

Eastern Pennsylvania Rugby Union

A Member of the Mid-Atlantic Rugby Football Union

KEYSTONE COLLEGIATE COMMUNICATOR

Volume XII, Number 1

Fall 2001

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Welcome to the Only LAU Collegiate Rugby Newsletter in the Country

The voice of college rugby in the EPRU is well-rested and in-shape to bring you 'all the rugby news fit to share'....**now in its 12th year of publication!** I hope everyone is as excited as I am about experiencing the joys of Fall rugby.....time for league play and championship action, followed by all-star rugby action in November with the EPRU Men's All-Star & Women's Under 23 Select Side teams in competition!

The standard mailing distribution of this newsletter is to each EPRU collegiate club president, it's school's Director of Club Sports and the club's faculty advisor, and various collegiate officials throughout the country. It is also available at all EPRU meetings and at the EPRU website. **The club president is responsible to share it** with his or her teammates, coach, parents, other school officials, etc. by either copying it or directing them to the EPRU website. **Please send an email to your teammates and rugby friends advising them the Communicator is on-line.**

Your feedback on content and ideas, as well as articles for inclusion, are welcome.

The due date for input for the Spring 2002 issue is February 1.

The EPRU Collegiate Rugby Program - The Finest in the Land

The East Penn RU collegiate program is recognized as the premier collegiate program in the United States. The program serves nearly 60 men and women's collegiate club and consists of a number of components, such as, a semi-annual newsletter, league play and playoffs, coaching clinics, administrative and safer rugby guidance, and an All-Star program. This newsletter is a communication tool to provide players, coaches, school officials and others with current information regarding individual clubs, events, safety, skills, resource materials, on-field results, the lighter side of rugby, coaching tips, etc.

The EPRU collegiate program has a number of goals in trying to improve the quality and enjoyment of rugby. These include:

- **teaching application of the laws of the game for player advantage**
- **instructing teams in positional skills, game strategies, and coaching techniques**
- **offering organizational and administrative guidance**
- **providing medical and coaching knowledge for safer rugby**

East Penn Men's Divisional Play

With Fall rugby comes the competitiveness of divisional play for 27 collegiate teams. The men's program has been overhauled to provide a better balance of strength between Divisions 1 and 2. Division 1 consists of 10 teams divided into 2 leagues; while Division 2 now consists of 10 teams divided into 2 leagues resulting in the formation of Division 3 for the additional 7 teams. League and playoff, standings, schedules and divisional play rules are available at the EPRU Web Site. **The EPRU's top three teams from Divisions 1 and 2 will represent their school and the EPRU in the Mid-Atlantic RFU (MARFU) Collegiate Playoffs starting in March, 2002 against the top college sides from the Potomac and Virginia RFUs for a chance to earn a spot in the National Playoffs.**

EPRU Institutes Division 1 "B" Side League

In an effort to increase the importance of the "B" side match, the EPRU has created a "B" side league for Division 1 teams. This league will help to bring out the best in these players in their 'push' to make it to the "A" side. It is expected that this will add to the structure of a club's practices, growth, recruiting and eventually it will help the "A" side competition through depth. It will culminate with a Championship match at the EPRU Division 1 and 2 Collegiate Championships, to be hosted by the South Jersey RFC in Voorhees, NJ on Sunday, Oct. 28th.

It is an EPRU requirement that ALL Division 1 men's teams field a minimum of two sides. The "B" side league match would follow the "A" side league match for the same teams at the same venue. "B" sides would NOT be held to the same eligibility requirements of the "A" side (such as 5-year rule, full-time undergraduate, etc.). Any student who is allowed by the University to play on a club could play in these matches.

East Penn Men's Collegiate All-Star Program

One of the finest collegiate All-Star programs will continue its tradition of providing an opportunity for both the better players and aspiring athletes to play under top coaching and against their peers from the Mid-Atlantic and other regions. The EPRU is proud of the tradition and success of its All-Star team (the EPRU won the 1993 and 1994 USA Rugby East Northern trials and its division at both the 1995 and 1998 St. Patrick's Day Tournaments in Washington, DC). Coaches Rob Grassi and Marcus Maffei are looking to build on the success of both their 1999 and 2000 squads which defeated both the Potomac and Virginia RUs in the MARFU Intra-LAU All-Star Competition held in mid-November. 11 EPRU players from the 2000 team qualified for the MARFU All-Star squad.

Tryouts for the EPRU All-Star team will be held on Saturday November 10th at a location to be announced. On Sunday November 11th, the trialists will gather for practice and a scrimmage against a local club to determine the final team. The All-Stars will then compete in the MARFU LAU All-Star competition hosted by the Virginia RU in Richmond, Virginia on Nov. 17th and 18th. Based on observations at this event, the MARFU All-Star squad will be selected to compete in the 2002 USA Collegiate All-American competition.

