

July, 2013

# OLD BOY QUARTERLY



## The Old Boy Quarterly

is targeted to the alumni rugby players of the Kansas Jayhawks Rugby Football Club.

These issues chronicle both interesting parts of the club's 50 year history and inform the readers about the club's current status & future plans.

It is meant to supplement and not replace the information on the club's website <http://www.kurugby.org/>

The club also has actively managed information on Facebook. (Kansas Jayhawks Rugby Football Club)

We are seeking to expand this publication's distribution. If you are aware of KJRFC alumni who would like to be added to the distribution, please forward this e-mailed newsletter to them.

If you are interested in financially supporting the club, charitable gifts can be made to:

**The Kansas Rugby Foundation, Inc.**

PO Box 1074

Lawrence, KS, 66044

Featured In the next Issue:

**1990 –1995  
Westwick**

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**Did you play for the club between 1990-1995?**

This newsletter needs your scanned photos and your personal stories.



Send material to [pd4bicycles@aol.com](mailto:pd4bicycles@aol.com) before September 15, 2013. Please provide your contact information.

Contact me if you have a story, but would prefer to just do an interview.

## Notes on end of Season Spring 2013

By Rick Renfro, Coaching Coordinator KJRFC

Spring 2013 will go down as the snow season. We had to cancel three matches due to weather and missed eight practices. But we finished with a bang. The college team lost merit tables to University of Arkansas and Lindenwood (finished 2<sup>nd</sup> at Nationals). We played a combined college/club side at the **St. Louis Ruggerfest** with a close loss in the finals to St Louis Bombers. **We had a big win over K-State at the Alumni weekend.**

**We are short on numbers and this will be our priority next fall to increase our squad's size.**

**We just got back from a two week whirlwind tour of the Republic of South Africa.** Contributing writer, **Lois Weldon** went on the tour and faithfully kept a **FANTASTIC** blog. (Click the following link)

<http://www2.kusports.com/weblogs/ku-rugby-south-africa/>

We went 3-2 and played the prematch at Ellis Park before a Super Fifteens game. We made lots of contacts and hope to get some players trading back and forth between Kansas and SA. Get ready next tour 2015 to Ireland.

We lost another good one this year. **Wint Winter's** funeral was like his life packed to the gills with people and great memories. Hell of a man. Everyone has a "Wint story". He will be missed, but not forgotten.

It has been great getting back in touch with the Alumni. Thanks guys. **Remember 2014 is 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the club.** Please plan on seeing us during the year.

- Rockchalk Jayhawk \*\*\*\*



## I want to talk to you!

link to these newsletters, meaning **those who want to read this newsletter or prior editions can load them off the Facebook page without getting on the email distribution list.** The club's website also has a link to the Facebook page.

**We have big plans for this fall** as we run up towards the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year. The club's new Publicity Officer is a Journalism graduate named **Rachel Alban**. She is crafting a media campaign that includes cultivating newspaper reporters to follow the club. **We will be running a series of ads in the University Dailey Kansan** to announce the start of fall practices. This will be an important step to greatly expand the college side's player count and capture some of the tremendous athletic talent that passes through the student body every year. There are future All American's on campus.

**The club is working to communicate with players, alumni, and fans across multiple media.** The Facebook page "Kansas Jayhawks Rugby Football Club" is getting more attention as a way to provide real-time information about

games, travel, and practices. You are encouraged to get on Facebook and "like" the club's page so you can tap into this information source. We are coordinating our various ways of communicating, so the Facebook page will include a

**To fund this ad campaign, we will be seeking a modest amount of money from the alumni. We may be calling you. \*\*\*\***

## Retrospective

### The Success of the Late 1980's - By Steve Lange

**In this edition** we interview the captains of both the College and Club sides from the era, **Pat Roberts** and **Don "Duck" Harris**. Roberts also penned a terrific essay about the **Tour of British Columbia in 1989, the club's only foreign tour that featured a roster of 100% college players.**

**Consider this...**The College & Club sides were both ranked in the Top 10 nationally. Within that achievement were all the building blocks that made it happen.

- The club had a College Team, Club Team, and developmental Reserve Team.
- The College side had 3 All Americans: **Pete Knutson** (wing), **Phil Olsen** (fly half), **Paul King** (fly half & fullback).
- Both the College and Club sides regularly had a handful of players who were on the Western Union's representative side or the junior rep side. (The

Westerns had 25 on the rep side and 25 on the junior rep side. Each of the 4 territorial unions had similar 50-player rosters, thus the Jayhawks sported some of the best 200 players in the nation.)

- The club could run a January ad in the University Daily Kansan newspaper for rugby club try-outs and **100 new recruits** would show up to run stairs in Allen Field House.

- They continued to go on international tours every other year and host visiting international tours.

As the club's 14-year CEO, **Paul Diedrich** said in the January 2013 edition of this newsletter, **"During the 80's we thought we could handle anything and the club just kept growing."** The only thing the club had not managed to do was buy a field for the club. The story about buying the field will be featured in the next newsletter edition.

In the early 1980's the Club side was strong, but the College side was somewhat neglected. By the end of the decade, the College side became more robust and the Club & College sides internally competed for the top college players. They finally learned to balance their schedules so that the Club and College sides would not have big games on the same day.

In writing this newsletter, I attempt to find events that serve as separation points that allow me to call a period an "era". The period between 1976 and 1990 has a number of common threads to make it one, big, long era.

- **Paul Diedrich** is their CEO.
- Johnny's Tavern is purchased and is the club's hub.
- A talented group of 20 or so players stay active for most of those 14 years and nearly all retire by 1990.

What signals the end of this era and starts the next is the purchase of Westwick.\*\*\*\*



## Alumni Game from the mid 1980's

It's difficult to count the players in the photo, but its almost 100.

You can see players from every era to that date, back to the founding players.

Look hard, you are probably in this photo somewhere.

## The Forgotten Tour

### Seattle/British Columbia 1989 (KU's only college player tour)

By Pat Roberts

The late 80's was a great time to be a member of the Kansas Jayhawks Rugby club. The club side was mature with a number of the older guys playing at their prime (mid 30's) and a good number of really solid college players playing up on the club side. The college side was as strong as it had ever been. Rugby magazine had recently started a national college and club side ranking system. **The KU college side was ranked in the top ten teams in the nation during the 1988 and the 1989 season.** The club's last tour was in 1987 to Belgium/Holland. At the time KURFC was touring about every two years so we were due for a tour. The idea to mount a "college" only tour started to circulate around the club. I am not sure who started this, but I believe it was **Bill Mills**. The idea was that the college side was in serious contention to make the final four that year and a Spring Break tour would be just the ticket to prep the side for the upcoming battle to win the Collegiate Western Championship, the winner of which would go to the final four. The team had lost a close game to the Air Force Academy, 7-6, the year before in Las Cruces, NM in the semi-finals of the Westerns Championships. A drop kick by **Paul King** in the final seconds of that game, hit the far post and bounced straight back up field resulting in the loss. Air Force, 1988's National Champion runner-up, beat CU easily in the final. We all knew that we had really blown our opportunity to get to the Final Four and were even more determined to get there the next season.

The fact that this was to be a "College" side tour, that would take place over Spring Break, and would have to be done on limited funds, the decision was made on a Seattle/British Columbia tour. The itinerary was to fly into Seattle, play the ranked Washington Huskies, and then take a hydrofoil to Vancouver where the team was entered into the prestigious University of Victoria invitational.

The tourist's consisted of about 25 college players, two club side players, **Herb Llewellyn**, and **Dave Burrows** ( a recently acquired Kiwi flanker) and the touring party: **Louie Riederer** (tour manager), **Donald "Duck" Harris** (team Manager) our Kiwi Coach; **Dominic Barnao**, and

the club coach, **Bill Mills**. The team landed in Seattle on a rainy March afternoon. We were hosted, very graciously I might add, by the Huskies. We were met at the Airport and split up and handed over to our hosts. The guys hosting my crew were great guys. Washington works

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT



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March 16th, 17th, 18th 1989

Cover Photograph by Don Lobb

on a tri-semester system, and these guys basically went to school for two semesters and fished on commercial fishing and crab boats the last semester. Needless to say, their apartments were appointed with a few more luxury items than us KS boys were used to.

Our hosts had arranged for a practice field right next to University of Washington field-house on campus. The grass was thick and green, but when you stepped down, your boots would disappear as your foot would sink 6 inches into the turf. Miraculously, when your foot was pulled back up there was no mud. The turf was so thick and the ground so wet, it was like walking on a water bed. The rain continued to come down in buckets (as it did the entire stay in Seattle) and at one point a college kid was walking by wearing a backpack, stopped, looked to the sky and screamed "I hate this f#@king rain!!!". This outburst stopped practice and we all just stared at this kid. He didn't seem to even know we were there. After his outburst, with slumped shoulders, he plodded along to class looking really beat down. I couldn't help thinking that it must rain every day in Seattle.

