

# US Women's 7s Team Impressive in New Zealand

By Emil Signes

## New Zealand February 2001

The US Women's Sevens team went 8-4-1 at two international sevens tournaments in New Zealand. Their only losses were to New Zealand, New Zealand Development (twice) and Aotearoa (New Zealand) Maori.

Their successes, however, included some significant ones: a 0-0 tie with New Zealand and two victories over New Zealand "B". Other teams they defeated included a World Invitation VII, Samoa, Hong Kong, Tonga and two New Zealand club sides.

The 0-0 tie with New Zealand represented the first game, 7s or 15s, in which New Zealand has been shutout since 1991, when the US beat them 7-0 in the first-ever Women's World Cup. Krista McFarren was a member of both teams to accomplish this feat. In fact, this is the only game against another national team since 1991 that New Zealand has not won.

The overall record of the US Women's Team between 1997 and today stands at 28-7-1. Against non-New Zealand national sides, however, we are 26-0-1, with only a tie to Australia marring an otherwise perfect record.

## US SCORING SUMMARY

Name	Tour	Try	Con	Pts
Cabrera	2	9	13	71
Schnapp	2	4	11	42
Henry	2	6		30
Juocys	2	6		30
Graf	2	5		25
Whalen	1	5		25
Irby	2	3		15
Pease	1	3		15
Ward	1	2	2	14
Blunt	1	2		10
Queen	1	2		10
<b>Totals</b>		<b>47</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>287</b>
<b>Opponents</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>105</b>

## National Sevens Camp

Forty-eight players participated in a three-day camp (January 12-14) in Tempe, Arizona to determine the women that would represent the US not only in New Zealand, but also in Hong Kong and Japan.

Due to the fact that not all players were available for the two-week tour, a 14-player squad was selected. Ten played in the Wellington Sevens on February 8-9 and eleven in the Whangarei Sevens February 16-17, with seven participating in both.

The head coach for both tours was Emil Signes and physio "Doc Sue" Bercuk also served for the duration. The first leg of the tour was managed by Greg Schor, with Jules McCoy as assistant coach. Al Caravelli joined the tour for the second week as manager and assistant coach.

The team assembled on Saturday February 3<sup>rd</sup> in Los Angeles and flew to Auckland and then on to Wellington. We stayed at the Central Institute of Technology (CIT) in Upper Hutt and trained immediately upon arrival Monday, then twice Tuesday and again Wednesday.

The CIT was perfect: we were all housed in single rooms in one enclosed dorm area with a large common room with a TV-VCR and marker board facilities. Having a liaison is always a great help and Captain Murray Lauder of the New Zealand army provided excellent support. Murray's suggestion that we visit the local go-kart track was appreciated by all.



US Women's 7s team in Wangarei: (KNEELING) Sarah Schooler, Emily Bock-Carlson, Emilia Juocys, Joanne Ward, Laura Cabrera, Kiwi Caravelli. (STANDING) Al Caravelli, Yancy Graf, Meredith Whalen, Krista McFarren, Tyshawn Henry, Pam Irby, Diane Schnapp, Katrinka Blunt, Emil Signes, Dr. Sue Bercuk, Melody Jackson.

## Maori Welcome

On Tuesday the participating teams visited the playing fields at Trentham Army Camp and were greeted in a formal Maori welcoming ceremony. The local people, assembled on a war footing, issued a challenge (wero) to determine if we came in peace. One of the menacing warriors facing us lay down an object (rakau) to see if we were friendly or not. Representing all the visiting teams, Greg Schor picked up the rakau to indicate we came in peace. We were then welcomed: whereas the men give and respond to the challenge, the women issue the call of welcome (karanga).

We were welcomed on behalf of the residents and their ancestors. Speaking on the visitors' behalf, Greg explained the purpose of our visit and thanked the local tribe for their hospitality.

The welcome concluded with a personal exchange of greetings. This is a kiss between women and a hongi (pressing of noses) between men. In the hongi, noses are pressed twice to mingle the breath of, first the two people, then the two people's ancestors. Although generally a tradition for men, elder women (kuia) also perform the hongi.

The importance to the Maori of their ancestors was quite touching, and represented for me a validation of all the genealogical research I have been doing.