Please contact Steve Cohen for more information.

All interested EPRU collegiate players are encouraged to attend the tryouts.

The National Rugby Scene

Five East Penn Women Named Collegiate All-Americans

Congratulations of the highest order go to East Penn players for being named Collegiate All-Americans. Princeton's duo of **Audrey Ellerbee and Pauline Reader** were named to the First Team. Second team honors went to Princeton's **Sarah Apgar, Laura Miller and Virginia Pitzer**. Well done ruggers!

MARFU Men and Women's Collegiate Teams Shine at Nationals

If anyone wonders where the strength of collegiate club rugby can be found in this country, tell them the truth. **It is - right here - within MARFU**. Despite the fact no MARFU teams came away as a National Champions this past Spring, out of the 7 MARFU teams that qualified for the men's (3) and women's (4) National Sweet 16s, 5 of the teams then qualified for their respective Final 4s by winning their pools. For the men, Navy (24-16 over Oregon State and 30-14 over Cal-Poly) and Penn State (14-12 over Wyoming and 14-12 over Central Washington) made it through, while Virginia Tech ran into perennial champ Cal-Berkeley. For the women, Princeton (39-3 over Clemson and 18-12 over Oregon State), Virginia (30-5 over Dartmouth and 12-11 over Marquette), and Penn State (30-0 over Illinois and 34-7 over Navy), while Navy beat Humboldt State 24-7 in its opener only to lose to MARFU's Penn State. So the women were 7-1 (with no losses to other territories)...WOW!

In the men's Final Fours held in Virginia Beach in early May, Penn State advanced to the championship match with its third straight 2 point win, this time over Army by a score of 27-25; while Navy mounted a gallant second half comeback against Cal-Berkeley before falling 34-27. In the finals, Penn State met its match (as most all teams have for the past "hundred" years) losing to Cal. In the 3rd place match between rival military academies, Navy came from behind to beat Army 34-22 giving MARFU a 2nd and 3rd place finish.

Meanwhile, in Rockford, Illinois at the women's Final Fours, upstart Chico State made a name for itself by beating perennial power Princeton 20-13. In the semi-final matchup between MARFU mates, Penn State held off the ladies of Virginia 15-5. Chico State's strong second half allowed them to pull away from defending National Champs Penn State 35-24. In the 3rd place match (another MARFU vs. MARFU matchup), Princeton controlled the pace with a 18-0 win over Virginia.

So with a National 2nd and 3rd place finish for the men and 2nd, 3rd and 4th place finish for the women, MARFU continues to show its club-side dominance in Division 1 collegiate rugby.

Spring 2001 Top Five - EPRU Women and Men

<u>WOMEN's RANKING</u>	<u>TEAM</u>	<u>MEN's RANKING</u>	<u>TEAM</u>
1	PRINCETON	1	KUTZTOWN
2	DELAWARE	2	PRINCETON
3	SWARTMORE	3tie	WEST CHESTER
4	MILLERSVILLE	3tie	VILLANOVA
5	EAST STROUDBURG	5	MILLERSVILLE

Guidelines....from this Side of the Law

can be found at <http://www.eastpennrugby.org/>

The revised USA Rugby Guidelines on the Application of Law for 2001/2002 season is now available on-line. This is a MUST-READ for all coaches, players, referees and touch judges. The instructions were jointly developed by coaches selected by the USA Rugby National Technical Panel and by referees and evaluators selected by the USA Rugby Referees Association. Adjustments for law changes and for circumstances unique to rugby in America are included.

News....from the Positive Side

Chris Brown, Head Coach of the Gettysburg College Men's RFC, has reported that rugby players in conjunction with The Women's Center on the Gettysburg campus are providing escorts across campus four nights a week. "We have players sign up for the night they are free, they carry a two-radio for the duration of the evening, and when someone calls the Women's Center for an escort, the player is radioed and escorts the woman home. All escorts are monitored. This provides a safe and discreet solution, in lieu of having to call Campus Safety and Security which identifies everyone by name in the school newspaper who uses this service. It's a great program that helps the women and friends of women on campus and has improved the campus wide rugby reputation."

This is exactly what collegiate rugby needs to do more of - both to maintain and improve - the image of its student-athletes. What does your club do in this regard? Please email me the details so it can be shared and do so....today!

