

Eastern Pennsylvania Rugby Union

A Member of the Mid-Atlantic Rugby Football Union

KEYSTONE COLLEGIATE COMMUNICATOR

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Visit us on the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.epru.org>

Welcome to the "Keystone Collegiate Communicator"!

The voice of college rugby in the EPRU has awoken from its cold and snowy winter hiatus to bring you 'all the rugby news fit to share'! I hope everyone is as excited as I am about experiencing the joys of Spring rugby...with MARFU championship action followed by the national championships, along with a plethora of tours and tournaments highlighting the season!

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, ideas and articles for inclusion are welcome.

The due date for input for the Fall 2001 issue is August 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 Playoffs

Kutztown Edges Princeton to Win Division 1 Championship

On September 16th, league play began for 9 Division 1 teams in 2 leagues. The top 2 finishers in each league qualified for the playoffs. The playoff results were:

Sunday Oct. 22th - Semi-Finals

Kutztown 40 - West Chester 13

Princeton 53 - Drexel 3

On Saturday Oct. 28th, Drexel hosted West Chester for third place and the final spot in the MARFU Playoffs. Drexel, under the guidance of new coach and former East Stroudsburg standout Mark Malfara, never gave up in a last minute 17-15 win over West Chester. On the next day, the South Jersey RFC hosted the championship final at their home field in Voorhees, NJ. Defending champion, Princeton found itself in quite the battle with a Kutztown squad that dominated its opponents all season long. Kutztown came out strong and before you could 'find your seat' were on top 12-0 due to powerful forward play that sprung their backs on some big runs. Princeton started to settle down into its game plan and managed a fine try late in the first half, only to let Kutztown come right back and score taking a 19 to 7 halftime lead. Kutztown kept their momentum going from the start of the second half, but Princeton's defense would bend only and the Golden Bears could not cross the goal line. Then in a dazzling display of rucking and attacking skills, led by winger Gordon Avery, Princeton played an amazing 20 minutes of rugby that saw them take the lead 21-19 with less than 10 minutes left in the match. Kutztown was in shock, but stood up to the task and off a lineout spun the ball wide for a try giving them a 24-21 lead in injury time. With the match about to end, Princeton's backline made a galant effort and move the ball almost the length of the field, but fell short and Kutztown came away with the East Penn crown. Both teams had a season to be proud of as they earned a right to play in the Spring MARFU Collegiate Division 1 Playoffs.

St. Joe's Dominates Division and Wins Division 2 Championship

On September 16th, league play began for 16 Division 2 teams in 4 leagues. The top 2 finishers in each league qualified for the playoffs. The playoff results were:

Sat. Oct. 14th - Quarter-Finals

Lock Haven 36 - York 30

Villanova 38 - Temple 7

St. Joseph's 30 - La Salle 5

Bucknell 22 - Bloomsburg 15

Sat. Oct. 21st - Semi-Finals

St. Joseph's 24 - Lock Haven 0

Villanova 24 - Bucknell 0

On Saturday October 28th, Lock Haven won a close match with Bucknell 36 to 24 to finish in 3rd place. While on Sunday Oct. 29th prior to the Division 1 championship match, Villanova faced St. Joseph's in what was expected to be a close match. The Hawks from St. Joe's had dominated their 3 league and 2 playoff matches with a combined scoring differential of 248 to 17. Villanova was not far behind at 219 to 34 in their 5 matches to date. But from the get go, it was all St. Joe's as they came hungry and finished a strong showing with a 47 to 7 win. Both teams, along with 3rd placer finisher Lock Haven, earned a right to play in the Spring MARFU Collegiate Division 2 Playoffs.

Fall 2000 Top Five - EPRU Men

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>TEAM</u>
1	KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY
2	PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
3	ST. JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY
4	DREXEL UNIVERSITY
5 tie	WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY VILLANOVA

From the Women's Side

The women's collegiate competition level within the EPRU has raised significantly within the past years. At the conclusion of the fall season in November, the EPRU Women's Collegiate play-offs were held at Princeton University. The weekend was a showcase for fantastic rugby players and matches in all three divisions. Thanks goes to the Princeton club for hosting the event as well all the referees, clubs, coaches and fans who participated. From this tournament, Princeton, the Delaware and Swarthmore finished in the top three spots in Division 1. Each earning the right to advance to MARFU play-offs this spring. In Division 2, East Stroudsburg, Lock Haven and Lehigh advanced to MARFU play-offs. Good luck to these teams in MARFU play-offs this spring!! Also, in a truly exciting Division 3 final, Kutztown defeated St Joseph's 10-5. The final standings for the Fall 2000 EPRU Women's Collegiate clubs are as follows:

