

Pondering on what tourneys are in store

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What are the tournaments in store for rugby in the state this year, at the club and school level? The new year/season should start off with the annual seasonal opener, the Frank Gaffney cup for the over 30's and the under 30's for all players who are in Kuching on the weekend it is held.

The other club level tournaments that are in the calendar will be the SRU President's cup and SRU/Dato' Sri William Mawan 10's, the KRFC Guinness league and Song Thian Cheok Memorial 7's, the Baram cup organised by Miri DRU and the Bintulu RC hosted Bintulu 10's.

Sibu DRU is planning a 10's tournament, tentatively scheduled for April, while Kuching politeknik is also planning a tournament for the higher learning institutes in the state involving themselves, Unimas, UiTM, UPM, Mukah politeknik and Curtin university.

They will also be inviting other institutes from across the waters and our Borneon neighbours, Sabah and Brunei.

This latter tournament is scheduled for the early part of the year.

Unimas is also planning to organise a tournament, whether in house closed or open invitational, is still to be known.

So it looks like the game is seeing a spike, judging from the number of tournaments that are already penciled in and being planned.

This will certainly be a boon to the clubs and players as it will give them the chance to play competitively more often rather than the usual diet of weekly games in between tournaments which can be quite long.

The only dampener on this increased number of tournaments is the perennial problem of funds for the clubs invited to play in these tournaments with regards to travelling expenses, besides the players' getting leave from their employers to play in the tournaments.

Although the majority of these tournaments are shortened versions of the game, either 7's or 10's, except for the SRU President's cup and Baram cup, the travelling expenses for a team to play in these tournaments is still quite substantial.

The schools' tournaments that are on the calendar will be the annual divisional U- 18 inter schools' to select the various divisional representatives for the interdivisional U-12 touch, U-18 and the U-15 inter schools' 10's.

These tournaments will be organised by the state schools' sports council together with the education department, with technical assistance from the SRU, and the various divisional clubs in terms of match officials.

From these latter tournaments the organisers will be selecting the state's representative sides to the national schools' sports council's national championship across the waters for the U-12's and U- 18's in the first quarter of the year.

Apart from these confirmed tournaments, the schools will not play any other tournaments after the conclusion of the inter-divisional U-12's, U- 18's and the U-15 interschool except for the KRFC schools' 7's and SRU 10's, the latter of which was not held last year due to time constraints, scheduled for the latter part of the first half of the year.

The schools that play the game, especially those in Kuching and Samarahan, do not organise any tournaments amongst themselves outside of the official tournaments and the idea to have a schools' league starting with Kuching and Samarahan divisions appear to be still born.

This is because the majority of the teachers, except for a few dedicated souls, do not seem to have any interest, commitment and enthusiasm to do anymore than prepare their charges for the annual inter-school tournaments.

This idea to have a league has been mooted and discussed umpteenth times by both KRFC and SRU with the game's schools' technical chairman, Zulkaranainhisham aka Zul, since 3 or 4 years ago.

But unfortunately, due to the lack of interest and enthusiasm by the teachers concerned, citing reasons like lack of suitable window and time for the league, it never saw the light of day.

Will this year see the birth of this league?