Tournament director George Skudder, employed by the NZRFU as "Manager, Women and Maori Rugby, New Zealand," is a former All Black who was a member of the 1973 NZ touring party that participated in the famous game against the Barbarians. George spoke on our behalf during the ceremony and commented that it was a shame that the men's teams in the Wellington Sevens were not greeted in the same way.

## Wellington Sevens

The US began with a very shaky 15-0 win over a World Invitation VII that comprised four Americans (Jo Anne Ward, Meredith Whalen, Katrinka Blunt and Emily Carlson), two New Zealanders, two Samoans and two players from Hong Kong. US tries were by Tyshawn Henry, Anita Pease and Laura Cabrera.

The American contingent on the Invitation VII played remarkably well, and the team came within 30 seconds of knocking off the New Zealand Development team. Scrum.com journalist Melodie Robinson wrote a touching article regarding Meredith Whalen's play—*What I learnt from America*—that can be found at:

[www.scrum.com/womens/columns/robinson6.asp](http://www.scrum.com/womens/columns/robinson6.asp)

The next US game was a disappointing 28-5 loss to the New Zealand Developmental VII, a team the Eagles needed to beat to get the play in the Westpac Trust Stadium on Saturday in front of nearly 40,000 people. The New Zealanders did a good job of spreading the field, finding gaps in the defense, and we helped with a few missed tackles. The US's only score was a try from Diane Schnapp.

The US rebounded against a solid Samoa team with good defense and tries by Diane Schnapp, Anita Pease and Emilia Juocys. The final score was 19-0, with two Schnapp conversions.

The Eagles then dispatched Hong Kong 64-0 with a clinical performance. After last year's disappointment in Hong Kong when we finished behind Australia in our pool (they scored 25 tries to our 23), we weren't about to let a game pass without scoring as many tries as possible.

Laura Cabrera led the team with

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a hat trick, Erina Queen and Tyshawn Henry each had two tries, and Emilia Juocys, Yancy Graf and Anita Pease had one each. Cabrera made seven conversions.

We found it ironic that the Hong Kong players, whose team didn't win a game all weekend, not only had all their expenses covered, but were paid to play as well. In contrast, our players were staggering under the \$1600 - \$2000 airline fares plus other expenses, most of which they paid themselves.

## New Zealand vs. USA: Another Barnburner

The first halves of most US-NZ games have been great defensive battles with NZ pulling away in the second. This one started out the same and, unfortunately ended the same. The halftime score was 7-5 New Zealand, with the US try on a heads up dive over a ruck by Emilia Juocys.

The first four minutes of the second half were marked by the US methodically moving from the opening kickoff down to the goal line with driving lineout, ruck, ruck, penalty, driving lineout, ruck, ruck, etc. They got to within inches of the New Zealand line, but missed a couple of opportunities to move the ball wide to space before losing it at a goal-line tackle. An ensuing kick resulted in a 100-meter NZ try and the Kiwis went ahead 12-5. A try

after the final hooter made the final score 19-5.

## Bill Freeman

Rugby legend Bill Freeman, New Zealand's Technical Director for many years and architect of New Zealand's unbeatable sevens teams of the mid 80s, watched our games, giving commentary afterwards. Bill still has the unique ability to express profound thoughts in simple sentences and his observations were immensely helpful.

## Day Two

On day two, the US found itself with only one game to determine if we would get the right to meet New Zealand in the stadium. It was a rematch against New Zealand Development, and once again it was a 99-meter turnover that did the Eagles in.

With the ball at the NZ 1-meter line, Erina Queen batted down a NZ lineout throw. Instead of bouncing towards Krista McFarren, the ball bounced to the NZ scrumhalf, who initiated a movement that resulted in a score. Again, a last-second try by the Kiwis turned a 7-5 game into a 12-5 loss.

The Eagles' only score was a Laura Cabrera try.

The resulting final was an unexciting 39-5 blowout of New Zealand Development by New Zealand. The general consensus was that, in the future, this game needs to be between two different countries.

## Progress

The Wellington experience, however, did result in another step forward for women's sevens at the international level: the women marched with the men during the parade of nations at the Wellington International Sevens, and were also invited to the post-match function where they mingled with some of the world's best rugby players.