DIVISION 1

- 1 Princeton University
- 2 University of Delaware
- 3 Swarthmore College
- 4 Millersville University
- 5 West Chester University
- 6 University of Pennsylvania
- 7 Shippensburg University
- 8 Bucknell University
- 9 University of Scranton

DIVISION 2

- 1 East Stroudsburg Univ.
- 2 Lock Haven University
- 3 Lehigh University
- 4 Bloomsburg University
- 5 York College
- 6 Lafayette College
- 7 Temple University
- 8 Franklin&Marshall College
- 9 Bryn Mawr-Haverford

DIVISION 3

- 1 Kutztown University
- 2 St. Joseph's University
- 3 College of New Jersey
- 4 Drexel University
- 5 Muhlenberg College
- 6 Susquehanna University
- 7 Gettysburg College
- 8 Albright College
- 9 Ursinus College

Why Women Play Rugby!

By Kristi Casey as reprinted from RUGBY Magazine, Nov. 25, 2000

Want do women love rugby? What is it that is attracting women in ever-increasing numbers? As Village Lions' and Princeton alum Lara Larson puts it, "I think of rugby as the epitome of the team sport. Every player is dependent on every other player - without complete trust in each other, a team will never be successful. Rugby generates a sense of team camaraderie that a non-contact sport just can't approach....The combination of strength and endurance is completely unique - 80 minutes of sprinting, driving, scrummaging, lifting and chasing kicks leave you completely exhausted aerobically and anaerobically, not to mention mentally."

East Penn Men's Collegiate All-Stars Conquer Potomac and Virginia

The East Penn RU, led by its backline play highlighted with Collegiate All-Americans, Tim Losey (East Stroudsburg) and Joe Cassidy (Shippensburg) and All-Star 'rookie' Mike "Rico" Sein (St. Joseph's), moved the ball smoothly and precisely to consistently outperform their counterparts from Potomac and Virginia RUs in the MARFU LAU Collegiate All-Star Event held in Manassas, Virginia and hosted by the Western Suburbs RFC of the Potomac RU. East Penn defeated Virginia 27-22 and Potomac 36-18 and Potomac edged Virginia 17-12.

On Nov. 11 and 12, the EPRU held open trials with 41 players attending over the 2 days. The EPRU coaches did their best to select 26 players for the team. The players comprised of current and new all-stars represent 9 different East Penn 'rugby' schools (Temple, St. Joe's, West Chester, Shippensburg, Kutztown, Princeton, Widener, East Stroudsburg and Scranton) plus the Community College of Philadelphia.

On Saturday, Nov. 18, the team started around 1pm preparing for its 3pm match with the Virginians. In the first half the EPRU put its 'best' side out to start the match and ran up a 17-0 halftime lead with its back line, led by Mike "Rico" Sein (St. Joe's), Kenrick Smith (Widener) All-Americans Tim Losey (East Stroudsburg) and Joe Cassidy (Shippensburg) slicing holes in the VRU defense enabled 2 fine tries by Rico and fullback Stan Ruda (Princeton and MARFU); Tim Losey converted both scores. However, in the second half, with an uncanny ability in not finding touch on kicks, the EPRU allowed the VRU to get back into the match. A brilliant effort by winger Danny Sonon of East Stroudsburg gave the EPRU a late 22-17 lead. However, the VRU hung tough and in injury time tied the match off a penalty play. Then on the ensuing kick-off, EPRU flyhalf 'Rico' Sein quickly dropped kick the ball for the halfway line and then outraced the Virginians to scoop the bouncing ball up and split the defense for a remarkable try to win the match for East Penn 27-22.

On Sunday, Nov. 19, with selections adjusted to provide a better balance between the starters and replacements, East Penn and Potomac fought evenly for about 20 minutes until 'Rico' and winger Taku Mizutani provided a try each to give East Penn a 12-3 halftime lead. In the 2nd half, East Penn turned it on and started running and rucking like they were coached. Aggressive play and tries by Anthony Ramonda (West Chester) and Eric Nolan (Kutztown) along with some great running and tries by Joe Cassidy and Kenrick Smith led East Penn to a convincing 36-18 win over Potomac. A notable "family" try was scored by Temple's Justin Cassidy who was there in support after his brother Joe had made a long run through the PRU defense.