The Huskies were pumped up to play us. We were ranked in the top 10 and then a few spots behind us. The game was played on a muddy/sandy field in an absolute monsoon. The game was low scoring and really hard-fought, the really poor weather taking away our huge advantage in our backline. KU lost by a conversion.

The Seattle boys took us out on the town that evening. I cannot remember much of what transpired, however I do remember great camaraderie and feeling like we were the kings of the world. We went to bar after bar and the Seattle boys really looked after us. After the bars closed we were invited to an after-hours party and many of us did not get to bed that night.

We were due at the marina for the hydrofoil ride to Vancouver early the next morning. All but two made it on time. As we were walking down the gang-plank to get on the boat, a woman lost track of her small son who wandered over to a big Rottweiler who was on a leash, but the

owner was not paying attention. For some reason, **Dominic** sensed the dog was going to take a run at the kid and moved into action. The dog lunged with jaws open right at the kid's face. **Dominic** snatched the kid out of the way at the last second. The mom was really thankful, and all of our adrenaline was pumping pretty good. Score one for the Kiwi!

The ride to Vancouver was uneventful as most of the tourists were sleeping off hangovers. I was never able to sleep on a travel day so I struck up a conversation

with one of the ship's porters. At some point he asked me where in Vancouver we were staying, I told him that it was a hotel called the "Park Place", at which he actually laughed out loud. I asked him what was so funny and he said "you don't know?" "Know what?" I replied. "The best strip bar in all of Vancouver (a town known for its top-notch strip bars) is in the basement parking garage of that place"! **I immediately glanced at Louie who was snoozing peacefully and thought "Man, he has to be the best tour manager ever"!** I could not believe

### Kansas University Jayhawks Rugby Club

COACHES: Rick Renfro  
Bill Mills  
Dominic Bornaio  
MANAGER: Louie Riederer  
Captain: Pat Roberts  
Colours: Blue Jerseys, White Shorts

Union: Heart of America  
Western Territory  
1987-88 Record: HOA College Champ.

#### TEAM ROSTER

Name	Position	Comment
Jeff Paxton	Wing	
Matt Shurtz	Centre	
Kelby Marks	Centre	
Paul King	Flyhalf	1988 All-American 1988 Woodley Award Nominee
Chad Voight	Flanker	
Scott Rilby	Wing	
Tony Rio	Flanker	
Pat Roberts	11 man	Western RFU Juniors
Dave Donaldson	Lock	
Pat Kirk	Prop	
Mike Hammond	Scrumhalf	
Herb Llewellyn	Prop	
Dave-Burrows	Flanker	
Paddy Delargy	Flanker	
Quinn O'Keefe	Flanker	
Bill Kirkelie	Centre	Western RFU Juniors
Jeff Hodder	Hooker	
Jeff Petillo	Prop	
Marcello Sosa	Lock	
Tom O'Donnel	Centre	
Jason Elder	Lock	
Drew Elder	Lock	
Hans Baker	Flanker	
Derek Monnell	Lock	
Gary Hartsell	Flanker	
Doug Mehose	Prop	
Paul Rustin	Wing	
Scott Stites	Prop	Western RFU Juniors
Phil Olsen	Scrumhalf	
Mike Beatty	Flankers	

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# R-U-G-B-Y



**Paul King, the Jayhawks' All American flyhalf launches a drop kick in the tour game against Vancouver in 1989.**

that he had booked us into a hotel with such amenities and he had never said a word about it to anyone. What self-control that guy has! Later, when confronted by the news, Louie claimed that he had no idea about the strip-bar and that it was pure luck that we booked the hotel!

The team checked into the hotel, and immediately went to find this bar. The entrance was in the basement of the parking garage, just like the porter said it would be. It was a non-descript steel door with nothing written on it. We walked in, took a look around, and couldn't believe our eyes. The bar we were standing in was basically a Johnny's Tavern, Canadian Style, pool tables, dart boards, cold Labatt's on tap, and .....dancing girls. **It was like some someone had combined Johnny's and the World famous Flamingo Club into one perfect venue.** We were impressed, but couldn't linger. Louie had booked a salmon fishing trip on a lake outside of town. **Tom O'Donnell** caught the winning fish (maybe the only fish) and I remember it was a pig.

The evening was spent in the "Hotel Bar" and much fun was had. Apparently, a few of the boys had talked a few of the "girls" into coming back up to our hotel rooms for some late night partying. I remember bouncing from room to room drinking Labatt's and feeling like a professional rugby player.

We had an early wakeup call and a practice scheduled at U Vic (The University of Victoria) and a tour of the campus and then a social at the U Vic club house. The word was passed around that the hotel management was not happy and that we must have a meeting with them in the conference room at 7 a.m. I, being a veteran of the Cherry Blossom tournament in DC a few years before, knew a thing or two about early morning team-meetings in a conference room with hotel management; it was not a good thing.

The hotel manager was obviously not as happy as the KU rugby team about the proximity of "the bar" to his hotel and informed us that if he even found one piece of glitter on the carpet, much less a dancer from the bar, anywhere near his hotel, the whole team would be out on its ear. He added for emphasis that every hotel in Victoria was booked because of the tournament and that we would be sleeping in the streets or have to go back to the U.S. if we got kicked out. Talk about a buzz kill!

Our first match in the tournament was ironically scheduled to be against the Univ. of Washington on Thursday afternoon. The tournament committee, understanding that we had just played each other, re-arranged the brackets and our new opponent was to be the University of Alberta. It was a blow out. KU won 28-0.

That night was spent taking it easy at the hotel bar, and being careful not to get kicked out of the hotel. In one memorable moment, **Paul King** was lounging on the bed in his room watching TV when **Tony Rio** (runway model and a future All-American) was prancing around in front of him in nothing but his underwear. Taking a line from "National Lampoon's Vacation" King yelled "**Hey Underpants!**" **Get the hell away from the TV!**" For some reason it stuck and to this day most people know Tony as "Tony Underpants". Even today if he calls me up the conversation goes like this: "Me: Hello?, Tony: Roberts, Me: yeah?, Tony: its Underpants".

Friday morning's match was a bit more challenging. We were up against Brigham Young University. Typical of BYU, they were huge and had a good number of "Islanders" in their ranks. We were no slouches in the pack either. We had a really experienced pack in Canada. Our props were: **Pat Kirk** (one of the infamous "Hansen Brothers") **Jeff Patilio**, and "**Big**" **Herb Llewellen**. **Jeff Hoobler** at hooker. The second rows were: **Jason and Drew Elder**, **Marcello Sosa** - who was a Paraguayan student who had grown up playing rugby, **Derrick Mannel** and **Dave Donaldson** (The Cement-Head Brothers) and rounding out the back row were: **Paddy Delargy** (England), **Dave Burrows** (New Zealand), **Tony Rio**, **Quinn "the Eskimo" O'Keefe**, and myself. The game was tied. With time running out, KU was awarded a penalty on BYU's 20 meter line. The prudent thing to do would have been to take the posts and let our All-American fly-half, **Paul King**, kick the penalty, but when the ref awarded the penalty, BYU turned their backs on us and started walking back to the mark. I quick tapped the ball and ran straight for their fly-half who turned around and scrambled to tackle me. King knew me well enough to keep an eye on me and came up in support. A quick flip to him sent him under the posts for the go-ahead try. He made the conversion and KU won 10-4. After the game **Coach Mills** and **Louie** both chewed me out for the quick penalty and not taking the points. I kept thinking what would have happened if we didn't



**All American to All American**  
**Phil Olsen launches pass to Paul King**

score, I would have probably gotten benched.

The next match was against the tourney favorite: The University of British Columbia. They had five players who had represented the Canadian National team on the squad and two or three more who were BC Seniors rep-side players. The game was played under the lights on the main pitch and was well attended. I would estimate a crowd of at least 500 turned up to watch the match. It is my understanding that UBC did not take us very seriously (and why would they?) and we were matched up against their number two's and three's. Very early on in the match we had a scrum down on UBC's thirty-five meter line which we won cleanly (**Louie Riederer** played prop for the side in this game due to injury to a couple of the other props. His strength and experience really helped us). Our freshman scrum-half, **Phil Olsen** (who grew up playing rugby in South America and would later become an All-American), delivered a clean ball to **King** who hit a perfect drop goal from 48 meters out. I was playing number 8 and heard the thump of ball coming off of Paul's foot. As I turned around, I saw the ball slice perfectly through the uprights! I was jumping up and down yelling, trying to build on the momentum, and I noticed the UBC guys looking at us incredulously. They were watching me jumping around like a maniac and I could tell that they were surprised by the fact that: (a) we had a guy who could hit 50 meter drop kicks and (b) the number 8 was jumping around telling his players that we had this game! The rest of the game was a blur. Both teams hammered

this: **Phil Olsen** at scrum-half (**Mike Hammond**, our starting scrum-half, had been injured in the BYU game thus giving Phil the start), **Paul King** at fly-half, **Matt Shurtz** at inside center (a really tough, hard, kid who played for a few years and then we lost touch with him), former KU football player **Bill Kirklie** at outside center (Bill was an absolute beast with the ball in hand and on defense), **Jeff Paxton** (another former KU football player at wing), **Scott Riley** (another hard runner and crushing defender) at the other wing, and a seasoned vet in **Tom O'Donnell** at fullback.