Information....for the Playing Side

Fitness and Strength - Keys to Playing at Your Best

Premier rugby supplier BALL'S OUT!, is providing fitness and strength conditioning information - at their website at: <http://www.ballsout.com> - as a service to all rugby players to help them improve their game through better fitness and conditioning. Strength conditioning articles are written by Ron Artingstall, the former Conditioning Coach for the US Eagles and the Great Britain Freestyle Olympic Wrestling Team. Ron is currently performing these same functions for the East Penn Super League team Philadelphia-Whitemarsh. Ron works with competitive athletes from a variety of sports and is available to provide personalized off-, pre-, and in-season programs, consultations and clinics. Contact Ron today at rasla@aol.com.

Look to the Web

For information on coaching and other important aspects of developing a quality rugby program, please check out the following:

Coaching Information: <http://www.coachingrugby.com>

Martin Slagt has recently updated his excellent website: <http://www.rugbycoach.com/>

Rugby Safety Program

Rugby is a strenuous physical contact game incorporating running, handling, kicking and contact. Basic safety precautions should be considered to ensure adequate protection for all participants. Responsibility for being prepared to play is shared among the administrators, coaches, referees, and most important, the participant.

Player Safety Alert

Do **NOT** let anyone practice or play with your team unless they have **medical insurance**. Please be sure you, as the club president, **VERIFIES** their proof of insurance!

Do **NOT** let anyone play with your team unless they have completed and signed their **CIPP** registration form. CIPP forms and money are to be sent into USA Rugby prior to their first match!

Club Safety Alert

Do **NOT** practice or play unless you have a complete medical kit at the field!

Do **NOT** play unless either a trainer, EMT or ambulance is present. Whether an ambulance is present or not, you **MUST** have a telephone at or adjacent to the field and the phone number for requesting an ambulance readily available!

Making Rugby Safer

In its continuing effort to help make rugby a safer sport, the EPRU has prepared "**Making Rugby Safer**" which addresses the following issues:

Injury Reporting, Testing For Concussion, USA Rugby Policy on Lesions, Bloodborne Infections and Contact Sports, and identifies numerous Resources for Safer Rugby

EPRU Injury Procedure

Prepared in conjunction with Dr. Merrick Wetzler, email: mjwetz@aol.com

All head and spinal/neck-related injuries incurred by a player are to be reported within 24 hours by both the referee and team captain to the EPRU Medical Committee Chairperson (Dr. Merrick Wetzler at (856) 354-5060 or by email to mjwetz@aol.com) and the EPRU Collegiate Coordinator (mcol@epru.org). The information needed is the player's name, phone number, injury description and the current status and location of the player. Furthermore and in accordance with USA Rugby Guidelines on the Application of Law, "A player suffering a definite concussion should not participate in any match or training session for a period of at least 3 weeks from the time of injury, and then only subject to being cleared by a proper neurological examination." This written clearance is to be submitted to the EPRU Medical Committee Chairperson (with a copy to the EPRU Collegiate Coordinator) for review and approval prior to the player resuming training or match play.

Any player with more than two definite concussions in a single playing season should not be allowed to return to playing that season. Return to play in the following season should be allowed only with a typed clearance letter from a physician. This written clearance is to be submitted to the EPRU Medical Committee for review and approval prior to the player resuming training or match play.

News....from the Women's Side

EPRU Women's Collegiate Divisional Play

by Deb Yates, EPRU Women's Collegiate Coordinator; email: dyates@sct.com

This fall will be an exciting time for EPRU Women's Collegiate Divisional play. Every year the level of competition increases and this year will be no exception!! 28 clubs will square off in 3 divisions. Some adjustments have taken place within the individual divisions as the EPRU continues to strive to even out the divisions both in numbers and strength. Many clubs will be facing new opponents which should prove to make this year a bit more exciting for all. The top three finishers in both Division 1 and Division 2 will have the opportunity to represent the EPRU and to compete in the Mid-Atlantic Championships next Spring. The EPRU play-offs will be held the weekend of November 3 and 4. Good luck to everyone this fall!

Playing to Win

Reprinted from July 15, 2001 Inquirer Magazine, Philadelphia, PA

No matter who or what the competition, women athletes have always had something to prove.

The joy of sports - of using your body full-out; of tapping its animal intelligence, a knowledge that goes deeper than words; of feeling the beauty of being connected - to yourself and your teammates - is available to everyone.

And yet, 30 years ago, girls were not encouraged to participate. Sweating and being tough and mixing it up weren't decorous, and the girls who loved athletics were dismissed as "tomboys".

As recently as the early 1990s - 20 years after Title IX required equal opportunities for women in sports - journalist Jane Gottesman noticed that women still weren't visible in the pages of her newspaper's sports section. This led her to begin a search for just what a female athlete looks like.

The pictures she developed in that quest can be found in her book "*Game Face*", which is a marvelous collection, in photographs and words, of women athletes. An exhibition of these images is on display at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

What this book shows is the determination, the effort and the satisfaction that sports can bring. Look deeper and you will see the exhilaration of women testing their limits - and pushing them back.