The Cassidy Family has a tradition of great athletes turning to rugby as their sport! In addition to Justin and Joe, brother Bob played in the EPRU for West Chester University and has just moved back to Philly and is expected to return to the pitch in Spring. Joe advised that "When I was younger, our whole family went to private Catholic schools, but due to a change in circumstances were all sent to public school. At the time we were all very upset about it but in retrospect it was the best thing that ever happened to us...we started to play rugby for the oldest active high school team in the country, Conestoga." Amazing how life takes such turns!

All of the players - who wore the bright red jerseys of East Penn - have a lot to be proud of. Coming together as a TEAM in such a short period of time is not easy...but they did it and did it very well! The victories over Virginia and Potomac RUs marked the second consecutive year

that the EPRU lads have prevailed in this competition. Quite an accomplishment! The experience gained by the team will only serve to make them better players but also hopefully encourage other EPRU Collegiate players in trying out for the All-Star team in the future.

Coaches Rob Grassi and Jason Horowitz are to be commended for doing an outstanding job in such a short time. With only 7 seniors on the team, East Penn should be well-positioned for continued success in the coming years.

As a result of their fine showing, 13 players from East Penn were selected for next Spring's MARFU All-Star camp with a chance at a making the MARFU team that will compete in a National competition. The players selected by MARFU Coaches Steve Guiffre and Ken Fraine are:

Alex Ahn, West Chester
Adam Hawk, Scranton
Justin Cassidy, Temple
James Dupay, Scranton
Mike "Rico" Sein, St. Joseph's
Danny Sonon, East Stroudsburg
Stan Ruda, Princeton

Tim Carey, St. Joseph's
Brian Quinlan, West Chester
Joe Cassidy, Shippensburg
Tim Losey, East Stroudsburg
Matt McHale, West Chester
Kenrick Smith, Widener

East Penn Women's Under-23 All-Stars Defeat Potomac & Virginia

The East Penn Women's Under-23 All-Star team, led by coaches Oscar Matthews, Becky Snyder and Trish Flynn off the field and by Bloomsburg's tireless flanker Becky Geiss, won 2 hard fought matches in Manassas to complete the 'daily double' with their male counterparts from the EPRU. Match results were: EPRU U23 7 - VRU U23 5; VRU U23 31 - VRU U23 0 and EPRU U23 17 - PRU U23 15.

East Penn Collegiate Tournaments Highlight Exciting Spring

Two major East Penn RU sanctioned collegiate tournaments offering collegiate teams an outstanding opportunity to play competitive rugby and enjoy themselves in a tournament setting are planned this Spring. These events are:

- April 6-7 - Schuylkill River Exiles RFC's 4th Annual "Mayor's Cup" Collegiate Rugby Tournament will feature 12 East Penn men's teams.
- April 6-7 - West Chester University Women's 5th Annual Collegiate Classic Tournament will have 24 of the finest women's teams in the Mid-Atlantic RFU.

MARFU Spring Collegiate Playoffs are Set

MARFU teams have been readying themselves this Winter for the chance to make it to Nationals. Quarterfinals will be primarily held on March 24th in all 4 divisions (men and women's divisions 1 and 2) at the home of the higher seeded team. The QF winners will qualify for the MARFU Final Four scheduled for March 31 and April 1. Roanoke (Virginia) RFC will host the Final Fours which will feature all 4 Divisions..

Details for the MARFU Collegiate Playoffs can be found by contacting Steve Cohen.

Due the historical strength of MARFU Collegiate teams plus the success at the women's Division 1 National Championships in 2000, MARFU has earned 4 seeds in the National's women's Division 1 Sweet 16's set for April 17-18; while they men hold onto to 3 seeds. The men's Sweet 16 pool winners will earn a spot in the Final Fours to be held at the Virginia Beach Sportsplex Stadium in Virginia Beach, Virginia on May 5-6, while the women's Final Fours will be held during the same weekend at the ISC Sports Complex in Rockford, Illinois.

In Division 2, the MARFU Men's Champion will be opening pool play against the West RU Champion at the Elite 8 at a location to be announced. Pool B winner earns a trip to Virginia Beach for the Championship Final against the Pool A winner. The MARFU Women's Champion will face the Pacific RU Champion in the Final Fours in Rockford on May 5.

