

DIII Final: Two Sides of the Tracks

By Alex Goff

June 2, 2006, San Diego, Calif. – Mission v. Boston Irish Wolfhounds Cs is a DIII final of two contrasts.

BIW is a DIII team, no doubt. They have their own DIII coaching staff and playing pool. However they are still part of a DI club, one of the best organized in the country. BIW does not deny there's an advantage that their C side still benefits from the infrastructure, administration, support, and finances of a big-time club.

This cross-divisional dance can be a double-edged sword, however, as when two teams from the same club have playoff games in difference venues, resources can be stretched.

However, this is not the case for the Boston Irish Wolfhounds. Their DI and DIII teams are traveling together to San Diego.

Contrast this with Mission, a Northern California side that plays hard and enjoys themselves - exactly what you expect from a winning DIII team. They are a stand-alone team that, while having had players like Tom Mell and Joe Domine play on select and Pacific Coast touring sides, is still a small outfit.

Mission members openly acknowledge they are a social team. They just happen to be good at rugby at the level they play. With players like Phil Gurilani, Fabio Rojas, and Arcia Dorosti also bringing touring experience, they are not overwhelmed by the prospect of a national final, but also you get the feeling they are fully aware of the different circumstances of the each team.

For BIW Cs, being in DIII has been a new lease on life for the players at that level - some wily veterans and some who cannot devote the time to DI play.

Still, winning, and the carrot of a championship, often means a greater commitment comes from the players anyway.

"The boys really stepped up, adapted well to some excellent competition, and played their hearts out," said coach Carl Morris. "It's a true team effort. We're in existence to push the DI team and act as a development tool for some of the young players."

Already they have sent players up to the DI teams.

Where Mission and BIW are somewhat similar might be in their diversity. BIW aren't all Irish, and they have built a reputation of being a club with lots of Irish administrators who are fiercely patriotic, for America. There are other players of all backgrounds, and it's that melting pot that makes the game so much fun.

As for Mission, it's a United Nations of insults as players from Fiji, Tonga, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Iran, Italy, Israel, Sri Lanka, and Ohio bring their special viewpoint of the sport to the training sessions. If you can survive the ribbing at a Mission touch rugby game, and give as much back as well, then you're one of them. Not a bad thing to be.