There are a number of women's rugby pictures included in this book. Here is information on this book:

Game Face: What Does a Female Athlete Look Like?

by Jane Gottesman (Editor), published by Random House under ISBN: 0375506020

Knowledge....from the Coaching Side

Teaching the Game - One Coach's Approach

By Dr. William "Loc" Vetter

Coach, US Naval Academy Women's RFC; email: LocVetter@aol.com

As published in *RUGBY Magazine*, September 2000 - Reprinted by Permission

Introduction

This is the first of 5 parts in a series entitled "Teaching the Game" by Loc Vetter. Parts 2 and 3 have already been published by *RUGBY Magazine* and can be found in the August and September 2001 issues, respectively.

Background

I've been coaching rugby for 21 years, since all but one my current players were born. While much of what a coach sees and adopts, adopts and modifies, or even comes up with on his own is worthless, I've been reinforced on some points, and those will be the content of this series. I'm going to start off with some thoughts on handling and running in support of the ball carrier and if feedback suggests interest, or even disagreement, I might go on to write, at the "player new to the game" level, about contact options for the ball carrier, early support or a defensive pattern that is effective and easy to teach.

I must acknowledge that there is very little original stuff here. Where most of it came from has blurred with time, but the list of names and places is long. Being the team doctor for a bunch of tours allowed me to listen and watch productively. Assistant coaching the All Americans and other rep sides, and managing on one Pacific Grizzly Collegiate tour were very enriching. There was definitely value in getting certified to level three in the old USARFU scheme, and then again, Levels, I, II, and III in the new scheme.

Perhaps the most important thing I ever did in terms of coaching rugby, however, was writing things down, my own Rugby Manifesto, which I did back in 1979. I never had the discipline of legendary basketball John Wooden, who could refer to his practice notes from twenty years prior, but putting pen to paper and wording one's thoughts, and then, some time later, reading and seeing if they make sense, is a good test of the cogency of your thinking. Also, there is no substitute for solitary contemplation.

One Coach's Principles

Detail & Precision

Of my idiosyncratic coaching style, *details and precision are stressed*. The concept here is that if the technique is good, and the players practice doing it perfectly, then if they fall a bit short of perfect under stress, the technique will still be effective.

Present a Rationale

A second point is that it just doesn't cut it to tell a college student to do something a certain way because, "I said so," or because, "That's the way it's done." They might not verbalize that they want to know why, but they do. And if you can't explain it, maybe you can't even convince yourself that this is the option to use. *A healthy coaching discipline calls for the coach to have thought most stuff through, be satisfied that this is the way to go, and be able to explain the rationale.*

Concentrate on Basics

A third principle is to stress basic skills. I once heard Ron Mayes comment that the sequence was: *give them skills, then skills at pace, and then they coach themselves*. While it can be fun to put in some razzle-dazzle, first phase penetrating move, championships can be won with no back line plays whatsoever. Done it.

It is important not to so encumber an athlete or team with so specific a repertoire of skills and plays that you coach out their personal flare. If the players understand why you are choosing a certain pattern of play, contact options, or defensive scheme, that flair, within the context of a team approach, will blossom, be fun, and be exploited to your advantage. It is uncanny how often one of your better players, who you know fully understands the guidelines that the team has adopted, blatantly violates what was thought to be a fully engrained principle, and scores a try! You sure don't want to coach away that option.

Passing Lines

I utilize simple passing lines to develop handling and support skills. Early in the year I start with the lines limited to four players, with three yard passes required. If there are more than forty players, we'll run two sets of lines next to one another. This allows lots of repetitions and keeps the passing skill requirement such that there will be lots of success. They will go only about 30 to 35 yards, as you need to move to the other end to make the next point. Save the lines with "jog backs", for after the skill basics are taught. You want a group of players together so that you can speak in other than a yell, and be heard by all. There are a great many points that need to be made, but one should limit it to only three points at a time. Often only one is optimal.

If it's the first session of the season, or guest coaching, watch one down-and-back with no instruction, to see where the players are. Have them go "off pace," or slow enough to perform near perfectly. Coach and players will note that things are not perfect, and that there is definitely a spectrum of skill within the squad. Have them take off again, with the only instruction that the next group goes when the group in front of them has gone five yards, (or has passed the cone, if you have placed a cone and it is a particularly dull group.) Also ask that they change the wings with the centers at the end of each run. Those are two things, next line starting and changing out the wings, that the coach should not now have to worry about – but you will probably have to remind at some point.