Rugby 7's in New York's Empire State Games

by Mike Raffe, VP at Large and 7's Coordinator, New York State Rugby Conference
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Seven-a-side Rugby for both men and women has been included in New York State's Empire State Games since 1998. Rugby has been a full medal sport in both the 1999 Games in Long Island and the 2000 Games in Binghamton. Athletes are provided with ESG uniforms, sweat suits and meals. In addition, the participants can attend any of the other sports venues at this Olympic style event.

The Empire State Games are usually held during the last weekend of July. Opening ceremonies start the activities on Wednesday night and the Games end on Sunday. Rugby is a two day event with play on Friday and Saturday in a round robin format with the medal games on Saturday afternoon. The 2001 Games will be held in the Rome/Utica area.

New York State is divided into six regions, Western, Central, Adirondack, Hudson Valley, New York City and Long Island, for the Games. Anyone who has permanent or school year residence should consider tryouts and participation. Trials are on a regional basis and usually occur during May and early June.

For information visit their website at <http://www.empirestategames.org> or call Chuck Halligan at N.Y.S. Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation at 518-474-8889 or 518-476-2009.

US Collegiate Rugby Students Visits Australia

by John Morrison, Univ. of New South Wales Rugby Coach

If 25 college students thought there was a better way to spend their summer break than playing rugby in a country that's so far away it takes the best part of two days to get there, then it sure didn't show. Drawing on colleges from Harvard to Texas, UMass to Miami, four guys from Portland and a dozen colleges in between, the students of rugby arrived in Australia for a six week tour, as part of the University of New South Wales Study Abroad program.

Combining rugby, study, training and playing there wasn't a lot of time to sit around. There was sight seeing, tours and a chance to meet the locals, who were more than surprised to meet a touring American rugby team. In the end, the students would see more of the country in six weeks than most Australians see in a life time.

Beginning in Darwin, traveling to Alice Springs and then Sydney the tour took in a visit to the real Australian bush with games in Newcastle and Armidale, before completing the tour in Brisbane and tropical Cairns.

The students learnt about rugby Australian style. Many of the players were introduced to the skills, drills and game plans used by the Waratah's when the skills coach from the state team joined the tourists for a few sessions in Sydney.

And the highlight according to those who were there was the chance to meet the All Blacks at a training session on the eve of their Bledisloe Cup match with Australia. Jonah Lomu and Tana Umaga took some extra time out to talk to the tourists after training and were quite happy to pose for photographs. It must have done something to inspire the American players who racked up a convincing 63 points to 5 win over a local Under 21 side, two days later.

Seven matches were played on the tour with the men winning three of their games and losing three by very narrow margins of three points or less. Only one game played in the freezing cold conditions of Armidale blew out - but that was played after nearly three weeks in tropical Darwin. While the women were convincing in playing sevens and ten's rugby to record wins in two of their four games.

The women's team were also invited to Canberra for the National Championship games after meeting up with the Northern Territory representatives when they played them in Darwin. It was a perfect opportunity to learn more about rugby from the women who would go on to selection in the national team.

Sadly the tour ended too quickly. From a coaching point of view trying to squeeze a whole season of learning into six weeks was only made possible by the enthusiasm of the people who came on tour and their willingness to learn.

Few of the players knew each other before the tour, but by the end they were not only a team which played like a team, but the best of friends who are trying to reform the team for a number of tournaments in the US. The touring team Captain was Jess Hammond from Louisiana while Dan Stewart from University of Texas captained the men's team.

The program will be repeated in 2001. Details follow.

STUDY AUSTRALIA

International Rugby Summer School at <http://www.study-australia.com>

June 6th* – July 31st, 2001

WANTED!!!

25 Men and 25 Women Collegiate Rugby Players to participate in an once in a lifetime summer experience combining athletics, academics and travel within AUSTRALIA.

Highlights

- Earn Academic Credit toward your US degree
- Learn rugby from some of the best Australian and New Zealand coaches and players
- Includes travel to 3 distinct Australian environments (Outback, Sydney and Great Barrier Reef)
- Play rugby before 2,000 spectators in a "Curtain Raiser" for a Legends Match and other matches will be organized against many Australian university and club teams
- Watch an Australia versus New Zealand test match at the new Olympic Stadium

The Program

This program combines solid academics with a chance to improve your rugby ability. Students take one course at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and spend after class time training and being coached in rugby by leading Australian and International rugby coaches and players. Weekend matches will be organized against local University sides and joint training sessions with also be conducted. Tickets to an Australia V New Zealand International Test match will also be part of the program. Students must chose two courses from the list of electives

The Location

The program will be based at the University of New South Wales for two of the six weeks. The first two weeks of the program will be in Darwin, in Australia's tropical north. Teaching will begin here and students also embark on a three day camping safari into Kakadu National Park. Kakadu is home to an amazing array of wildlife and historic Aboriginal Art. Students will boat on crocodile infested rivers and swim in spectacular waterfalls. The rugby training will also begin Darwin. The highlight of this segment is the game played against a local team which will be the "curtain raiser" to the Australia versus New Zealand Legends match which in the past has drawn crowds of about 2,000 spectators.