UBC had scored, converted, and then made a penalty kick making it 9-3 UBC (tries were only worth 4 back in those days). Our hard tackling put at least two UBC players out of the game. With time running out and a UBC flanker going down to injury, a big back row guy came out on the field (obviously a number 1). It was a KU scrum down which we lost and their big number 8 picked the ball up and ran right at the gap between the scrum and the fly-half, **King, myself, and Tony Underpants** hit him at the same time, basically high/lowing him and he went down. They had to bring a stretcher out for that guy. At this point UBC was looking worried. It was late in the game and we were still in it. The crowd was on KU's side and was cheering for us wildly. UBC started subbing in guys on the fly (not really legal at the time). Time was running out and we were on the attack; successfully recycling the ball in ruck after ruck. We had a ruck on UBC's five meter line with what looked to be a big overload on the outside and we knocked the ball on. UBC won the resulting scrum-down, cleared

away at each other. Each attack was met by big plays on defense. KU's backline was loaded with hard runners and hard hitters.

The back-line looked like

the ball, and time ran out. UBC 9- KU 3. We were devastated. "Ignorance is bliss" they say and I guess we didn't know enough to realize that we shouldn't have even been in that game. The UBC guys were very gracious and complimentary of our efforts. Our record put us in the Semi-Final game against the host club U-Vic the next morning at 10am. We weren't out yet!

Later that night, **Scott Stites** (our Western Junior prop who was recovering from a ACL repair) was slumming around the U-Vic club house and happened to walk into the room that the U-Vic coach's were making selections for the game the next morning. **Scott over-head one of the Coach's say "do not take Kansas lightly, they hit as hard as any team in this tournament"**. The selection committee took this Coach's advice. Although we played hard the next morning, it was obvious that we were up against a more seasoned and stacked team. KU lost to U-Vic 32-4 ending our Canadian campaign. **Geeth Rees**, Canada's national team fly-half did not take the pitch against KU, but we were told that he was the only starter who did not.

The final match of the tourney was predictably between UBC and U-Vic. It was a great match with no less than nine Canadian national side players on the pitch. UBC won a close one.

Years later, **Rick Renfro** and I were sitting at Johnny's talking about past tours. Rick was counting them up one by one. When he got to the 80's he counted Argentina '85, Belgium/Holland '87 and then skipped to New Zealand '92. I said "wait a minute, you forgot Canada" Rick replied "That wasn't a real tour and it doesn't count!" I said "Bullshit, you are just not counting it because you weren't there!". **Looking back and remembering all the great stories, the fact that it was the only true college tour KU has undertaken, and the strength of the touring party on field, it will go down as one of the better tours KU has ever gone on ... at least in my book.**

\*\*\*\*

## An afternoon with Pat Roberts

### Jayhawks' Two-Time Kernow Cup Award Winner & College Side Captain in the 1980's



Pat Roberts was interviewed in May 2013 at the Johnny's Tavern in Corinth Square in Prairie Village. It is one of several in which he is a part-owner. Pat is interesting, funny, and has a great way with a story.

#### Introduction to KU Rugby:

He grew up in Europe watching rugby. His dad was in the military, stationed in Belgium and Germany. They traveled to England and saw rugby games at the club level. When he got to KU, he saw that rugby was a club sport. He thought about coming out and then when he was a sophomore in 1984, he saw an ad in the UDK. **"Rugby Try-Outs... If you are athletic and like competition, try out for the KU rugby club."**

The "try out" was at Allen Field House during January. The first night he showed up, there was over 100 guys. **Bill Mills** was the coach in charge. Roberts termed the whole night as "a complete s##t show". Mills had everyone running laps

and running stairs. Guys were dropping out left and right. They were puking. They couldn't finish the drills. Roberts thought "There is no way I am going to make this club." At the second training session, only 50 or 60 showed up. It was the same thing; nothing but sprints, stairs, and up-downs. There were no rugby balls. By the second week, there were only about 40 from the initial 100.

**I interrupt...This is a terrible story! You were running good people off without even introducing them to the game?**

Roberts agreed. "This all came to a head when we started getting football players showing up. We addressed it with the coaching staff that we couldn't treat these football guys like that. The football players would show up and the first thing they were doing was having everyone run miles for time. Football players hadn't been doing that sort of training. They would quit. So eventually we would have the coach like **Rick Renfro** or **Joe Kieltyka** take them aside and show them some ball handling drills to keep them interested enough to stick around and ease them into get fit enough to enjoy the game.

#### Kernow Cup:

The 6'2" 190 lbs Roberts played 2<sup>nd</sup> row first year and then usually played #8 after that. He was awarded the club's **Kernow Cup** twice. (An annual award for the club's biggest contributor as a player, in

club activities, and in social fellowship. It was the club's highest honor. Only one other person has won it twice; **Grant Lechtenberg**.)

Roberts said, "I won it on consecutive years 1988 and 1989. I was really passionate and involved in the club. At the time I was playing a lot. I was fit. I worked hard in the drills like running distance. I held every job in the club: field manager, equipment manager, eventually captain. I broke my wrist and missed an entire year of playing in 1986. Rather than lay out that year, I actually coached. **Rick Renfro** asked me if I would coach the senior reserve side. At the time we had 3 full sides at practice and 3 games on weekends and had so many players, we didn't have to ask players to play in multiple games. Coaching was the best thing that ever happened to me. I got to look at the game from a coach's point of view. I was a 20-year old kid and a lot of the players I was coaching were 35-40 years old. In the end, my injury got me even more involved in the sport. The college side emerged in the nation in 1988 and 1989. Rugby Magazine put our college side in the Top-10. I think I got the Kernow Cup because I was out front; pushing that charge with enthusiasm."

#### K-State/KU:

K-State had a great college side in the early 1980's the Jayhawks' college side suffered. We lost to K-State for 7 straight years between around 1980, until we beat them in 1988. K-State won the HoA Union those years and represented the HoA in the playoffs. K-State had some very good players like **Duck Harris** and **Larry Krisman** (both played for the Jayhawks after graduating from K-State).

#### What changed?

KU had a lot of guys who were more into the party and the social after prac-

tice, than the actual game. That started to change around 1982. The guys who had been playing through the late 1970's were on the club side and they were "larger than life". **Louie Riederer, David Hay, Bill Boyle, Kenny Dunn, Doug Hasing, Paul Diedrich, Don Harris, and Jimmie Bartle.** We would scrimmage every Thursday night and it was the college team against the club side and the college guys were really tested. The hitting was hard and the college guys realized that they needed to take it seriously. More and more college side guys started getting picked for club side games. Then in 1984-1986, we started getting football players coming over to the rugby club. They were athletically bigger, stronger, and faster than the guys they replaced. By the time we got to 1988 and 1989; we were a really physical college team like the club side had been in the earlier ears. To a man, they could all run, handle the ball, and tackle. The last part was the coaching. The coaches worked their tails off. **Bill Mills**, especially. He implemented training 4 nights a week instead of just Tuesdays and Thursdays. We had "fitness days" on Mondays and Wednesdays. If you wanted to be selected on the team, then you were expected to show up with your running shoes!

Another thing that helped the college side getting good was the select side play. We had a few of guys who played for the Western RFU junior side, which were players under age 25. There were 4 to 8 of our guys who were revolving through that program. We traveled around the



**In 1986, Roberts had a broken wrist that barred him from playing. He continued to be valuable to the club doing tasks like setting up the sideline tent at the HoA Tournament. Here he gets helpful "direction" from Coach Bill Mills, who is mugging for the camera.**

country to play in inter-territorial games against the other territorial union's sides. Those games were the main venue where they selected who would play for the Eagles (USA's national team). You had 25 guys selected for each of the four territorial unions and 25 guys selected for the four territorial union's junior side. So that would presumably be the best 200 players in the country. Our rep side players were exposed to all that high level of play and brought it back to the club. You couple that with all out international tours and the Jayhawks became very good.

We also had a bunch of foreign players on the club side at the time. After we toured Argentina in 1985, they sent over 3 Argentine players in 1986. **Telo** (inside center/fullback), **Carlos** (fly half), and **Julio (Bear)** (# 8) Julio now lives in Miami and keeps in touch with **Lou Blanco**. These were all

top-level, Junior Pumas in Argentina. **Sami Arap Sorbrino** also showed up around this time. He was a full back on the Brazilian national team. Sami later sent up **Tato Riquelme**, an Argentinian who had played with Sami in Brazil. Tato hit like a truck and would have made a great American Football player. We picked up some New Zealanders after that tour. **Dominic Barnao** played fly half. Dominic stayed around and coached the club and college sides for almost a decade. **Richard Brookie** (# 8) came over with Dominic. Brookie was a great mentor to me. He was a complete hard-ass Kiwi stud. He refused to play in the alumni games, because he was too intense. He couldn't separate the way he played for a friendly match.

