

July, 2012

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.

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:

1973 -1975

Rebuilding the Club
K-State/Ft. Riley Saga

Ian Henry

Big 8 Champs

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(BY JACK KLINE)

Wow!

Notes on the Fall 2012 Season

By Rick Renfro - Coaching Coordinator

First I would like to say what a pleasure it is working with the team. Every year there are players that remind me of past players (**Scott McAvoy = Scotty Myers, Jack Vogt = Bill Boyle, Connor Rollins = Dave Hay, Connor Taft = Rich Millard, Dave Buteyn = Phil Olsen, Dane Kieser = Pat Roberts**) and what fun it is to see them progress as players and people. Very few get worse, most get better, and some get great.

The team as a whole is making great strides and playing a much more competitive game. **We preformed well in Aspen and twice against the KC Blues.** We won more than we lost over the year. We played very well in the USA Colligate Merit Table games on our first year back in D1. **We pounded K-State and Truman, beat OSU and OU and lost nar-**

rowly against MU & Arkansas U in games that we could have won. We played four B side matches giving some players a chance to play that may not have been able to. The highlights of the season were beating Truman and K-State so dominantly, having a GREAT match against Arkansas U, and **winning the 2012 St Louis Ruggerfest.** Yes you heard me right. We took 23 players (3 freshmen and 12 total college kids) and won four games very handily. We whipped up on Sunday Morning, Jefferson Co, and Minneapolis twice. We had some tremendous loose ball continuity in the final.

We won the 2012 St. Louis Ruggerfest.

Off the field we did a great job of paying off the Brazil debt

and taking care of our expenses as we prepare for a lot of traveling in the spring. The guys are hanging out together more and you can sense the team building going on. We are losing three graduating seniors that have contributed a lot to the program and we wish them luck in life. **Dan Smolic** is going home to Chicago and plans on playing with the Lions, **Chris Nugent** is living in KC and needs a job (finances), and **Scott McAvoy** is going to Australia for some rugby.

Lots to do this summer, Put together a Sevens Team, hope some of you got to watch the collegiate 7's final on NBC, I thought the games were very good.

We are preparing for our 2nd tour to South Africa in June 2013. Spots are still open,

but we are limiting it to 60 and I am sure we will fill up.

We are finishing up with the plans for the changing room/clubhouse and will start fundraising for that soon.

We are preparing for our 2nd tour to South Africa in June 2013. Spots are still open, but we are limiting it to 60 and I am sure we will fill up.

Lastly I would like to recommend a book that I really enjoyed. **Memoirs of a Rugby Playing Man** by Jay Atkinson. He is 56 years old and played in the 70's and 80's and it brought back a lot of memories from my playing days. It's not as good as **Jack Kline's** stuff, but is a good read. ****

Preparations for the Club's 50th Anniversary (2014)

By Jimmy Bartle

Clear your calendars and start planning to celebrate 50 years of KU Rugby!

A series of events will be held during September 2014 to commemorate the founding of the Club, which occurred on September 25, 1964.

We will begin with a road trip to the Aspen Ruggerfest

on September 17-21, 2014. Play in the old boys matches (45+, 50+, 55+), or just relax and enjoy this world-class resort while you reconnect with your buddies and relive the good old days.

After things wrap up in Colorado, we will reassemble in Lawrence on September 25-

28, 2014, for more festivities. We hope to coordinate a wide variety of events for KU ruggers from all eras.

There will be family-friendly activities suitable for WAGS (wives & girlfriends) and children.

Please join us for this once-in-a-lifetime extravaganza!

Direct all communications regarding the Golden Jubilee to westwick@sunflower.com

Keep up the good work and feel free to contact me.

Watch the 1966 Jayhawks

John LaRocca found an 8m film that has 5 minutes of a 1966 game, played behind Oliver Hall. We have it on the internet.

See last Quarter's Newsletter regarding the 1964-1967 era.



Go to www.youtube.com
Search: **kularoccarugby**

1968-1972

A regionally dominant club with rep quality players in an era before territorial unions, rep sides, or official union rankings.



Fall 1972 First Team

Standing Back Row L-R: Bill Mills (2nd Row/Prop), Jim Thurman (Scrum Half), Craig Parker (Fullback), “Crazy” Dave Moore (Center/Fly Half), Hal Edwards (Flanker/#8), Nick Niewald (Center), Jeff Joyce (Flanker), Don Price (Hooker), John Brown (2nd Row/Flanker)

Kneeling L-R: Luke Miller (2nd Row), Mike Wiley (#8/2nd Row), “Fast” John Miller (Wing), Dave Hazelett (Prop), Hank Winslow (Fly Half), Jim Dubois (Hooker)

Laying L-R: Tom McCormack (Wing), Dick Holloway (Center)

The above photo was controversial to some, because it did not include all the members of the club. However, the pictured group is almost entirely seniors, who were great players, and had been on the club for years. One of the realities of a college sport is that the participants graduate and must be replaced. The club lost a great deal of talent the next spring. This photo therefore represents the end of an era and is why this newsletter edition’s historical feature ends at 1972.

When most folks picture the culture of the 1960’s, it’s usually not the decade that began in 1960, but rather reflects the cultural elements at the end of the 1960’s and early 1970’s. Those were turbulent years that had a huge impact on the people who were then college age. **Their “normal” was not today’s “normal”.** Here are just a few items from this period:

- Long hot summers of race riots
- China’s H-Bomb
- Vietnam War & The Draft
- Tet Offensive
- President Johnson does not seek re-election
- Martin Luther King & Bobby Kennedy murdered
- Nixon elected President
- Cambodia
- War Protests
- Kent State students shot dead at anti-war rally
- Drugs
- Death of rock superstars Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Jim Morrison
- Popular anti-hero movies: “Bullitt”, “Easy Rider” and “A Clockwork Orange”

The players from the 1968-1972 era were as wild as their times and developed the club into a regional power. The club had great athletes like the earlier teams, but they had a much better understanding of the game. They had a very good player-coach from Scotland, named **Colin McMillan**.