Pass Straight Across the Field

After these few lengths without coaching, introduce the first key deal: Pass the ball straight across the field. Of the scores of little things that make great rugby, this to be the most important. If the ball is passed on a line parallel to the goal line, the following advantages are taken: The pass is legal; the support player knows exactly where the ball is coming; the support player can see the ball and where to go in the same field of view; the passer need not turn the upper body to make the pass, the support player can come onto the ball at fastest pace and is immediately advancing the ball, rather than making up ground that would be lost with a pass that was other than straight across the field. Further, as the skill level advances and the players want to move the ball along the line quickly, they will realize that only if the ball is caught in front, in the sense of towards the opponents goal, and caught with a hand that is extended towards the passer, can the really cool, single step, take-an-give be executed. That is most easily done with the flat pass, *the pass that is straight across the field*.

Take Every Opportunity to Get Better

Having done that for a few lengths, I pose the question: Which did most of you find easier: a) Passing the ball straight across the field, or, b) Being in a support position such that the ball could be taken at pace, in front, by hands reaching for the passer? Most realize they hadn't thought much about their support running. These are "passing" lines, not "catching" lines. This is the point at which to introduce the most important principle of the efficient drill: *Every role in every drill is an opportunity to get better*. In the case of introductory passing lines, without question the more difficult knack to nurture is being in a good position to change pace, to a real burst to top speed, onto the pass. A length or two with that concept freshly mentioned are then done.

Ball-less Passing

An option that I first saw done by coaching guru Ray Cornbill has value here (and elsewhere). He actually did it as the first drill at the clinics I saw him give. *Ask all the players to place the balls on the ground, and then run the passing lines with perfection, but without the balls*. Add another sense to the drill by asking each player to scream "BURST!" when changing pace to come onto the ball. The ball should be envisioned as having been passed perfectly, chest high, straight across the field, with timing such that it can be taken from the air and passed to the next player within two steps. Insist that the players reach for the ball, towards the passer. The passer should pretend to be passing the ball, dead ball, no spin, to the space in front of the support, at chest height. Ask the group to humor your oddball drill. I tend to ridicule those that clearly cannot speak and run at the same time. Inform the players that we need a little Hollywood here.

Run-less Passing

When back at the end, each group picks up a ball and the space between the groups is increased a bit. Now the players are asked to make a few perfect passes without running at all. Just pass the ball down their line without running. Experienced players might at first find this drill beneath them. Now is the time to point out that we absolutely need the newer players to improve and contribute, and that the chance to learn by imitation is something we must give them. Also, *even the best can get better at the basics*. The very experienced must challenge themselves to make every pass absolutely perfect: Dead ball, long axis straight up and down, a bit of pep on the ball, it should go exactly to the tip of the middle finger of the far hand of the receiver, which of course will be extended towards the passer, and for this drill, is a target.

Look then Pass

Be sure and look-then-pass. By looking we mean with the eyes and perhaps the head, but not the shoulders. Try it with the specific directive to look, then pause, and then pass. Some players must unlearn the tendency, so effective in basketball, to give the no look pass. There is little or no place for the no look pass in rugby. The look before the pass is also an important component of the effective dummy.

The group will find plenty of challenge in this stationary passing. It can be pointed out that most of the passes were off-perfect, even in this drill that has no opposition, no running, no game pressure, or any other complicating factor. This is the ultimate in "unopposed," yet really perfect passing still is not there. Reassure that we'll try it again in a few days, and they will like what they see.

Now try it with the elbows of both arms of the passer held tight to the sides of the body. This will highlight that it is possible to pass the ball accurately, with some pep on it, with just the

wrists and hands. One can try all of the above while jogging in place. Now try all but the elbows at the side part with the pass coming from above the head, but arriving at the same perfect spot of chest high for the catcher. Now try in from below the knees, again passing to a spot exactly in front of the chest of the receiver.

Never Pass “To” a Teammate

Make the following point before getting back into running passing lines: Never pass the ball “to” a teammate, but rather to the space which a teammate is running, or to a spot from which a teammate can take it from the air and do something good with it. The only exceptions to this rule are the pass from maul to scrumhalf, and service of scrumhalf to fly, when the fly is taking the ball for a planned clearing kick. Often even this should not be an exception!

Run a few more lines with encouragement and reminders of *the points made so far*:

- Run with the ball in two hands
- Pass the ball straight across the field
- Look then pass
- Reach for the ball
- In support, position to take the ball on the burst
- Touch the ball first with the far hand, and before it reaches you
- Pass chest high to chest high, unless opponent dictates another option
- For passes less than about 4 yards, give a dead ball pass

It would be typical for me to put all of the above into the first practice of the season, and many subsequent training sessions. But, there is very much more, without moving to what could be considered a higher level. That is to say, we can move to emphasize details of other fundamental skills, and should do so, before moving to more complex concepts.

