Welsh** outfit, who, despite the presence of Adrian Hadley and Mark Tittley, only just managed to keep the spirited **Italian Zebras** at the foot of the table.

It was *Poule B* that provided much of the drama as the **Irish Wolfhounds**, **Scottish Co-Optimists**, a **French President's** seven and the **Bahrain Warblers** locked horns.

The French, with a slim-line Blanco captaining a side with internationals Rodriguez, Carminati, Lagisquet and Camberabero in harness, disposed of the Wolfhounds comfortably before falling foul of the Bahrain Warblers.

The brainchild of expat. businessman, Simon Davis, this multi-national outfit had sufficient kudos to capture the services of Murray Mexted, Nick Farr-Jones, Jamie Salmon, Will Carling and Les Cusworth, who were ably assisted by flanker Peter Thornley, winger Barry Evans (both Leicester),



The victorious Bahrain Warblers (standing, l-r): "Henry" Peevers, Simon Davis, Peter Thornley, Murray Mexted, Barry Evans, Jamie Salmon. (Kneeling): Nick Farr-Jones, Will Carling, Paul McKay, Les Cusworth, Chris Barber.

Results

Poule 'A': Crawshay's Welsh 12 English Wanderers 20; Monaco Invitation 24 Italian Zebras 0; Crawshay's 6 Monaco 24; Zebras 6 Wanderers 36; Wanders 6 Monaco 28; Zebras 12 Crawshay's 18.

Poule 'B': French President's 26 Irish Wolfhounds 6; Bahrain Warblers 20 Scottish Co-Optimists 16; French 10 Warblers 22; Wolfhounds 16 Co-Optimists 12; Warblers 10 Wolfhounds 16; Co-Optimists 10 French 30.

Semi-Finals: Monaco Invitation 12 French President's 6; Bahrain Warblers 18 English Wanderers 12.

Final: Monaco Invitation 16 Bahrain Warblers 32.

MONACO INVITATION: Poidevin, Brunat, Chamayou; Mazille, Barthélémy, Jefferson, Hontas. *Replacement:* Cassagne for Brunat.

BAHRAIN WARBLERS: Thornley, McKay, Mexted; Farr-Jones, Salmon, Carling, Barber. *Replacement:* Evans for Barber.

Scorers: Monaco Invitation: Chamayou 1 try, Barthelemy 2 tries, 2 cons. .

Bahrain Warblers: Mexted 1 try, Carling 2 tries, Farr-Jones 2 tries, Salmon 1 try, 4 cons.



Warbling Will Carling – top class!



nuggety Wellington hooker Paul McKay, and speedster Chris Barber (SW Police).

After burning past the Co-Optimists and then the French seven in outstanding ties, the Warblers were surprisingly upset by the tenacious Wolfhounds with big Phillip Matthews in thundering form.

With the Wolfhounds, the Warblers, and the French getting the better of the Co-Optimists it was a three-way tie at the top.

The Warblers and French progressed to the semis in that order with the latter having scored the more tries but having been beaten by the Warblers. This time there was no question of the luck of the Irish as the Wolfhounds lost out on the count-back.

The semi-finals were both close-run affairs with Monaco – probably the fastest all-round side – inspired by Barthélémy and Hontas to a narrow victory over the powerful French combination. The Warblers were also forced to come from behind with fine tries from Carling and Farr-Jones to overhaul a Wanderers side who had in Eddie Saunders one of the most elusive runners on show.

The tournament, held in front of a disappointingly small crowd in the magnificent Stade Louis II, came to a fitting climax of exhibition sevens and ended in a convincing win for the Warblers for whom Carling was superb.

Throughout the day the England centre was an almost unstoppable amalgam of pace, power and skill and with Mexted, McKay and Thornley churning out good ball

he had plenty of scope to perform. Carling scored twice after scintillating solo runs and a couple of typical Farr-Jones bursts took the Warblers whistling past Monaco.

All that remained was for a delighted Murray Mexted to take the Glenlivet Trophy from the hands of royal patrons Prince Rainier and Prince Albert – and for the party to move from pitch to pavillion. . .

Above: In the air . . . Blanco juggles the ball past Monaco's Mazille. Below: Style on and off the field: Chief Warbler Simon Davis leads the way at the Gala Dinner. . .

Report by NICK CAIN