Week three through five are in Sydney with academic classes and rugby training taking place at the University of New South Wales campus in Kensington. Trial games will be played against local teams on weekends. Week six is a rugby tour up the east coast of Australia playing university teams along the way stopping at Newcastle, Armidale and Brisbane. From Brisbane, students fly to Cairns (Great Barrier Reef) for the conclusion of the 2001 Summer School.

Program Fee

The cost of the program is \$3,400 which includes tuition, all accommodation, training, meals in Sydney and Kakadu National Park, Study Australia Support Services, all excursion travel fees, orientation program, UNSW student card, airport shuttle service and UNSW rugby socks and shorts. The only additional costs would be for spending money and airfare (domestic and international). The airfare segment is estimated at about \$1,500.

Group and Team Discounts May be Available.

For more information or an application please contact:

Monica VanBuskirk at monica@study-australia.com or (617) 838-2883 or (413) 250-8095

or

Chris Shepherd at info@study-australia.com or (800) 585-9658

The Coaching Side of Rugby

Coaching Resources on the Web

Courtesy of Lance Hayward; email: lance_intouch@hotmail.co; Website: <http://rugbycoach.homestead.com>

<http://www.rugby365.com/coaching/index.shtml>

...useful stuff on scrums / lineouts and drills

<http://www.waikato.ac.nz/education/ls/leisure/Rugby/>

Brett Smith's NZ site with lots of rugby training programs and planning

<http://www-personal.monash.edu.au/~tim/avoid/>

Tim Fry's site on avoiding the breakdown Aussie style

http://members.xoom.com/_XOOM/ramsjnrs/index.htm

Bob Woods rugby league site with drills defense tips and quotes galore

Team Building - Learning New Skills

by Martin Slagt; email: martin@rugbycoach.com

How do we learn new skills? When you are training, how much feedback do you give? If you want to show the new skill, do you perform the new skill yourself, do you let your best player set an example or the player with the poorest skill level?

<http://www.rugbycoach.com/club/skills/learning.htm>

I extended the team building part. Four main elements of team building are discussed:

- Team Identity

- Team Structure

- Team Goals

- Team Motivation

<http://www.rugbycoach.com/club/teambuild/teamintro.htm>

Please have look and tell me what you think, to promote communication between my visitors I have set up the forum.

<http://www.rugbycoach.com/wwwboard/wwwboard.html>

Sports Vision - Hard Hands

by Hadon Westerby; email: hadon.westerby@xtra.co.nz

Some players have vision problems which is not at all uncommon. The topic of sports vision is one that I am extremely interested in and have collated a number of links to sites that explain the types of vision involved, and more importantly how to train them.

<http://www.vision-therapy.com/Links.htm>

<http://www.easv.org/>

<http://www.allaboutvision.com/sportsvision/index.htm>

<http://www.eye-care1.com/sports.html>

<http://www.vision4sports.com/>

<http://www.sportsmedicine.com/>

<http://www.aoanet.org/sports-vision.html>

http://www.sportingeye.com/frame_7.htm

<http://www.iasv.net/journals.html>

<http://www.see-better.net/sportst.html>

<http://www.healthy.net/oep/SPORTS.HTM>

<http://www.brianmac.demon.co.uk/vision.htm>

Ball Handling Skills

by Leo Pavone, PhD; email: lpavone@INFORAMP.NET

One of my favorite handling drills, designed by Australian Barry Honan to improve both passing and receiving.

I know everyone who has played rugby probably has a dozen or so drills that they could rhyme off, however, most unopposed handling drills tend not to be very good in developing handling skills required in matches. The biggest problem seems to be that it is hard to get players to practice handling drills at the same pace as they try to do it during the match. I suspect most of you have seen numerous knock-ons during handling drills at practice...EVEN WITHOUT OPPOSITION! Always makes me wonder how a team can possibly expect to score with their backline against an opponent when many cannot perform a basic handling drill at practice when there is no opposition. Following is an unopposed handling drill that does a pretty good job in getting players to run at pace during practice.