Inside Passing - the “pop” pass to bursting close support

In progressing towards being great handlers of the ball, our next option is to work on a much shorter pass. Seems like it should be easier, but no, indeed. Not only is the skill just as tough, in the sense of doing it effectively under pressure, but it is these short passes that often provide the breakthrough continuity that leads to scores. Particularly at the Naval Academy, it is good to think in terms of breaching the defensive line at some point, and then being capable of pouring through that break in the defense. *The concept is that we are switching from a passing line to a penetrating force.* We’re trying to break the glass with a ball peen hammer instead of an open hand.

Have the players gather round in a group in front of you (the sun or other distraction should be behind them, not you). A straight line should be near, either a field line or a line of cones. Present the “breaching the defense” and explain the following drill. Three players take off from the group single file, down that line. The lead player of each group of three has the ball, and after getting to pace, that player moves off the line, as if swerving away from an opponent who is on the line, or driving into an opponent that is off of the line. Just as that ball carrier comes off of the line, it is look then pass. The pass is just popped, almost straight up and down, and is consistent with our rule of straight across the field. It is never higher than the brim of a hat, and is a dead ball. The effect is to leave the ball in the air, over the line.

The first support player, is running low, with both palms up, and bursts forward to take the popped-up ball out of the air. And then the cycle repeats.

The drill can be paced up and sometimes we run it under bridges of arms of coaches and injured players standing along the way, just as incentive to stay low. Another effective touch is

to have the passer tap the ground twice after the pass, but before chasing. This will almost magically increase the pace of the drill and get people lower. This tapping the ground will also demonstrate the concept that it is **better to be a little late than a little early**. The support player who's a little late tends to run harder, in order to get there and contribute. Also, the late player gets a perspective on the field and the ball carrier. The running line can be optimized and support options assessed. It is remarkable that in the two seconds or so that the pop pass is in the air, a hard running supporter can cover ten to fifteen meters. What a deal to see a big, sprinting forward take that ball near the grass and blow up into the next opponent, crashing over for the try!

About Running Low

When asking players to run low, just as with everything else, they need a how and a why. *They should get low by shortening the stride and bending the knees*. This is preferable to bending at the waist, which does not lower the center of gravity, except in the very few with very heavy upper bodies. The notion is that we want our belly buttons lower than the opponents'. We'd prefer to be running that way when we take the ball because it can be difficult to tell, when focused on the ball, if you are going to be hit right away.

In the contact situation, the lower player, tackler or ball carrier, has a distinct advantage. The lower player can effectively push the opponent's cleats from the turf. The lower ball carrier can get to the ground, or get the ball to the ground more easily. The lower ball carrier can more often control the exact position of body and ball as the tackle progresses. The lower ball carrier often has arms free to provide continuity. The lower ball carrier can sometimes explode the tackle and amble on up the field.

The lower tackler, on the other hand, is more likely to get the runner to the ground, disrupt passes by being under the runner's arms, and can generally better control the situation. *Emphasis must be placed on the notion that "low" here means a position of explosive advantage*. The players should be thinking of the position used to squat, as in weight lifting. Ideally the back is hollowed, feet a bit wider than the shoulders, knees bent, chin off of the chest. I like them to think of a descriptive feat I first heard from former OMBAC Bing Dawson, in rugby we "Dive out of the pool, never into the pool".

At the End of the Day

So now I've written in excess of 3,000 words, and have yet to spin a ball, take contact, or do any unit or team skill work. Yikes! The above, the first of the season, can take 45 minutes. Later it takes less than ten. Introducing what it is you are looking for, exactly, can be of great value. These skills must be drilled and seemingly picky points stressed. Having been part of a national collegiate championship game in 1987 that San Diego State won by one point, I believe it is good to get across the point that little things can make that little difference. It can make you a champion.

Northeast Ultimate Rugby Development Camp 2001

by Marty Rosenthal, Ultimate Rugby Development Director & Coach; email: UltRugby@aol.com

The Northeast Ultimate Rugby Development Camp 2001 saw many players and coaches experience what might have been the best technical rugby camps to date. In its ten year history of providing four day rugby development camps in the Northeast both the male and female sessions went without a hitch.

"I've attended another camp this summer and Ultimate Rugby Development blows that one away. To run drill after drill is one thing but to learn and understand why we are doing them and be able to apply them in a game situation is another. The atmosphere and accessibility of the coaching staff of this camp is far greater." - Player Attending the Boys Session

The players and coaches were able to experience incredible instructions from two of England's Elite Development Officers. Simon Hardy, Specialist Coach for England's National Side, Gareth Rees, England's U-19 Coach with assistance from Marty Rosenthal, USA Level III Coach, ran 4 days of drills, skills and mentally challenging classroom sessions for the players and coaches. With an excellent player to coach ratio all those in attendance came away with a much greater understanding of the game.