The excitement of the parade was sweetened by the fact that the women were also beneficiaries of

*The women were also beneficiaries of the crowd's enthusiastic support for the men's team that had just beaten Fiji and England. "USA! USA!" resounded from the crowd at every stage of the march.*

the crowd's enthusiastic support for the men's team that had just beaten Fiji and England. "USA! USA!" resounded from the crowd at every stage of the march.

On Sunday the team took in a little New Zealand culture and visited Te Papa, the national museum. I was also able to visit a distant I had recently "discovered" during an ongoing study of my family history.

**From Wellington To Whangarei**

Monday brought tearful goodbyes from the departing members of the squad. Following a hard training session at CIT, we left at noon for Rotorua. On the way we stopped at Lake Taupo for a bungy jumping adventure. Ten of the 15-member tour party jumped (but only Emil and Emily did the full body plunge into the lake).

The Rotorua stay was a unique adventure as the tour party spent two nights at a Maori Marae. The Marae is a place of worship, a place where people can stay and the family home of generations that have gone before. The Marae at which we stayed was called Tunohopu, the name of an ancestor of that community.

The sleeping arrangements were 17 mattresses laid out on the floor next to one another. Being in Rotorua there were also thermal baths and mud for bathing and cleansing; one each for men and women.

In order to remind ourselves of the culture in which we were guests, we modified our tour numbers: we became tahi (one), rua, toru, wha, rima, ono, whetu, waru, iwa, tekau, tekau ma tahi, tekau ma rua, tekau ma toru, tekau ma wah, tekau ma rima, tekau ma ono and tekau ma whetu (seventeen).

**Whakarewarewa**

Tuesday, following another hard training session, the tour party visited Whakarewarewa, often abbreviated "Whaka" by the locals, but itself short for "Whakarewarewatangaoteropeawaihaio," meaning "the uprising of the war party at Waihaio." Whakarewarewa is the best-known geothermal site in Rotorua, and the main place people go to see geysers, hot pools and mud pools.

We also took a gondola to the top of the mountain and enjoyed luge

rides. In the evening we were treated to more Maori ceremonies and singing, and on Wednesday morning we were off again.

**Mount Manganui & Gordon Tietjens**

Most of Wednesday was spent at the beach resort of Mount Manganui where NZ Sevens coach Gordon Tietjens ran the team through a training session. In the seven years "Titch" has been coaching the national team, they have been in 50 tournaments, won 29 - including four Hong Kong Sevens - and made the finals in all but eleven. During the last two years they have won the first-ever World Series of Sevens and this year the third Rugby World Cup Sevens in Mar del Plata, Argentina.

Besides a great training session we got three bonuses from this trip.

First, we went to the beach (which reminded me of the Jersey Shore - cool but not cold, and nice body surfing waves) and visited the thermal salt pools.

Second, while at the beach we saw the Super 12 Chiefs training and stopped to chat briefly with Roger Randle and Karl Te Nana.

Of more lasting significance, though, was Titch's description of the tour game of "murder" that the Kiwi sevens team plays. We implemented it immediately and within four days 12 people were killed off.

**Whangarei**

Finally, we were off to Whangarei (pronounced fong-ah-ray). With a population of 45,000, Whangarei (about 2 1/2 hours north of Auckland) is the business, shopping, entertainment and cultural center of Northland.

The drive from Mount Manganui to Whangarei in our two rental vans was a ride from Hell. With very few exceptions, New Zealand roads are two lanes and wind up, over and around hills and mountains.

On Thursday we settled into a pattern of publicity appearances, plus a brief practice. In Whangarei we stayed at the famous Grand Hotel, constructed in the 1870s and slept in by the Queen during her 1954 visit to New Zealand.

Promotions in Whangarei included three radio station interviews, shopping mall and store visits, and a "celebrity" touch rugby game with the Aotearoa Maori side. Tyshawn "Hurricane" Henry became an instant hit with the locals.

**Aotearoa Maori**

Formerly known as the New Zealand Maoris, the national Maori side is now called Aotearoa Maori, after the Maori name for New Zealand - Aotearoa, or "Land of the Long White Cloud."

**Whangarei Sevens**

The tournament featured both men's teams and women's teams, and was played on two pitches laid out across a large stadium field: the fields were wide enough but their length is only about 80 meters. The men's division was comprised mostly of Northland clubs, but the women's division included both club and international sides. On the first day there was a crossover, so clubs and international sides played each other. On the second day, the international teams were regrouped into pools of three, with the standings in these pools determining the semifinalists.

