

## SPORT

# Koupreys lose by slimmest margin

Cambodia's rugby team succumbs to a 10-9 defeat by Brunei in their opening fixture of the Asian 5 Nations Southeast Regional rugby tournament as second-half sin bins prove costly

BY DANIEL PORDES

**T**WO second-half sin bins and an injury proved costly for Cambodia in their 10-9 defeat to Brunei at Phnom Penh's Old Stadium Sunday. A spirited second-half fightback by the Koupreys, who clawed back to within a point in their opening game of the Asian 5 Nations Southeast Regional tournament, was stymied by yellow cards for lock Sopha Yun and scrum half Em Ratana.

Slight favourites coming into the match due to their size advantage, the visitors' powerful forward row dominated early exchanges, at times looking like they would steamroll their way over the hosts. However, dogged defending by Cambodia and some poor ball-handling by Brunei began to swing

the match in favour of the home team. Ultimately, poor decision-making meant it was not enough to gain revenge for last years defeat.

"It was disappointing to lose by one point at the end of the game," admitted Cambodia and Sisowath Knights lock Robert Baker. "We expected them to tire in the second half. Then we could use our speed and endurance and come back at them. It did work out, but not quite the way we planned."

Against the run of play Cambodia took the lead early on, when captain and flyhalf Pich Ratana kicked a seventh-minute penalty following a good drive down the middle by center Arashad Lovy.

However, a steady spell of pressure soon saw Brunei take control in the 11th minute through a try from centre Hj

Rozaimienizam Hj Jainal. A quick move begun by captain Ahmad Faez bin Haji Anuar on the Cambodian right played in the number 13 who burst through the Kouprey's over-stretched defence and touched down on the left of the posts. Flyhalf Petrus Tuam, one of several naturalised players in the Brunei team, scored the conversion that increased the lead to four, with the score looking just reward for their early dominance.

Rather than open the floodgates, the try seemed to galvanise the Koupreys as penetrating runs by first lock Sopha Yun and then Arashad Lovy again almost snatched the lead back. Instead, they settled for a penalty, successfully kicked between the posts by Pich Ratana on the 19th minute to bring the score to within one point.

Bad luck followed after the drinks break, as the Koupreys suffered both injury and insult. Fullback Chan Samedi was taken off with a dislocated shoulder after a heavy challenge, and Brunei winger Ak Md Muizzuddin kicked a long-range penalty to maintain a four-point cushion at halftime.

"Same again," Cambodia coach Richie Flanagan said during his pitch-side team talk. "They're gonna come out, in the first 5-10 minutes of the second half and they're gonna hit hard. We have to absorb that for 10 minutes and then after that we can work on our game-plan."

Flanagan's tactics were disrupted after just five minutes of the restart, as stamping in the aftermath of a Koupreys scrum



Cambodian rugby team captain Pich Ratana (centre) gets tackled by a Brunei player during the opening match of the Asian 5 Nations Southeast regional tournament at Phnom Penh's Old Stadium Sunday. JOE GARRISON



Brunei's Hj Rozaimienizam Hasi Jainal (centre, with ball) is congratulated by scrum half Muhammad Ziyad bin Hj Ramlee (left) and teammates after scoring the game's only try Sunday. JOE GARRISON

led to Em Ratana's trip to the bench. The resultant penalty for the infringement was kicked by Tuam from distance, striking the crossbar and bounced back into play.

The second half followed the pattern of Brunei focusing on rucks and trying to force their way through, while the Koupreys attempted a running game that worked in fits and starts, often being let down by poor kicking. Flanagan had implored the team at halftime to take more kicks at goal, but a 54th-minute penalty attempt by winger Khemarin Dul was well short.

A successful 70th-minute attempt by Em Ratana should

have led to a grandstand finish, with impressive center Vireak Vannak looking the man most likely to make a breakthrough.

Unfortunately, another sin-binning, this time for Sopha Yun for elbowing, meant that the game petered out as the Koupreys failed to break through.