#### **Arc of the Jayhawks' club 1985-1990**

Big membership numbers  
Thursday night scrimmages

Intense selection process on Thursday night, because the club was so big and so competitive. Selection time was a 1 ½ hour ordeal. The college guys would be pushing for his player, the club side guy would be pushing for his players. You

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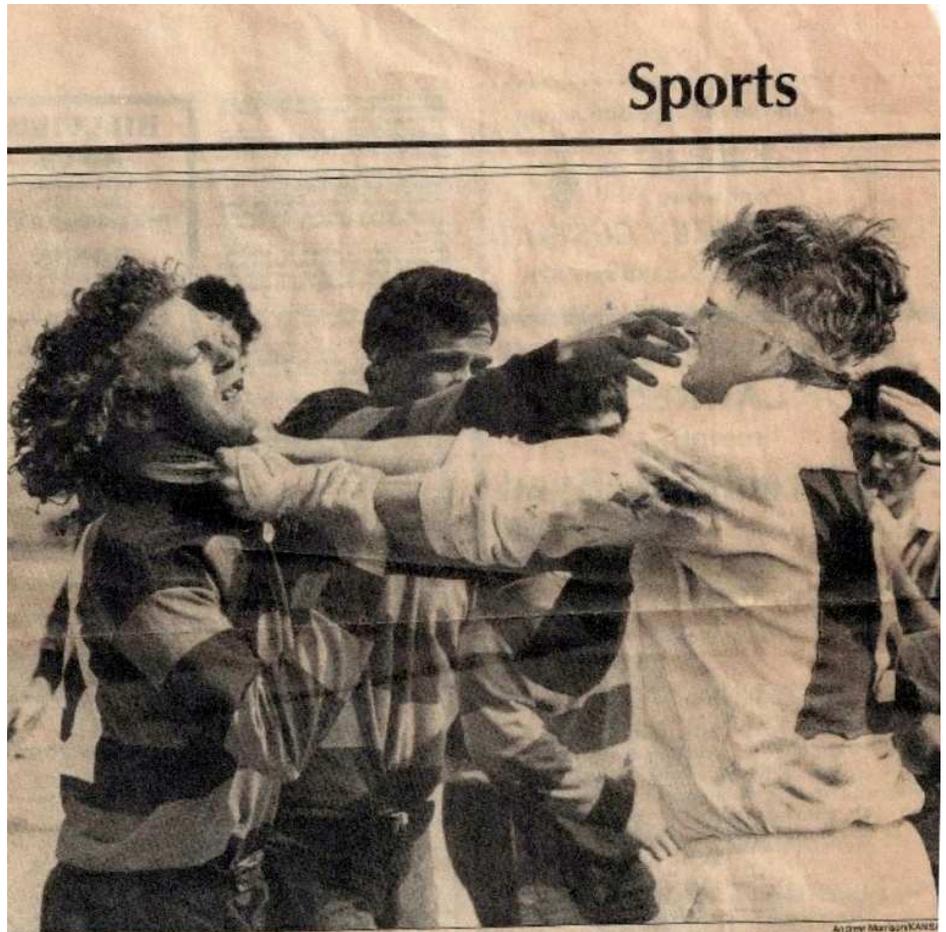
had to split hairs. Did they make practice? Did they come late to practice? Who was working harder in practice? In contrast, if you only have 18 guys on your team, the selection process is pretty much already done. The selection process in the 1980's was difficult because we had so many talented players.

In the late 1980's, as the college side was getting better, they didn't want their good players taken by the club side, if there was a big college game that weekend. There was a lot of friction on the club over sharing players between the sides. We finally figured out "smart scheduling" and stopped putting important club side matches in the same weekend as an important college game.

#### Most memorable game?

The loss to Air Force in Las Cruces, NM in the spring 1988. (See [UDK articles on page 13](#)) We were ranked behind **New Mexico State** in the tournament and we played them and killed them. It was close at the half and then we ran away with it in the second half. They never saw it coming.

We had quite a bit of history with **Air Force** already. **Mike Junk** a hooker from Salina, KS had played for KU and then transferred to Air Force. Air Force showed up in big tour busses. They brought 70 guys and filled the sidelines. In the early part of the game they were running, rucking and taking it to us. We were really on our heels. Their sideline crowd was chanting "**There can be only one!**" Then we started counter attacking and the game was on. Towards the end of the game, the score was 7-6 Air Force. The Jayhawks' flyhalf, **Paul King** made a drop kick that was in swirling wind; you couldn't tell if the ball would go through the uprights. It finally dropped and hit the cross bar and bounced 20 yards straight back up field. We tried to field the ball, but the Air Force guys swarmed on it and there was a big pile up. The game ended. Air Force went on the play Colorado in the final, beating them by a big margin like 25 points and advanced to the Final Four...That could have been us.



going after a Wisconsin player is Kansas Rugby varsity captain Pat Roberts, Washington Crossing, Pa., senior. Roberts was upset after the Wisconsin player stepped on the face of another Kansas player.

## Rugby club dominates Wisconsin Varsity, JV defeat No. 3 ranked squad

**UDK photographer Andrew Morrison captured Pat Roberts' reaction after a fellow Jayhawk was kicked on the ground. Roberts begged the photographer to not run the shot for fear of what it would do to the rugby club's image. The shot was too good and ran on page 1.**

We played Air Force again in the championship game in 1989, but it was not a close game, they won by 18 points. We couldn't hang with them in the scrums; they were so strong. We had a few key people who were out.

The only time we beat them was in a "friendly" game. They came to Lawrence in the fall of 1988 and we beat them 18-4. We had them to our club house before the game and one of their big guys walked in and said "**Where are all their**

**athletes?**" I reminded our guys about that comment a couple of times before we played the match.

It's tough to pick a "most memorable game". We beat **Wisconsin** around 1988 or 1989. They came in as the number 3 club in the country. They played us in Lawrence and we just ran them into the ground. (See [above newspaper article](#).) **Scott Ryley** was our wing and was on the ground. The Wisconsin captain ran over and kicked him in the head and

knocked him out. I went nuts. I ran over and grabbed the guy by his collar to let him know that I was not going to put up with that kind of shit. This other Wisconsin guy ran over and grabbed for my face and ripped the skin off my lip. It looked like I had herpes for about a month. The UDK photographer caught it all in the photo. A week later, the photographer showed us the picture. We all told him not to use the photo. We were working hard on recruiting. The university was letting us set up informational booths up on campus. We were sensitive to the public perception of the violence and drunk stories. We wanted to focus on the athletic points about the club. The photographer looked at us and said **“Look...this is the best picture I ever took in my life! I may never be able to do this again. It’s going in the paper!”** He ended up putting it on the front page.

For the college side in years 1988 -1989, about the only game we lost all year was to Air Force or whoever put us out of the Western Playoffs for the college championship.

**What made the club retain so many good players for so long in the 1980’s?**

Thursday nights at Johnny’s. After practice and then selections were posted almost everyone club and college would head to Johnny’s for the evening. This is where the older guys really connected with the college players and the "Bucks" and "Baby Bucks" concept was born. I think this was the key factor as to why these two groups bonded so closely even though there was a ten year age difference. That bond is still really strong today with the same group of guys. \*\*\*\*



**Jeff Paxton runs with ball as Jeff Hoobler supports in 1989 home game against the nationally ranked Wisconsin side. Paxton was one of several transplants from the football team.**



**Jayhawks form a maul in 1989 Wisconsin game.**



**Watch the YouTube movie !!!**  


As a closer to the interview, click on the link below and watch a freeze frame movie as Pat Roberts scores a try on Oklahoma State. Roberts is the # 8 and this is a called play wherein he picks up the ball from the back of the scrum and runs it with his flankers supporting on either side of him. **(If the link doesn’t work, the YouTube file is “Pat Roberts rugby try 1989”).**  
[http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-zEVcRjRBuK\\_4oEwnVgH8w/videos](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-zEVcRjRBuK_4oEwnVgH8w/videos)

# Rugby club dominates Wisconsin Varsity, JV defeat No. 3 ranked squad

by Beth Behrens  
Kansan sportswriter

The KU Rugby Club defeated Wisconsin on Saturday in the last two games of Wisconsin's Spring Break tour. Both games ended in shutouts, much to the surprise of the Jayhawks.

The varsity squad won 28-0, and the junior varsity squad won 22-0.

The other two squads in the club, the club side and the senior reserves, met two teams from the Kansas City Rugby Football Club and were victorious in both matches. The club side won 10-8, and the senior reserves beat Kansas City's B team 14-6.

Lawrence senior Herb Llewellyn said he didn't expect the varsity and junior varsity squads to do well against the Wisconsin club because it was ranked third in the Midwest region.

The collegiate clubs are divided into four competitive regions: East Coast, Midwest, Western Union and Pacific Coast. Kansas competes in the Western Union region. Its borders run east and west from St. Louis, Mo., to the Eastern Rocky Mountains, and north and south from Montana to Texas.

