

## The Conch Cup 2008

### TCIRFU 17 - BAHAMAS 25

On Feb. 16, 2008 the TCI rugby team played the Bahamas in the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Flamingo Cup competition sponsored by Dempsey & Co. and J.S. Johnson Insurance Ltd. The game started at 4:00 at the DeWinton rugby complex when Simon Taylor lifted the opening kick into the sky. A thunderous tackle on the Bahamian ball carrier let him and the rest of his team know that the smaller TCI pack were not going to be intimidated by a larger Bahamian side. The smaller TCI pack proved quicker to the tackle than their opposite numbers, and were able to provide some clean ball from the back the rucks. The TCI backs made some penetrating runs, however the Bahamian fullback made several good covering tackles to deny the TCI an early score. Shortly after a Bahamian clearing kick failed to find touch, the alert Bahamian winger out jumped the TCI defender to regain possession. His quick chip sent the ball skittering over the TCI try line where he managed to ground it for the first Bahamian score. TCI 0 - Bahamas 5.

After the kick off, the TCI applied some good pressure, pinning the Bahamian side in their own half for the next 15 minutes. Johnny Hilton made a strong run up the left side of the field. He was tackled just 10 meters shy of the try line, however an alert Neil French claimed the loose ball and surged forward with Bahamian tackler in tow and managed to stretch his lanky frame far enough to ground the ball just over the try line. TCI 5 – Bahamas 5.

From the ensuing kick-off the TCI squad displayed good ball handling skills and over 8 phases of play forced the Bahamian side back to their 22 meter line. Fly half Gareth Butler received a pass from the back of a ruck sold a feint to the left to his opposite number and sidestepped to the right. A straight sprint to the try line drew in the Bahamian full back as Butler popped the ball to Fraser Dodds to run the ball in under the posts. The conversion from Butler was good- further stretching the TCI lead. TCI 12 – Bahamas 5.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half the seemingly inexhaustible supply of Bahamian substitute players started to tilt the table as the tiring TCI side faced fresh legs at almost every position. The Bahamian pack hammered away at the TCI defense, but could not force the ball over the line. Changing tactics the ball was spun wide where their quick scrum half scored in the corner. TCI 12 – Bahamas 10.

TCI charged back after the kick and regained possession of the ball. A string of penalties against the Bahamas for improper rucking resulted in a penalty and TCI spinning the ball wide to pace man Dean Griffith who ran in untouched for the 3<sup>rd</sup> TCI score.

TCI 17 – Bahamas 10.

At the kick off another new batch of Bahamian players materialized, and their fresh legs soon had the TCI team on the back foot. A quick ball from the breakdown and Bahamas had scored in corner much to the delight of the home crowd.

TCI 17 – Bahamas 15.

TCI made their only sub of the game, but the Bahamas had the momentum against a winded TCI side and started to dominate the scrums giving good ball for the Bahamian attack. Capitalising on the leaden legs of the TCI team the Bahamas ran in two quick tries to go up for the first time in the match.

TCI 17 – Bahamas 25.

With only a few minutes left in the game the TCI team reached deep and started to push the ball into the Bahamian side. A strong run by Dino Parker ended just short of the try line and the Bahamian side kicked the ball into touch to secure the win.

Although the TCI side failed to return home with the cup they provided the Bahamian side with a great match and if the TCI side would have had a few substitutes to match the horde of Bahamian fresh legs the result could very well have been different. The TCI side would like to thank the Bahamas rugby club for their superb hosting and we look forward to hosting their side next year in the TCI. The TCI rugby football union would also like to thank Dempsey & Co. and J.S. Johnson Insurance for their financial support of the Flamingo Cup.

