

Kingdom of God and Rugby 7'S

I has long been affirmed that rugby union is 'the game played in heaven'. This may or may not be true, but I hope to convince you that God is 'into' rugby, especially the derivative of the game called Rugby 7'S

The number 7 is perhaps the most significant numeral in the bible. We have the 7 spirits before the throne, the 7 golden lamp stands, the 7 churches, the 7 seals judgements, the 7 trumpet judgements and the 7 bowl judgements just name a few.

We serve a God who is not only methodical but also wild, courageous, competitive and unpredictable. A God who loves fun, food and entertainment. After all, He created them!

The Kingdom of God has invaded the world of Rugby 7's. I can be absolutely sure of this because where there is an opportunity for the kingdom to advance 'God is in it'. There is no sphere in which God is not willing to enter. He has promised his Son 'the nations' and Rugby 7's is a game played by the nations of the world. Any nation who wished to field a team may enter. They may need to qualify but they are welcome into the kingdom of rugby 7's.

Rugby sevens or Seven-a-side rugby as it used to be called consists of 7 players in each opposing team on the field at any one time. Interchange can take place as required. There are 2 halves of 7 minutes each. The players who play this extreme sport are usually not well known in the 'normal' world of rugby. They are somewhat covert, humble, not well paid players who seek excellence. It was said of Daniel that 'an excellent spirit dwelt within him'. In Daniel 23:4 it says 'those who serve their God will do great exploits'.

Many of these incredible players from nations like Australia, New Zealand Fiji, Samoa, Scotland, England, Argentina, Wales, and Kenya give allegiance to the King of Kings both on and off the field.

The game is played at an unbelievable pace. It is non-stop and can only come to a halt if there is an infringement by one team. It is played with extreme respect for the opposing side while giving no ground. The camaraderie, commitment to play fairly and to the rules, regard for the referee, no fighting and while not willing to lose, graceful in defeat.

Many Sevens competitions are held locally and internationally. The best known probably being the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens. It's a very fast game played at break neck speed within wide open spaces. Although with a reduced number of players the game is still played on a full size rugby pitch. There tends to be a light-hearted atmosphere less pressure and more room to move. Teams are prepared to throw the ball about, keep the ball alive, take risks (only calculated ones, of course!) and use plenty of rugby sidesteps provide outstanding entertainment and often surprise everybody.

The game is well known for spectators dressing up for the occasion. A fun party atmosphere is present and opposing supporters respect each other. It is an incredibly exciting spectacle to watch. This is like the same ongoing excitement of serving the king in your own specific role, with passion.

So why am I excited about it being a Kingdom sport. It simply is and it has many kingdom attributes like: fair play, played only by those who have developed the skills necessary, played in excellence and with a spirit of excellence. It is also played in a most creative style. Money is not the goal of the players. It is a worldwide (nations) sport played all year round. It is played by both genders, but not against each other. This provides a platform for the kingdom to advance in many nations so the king may return.

There are parallels that can be drawn between Kingdom and 7's.

In Rick Joyner's first book of his trilogy 'The Final Quest' he is shown 3 armies advancing against the hordes of darkness. The leading army comprise of the elite troops, well prepared, shining armour, well armed and in specific companies. They know their task in the battle. These are the forerunners. They are small in number but extremely well prepared.

The second army comprises of a somewhat prepared group, not organised, some dressed in armour, some not. Some have weapons but most don't. The majority do not know they are in a battle, just a day out. If they do know, they treat it as not real. This is the church of today. The third army are the Sunday only Christians. They are totally disorganised, not aware they are in a battle and do not know why they are there in the first place. They argue and fight amongst each other. Their dress is mainly ordinary day to day clothing. They have no armour or weapons.

In 7's Rugby it is quite the opposite, this is the elite form of rugby. They are the SAS of rugby. While only 7 on the battle field at one time, they are capable of defeating 7000 opposition. There is none more prepared, more organised, more skilled and dedicated to the task of winning. They know their opposition will score against them but they are focused on the final battle and winning the end-time prize, the winners crown. They operate as a trained team and provide cover for each other.

The second group (church) are the spectators. Most know what the game (battle) is about, however some just came along for the fun. They would love to be on the (battle) field but are comfortable seated in the grand stand. There is a great party atmosphere. A reasonable number of the spectators dream of being on the field, some even play the game. Many are dressed in identical costumes (which is a step towards battle dress and being in a regiment). This is a good sign. However, they have not committed themselves to any training for warfare. They are unfit for battle and would be easily defeated. The elite group on the field want those in the grand stand to join them for the final battle. They provide motivation to those in the stand by their expert clinical performance on the field.

The third group of rugby are supporters but do not know the game is on. They are off doing life as usual, or forget a friend told them the time, date and venue for the event. If they were aware of it, some would prefer to watch from the comfort of their lounge chair.

2. In the church we are supposed to be in unity. This means working as a team and having cooperation between local churches, putting aside differences and working together. This does not happen anywhere near enough for the church to be an effective army.

You may say, the Olympics have everything or are very similar to rugby 7's. Well, they're not. Olympics are mainly about individual performance and personal glory. It is rife with drug taking to win the prize. It is extremely expensive to be a spectator.

7's is very similar to the kingdom. Team performance is the key to winning. There are about 14 members in a team who train and play together all year round. They are content to sit on the bench and wait their turn to compete. The team receives the glory, not the individual. The kingdom is totally affordable and so is rugby 7's. A day pass costs in the order of \$30. Try comparing this to a seat at the Olympics!

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