**Friday Results**

The US began against two Northland club sides: Hikurangi and Hora Hora. In the Hikurangi match we performed abysmally for a half, before settling down for a 24-5 win. Pam Irby, Yancy Graf, Diane Schnapp and Jo Anne Ward all had tries in this game, with Schnapp adding two conversions.

Against Hora Hora, our offense was far more fluid, and we were able to score a comfortable 31-0 victory. Laura Cabrera led the scoring with two tries and three conversions. Tyshawn Henry, Emilia Juocys and Meredith Whalen also scored tries.

Friday's final match pitted us against New Zealand "B". This team included many of the developmental players that had beaten us twice the preceding week, plus some older and more experienced players. From the opening whistle, however, our swarming defense gave them no breathing room and we scored an impressive and comprehensive 31-5 victory. The crowd was so impressed that shouts of "USA!" could be heard regularly during the match. Cabrera repeated her two try, three-conversion performance of the previous game and Yancy Graf, Emilia Juocys and Diane Schnapp added tries.

**Saturday Results**

Saturday we were put into a pool with New Zealand and Tonga, the other pool being Aotearoa Maori, New Zealand B and Samoa.

The New Zealand - Tonga match was first, and the Kiwis dominated the New Zealand-based Tonga side, 43-0, scoring seven tries.

The US - New Zealand match was 14 minutes of brutal defensive plays, one after the other. Despite the absence of scoring, the game was immensely exciting and many spectators commented that it was one of the best sevens' matches they'd ever seen. We missed, however, an easy chance to score and give the Kiwis their first defeat since 1991. Nevertheless, it was the first time New Zealand had been shut out in 10 years, with Krista McFarren being a member of both

US teams that achieved that feat.

Incidentally, in my 25 years as a sevens' coach, I have never before been part of - or even seen - a scoreless tie.

*I worried a wee bit about "too much, too soon." After shutting out New Zealand and dancing with Jonah Lomu on your first tour, there's not much room for upward movement.*

Now the US's task was to score at least eight tries against Tonga - to win our division and force New Zealand to play Aotearoa Maori in their semifinal. Eight tries are a lot: sometimes even unopposed we struggle to get the ball across the line that many times. We had five by halftime and ended up scoring eleven in an absolutely professional display to win 71-0. Meredith Whalen had a hat trick in this game, which also featured two tries by Katrinka Blunt and crowd-favorite Hurricane Henry. Emilia Juocys, Jo Anne Ward, Pam Irby and Yancy Graf also scored tries. Diane Schnapp had six conversions and Jo Anne Ward two.

Our semifinal against New Zealand B was not as convincing as Friday evening's, but as the old saying goes, it's tough to beat the same good team twice at one event. In the end, the score was 17-5 and we were never seriously in trouble. Pam Irby, Yancy Graf and Meredith Whalen scored tries, and Diane Schnapp kicked a conversion.

In the meantime, New Zealand and the Aotearoa Maori team were locked in a battle that saw New Zealand hold a lead into the second half. The Maori VII, however, scored the last three tries in a 26-10 victory.

From our perspective, the less said about the Aotearoa match, the better. All the good things we had done in earlier matches were not to be found in this one. The Maori VII

was on fire and we were exhausted, perhaps the result of playing too many people too many minutes. Meredith Whalen got the true Ironwoman award of the tour, as she played every minute of every match both in Wellington (for the Invitation VII) and in Whangarei.

Kelly Kiwi scored a hat trick against us and got the tournament MVP (for men and women).

**John McKittrick**

On Monday February 19, on our way to the Auckland airport, we stopped at the Silverdale RFC for a training session with John McKittrick. John is the interim coach of the US National Men's Sevens team that had just come off a spectacular weekend in the Wellington Sevens, defeating Fiji, England and Canada.

John, accompanied by Eagle Alex Magleby who is spending a season at Silverdale, was very giving and shared with us his preferred style of play, and some drills crafted to achieve it. Everyone felt the session to be of immense help for developing future successes.

On our way to the airport we dropped off Jo Anne Ward, who has decided to spend the season in New Zealand. She will be playing with Takapuna, Eric Rush's club.