"I'm speculating that (Wisconsin's) best 15 players may not have been able to make the trip," Llewellyn said. "We gave them a hard game and threw them off balance, which is what we wanted

to do. We were very aggressive and didn't ever let up."

Topeka sophomore Jeff Paxton scored four tries. All-American Paul King, St. Louis, Mo., senior, was able to complete conversions on three of Paxton's tries. Western Springs, Ill., sophomore Tony Rio and Overland Park senior John Brooks scored one try each.

A try is comparable to a touchdown in football and is worth four points. A conversion is the rugby version of a field goal. A successful conversion is worth two points. Two other ways to score points are penalty kicks and drop kicks. Each is worth three points.

In the junior varsity match, tries were scored by Derek Mannell, Prairie Village freshman; Chad Voigt, Ventura, Calif., senior; Gary Ferguson, a visiting player from Wellington, New Zealand; and Matt O'Donnell, Overland Park resident. Assistant Coach Dominic Bornao, also from Wellington, New Zealand, scored one penalty kick.

Team captain Pat Roberts said Kansas had allowed visiting players, such as Ferguson and O'Donnell, to play in non-conference matches to improve the level of competition of the squad.

Part of Saturday's competition included several arguments, a part of the sport Roberts said was typical. Varsity player Paddy Delargy, Lawrence sophomore,



Andrew Morrison/KANSAN

Putting the squeeze on a Wisconsin player is Bill Kirkelle, Lake Forrest, Ill., junior, and Scott Ryley, Boulder, Colo., junior. The Kansas Rugby Club defeated the Badgers 28-0 Saturday at the Shenk Complex.

sustained a hairline fracture in his cheekbone during one of the disputes.

"Delargy is one of our strong players," Roberts said. "We'll miss him if he can't play."

He said fights were unavoidable in rugby, but the ability to forgive and forget played a big role in the camaraderie of the club.

"Whatever happens on the field,

as soon as you walk off, you forget it," Roberts said. "One thing peo-

ple don't really know about rugby is the social fellowship. A lot of good friendships developed over the week."

The rugby club will compete in the Heart of America Collegiate Tournament this weekend at Swope Park in Kansas City, Mo.

UDK Story and photo about 1989 Wisconsin game.



Pat Roberts runs his "keeper" from his # 8 position in 1989 Wisconsin game.

Roberts notes he is running to left of the scrum, so it was scrum where his front row "won against the feed". He continued that even if the opposing team stopped him (as it appears here), the play committed a lot of defenders. He could dish the ball to his supporting flankers, or they could spin the ball the other way across the field.

It was a dependable play.

# KU rugby team ready for Spring postseason

By Keith Stroker

Kansas sports writer

For the first time in eight years, the KU rugby team will play in the Western Rugby Football Union tournament, April 16 and 17, in Las Cruces, N.M.

Kansas defeated Kansas State 9-6 last fall to advance to the tournament. The Wildcats had defeated Kansas every year since 1980, preventing the Jayhawks from reaching postseason play.

Kansas has been preparing for the tournament this spring by competing in weekend games. The Jayhawks collegiate team is 4-1, losing only to Kansas State's club side two weeks ago.

Kansas has three rugby teams: a club-side team, composed of college and graduate students with a lot of rugby experience; a collegiate-side team, with just college students; and a reserve-side team, composed of first-year players.

On Sunday, the Kansas collegiate-side team defeated Topeka's club side, 24-0. Jayhawks coach Louie Riederer said the game was a good one for tournament preparation.

"I think the college match went

really well, especially considering we played their club team," Riederer said. "The forwards did a very good job, and they scored a lot, which doesn't happen often in a rugby game."

In other games, the Kansas reserve team lost twice, 12-10 to Washburn and 34-0 to the Kansas City Blues, and the Kansas club team defeated Oklahoma's club team, 34-8.

Eight teams will compete in each of four regional tournaments, and the winners will meet in rugby's final four, April 30 and May 1, in Monterey, Calif. Kansas is in the Western Regional, and the other three regionals are the Pacific Coast, the East, and the Midwest.

The Jayhawks are the No. 3 seed in the West, and the Air Force Academy is No. 1 in that regional. Air Force won the national tournament two years ago but lost in the championship game to San Diego State last season. The Aztecs are the favorites to win again this season.

Kansas rugby player Pat Roberts said the team worked out five days a week, including running and a workout program.

Left -

Spring 1988 article from the UDK describing upcoming Western RFU playoff opportunity. If Jayhawks win; they go to the "final four".

Below -

Article from UDK published after the Jayhawks failed to advance past the Air Force Academy.

The Pat Roberts interview on the preceding pages adds some additional detail about the games.

At this point in the Jayhawks' history, these losses on the doorstep to the "final four" were usually about the **only losses** the Jayhawks college side suffered during an entire calendar year.

# Rugby team fails its bid for final four

By Keith Stroker

Kansas sportswriter

An edge of the crossbar was all that stood between the Kansas collegiate-side rugby team and a possible berth into rugby's final four.

Air Force defeated the Jayhawks 7-6 in the semifinals of the Western Union Rugby Regional Tournament at Las Cruces, N.M., Saturday.

Paul King, St. Louis senior, attempted a 40-meter penalty kick into a stiff, swirling wind against Air Force with 5 minutes left in the game. The kick had plenty of distance and looked good, but the wind pushed it into the crossbar, and Kansas could not recover.

KU coach Bill Mills was proud of the team's effort and said that he was

happy that the team was able to compete with a team like Air Force.

"Our effort this weekend should help boost our confidence going into next season," he said. "It was a tremendous team effort."

Scott Stites, Dexter, Mo., senior, said that the loss was disappointing but not too frustrating considering the competition.

"It was probably the best rugby match we've ever played," Stites said. "We had many opportunities to win, but couldn't always capitalize. Air Force is a fine team, and I think we gained their respect."

Before the game, Air Force was overconfident and so were their fans. As the game wore on and Kansas remained competitive with the

national runners-up, the fans from the other schools showed their appreciation for the Jayhawks by cheering for them as the Air Force faithful grew restless.

To gain its semifinal berth, Kansas defeated New Mexico State 15-9 on a try by John Brooks with 1:30 left in the game. NMSU was favored by as many as 20 points, but that did not seem to bother the Jayhawks.

"New Mexico State was the second seed in the tourney and was a very fine team," Stites said. "Paul King played a fine game with 11 points and was the real leader out there for us in the game."

Air Force defeated South Dakota State in the opening round before its game with Kansas. The Falcons went

on to win the regional championship against Colorado, 27-12.

The field conditions were despite a diverse range of wet patterns. Stites said that it rained and was windy and sun at different times during the week.

Kansas was honored by the tournament committee, which chose Kansas members for the 15-member All-Tournament team, more any other team.

Those Kansas players honored were Jim Loarie, Chicago senior loosehead prop; Stites at loose prop; King at fly half and full; Kevin Harder, Lenexa senior; and former Kansas football player in his first rugby season.

# KU rugby team plays Air Force

By Terry Bauroth  
Kansan staff writer

Air Force rugby players may outweigh the Kansas varsity in pounds but not in technique.

And Kansas' Scott Stites hopes technique will be the decisive factor in this tomorrow's season opener against Air Force at Shenk Complex, 23rd and Iowa streets.

"Air Force is a muscled-up team, but we're just as strong on technique," Stites said. "They outweigh us 30 to 35 pounds a player."

Kansas lost the Western Territorial championship game last year to Air Force, 7-6. Despite losing the game in the final minutes, Stites said Kansas outperformed the academy in the second half.

Pat Roberts, team captain, said Air Force was in good shape and would be a tough match, but Kansas had the advantage of being a veteran squad. However, not all the weekend games would be played with all of Kansas' veterans.

Coach Rick Renfro said returning players would make a strong backline, but the loss of four players would hurt the Jayhawks' scrum.

Scrumming is a way of restarting play, he said, and could be compared

to the offensive or defensive line play in football.

Renfro said the team was out of shape and it would be four to five weeks before it would reach its peak.

"This year's goal is to develop as individual rugby players so everyone reaches full potential at their position," Renfro said. "We're willing to sacrifice victories to improve players for next season."

Next season for rugby players isn't too far away. They play a split season with the current season ending in mid-November and next season beginning in February.

Kansas has two rugby teams: a varsity team composed of college students and a club-side team composed of college and graduate students with rugby experience.

This year's varsity team will be comprised of about 20 veteran players and 25 new players.

About 15 to 20 veterans will play on the club-side team. Renfro said All-American Paul King, Pat Roberts, Mike Hammond and Scott Stites would be the Jayhawks' key players.

The club-side team starts its season Sunday in a game against the Chicago Blaze, who Renfro said was a top flight team.

The Jayhawks had a re-match with Air Force in Lawrence in the fall of 1988.

Here is the UDK article about KU's expectations.