"Alix played in the Monmouth tournament at Sea Girt last weekend. A Monmouth WRFC winger went down with a severe heat-related asthma attack about 5 minutes into the first game; Alix was ready and willing so they pulled her in, stripped the jersey off the winger and poured it over Alix. And, presto! She was playing on the Wing!!! I was astonished – must have been the biggest winger ever in the history of women's rugby! I was even more amazed to discover that Alix actually knew how to play the position and was able to do a commendable job out there, with several open field tackles / slow-downs, and at least one crash ball near the line that she handled well, taking two tacklers and setting up the ball for the next phase. She attributed her ability to playing wing to your clinic, to the coaching in all aspect of the game she had received the previous week. I don't know exactly what you did, but that's a great credit to your staff, giving a front-five 16 year old like her enough general game knowledge to be able to step into such a different position and look like she really knows what she's doing. Congratulations!" - Tom Bryant in regards to his daughter Alix attending the female session of Ultimate Rugby Development.

The players were put through two to three practical sessions a day along with a theoretical session. Coaches enjoyed formal classroom sessions dealing with prescribed topics, practical player drill and skill sessions and informal evening sessions dealing with a range of topics pertinent to their own programs.

"It is just a great thrill for me to be able to see the development and growth in both the players and the coaches at our sessions. To hear a college player thank me for providing this opportunity for them and then hear them say that they might have just learned more in the past 4 days then they did in their previous 2 years of playing college ball, is just awesome. That is what we are trying to do. Give incredible coaching and development to any player (15-21) that wants it. Bringing the coaches into the mix is just an extra bonus. It allows them to take cutting edge information back to their programs. It is impossible for us to reach every kid but if we can help the coaches along the way and they in return can bring it to their teams, then we've done our job. I'm kinda sad it's over for this year, but I can't wait for next summer to be here already." Marty Rosenthal

To find out more about Ultimate Rugby Development or to register for the summer of 2002 check out <http://www.ultimate-rugby.com>

The Future...from The Younger Side

Rob Shutt of Widener University writes about his experience in Chile as a member of the USA Under-19 rugby team which competed in the Junior World Cup this past April.

My experience, in Chile, with the USA National U-19 rugby team can be summed up in just one word....AWESOME! This was one of the greatest experiences of my life. Not only did I get to play with the best talent that America had to offer in the sport of rugby at that level, but I got to play against the best talent that the world had to offer as well. Having the opportunity to watch teams like New Zealand and Australia play just put me in awe. It was amazing watching players from other countries, who have played rugby since they could walk, compete against each other. Observing them as they made passes and ran plays, without even glancing at their teammates because they had such a feel for where everyone on that field was, was simply astonishing. This whole level of play and competition was so much higher than I could have ever fathomed. It was great getting to play with, instead of against, ruggers that I had seen in my own division, at regionals, and even at the national tournament. It was a little difficult, at first, trying to mix all of our different styles of play together. Coming from different parts of the country presented a bit of a challenge but we rose to the occasion. The excellent training and teaching of both Coach Mark Bullock and Tim "Sarge" Gilligan, along with the expert management of Mike Dunafon is what made becoming a team, within the small time apportioned to us, prior to the tournament, possible.

I learned a lot about the game, not only from my own teammates, but also from players of other countries. I learned that rugby is so much more than just 'beating the crap' out of the other team and partying, which is how I saw rugby the first two years I played. I learned about the unity and fellowship not only between teammates, but between opposing teammates as well making a great sport like rugby rather unique. I also learned how to sing some of the greatest songs in the world, those being rugby songs of course. Instead of looking forward to having a victory party after each game like what often happened for football games, I found myself looking forward to hanging out with whichever team it was that we played, and getting to know them as both fellow ruggers and new found friends, no matter the outcome of the game. This was a whole new side of rugby that I would have never known had it not been for my experience in with the U-19 team. The fact that America has made such great strides establishing itself as a force in the sport of rugby over the last couple of years is great. There is nothing that I would love to see more than an U-19 American team competing at the level of New Zealand or South Africa for the World Championship. And with the way the U-19 team and other high school teams have been developing in recent years, I think I'll be seeing it soon.

In short, rugby is the best sport ever created. It not only develops individual skills, but more importantly, your ability to work as a team member, your heart, and your devotion. This is not a game for the timid or weak, but it is a game in which one can develop lifetime friendships.

Lessons....from the Historical Side

East Penn Rugby Referee Emeritus, Peter Heaton, who has a habit of finding interesting publications about rugby, recently found the program booklet for the 1938 Cambridge University's American Tour match with the Eastern Rugby Union (known as the All-East team) played on April 9. From this program I'd like to share some of its historical perspective on the game we love.

