

Jesuit, Dixon Tops at KOT

Written by Alex Goff

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Forty-two HS programs fielding 128 teams played in the Kick-Off Tournament in Sacramento this past weekend.

The tournament featured nine divisions, including a round-robin for girls, Varsity Gold, Silver and Bronze, Development, Frosh-Soph, and divisions for Middle School, U12s, and U10s.

In the Varsity Gold division there were so many teams that the bracket was split in two, with each bracket crowning a winner.

In Bracket A, Jesuit of Sacramento made a statement in taking the top spot, beating well-regarded Lamorinda 41-0 in the final.

Head Coach John Shorey said his team was still knocking off the rust, given that this tournament capped their second week of training.

But, he added, “we have chance to be a very good team .”

Leading the way for Jesuit was No. 8 KC Riley, who isn't the tallest No. 8 you'd ever see but was enormously difficult to bring down and caused defenses fits all weekend.

Shorey was, as usual, a bit muted in his assessment of his squad, but added he was very impressed with Dixon, who “look big and well drilled for so early in the year.”

Dixon indeed won Bracket B, beating Santa Rosa 14-7 in the final.

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“Our Varsity played well,” said Dixon Head Coach Rob Salaber, whose son, Anthony, Graduated and now plays for Cal. “We have 12 of our 15 starters returning from last year, and many of the players are playing with a new-found confidence after winning Nationals.”

Senior tight five forward Val Lee-Lo “played inspired rugby,” said Salaber, while senior flanker Kraig Roscoe was excellent in support. In the backs Nolan Williams and Chris Rico formed an effective midfield pairing, while sophomore wing Nathaniel Short led the team with five tries.

“The hardest match of the day was clearly Santa Rosa in the final,” said Salaber. Dixon beat McClatchy and Jesuit’s B side fairly comfortably.

In other brackets, Bellarmine Prep took the Varsity Silver Bracket A with a 22-7 defeat of the Calgary Mavericks. Making the trip from Canada, Calgary fielded three squads, all happy to leave the snows of Alberta behind them.

In Bracket B, Lancer of Sacramento edged the Sacramento Eagles 10-5.