Per Pat Roberts' interview, Pat overheard the Air Force players make a derogatory comment that the KU side looked like it lacked any athletes. It was a comment Pat fed to his teammates before the match.

rts

# Rugby team has revenge; dominates Air Force 18-4

By Arvin Donley  
Kansan sportswriter

It was sweet revenge for the Kansas varsity rugby squad, which opened its season by defeating Air Force 18-4 Saturday at Shenk Complex in Lawrence.

The Jayhawks were denied a final four appearance last season when Air Force took a 7-6 decision in the finals of the Western Territorial Championship.

For Jayhawks All-American Paul King, Saturday's victory was especially enjoyable.

"It was great," King said. "Last year I missed a drop-kick that hit the goal post and would've won the game. I made two in this game, which was a little sweet revenge."

King led Kansas in scoring with 10 points, while Jeff Hoobler and Jeff Paxton added four points each.

Jayhawks captain Pat Roberts said he was pleased with the team's performance and thought the key to victory was the play of the backline.

"Our backline played really incredible," Roberts said. "We were going against a strong wind in the first half and stayed tied at 4-4. We played downhill with the wind in the second half and that's when Paul King really helped us. He's got one of the best foots in the nation. He kept us in their end of the field most of the game and we really capitalized on

'It was great. Last year I missed a drop-kick that hit the goal post and would've won the game. I made two in this game, which was a little sweet revenge.'

— Paul King  
Rugby player

Both King and Roberts said they had expected Air Force to be more competitive.

"We were expecting a real battle," King said. "It was a tough game, but they didn't show us as much as I thought they would."

Encouraged by the performance against Air Force, Roberts said that he expected a good year.

"We've started the season with a full head of steam. The schedule is tough, but I don't expect to lose a game," Roberts said. "I think if we have a shot at the final four, this is the year."

This weekend, the Jayhawk varsity will play in the Kaw Valley Cup in Topeka. Eight teams, including Kansas State, will compete in the round-robin tournament.

Roberts said the tournament would be used to give Kansas' less-experienced players more playing time, which would benefit the Jayhawks

later in the season.

"We won't be so worried with winning it, as with getting our less experienced players more playing time, which will help our depth," Roberts said.

The Kansas club side team opened its season Sunday by defeating the Chicago Blaze 7-4.

The Jayhawks jumped to a 7-0 lead at the half and despite a strong wind that was blowing in their face, held the Blaze to only four points in the second-half.

"We had a lot of heart and defense the last 30 minutes," club captain Don Harris said. "In a wind like this, it's hard to protect a seven to nil margin, but we managed to hang on."

Harris said that he expected the team to be more competitive this season because of increased emphasis on the team.

"Last year our club was kind of second fiddle," Harris said. "This year we're taking somewhat of a different attitude toward the club team. We have a real opportunity to win more games and a couple of tournaments this fall."

The club will play the St. Louis Falcons at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at Shenk Complex, 23rd and Iowa streets.

"We haven't lost to the Falcons in the last eight games. We don't anticipate having any problems," Harris

The headline says it all.

## Interview with Don “Duck” Harris Club Side Captain 1984 & 85 & Kernow Cup Award Winner The Jayhawks’ Junk Yard Dog



Duck was interviewed in early June 2013 at his Kansas City office. He is a regional executive with the construction supply company, Rew Materials and has worked there for 30 years.

The 6’2” and 215 lbs flanker started playing rugby while going to Kansas State in 1976. He was initially a 2<sup>nd</sup> row. The K-State team was very good at the time and that was the only position where he could crack into the starting line up. His counterpart 2<sup>nd</sup> row was 4 inches taller and 70 lbs heavier. He eventually migrated to flanker and played that position and # 8 the remainder of his career.

Harris said K-State’s college side was very good at the time. The highlight was in the spring of 1981, when K-State went to the college rugby “Final Four” and represented the Western Rugby Football Union. They played the previous year’s national champions, the Cal Berkely Golden Bears in a hard-fought match, losing 27-15. Cal Berkeley went on to repeat as the National Champions in 1981.

Former KU player-coach **Allen Chap-**

**man** had moved to a teaching position at K-State and had been one of Harris’ coaches. Although working for K-State and helping coach that team, Chapman encouraged Harris to go on the Jayhawks’ 1981 tour of England Wales & France. That tour had a very talented side of players. Chapman unapologetically disliked the French and was delighted that the tour swept the trio of matches played against the French. Harris got caught up with the excitement of playing on the Jayhawk club side.

Harris graduated from K-State with a masters in December 1981 and had planned to go on to study at Nebraska and get a PhD. Instead, he blew off the PhD idea and moved to Lawrence to play rugby in the spring of 1982. Harris had been presented with a lot of rugby options for his life after K-State. He had been getting recruited by the KC Blues, Des Moines Rugby Club, clubs in Denver and clubs in California. The Jayhawks pitch to him was that he helped take K-State to the college “Final Four”; so now he could help take the Jayhawks to the club side “Final Four”.

Harris (with his masters) chuckled as he said he ended up working at Johnny’s and also worked with **Louie Riederer** at his “College Lawn Service” company. “I had a lot of cash at night and would be broke the next morning.”

In 1983 he planned on going on the Jayhawks’ New Zealand Tour. The tour cost (excluding pocket money) was \$1,995 and Harris didn’t have it. **Wint Winter** loaned him the \$2,000 to go. At the same time, the sales rep from Rew Materials from Topeka was a customer in Johnny’s. He convinced Harris to come to work at Rew. So Harris worked for Rew for about 7 weeks and was able to re-pay Winter his \$2,000 and go on the

tour. Harris has been working for Rew ever since.

**Harris recalls that the Jayhawks’ club side was ranked in top 10 nationally from 1982-87.**

**Why was that era of the club so good?**

There was a nucleus of 10-12 talented guys who were willing to put their lives on “hold” and played together for a decade or more. They were supplemented by talented players from the college side and foreign players that cycled through. As the 1980’s came to a close, a number of this group started to retire or move away. That included 2<sup>nd</sup> row, **Paul Diedrich**, inside center **Bill Boyle**, and loose head prop **David Hay**. **Jimmy Bartle** and **Louie Riederer** were probably the last of the group to continue on.

**What was the “secret sauce” that encouraged those cohorts to stay and play through the 1980s?**

There was all the momentum coming out of the 1970’s. **Allen Chapman** had started the international tours and a lot of people had bought into the thought of making Lawrence a “Rugby Mecca”. That included **Rick Renfro**, **Doug Hassig**, and **Roger Walter**. They were carryover players from the 1970’s that got the cohort group going.

**Why didn’t the tradition of a large number of long-term cohorts continue with later groups of players?**

Harris speculated that they were such a fixture as a group, that they didn’t really push a succession plan for themselves. **Allen Chapman’s** death in the early 1990’s may have also contributed. Even though he was then working at a university in Ohio, Chapman stayed involved with the Jayhawks and was infectiously

enthusiastic about rugby in Lawrence. His passing removed an important cheerleader.

**That big group of 1980's cohorts remain key members of Louie Riederer's Golf Tours.**

The guys remain a tight group and go on annual golf trips. The first golf trip may have been Harris' bachelor party trip to Las Vegas in 1989. About 15 guys went on that, even though some did not play golf. Since then **Louie Riederer** coordinates the golf trips every winter. The guys always include it in their schedule without question. So it's not a matter of starting a golf trip tradition. The guys went on the trips while active in rugby and have continued it to this day. Harris thinks that the guys who played after him are now starting to get into the annual golf trip and get-togethers. "Its just one of those things that sort of happens."

**You had a reputation as an enforcer.**

"I played hard. I probably don't look at myself the same way as the people I played against did. We always tried to take care of our own on the field. When you are one of the biggest guys on the team; you have to do some things that might be defined as being "the enforcer".

**Paul Diedrich told me that you both wore headbands to protect your ears. He made it a point to have a different color headband from you, so that the other team would not confuse you two at the bottom of a ruck.**

Harris laughed and said that probably happened to Paul more than a few times.

**Tell me about who the other players were among those 1980's cohorts:**

**David Hay and Louie Riederer** on front row. A changing bunch of hookers played between them and there were other props that rotated through. **Paul Diedrich** played 2<sup>nd</sup> row. His counterpart was sometimes **Doug McCauley** or college players such as **Lou Blanco** or **Pat Roberts**. The flankers were **Larry Krisman** (previously from K-State), **Rick Renfro** and Harris played either #8 or the other flanker. **Randy Renfro**

could play a number of positions at hooker, flanker or wing. There were a number of foreign players, **Richard Brookie**. In the backfield, **Jim Bartle** or **Al Tebbins** at scrumhalf, **Dominic Barnao** or **Jim Bartle** played flyhalf, **Bill Boyle** was inside center, **Roger Walter** was outside center. Wings and fullback were an assortment of college guys like **Pete Knudsen & Kenny Dunn**.

