

Female physio students break barriers

A total of 64 men's, 12 women's and six Under 20 teams—such was the magnitude of the two-day Marist 7s that concluded at Suva's ANZ Stadium on Saturday but the electrifying atmosphere, relentless intensity and thousands of ardent rugby fans did not deter two aspiring female physiotherapists from facing their baptism of fire.

For the soft spoken Jessica Mape of Vanuatu and young Amisha Prasad of Nadi, being part of a strong 42-member contingent of physiotherapy students from the University's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, was an opportunity of a lifetime.

The physiotherapy students were among the official medics of the tournament.



(standing Front) Event Director William Mar (left) with Jess Mape (second left) and Amisha Prasad (fourth left) with other physiotherapy colleagues in the indoor recovery room at the Marist 7s.

“When I ran onto the field for the first time to attend to my case, I was really nervous. My heart pumped against my chest but I calmed myself down by thinking of the job on hand,” Mape said.

“As I attended to more cases, my self-confidence grew and the application from classroom learning to on field situation became easier.”

The students braved rainy conditions and blistering sea breeze belting from nearby Nasese foreshore to get as much hands on experience as possible.

“This is the first time I have had such opportunity to learn outside the classroom setting and I am loving every bit of it. The intensity is high but this live action which gives a feel of what we will experience out in the job market,” she added.

For soft spoken Prasad, having a chance to run onto the field was more than getting practical experience.

“There are always cultural barriers that I had to overcome. When I attended to my first on field case, I did not even think about who is looking and what is happening around me. I just stayed composed and focused,” Prasad highlighted.

According to her, the chance to be part of such a tournament will always be a memorable experience.

A wonderful physio room and well-coordinated shifts were also planned by the physiotherapy lecturers.

Every student had a chance to feel the atmosphere on the playing pitch, training bases and indoor post match recovery room.

The organisers of the tournament—Marist Rugby Club, was a wonderful host to the physiotherapy students who had proper supply of meals and beverage options.

Event Director, William Mar, said the physiotherapy students were quite helpful.

“They ensure the safety of our tournament and we are excited to have them on board.”

“This experience is something that cannot be taught inside the classroom. And we are grateful to have such a wonderful partnership with the University, who have allowed their students to be here,” Mar said.



Ready for action! Jess Mape (closer to the camera) with Sakiusa Naika and Amisha Prasad at the pitch side during the Marist 7s.