

O-Club Forfeits Two Games to Open Season

Written by Pat Clifton

Thursday, 10 January 2013 23:08



The Northern California DI competition is about to enter its second week of play, and Olympic Club is already 0-2.

The 2011 DI National Runners-Up chose to not play the Sacramento Lions last week or the East Palo Alto Bulldogs this week, resulting in two forfeits. They informed the league of that decision last Wednesday.

The Olympic Club was displeased with the unbalanced schedule in NorCal this year. With Old Puget Sound Beach having no local DI competition to play in after the demise of the Super League, NorCal invited them to join.

However, NorCal leadership decided it wasn't prudent to have OPSB play home-and-away with everyone in the league, so it worked up a six-game schedule that would see the Seattle club play a home-and-away series against O-Club and San Francisco Golden Gate and one-offs against the Sacramento Lions and the Bulldogs.

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The result: Olympic Club and SFGG would play 12 league matches, the Lions and Bulldogs 11, the Bay Barbarians and EPA Razorbacks 10 and OPSB six. Since not everyone played the same amount of games, the playoff participants would be decided by win percentage. Everyone would have had two more games, but San Mateo was disqualified from the league for not meeting minimum CIPP requirements by a late December deadline.

Olympic Club was informed of the unbalanced schedule in October.

“They were very well aware that they were going to have more games on their schedule because they wanted to play the fixtures with OPSB on those crossover matches,” said NorCal DI coordinator Aaron Frederick, also the manager for the Lions.

“At one point in October I did let them know that if that was their concern, having more games than other clubs, then I could easily work with the PCRFU and restructure those OPSB games to other clubs in Northern California and they would have again a 10-game schedule. They said that they did not want to give up those OPSB games, and in turn they had more games than other teams in Northern California.”

For the first time, Northern California decided to enforce CIPP requirements in 2013. Clubs had to have a minimum amount of players and a certified coach on the roster, or they would be forfeited. O-Club said this is part of the reason they waited so long to act on their disagreements with scheduling.

“We didn’t want to take this action until we knew what the schedule was, until we knew the teams that were in our division, because if teams that didn’t meet the requirements in mid-December hadn’t met them, it would have changed the schedule entirely anyway,” said James Brandon, O-Club director of rugby.

“We’ve been developing over a number of years now with success, and we know the calendar that’s worked best for us. We were preparing for many months in advance for the same season structure that we’ve had for many years. We thought that it was an inequitable structure that they put together this season, and so this is the path we decided to take.”

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Northern California ruled that O-Club's missed games against the Lions and Bulldogs will count as forfeits, and that if they miss another league game, they will be removed from the competition altogether. However, O-Club remains in the competition currently, and if they finish in the top four of the league in winning percentage, they'll receive a playoff spot.