**What was your memory of "best game"?**

He doesn't really have one. He recalls that first tour in 1981 where he played flanker on the first team in every match. They were playing a night game against Bath in England, under lights. It was a briskly chilly night. Bath had a young wing and Harris tackled him from behind as he ran down the sidelines. The crowd reacted to that hit. He enjoyed the games in New Zealand in 1983 and in Argentina in 1985. He enjoyed the series of games against the KC Blues and games played in Aspen.

**"Chuck, you can take the wind and the hill and we will still kick your ass"**

The Jayhawks were playing the KC Blues at home on the field north of the regular field at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Iowa. The field has a slope to the south and the wind was howling out of the north at close to 30 mph. The game ended in a tie. The Blues lost the coin flip and their captain **Chuck McKeon** started ranting about it being unfair... He was going to pull his team of the field. Harris got caught up in the moment and told Chuck that they could have it all and the Jayhawks would still beat them. The Jayhawks had beaten the Blues in a string of prior matches and Harris figured that on their home field, they would find a way to beat them again. Harris' teammates couldn't believe he had done it. It was huge tactical error. They entire overtime was played within the Jayhawk's 22 meter line and much of that was 5 yard scrums on the Jayhawk goal line. The Blues had a big Samoan at # 8. Harris and crew wore themselves out tackling him over and over. The Blues finally scored and won. The line stuck to Harris for years.

**Last Game?**

It was an alumni game at Westwick. Harris' wife was working so he had his 1 year old and 4 year old child with him. He played and ended up knocking heads with somebody and having to go to the hospital to get a gash in his forehead stitched up. His children were horrified. Harris thinks it was Mother's Day weekend. On Monday he came to work with a bandage on his head and black eyes. His boss gave him a double take and silently turned his back on him and walked down the hall to his office. Harris thought things through; he almost lost his marriage and his job in one weekend. He never played again.

**A Wint Winter story.**

It was Harris' first practice as a Jayhawk in Lawrence. Winter knew Harris at K-State and was also on the foreign tour with him. Harris had just come from K-State's Final Four team. He thought he was pretty hot stuff. The first team was practicing kick offs. Winter was on the opposing, "practice squad". The ball came to Harris and he called out "Mine!" and caught it. Most players were just half-stepping the drill, but Winter came charging down field and absolutely leveled Harris. Winter got up and said to him **"Every man a Wildcat!...Welcome to KU!"**

**Reflections on playing at KU?**

"It's the best decision I ever made. I never regret passing up pursuing my PhD at Nebraska. It's not even in my rear view mirror. I have been working for this company 30 years and married 24 years. If I hadn't made the decision to play in Lawrence, all of this may not have happened. I made the Western Territorial rep team for 6 or 7 years, which put me the pool to be considered an Eagle. **The whole thing was a great experience.**"

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## Memoriam – Lost Players

In the past few of months, the club lost two alumni, **Wint Winter Sr.** and **Mike Pedrotti**. Both were as likeable guys as you would ever meet.

Wint started playing when his son Wint Jr. joined the club in the mid 1970's. (See [AP newspaper article](#).) When Wint Sr. showed up at practice, the rest of us assumed he was doing some father-son bonding for a day, but Wint Sr. hung around to play for the next 30 years. Over that time he befriended hundreds of Jayhawk rugby players. He loved the game and was a huge asset to the club off the field as they incorporated and bought a field.

**Mike Pedrotti** played for the club after quitting the football team in the late 1980's. **Pat Roberts** noted that Mike treated everyone like they were his best friend. After leaving Lawrence, Mike played for several more years in North Carolina.

One of my motivations for writing this newsletter was the realization that players are passing away and their stories will be lost to time. This newsletter is something of a time capsule. Before I decided to start this project in 2011, I knew that 5 of my teammates were already gone from just my 3 years of playing for the club. Since they will not be coming to the 50 year reunion in 2014, let me tell you a short bit about each of these 5.



**Mike Wiley** - A lanky 6'5" 2<sup>nd</sup> row and # 8 that played in the 1968-72 era. He had blue eyes the size of alarm clocks that radiated competitive intensity. He was a fixture at Robinson Gym playing volleyball. He was a competitive distance runner all of his adult life. One time he lived in a big camping

trailer that he parked next to the 103 Club for a few months. We ran a hose and extension cord out to him for utilities. I remember going out on the drive-

way in the mornings with a couple of cups of coffee and shooting the breeze with him. After college, Mike returned to El Dorado and was a building contractor, building houses and light commercial buildings. In the 1980's he got out of his car as a Good Samaritan to help someone and was struck & killed by traffic.



**Jon Mellon** – The 6' 200 lbs player started out trying to be a walk-on football player at KU. He migrated to the rugby club in 1973. He was in the SAE fraternity and from there recruited a whole string of fine players including **Steve Francisconi** and **Craig Ol-**

**iphant**. Mellon played tighthead prop for a couple of years and was also able to play a good game at scrum half. He was a member of the initial KU tour of England in 1977. After he graduated, he moved to Wichita to be a pharmacist and helped start a new rugby club called Old Yeller that later became the Barbarians. Then around 1980, Jon was diagnosed with MS. It got progressively worse and it finally took him in the late 1990's.



**Larry Beyers** – The 6' 1" 200 lbs player was recruited during enrollment in 1974. I think he was an Army officer getting his masters in military history. Since he was an older guy,

green, and not very big, he ended up being a 2<sup>nd</sup> row on the "B Team". However, he and his wife Barbara were probably the most enthusiastic club members you could ever hope for. He offered some good advice about rotating players in the 1974 HoA, which I ignore and then regretted. In retrospect, we should

## Winters give rugby a try

KANSAS CITY (AP) — The state senator from Kansas braced as a half dozen young men in striped uniforms thundered downfield and knocked him to the ground, hard.

A man 23 years his junior helped him to his feet.

"You all right, Dad?" They grinned and, panting for breath, rushed back to the action.

Rugby is a fast, rough sport, and a family affair for state Sen. Wint Winter, R-Ottawa, and Wint Winter Jr.

The Winters began playing this year for the University of Kansas "B" team, and Saturday the KU squad took on the Kansas City Blues in a Heart of America Rugby Union match.

Nancy Winter, wife and mother of the pair, stood on the sidelines yelling encouragement.

The Winters, no strangers to athletics, both played center for the University of Kansas football team. Wint senior in the early '50s and Wint junior last year.

Wint Senior, 44, knew as much about rugby as most Americans—practically nothing—when he saw his first game last year.

"The next week," recalled Nancy, "He was out practicing with the team. I knew it would just be a matter of time."

Time came this fall when father and son joined the KU squad and quickly discovered they had some things to learn.

In their first game an opposing player dropped the ball at Wint Junior's feet and the former footballer pounced on it and held tight.

"People started pounding on



Wint Winter Jr.

me and I kept waiting for a whistle to blow the play dead so they'd stop beating on me. After a couple of minutes I remembered that in rugby you don't just hold on to the ball like in football," he said.

"I was really sore after that game."

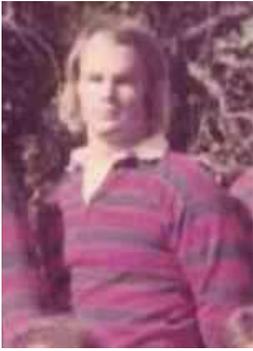
Neither father nor son has suffered any thing worse than cuts and bruises, although injuries in rugby are not uncommon.

Rugby is played by 15-man teams trying to move a ball across the opponent's goal line. Wint Senior, the oldest member of his team, says rugby demands the same aggressiveness, teamwork and stamina as football. But there are differences. Rugby players wear no padding or helmets, and in rugby you tackle, kick and pass, but don't block.

"I'd feel better about it if they wore pads," said Nancy.

have lassoed Larry into the club's management. He finally got a start on the "A team" during a tournament in New Orleans in 1975. Larry won that game, breaking tackles and doing a head-first sliding try in the wet grass. He did the Zulu Warrior down the aisle of the bus on the way back to the hotel. In the bar later he confided that the highlight of the day wasn't the try or winning the game; it was finally playing on the first side. Larry went on to live in Washington DC and continued to play rugby. I was sorry to read in the KU Alumni Magazine that Larry passed away around 1990.

**Nick Niewald** - The 5'11" and 205 lbs outside center played in the 1968-72 era and is [generally considered one of the](#)



best backs to ever play at KU. Off the field he had an annoying habit of slugging you hard in the chest when he said hello. On the field, he was fast and tough as a boot. He literally ran right through people like they were blow up

dolls. Even if a spectator had no idea how the game of rugby was played; they would comment on Nick after the game and say “Who the Hell was THAT guy??!!” He had a huge motor, consistently making terrific offensive and defensive plays. After he graduated from KU, he worked in banking in Kansas City and played for KCRFC. He then returned to his hometown of Beloit, KS. He and his wife of 30 years had 10 children. A few years ago, he was swept away at 56 by fast moving cancer. [At his insistence; he was buried in his KU rugby jersey.](#)

You are invited to send in your own stories about deceased players. We'll print them in future editions.