**Young Eagles**

When I first coached select-side women's rugby in 1990, the youngest person invited to the East camp was 25 years old. Now, thanks to the proliferation of the sport throughout our universities, we not only had 19-year olds at camp, but a 21, a 22 and a 23-year old made the team. We have definitely taken many steps in the right direction in the last decade, and this New Zealand tour was a fantastic introduction for our players to the highest level of rugby in the world.

I was a bit jealous to see players so young achieving so much success and enjoying themselves so much, so early. I worried a wee bit about "too much, too soon." After shutting out New Zealand and dancing with Jonah Lomu on your first tour, there's not much room for upward movement.

**US Women To New Zealand**

Name	Team	Age	Ht	Wt	Tournaments
Katrinka Blunt	Bay Area Shehawks	24	5' 8	161	(Whangarei)
Laura Cabrera	Berkeley All Blues	31	5' 6	140	(Wellington and Whangarei)
Emily Carlson	Kansas City Jazz	25	5' 5	150	(Whangarei)
Yancy Graf	Kansas City Jazz	26	5' 7	144	(Wellington and Whangarei)
Tyshawn Henry	Berkeley All Blues	25	5' 7	167	(Wellington and Whangarei)
Pam Irby	Oregon Sports Un	36	5' 6	132	(Wellington and Whangarei)
Emilia Juocys	Chicago	23	5' 7	140	(Wellington and Whangarei)
Kerry McCabe	Philadelphia	33	5' 8	146	(Wellington)
Krista McFarren	Maryland Stingers	39	5' 6	142	(Wellington and Whangarei)
Anita Pease	Maryland Stingers	37	5' 8	140	(Wellington)
Erina Queen	Emerald City	30	5' 10	158	(Wellington)
Diane Schnapp	Berkeley All Blues	32	5' 6	142	(Wellington and Whangarei)
Jo Anne Ward	Syracuse University	21	5' 7	140	(Whangarei)
Meredith Whalen	Arizona State	22	5' 3	124	(Whangarei)



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## INTERNATIONAL ROUND-UP

## AUSTRALIA

## Coming and Going

No sooner had the ARU snared Australian league star winger Wendell Sailor, than Wallaby winger Joe Roff said he was taking a 12-month break at the end of the year, citing exhaustion and a desire to live overseas. He will not be considered for the end-of-year tour of Canada and Europe.

Sailor turned down a four-year offer from his NRL champion Brisbane Broncos of SA450,000 a year, to switch to rugby at the end of this year for a SA2.5 million package from the ARU that includes two cars and a clause that allows him to get out of rugby after two years. Sailor will play for Queensland, and the ARU denied he was guaranteed a Wallaby place.

## Wallowing Waratahs

The problems which caused the ARU to step in forced New South Wales to record a \$A6.5 million deficit last year. A trading loss of \$A4.09 million was compounded by other factors, including the write down in value of Waratah Stadium.

Last year, 19 staff were made redundant, and grants to clubs were reduced by 50 percent. A three-year plan is in place to repay the debt.

## League Lining Up For S12

Three Sydney premier rugby league clubs - Parramatta, Canterbury and Penrith - all expressed interest in bidding for a new Sydney-based Super 12 franchise if the competition was expanded. But NRL chief executive David Moffett, a former NZRFU CEO, criticized the clubs for consorting with the enemy and told them to concentrate on promoting league.



The US Men's and Women's Sevens Teams at the Wellington (NZ) Sevens.

## Up-and-under

Less than two months after talking about retiring at the end of this year, Australian captain John Eales was thinking of continuing to the 2003 World Cup, which would be his fourth ... Wallaby winger Matt Burke signed to play in Australia to the end of 2003, and was named New South Wales captain.

## ENGLAND

## Premiership

Leicester, on the verge of defending its league title, was in a tizzy by the decision of the RFU's marketers to confer the title of English champions on the winner of a knockout competition. The RFU, backed by English First Division Rugby which represents the Premiership clubs, says the May 13 winner of the three-week playoffs, tacked on after the Premiership, will go into the European Cup as England's No. 1 seed.

Leicester has threatened to boycott the knockout competition, believing the Premiership title has greater value. Leicester was 10 points clear of Wasps and Northampton with six games left at the end of February.

London Irish's unbeaten home record was ended 28-9 Feb. 11 by Leicester, which also extended its own home winning streak to 37 with a 17-10 comeback against Bristol.