Boundary of Grid

In this handling drill we ask four players to pass the ball to each other while running down a segment of the field bounded by one touch line, 15 m line from touch (limit of lineout), and the two 22 m lines. These boundaries basically delineate a rectangle that is approximately 15m wide and about 70m long. What should also be noted is that there are three other lines that segment this rectangle: that is, the center line and the two "10m" lines. These lines are an integral part of the drill (as you will see).

Positioning the Players

The four players line up at one end of the rectangle (one of the 22 m lines) such that player #1 is on the intersection of the touch line and the 22m line (he/she will run straight along the touch line), player #4 will line up at the intersection of the same 22m line and the two remaining players line up between #1 and #4, equally spaced.

Running the Drill

Let's suppose the ball is in the hands of player #1 (the one running along the touch line). At the start the players are asked to pass the ball *quickly* down the line such that #4 receives the ball well before reaching the first 10m line. Player #4 sprints to the first 10m line and passes back to player #3 who SPRINTS WITH BALL to the center line and passes to player #2, who SPRINTS WITH BALL to the 2nd 10 m line and passes back to #1. At this point the players should be between the 2nd 10 m line and the opposite 22m line. Once #1 receives the ball, it is passed back along the line very quickly such that #4 should have it in his/her hands before reaching the 22 m line.

If you have been able to picture this drill and tried to visualize it, you will notice that it is designed to force players to take and make passes AT PACE.

Once players can do this drill 10 consecutive times without dropping it then you can make it more challenging by increasing the width of the rectangle, such that the passes must now be sent a longer distance.

As a comparison, one gifted group of backs I have the luxury to coach were able to do this drill on a rectangle that reached almost halfway across the pitch (from one touch line to the goal posts, near center).

Associate Athletic Director Relives the Joy of Coaching

by Eric Dash, Reprinted from *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, Thursday, October 26, 2000

Mary DiStanislao doesn't need to be the coach of the women's club rugby team. She already has a full-time job as Penn's associate athletic director, overseeing women's athletics and nearly half of all varsity sports, including the men's and women's basketball programs. DiStanislao doesn't need to pad her coaching resume, either. Somehow, women's club rugby probably doesn't look so impressive when its stacked up against a work experience list that includes more than a decade behind the bench of two different Division I women's basketball programs -- and two Big Ten championships to boot.

No matter. DiStanislao wouldn't miss her current sideline engagement for the world. "I'm really busy, and this just makes me busier. But I love it," she said. "It's teaching, it's sharing, it's a good time and doing something unique." Since the beginning of the semester, DiStanislao has been in charge of the women's rugby team -- a job she quickly agreed to take on when a few team members offered her the position last summer.

Although DiStanislao had never coached rugby, she's been an avid player for more than 20 years and was excited to share her knowledge and enthusiasm for the game. It also provided her with somewhat of a challenge, since about 15 of the 20 girls on the Penn team had never even played before coming to college. But more than that, coaching rugby has allowed DiStanislao the opportunity to briefly step out of the pressure-cooker environment of Division I athletics and revisit her past love for coaching.

A two-sport athlete at Rutgers University in basketball and field hockey, DiStanislao entered coaching almost as soon as she hung up her game jerseys. In 1976, she was named head coach at Northwestern University at the tender age of 23, where she took her team to two women's Big Ten championships in four years. She moved on to Notre Dame in 1980, where she took the Fighting Irish women's basketball program from Division III to a top-20 Division I program in seven years before leaving basketball altogether for the corporate world.

She wound up in Weightman Hall last fall, after a brief stint as the associate director of the Wharton Career Management program. But while coaching in the high-stakes world of NCAA basketball was fun, DiStanislao says nothing is more fun than teaching young weekend warriors, who simply play for the love of the game.

"The Division I level is just much more competitive," she said. "You travel with an entourage. Your time is heavily scheduled; you practice five times a week. There are certain impromptu elements that are removed at the varsity level by necessity," she added. "The thing that is wonderful about rugby -- and I think any club sport -- is that it's run by the students."

But if you think that means her team is less hungry to win, think again. "Club sport athletes are very serious about what they do," she cautioned, although in another breath she's quick to point out that "rugby is a social sport" that frequently ends with a party that allows the players to get to know their opponents off the field. "Our kids have it within their sights to win the Ivy Championship."