Brunei's New Zealander coach, Ben Bourne, was relieved to have gained the win. "It was pretty tough actually, pretty hard to predict who was gonna win especially in the second half," he stated. "I thought Cambodia came back really well."

Despite the defeat, Flanagan, seemed more upbeat than his

counterpart. "Overall, I was very impressed with our team. I thought [Brunei] looked tired in the second half. I was confident we'd go ahead and go for victory. But for some silly sin bins, a few handling errors and kicking the ball away when we shouldn't have, we could have won."

Looking ahead to their next game against Laos Saturday, Flanagan was optimistic. "We'll see how Laos and Brunei goes" on Wednesday, he asserted. "It's still gonna be a very tough match for Laos, and they only have a three day turnaround. So if we get over a few injuries we'll be alright. I'll be quietly confident for the next game." ■

## Solid McDowell wins US Open title

Northern Ireland golfer Graeme McDowell shoots a final round of 74 to clinch the US Open

PEBBLE BEACH, California – Graeme McDowell was last man standing at a treacherous Pebble Beach on Sunday, holding his nerve as all around him lost theirs to win the 2010 US Open championship.

A final round 74, three over par, was notable more for more its steadfastness than anything else, but it was good enough to give the Ulsterman a one-shot victory over Gregory Havret, a Frenchman who made the most of the place in the tournament he earned at a qualifying event at Walton Heath. McDowell is the first British golfer to win the US Open since Tony Jacklin did it in 1970 and the first home player to win a major championship since Paul Lawrie's Open Championship victory at Carnoustie in 1999.

Ernie Els, Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods, a veritable Mount Rushmore of golf's modern era, filled places three to five.

All three of them expressed their disappointment at an opportunity lost, although their misery was but nothing when measured against that of Dustin Johnson, who began Sunday's final round with a three-shot lead, lost that advantage on his second hole and ended up shooting an 11-over-par 82.

Were you watching Jean Van de Velde?

Yet if Johnson's day was misery complete, then McDowell's was the very essence of joy.



Graeme McDowell celebrates with the trophy on the 18th green after winning the 110th US Open at Pebble Beach Golf Links in Pebble Beach, California Sunday. AFP

"I just can't explain how I feel right now. I said before the round started that if the golfing gods smile on me I might win this trophy. And they did," he said afterwards.

The Ulsterman's triumph was built on solid start, which saw him run off a string of pars. A birdie on the fifth, coupled with Johnson's demise, saw him take the lead and he never let it slip.

Bogies at the ninth hole and the brutally difficult 14th, gave momentary hope to the chasing pack but when the question was

asked of Els, Mickelson and Woods they did not answer.

Only Havret came close to denying McDowell his ambitions but a bogey on the 17th hole and the Frenchman's failure to birdie the par-five 18th left McDowell needing a par to win the tournament.

He could have reached the green in two shots but deployed discretion instead of valour, laid up to 100 yards and got his regulation par to secure his victory.

THE GUARDIAN

## Lorenzo coasts to win in the British MotoGP

SILVERSTONE, England – Jorge Lorenzo extended his lead at the top of the world championship after a dominant performance at Sunday's British MotoGP here.

The Fiat Yamaha rider started from pole and lead all the way to finish ahead of Italian Andrea Dovizioso on a Honda with American Ben Spies third for Yamaha.

American Nicky Hayden finished fourth ahead of Australian Casey Stoner.

"This was an important day for me and an important win, because I felt so strong and I enjoyed riding my Yamaha so much," said Lorenzo, who now leads Dovizioso by 37 points in the championship standings.

"I had a different feeling today. I felt it was going to be a good race.

"I never dreamt of taking three wins from five races but here we are and I am feeling very strong mentally at this moment. I want to thank my team, Yamaha and Bridge-

stone for this victory."

Lorenzo had built up an eight-second lead at the halfway point with the battle more for second place behind him.

Spies managed to overtake Hayden right at the end of the race to grab the final podium spot, his first ever in Moto GP.

AFP



Spain's Jorge Lorenzo of Yamaha celebrates with the trophy after winning the British MotoGP. AFP