Bristol gave Harlequins its ninth loss in 10 matches, and first loss of the new year by 13-9 on Feb. 11. Newcastle removed Bath from title contention by 24-23, despite two late Bath tries by Tom Joyce, which went unconverted. After Gloucester suffered its worst loss of the season, 28-3 to Wasps, coach Philippe Saint-Andre offered to resign but was declined by club owner Tom Walkinshaw.

## Up-and-under

Former All Black flanker Josh Kronfeld will finish his career at Leicester ... Former Samoa captain Pat Lam announced he was leaving Northampton at the end of his contract in May after three years, expressing shock at the club not offering him a coaching role.

## EUROPE

## European Nations Cup

Embarrassed officials of the Romania Union offered to pay for a replacement European Nations Cup after losing it. Romania last year won the inaugural competition, a tier below the Six Nations. A replica cup will cost about £1000.

Meanwhile, after two rounds of the Cup, Romania, Georgia and Russia have all had two wins, and Portugal, the Netherlands and Spain have had two losses. In the next round March 4, Russia hosts

Georgia.

Results so far: Romania 47, Portugal 0, Lisbon; Georgia 32, Holland 3, Amsterdam; Russia 30, Spain 29, Madrid; Georgia 36, Portugal 12, Tbilisi; Romania 27, Spain 12, Seville; Russia 41, Holland 20, Amsterdam.

## European Cup

The Cup semifinals April 21 match English clubs Leicester and Gloucester at Vicarage Road, and Ireland's Munster against French favorites Stade Francais in Lille.

In the quarterfinals, #8 Anthony Foley scored all three Munster tries as the Irish remained unbeaten at home, 38-29 against Biarritz. Stade Francais beat Pau with 21 points from Diego Dominguez.

Leicester crushed Welsh leaders Swansea 41-10, with ferocious tackling from Fereti Tuilagi and a try in each half by Geordan Murphy. Gloucester topped Cardiff 21-15, Cardiff scoring two tries but Simon Mannix punishing poor discipline with six penalties.

## European Shield

The Shield semifinals April 21-22 guarantee an England-France final, with Newcastle v Harlequins, and Narbonne v Agen.

Newcastle thrashed 14-man Mont de Marsan 61-23, and Harlequins pipped Brive 20-13 on an 80m game-turning try by England's Will Greenwood. Narbonne's Cedric Rosalen kicked nine penalties to Perpignan's Thierry Lacroix's eight in a 34-24 victory, and Agen dumped Bezier 31-0.

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## FIJI

## Sacked

After guiding Fiji to the Wellington 7s World Series final, coach Rupeni Favonu and manager Jone Buakula were fired by the FRU for having the team wear jerseys without their sponsors logos. Fiji used a variety of jerseys, one with a biblical quote. Sponsorship was prized by the cash-strapped FRU, which considered a breach of obligations a serious matter.

## IRELAND

## All-Ireland League

Cork Constitution replaced Galwegians atop the table by handing Shannon its first loss. Cork came from 9-0 down to win with a second-half try by international Frank Sheahan, who was allowed to play because he played less than a half for Ireland against Italy.

Galwegians was briefly on top of the table after holding on against St. Marys 13-12 from 13-3 at halftime. Old Crescent beat Ballymena 26-22, sealed by Foin Reddan's try. Blackrock College cruised after leading DLSP 24-0 at halftime, and Terenure's Shane Cullen landed 24 points in a 29-10 defeat of Buccaneers, its sixth loss. Young Munster almost let slip a 19-3 lead over Dungannon before winning 19-17.

## ISRAEL

## Women's Rugby

History was made in Israel when the first, senior women's rugby match took place at the Tel Aviv Sportek Rugby Ground on January 12<sup>th</sup>.

It was a ten a side game between teams made up of an eclectic group of young women, all living in Israel either temporarily or permanently. Some had previous knowledge of rugby, while others had never seen the oval ball before beginning training.

In all, 27 women took the field. Many of the players were students and, besides the Sabras in the teams, there were women from England, America, Canada, Australia, Holland, South Africa and Russia.

## ITALY

## Italian Cup

Petrarca Padova won a depleted Italian Cup beating G.R.A.N. 27-11 in the final at Rovigo. Only six teams entered the knockout competition which gives the winner automatic entry into the European Shield.



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