And so does DiStanislao. To that end, she's been showing up for practice several times a week, running "her girls" through drills to improve their throwing and catching, encouraging them to run on their own -- and ensuring they have fun. "What's important is that when I turn out for practice, I give them my best and they give me theirs," she said. Sometimes, that means her evenings are spent shuttling from rugby practice to Penn soccer games and crew practices for her full-time job. "I have some very busy weekends," she admits. But it's never a hassle.

After all, DiStanislao says she has the best of all worlds: a great job in the Athletic Department, an enthusiastic rugby team and, most of all, another opportunity to coach.

East Penn Collegiate Rugby: A Model Program

The November 25, 2000 issue of *RUGBY* Magazine published an article about the success that the EPRU has had with its collegiate program. While only the article highlights are summarized below, if you are interested, a complete copy of the article (as published) can be provided by dropping me a request or reprinting it from the EPRU website.

What makes a collegiate rugby program successful?

It starts with a vision. A vision that has a clarity of purpose. In the EPRU, that vision is the belief that an important aspect of securing the continued growth and prosperity of rugby in this country is to provide an opportunity for young players to learn the sport in such a way, that when they finish their time in college, they will want to continue their rugby experience. In order to realize this vision, the EPRU strives diligently to provide a quality collegiate rugby program.

For many young athletes, collegiate rugby is the final stepping stone before the traditional club rugby experience. For some, collegiate rugby becomes the bridge between their youth/high school rugby experience and club level play.

The EPRU's vision began over 10 years ago when Steve Cohen took on the job as its Collegiate Coordinator.

For many years, the EPRU has been recognized both by its peers and by USA Rugby as the best administered LAU in the country and its collegiate program to be the finest of its kind. This is not by accident. This is in large part due to the willingness of many 'volunteers' to get involved. The EPRU is very fortunate to have many competent administrators that not only work hard and who are dependable, but also are willing to work together in support of each other when and where needed.

The EPRU, is the second largest LAU in the country, comprising of 110 clubs. Exactly 50% of these clubs are colleges (27 men and 28 women), making it the third largest collegiate program (behind New York State and New England RFUs) in the US. The larger number of collegiate clubs brings mixed blessings. They provide much financial assets to the Union, but also requires a lot of administrative time to manage. Since this is rugby, we are run by volunteers, and more money does not mean more time.

What follows is a list of ingredients that makes the EPRU Collegiate Program a **model program** for other LAUs to emulate. They are presented in no particular order of importance, except for no. 1.

Key Ingredients

1. **LEADERSHIP.** Being successful in any endeavor requires leadership. In rugby it takes leadership by example: someone who will not only talk about what must be done, but actually gets it done. In the rugby world, you must be willing to do whatever it takes to reach your goal. Keeping a healthy balance of hard work and fun is also key. In the EPRU, a few key individuals, such as Steve Cohen, Dana Bateman (Secretary), Dawn White (President) and recently Deb Yates (Women's Coordinator) lead by example. Why do it? It is the spirit of rugby that we love and that is so alive amongst the collegiate teams. As *Rugby's* Ed Hagerty says, "their enthusiasm for rugby is infectious". And the EPRU is seriously infected!