Items of Interest

Tablet to Law-Breaker Marks Birth of Modern Rugby

Rugby playing rules are now called "laws" in England, but if "law" had not been violated by a Rugby player 114 years ago, soccer would very likely reign supreme today on both sides of the Atlantic. At that, it took 32 years for the Rugbians to exonerate the players by admitting he was a genius. They did it handsomely, by erecting a table in his honor. The official change in the rules that permit running with the ball was made in 1865.

The tablet, first memorial in the history of sport to be erected to a football players, was placed on the most sacred spot in Rugby - the famous "Doctor's Wall." It commemorates "the exploit of William Webb Ellis, who, with fine disregard for the Rules of Football as played in his time, first tool the ball in his arms and ran with it, thus originating the distinctive feature of the Rugby Game, A.D. 1823." Ellis, it is said, later became a popular clergyman in the Church of England.

Eastern Rugby Union of the U.S.A. Inc.

Formed in 1934 for the purpose of maintaining the laws and by-laws of the game, the Eastern Rugby Union now consists of ten active clubs, as follows:

Boston Rugby Club	Long Island Univ. Rugby Club	Queens Rugby Club
Harvard Univ. Rugby Club	New York Rugby Club	St. Andrew's Rugby Club
Hofstra College Rugby Club	Pilgrims Rugby Club	Yale Univ. Rugby Club
	Princeton Univ. Rugby Club	

Rugby in Princeton by David W. Sidford, Princeton University

The Princeton Rugby Football Club is a comparatively young organization having been existence but six years. The game was introduced at the university by two veteran rugby men, Monte Barak, a New Zealander and a member of the New York Rugby Club doing graduate work at Princeton, and Harold Cooper, an English Fellowship man and outstanding rugby missionary who transferred to Princeton the following his establishment of the game at Yale. Despite its youth, ruggie is enthusiastically received each Spring by a group of 40 to 50 players who appreciate the variety of play and good sportsmanship the game affords. Since rugby is not an officially recognized sport at Princeton, the coaching is undertaken, for the most part by the more experienced players. These include a number of graduate students from England and Canada, and from other countries in which rugby is a better known sport. There are no remunerative positions in connection with the club, so that all training and organizing of the team is done on a purely honorary basis.

The Princeton Rugby Club belongs to the Eastern Rugby Union and plays most of its games with the ten members of that league. However, the team was invited to play in Bermuda last spring vacation. The trip was a great success, and plans have been formulated for another visit

there this year. Although rather swamped by the visiting Cambridge University XV in 1934, the Princeton team profited greatly from playing with the smooth functioning English side and the valuable experience gained has been reflected in this season's Princeton team.

Rugby has now become firmly established at Princeton. Among the men turning out at practice this spring were many experienced rugger players and top-notch football men - Jim Salsich, this year's rugby team captain, Tom Mountain, Franklin Hall, Howard Casey, Tom Roche and others. The popularity of rugby at Princeton is primarily due to the fact that, in addition to the game's various inherent advantages, it is always played hard and clean. After the smoke of battle has cleared away, both teams will have derived much pleasure as is possible from any game in the world. In other words, rugby is played everywhere for the game's sake, which after all is true sportsmanship.

Reading Rugby

Jim Hall of the North Penn RFC in the EPRU advises that anyone who is interested in coaching, refereeing or playing rugby, should consider reading Jim Greenwood's books entitled "Think Rugby" and "Total Rugby". Be sure to get the most recent editions.

"Winning Rugby" by Brian Quistberg (100 drills + variations, very useful, although we all know a lot of drills, finding the right drill for a training can be a hard task).

"Rugby: Steps to Success" by Tony Biscombe and Peter Drewett (ISBN:0-88011-509-2). Available at Amazon.com and at Human Kinetics(publisher) at www.humankinetics.com. This is more of a self-coaching guide, designed for players, but there's no reason why as coach you can't use it. This is the book your most dedicated players should read. Explanations and coaching are first rate.

"Championship Team Building" by Jeff Janssen. Available at Amazon.com. Not strictly a rugby book, but an outstanding book on how to realistically build a healthy team. I think it should be required reading of every coach. I think the principles in this book are especially salient for the tight team play in rugby.

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I hope this newsletter has provided you with relevant rugby information, ideas, etc. My thanks for contributions from Chris Brown, Rob Shutt and Loc Vetter with permission of *RUGBY's* Ed Hagerty. Please contact me anytime with your input, suggestions or comments. My NEW email address is: sdcohen4@mindspring.com

Yours in the true rugby spirit,

Steve Cohen, Coordinator
EPRU Collegiate Program