I'll wrap this up the best way I know how and that's with **Pat Roberts** telling a couple of his “Wint stories”.

**Wint Winter** – The very first rugby game I played in was a Sunday game against the Ft. Leavenworth officer's club. It was the Jayhawks' senior reserve side's game. The entire club side came along to watch. The whole way up there, the guys were drinking beer. It was just going to be a fun road-trip game. So we are getting ready to play the game. It was all confusing, like the first game you ever play. **Paul Diedrich** taped my ears with electrical tape and taped them way too tight. It was hot day and I was tugging on the tape to loosen it up. The game starts and all I have to offer in the game is tackling hard, so I am running around and creaming guys. I look up and realize that **Wint** had gone up there with his kit bag and volunteered to play for the Ft. Leavenworth club. This is 1984, so Wint is probably then in his 50's. As I was angling across the field I realize I am going to be the one who will probably have to tackle him. So I start easing up, because I don't want to hurt an old guy. As I got close to him, I started to change direction so I could kind of get him from the side and give him a soft tackle. As I moved the side, **Wint** changed direction to come straight at me. I moved the other way and Wint shifted to come at me again. He knees were up and you know how tackling Wint; he would hurt you with an elbow? So at the last second, I ended up doing exactly what I didn't want to do and dove into his ankles. I did it to protect myself. He patted me on the butt as he got up. I was thinking “Holy Cow, these guys play like that in their 50's!”

killed. He shouldn't be playing!” Rick had a really un-typical reaction; he got pissed. He grabbed my by the jersey and got in my face. He looked right at me and said “F###king Roberts! If Wint wants to play f###king rugby, he's going to play f###king rugby!!! If he dies on the field, that's the best way he could go!!!”.

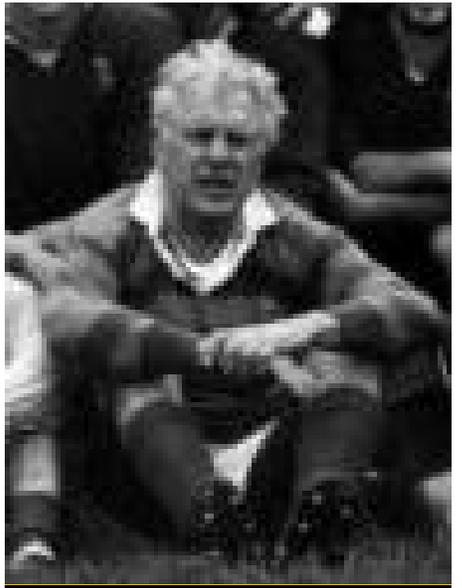
So Wint starts in the game. It's the worst start you could script. The kick off goes to the last guy you wanted to get it; a big blond 2<sup>nd</sup> row named Jordan. He catches the ball and breaks two tackles from some great flankers. He stiff arms one and breaks the second guy's tackle. So the next guy to try to tackle him is Wint. I am thinking “Oh No!!!” Jordan's running with his knees high and Wint goes down and sticks his head right into Jordan's legs. Jordan had enough momentum that he drove Wint backwards into a somersault and as Jordan was going down, was able to pass the ball to the guy next to him, who was my guy. So I tackle that guy. There was a quick ruck and the ball went out, leaving Wint and me laying next to each other. Wint was laying flat on his back with his hands to his side, not moving. I looked at him and thought “Wint is dead...I knew it!!!” Then Wint starts rocking his head from side to side and slowly rolled over onto his hands and knees, gets up on his feet and starts that lumbering trot across the field. As far as I know, he finished the game. \*\*\*\*



Late 1970's Alumni Game  
 Standing L-R: Dan Bedora, **BOBBY FRIEDMANN**, Steve Lange, Bill Boyle, and Bill “Beezo” Byers. On knee L-R: Ted McGrade, John Brown, and Paul Diedrich

**Roberto “Bobby” Friedmann** - He grew up in Uruguay and started playing scrum half for KU while an undergrad student in 1973. In my newsletter about the 1973-75 era, I made a point of describing the important games that Bobby won for us with his kicking skills. Bobby went on to be a college professor at the University of Georgia. Much as Nick Niewald, Bobby was swept away a few years ago.

**I think the last game Wint ever played** was an Alumni Game around 2004 when Wint would have been in his 70's. The college team was full of big, tough kids. I knew the game would be a war, at least for the first 30 minutes. I looked over and Wint was putting on his gear. **Rick Renfro** came walking by me and I said “Rick, come here...Wint wants to play?” Rick says “So???” I said “He could get



Wint Winter Sr. sitting with his club

# Rugby Shorts



## Sons of Jayhawks Are High School Players

Jayhawk rugby alumni, Matt O'Donnell is now a high school rugby coach of the Blue Valley Rugby Club (suburban Kansas City area). Matt forwarded this photo and said:

I am forwarding to you a picture of me with (4) of my Blue Valley Rugby Club players . I had this picture taken because I played rugby with all of their dads while at KU ... the exception being the player to the far left ... his dad and I played for the St. Louis Ramblers . The players, L-R: Gavin Kirk (Tom Kirk - KJRFC 83-87 ) ; Ian Roberts (Pat Roberts - KJRFC 83-87 ) ; Boyd Brooks ( John Brooks - 83-87 ) .

## Westwick facility hosts Kansas High School Rugby State Championship

The Kansas State Championship Tournament was played at Westwick on Saturday, May 11, 2013. St. Thomas Aquinas HS became the state champs.

6 teams entered; all played two matches. From that, only St. Thomas Aquinas won both. The others split or lost both. Therefore the pairings had no pool play or single or double elimination significance.

### First Round:

- St. Thomas Aquinas (W) - Shawnee Mission East
- Blue Valley (W) - Shawnee Mission NW
- Wichita (W) - Liberty

### Second Round:

- Shawnee Mission NW (W) - Wichita
- Shawnee Mission East (W) - Liberty
- St. Thomas Aquinas (W) - Blue Valley

### Results:

- St. Thomas Aquinas (2 wins)
- Blue Valley (split)
- Shawnee Mission Northwest (split)
- Shawnee Mission East (split)
- Wichita (split)
- Liberty (2 losses)

The Westwick facility's multiple pitches were perfect for this event. Hopefully all the players were impressed and will seriously consider KU for college **AND** continue their playing careers.



Has this newsletter already jumped over your era, but **NOT** included a good story about when you played?

This "Rugby Shorts" section is where we go back and cover those missed stories. Please send your scanned photos and stories.

In addition, there are a number of talented past players (and writers) who we have contacted and still await something from you...

# Fall College Recruiting Campaign Plans

## (Club needs financial support from alumni)

**Ruck Hard & Join the  
KU Rugby Team**

Contact:  
College Captain,  
Conor Taft 630-247-0061  
College President,  
Connor Rollins 847-380-0729

[www.kurugby.org](http://www.kurugby.org)  
[kansasrugby@gmail.com](mailto:kansasrugby@gmail.com)  
twitter: KURugby

Season runs  
August thru  
November

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Practice  
Tuesdays &  
Thursdays  
6:30-8:15

ATHLETES  
WANTED



ATHLETES WANTED FOR

# ELEGANT CHAOS

Practice Tuesdays & Thursdays 6:30-8:15  
Season runs August thru November

**CONTACT:** [www.kurugby.org](http://www.kurugby.org)  
[kansasrugby@gmail.com](mailto:kansasrugby@gmail.com)  
twitter: KURugby

Conor Taft - College Captain - 630-247-0061  
Connor Rollins - College Pres - 847-380-0729

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COME OUT TO  
PLAY KU RUGBY



On page 2 of this newsletter, we outlined that the club is going to beef up its use of social media like Facebook to make it easy for players, fans, and alumni to follow the club in real-time.

An essential part of the club’s operation is to attract a new crop of KU students into the college program. The best time to do this is at the start of the fall semester, when practice conditions are ideal.

The club’s new Publicity Director, **Rachel Ablan** has drafted an excellent overall publicity / recruiting campaign that will include generating stories in the university and Lawrence newspapers, recruiting tables on campus, and higher visibility for the Westwick facility.

A key component for the fall is to run ads in the University Daily Kansan. Above are two mock ups of the ads that we would like to run.

Rather than just one ad, we want to have a series of recruitment ads during the first 2-weeks of school, followed by awareness ads or front page “post it” stickers on Thursdays before home games.

Rachel also would like a supply of inexpensive tee shirts for give-aways at recruiting tables. The shirts would have the club logo on the breast on the front and “Play Rugby” in big print on the back. She notes students line up for free tee shirts and they wear them on campus.

**All this costs money.**

UDK ad campaign —	\$2,200
Tee Shirts —	<u>\$3,000 +/-</u>
	\$5,200

**We would like to have a fund drive among alumni to make all this happen over the next 30 days.**

**The 50th anniversary of the club will be a year from now and the college side should be in a robust condition when that happens. The time to get it geared up is NOW, so the new players get a year of experience in advance of the 50th anniversary year.**