2. **COMMUNICATIONS.** Communications is easier said than done. It is naïve to assume club officers will do as requested just because you ask them once. Like all of us, college students are 'busy' people. You just need to accept that, make the information available and employ reminders through various types of communication, such as a Listserve, Website, Newsletter, and Handbook. One area that needs to be very clear to colleges is timely communication with opponents and the assigned referee **confirming match day arrangements**. The EPRU recently issued a "Procedure for Confirming Match Day Arrangements" which is a simple step-by-step plan to make it all come together for a fine day on the pitch for all. This Procedure can be found at: <http://www.epru.org/referees/index.html> under "Day of Match".
3. **IMAGE.** The old adage, 'do one thing wrong and a hundred right things are quickly forgotten'!
Conduct - The EPRU has established behavioral expectations for both players and coaches with distinct **Codes of Conduct**.
Appearance - The EPRU requires all clubs to be properly kitted for each match.
Alcoholic Beverages Policy - The EPRU has a very specific Policy regarding consumption of alcoholic beverage that they do their best to enforce, especially at collegiate tournaments and championships. It can be found, along with other collegiate Policies, etc. at: <http://www.epru.org/mcol/index.html>
Community Service - The EPRU encourages its clubs to make an effort to improve the image of rugby by getting involved in community service projects. A number of clubs do so and find it fosters a positive attitude around campus and town about rugby.
4. **SAFETY.** The safety of players on-the-field is of paramount importance to all involved with rugby. The players, coaches, administrators and referees all want rugby to be played to the best of the player's ability but in a reasonably safe manner. The EPRU has been proactive in providing guidance for rugby safety and has prepared and distributed safety papers entitled "Safety Precaution Recommendations" and "Making Rugby Safer".
5. **COACHING SUPPORT.** For over 20 years, the EPRU has been a leader in hosting coaching clinics. Long before the USA Rugby Coaching Certification Program started, the EPRU was bringing the best coaching minds in the world to Philadelphia for its annual coaching clinic that was always well-attended.
6. **COMPETITIVE STRUCTURE.** The EPRU organizes both the men and women's colleges in a league structure that provides a competitive structure in the Fall that leads to a playoff system enabling teams to qualify for Spring Territorial and National playoffs.
7. **ALL-STAR RUGBY.** The EPRU fully supports its members interest in All-Star rugby and provides both coaching and financial support for Men's Collegiate All-Star and Women's Under 23 teams.

The Future. The path to the future growth of USA Rugby needs to be paved with collegiate players. For many, however rugby is JUST a 4-year experience. In some cases, players have little awareness of the world of rugby beyond their collegiate competitions. Each Spring in the EPRU, players are made aware of rugby beyond their diplomas. The EPRU offers to help them locate rugby clubs wherever their destiny takes them and explains how rugby can offer a lifetime of rewards both on the field either as a player, coach or referee, and off the field as a club and union administrator. When they enjoy their collegiate rugby experience, as most do in the EPRU, they want more rugby. Hopefully, a lifetime's worth.

What about The Vision? Does the EPRU believe they have realized their vision? As Steve Cohen puts it in no uncertain terms..."yes and then some"!

How Can We Help? The EPRU stands ready to assist any LAU in their efforts to improve their collegiate program. Please contact Steve Cohen at: cohensd@voicenet.com or 609-714-2203.

Rugby Wisdom and Assorted Tidbits

USA Rugby Referee Association Interpretations and Rulings

Dick Podmore (email: rpodmor@attglobal.net), Chairman Laws Subcommittee, USARRA has recently issued some important Law Interpretations on the following subjects:

- **A Fair Contest for the Ball** - Referees seem to be much stricter on having the ball thrown in straight at the scrum. Why the change?
- **Rulings Related to Law 4-Players' Clothing** - Two new rulings have been issued by the United States of America Rugby Referees Association (USARRA). They are both effective immediately. The first relates to the requirement for an IRB authorized mark on some equipment worn by players, the second relates to the soles of the multi-studded boots
- **Wheeled Scrums** - There has been an increase in the number of wheeled scrums since the Experimental Law Variation was introduced that awarded the throw-in at the subsequent scrum to the team not in possession at the time of the wheel. Is wheeling the scrum intentionally an infringement? Is wheeling the scrum repeatedly an infringement?

The answers to the above can be found at: <http://www.rugby.org/referees/usarrainterps.html>

Rugby Attempting Olympic Return After More Than 70 years

October 5, 2000

LONDON (AP) -- Rugby could be making a return to the Olympics after an absence of more than 70 years, according to international organizers of the rough and tumble sport. Proposals for rugby's inclusion in the 2008 Olympics have been presented to the IOC and four of the five cities vying to host the games, said Vernon Pugh, chairman of the International Rugby Board.

"We are doing our very best to get rugby back into the Olympics," Pugh said at a news conference. "The reception that we received was judged to be extremely successful with high levels of interest being expressed by the IOC members present."

Rugby last appeared as an Olympic sport in the 1924 Games in Paris, when the United States beat favorites France in the finals. The upset was marred by fights in the stands and a chorus of boos drowning out the Star Spangled Banner as the winners received their gold medals. Pugh called rugby's inclusion by the 2004 Games in Athens "problematic" for logistical reasons, but he said that Osaka (Japan); Paris and Toronto had expressed enthusiasm.

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I hope the efforts of myself and the contributors in providing rugby information, ideas, experiences, etc. have been of interest to you. Please call me (609-714-2203), snail or email (cohensd@voicenet.com) me anytime with your input, suggestions or comments.

Yours in the true rugby spirit,

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