

AIDAN AIMING TO EXCEL AT THAI RUGBY TOURNAMENT



Aidan Jackson-Smith flanked by colleagues Jake Whittle, 21, and electrical apprentice Conor Bennett, 18

A Sembcorp-sponsored apprentice will *try to stamp* his authority on an international rugby tournament in a bid to raise funds to give the *boot* to testicular cancer.

West Hartlepool RFC first teamer Aidan Jackson-Smith, 18, will be travelling to Thailand with the best players from clubs in the Hartlepool area to take part in the Bangkok International Rugby 7's Tournament.

Aidan, a third-year Instrument Apprentice with Sembcorp at Wilton, was selected to attend the tournament for the second year running, having made a big impression with his skills on the same tour in 2018.

Organiser John Bickerstaff, team manager of the squad that will be travelling, said: "It's about sending ambassadors to raise the profile of Hartlepool generally and develop their rugby and life skills. It's also about getting the town back on the rugby map."

The round robin tournament, featuring teams from Australia, New Zealand, Spain and Kazakhstan, takes place over the weekend of 9th/10th November.

Organisers have requested sponsors and businesses in the town make donations to the "Movember" charity, raising awareness and early detection of conditions which claim the lives of hundreds of young men each year such as prostate and testicular cancers. Sembcorp has donated £100 in recognition of Aidan's involvement.

As well as competing in the tournament, players will take part in coaching events for sides in and around Bangkok and two young female players are aiming to convert more women to the sport during the six-day tour.

Aidan, who plays flanker for West Hartlepool, recently promoted to the North 1 East division, said: "I'm hugely honoured to have been selected to be part of the squad once again. It was an incredible experience last year."