The same players remained active on the club for a number of years, which created a dynasty.

Some of these players were among the best to ever play at KU. Four were interviewed here.

We are fortunate that one player from that era, **Jack Kline** is now a professional author and has graciously provided some stories for this edition.

The 1970 Aspen Invitational Ruggerfest or Snow White and the Fifteen Jayhawks

BY JACK KLINE (1968-1972)



Jayhawks (on right) from early part of 1970 Aspen finals against the Denver Barbarians

KU fowards (Front-Back): Greg Allen (Hooker), Dan Marting (2nd Row), Skip Quimby (2nd Row), Jack Kline (Flanker), Ray DiTirro (Prop), Mark “Mushy” Mullins (#8), Kim “Ewo” Ewonus (Flanker)

Photo by John Brown

In 1969 our Jayhawks created a stir in the Aspen Invitational Ruggerfest by besting several of the favored club sides before losing in the semis to the St. Louis Falcons. It had been the best finish of any university side to date. In 1970 we traveled to Aspen as one of the favorites. The '70 Invitational featured teams from as far east as Indianapolis and as far west as San Francisco.

As we left Lawrence on the 13 hour drive we learned that Aspen had gotten an early season snow that week. Four of us left Lawrence in my Mustang before dawn two days before the tournament, anxious for a day of acclimatization to Aspen's altitude and to its social accoutrements. At Leadville that afternoon we purchased some libation for the trip over treacherous Independence Pass. The pass fea-

tures steep inclines and long stretches with no shoulder, only granite walls and thousand foot drops. On the western side of the summit there are segments where the road narrows to one lane – scary. My passengers stoked with Coors-label bravery and I maintaining a driver's sobriety, we tackled the pass.

Everything went swimmingly

until we reached the summit and began to wind our way down the daunting western side. From the back seat **Mark Mullins**, our lock (#8) exclaimed “I gotta pee.” Well, gee Mark, with several cars behind us, no shoulder, only vertical granite walls to the right and an instant death drop to the left there was no way to stop. Suggestions from the group that Mark hold on for another forty minutes fell on

(Continued from page 4)

deaf ears, perhaps deafened by being too often stuck between second row hips. Finally, desperate for relief, Mark attempted – somewhat successfully – to pee into the tiny openings of two empty Coors cans. Mark gained a modicum of relief. Everyone, including Mark and the entire inside of my car were greeted with a warm, yellow shower. There was much laughter and mock anger. Before we reached Aspen a new nickname for Mr. Mullins was born – Thundercan.

Arriving a full day before the tournament allowed us ample time for merriment. There was a fine old western bar across the street from the main tournament pitch – the Red Lion, I believe it was called. Things got rather wild that night. I vaguely recall the Kansas City Rugby Club also arrived early in force. And I believe there was a fight that involved some of the KC lads (or more likely some Blues), but none of our peace loving Jayhawks participated.

The tournament began on a cool day with a chance of snow forecast for later in the weekend. The pitch was slightly muddy, but all of the previous week’s early snowfall had melted. Our Jayhawks featured strong, lightning fast backs and a smallish, quick scrum that could both run and deliver the ball to our backs. I don’t recall much about the early competition other than we had one scare the first day. By the semi-finals the center of the pitch was chewed up and muddy. The semis and finals were to be played on Sunday.

Dawn broke on Sunday accompanied by cottonmouths, hangovers and light snow. We won a low scoring semi in the mud. Following the match, Jayhawk girlfriends commandeered the battery of the Aspen Inn’s washers and dryers to launder uniforms. I remember the joy of getting out of that cold, clammy uniform and into a hot shower and I remember my first exposure to brandy – the spirit, not the attractive redhead. We learned that we would play the Denver Barbarians later

that afternoon.

By game time the snow had reached blizzard proportions. The match against the Barbarians was delayed while snow was shoveled and blown from sidelines, goal line, etc. Once the game began we quickly realized that our speed had been negated. The cold was numbing. The footing was non-existent – sloshey in the center and pondicyish near the sidelines. The Barbarians primarily used a kicking and field position game. Their scrum pushed ours around in set pieces (I recall a lot of wheeling) but we won most line-outs with **Skip Quimby** and **Ray DiTirro** as leapers. By halftime it was hard to tell one team’s uniforms from the other. The score stood 0 – 0. I recall that the short half-time only served to negate the warmth we felt from the constant sweat-creating, mud-snow slogging we had accomplished for 40 minutes. The snow and wind turned hot sweat into icewater.

It’s a shame that the only surviving photos (courtesy

of scrummy **John Brown**) are from early in the match. The photos show the extent of the snow, but not the eventual condition of the pitch or the players.

The Barbarians kicked a short penalty kick early in the second half for a 3 – 0 lead, which was impressive considering the cold, wet, leaden ball and the pitch’s horrific footing. That score held up. **It was the only time our Jayhawks were shut out in my four years with the club.** The snow raged on following the game which delayed our departure one day and allowed me further exposure to both brandy and Brandy.

Overnight, Independence Pass had been closed to traffic without snow chains. My Mustang had never worn chains and wasn’t happy about putting them on. The trip back over the dangerous, icy pass with Thundercan and the gang was another great adventure. But that’s a story for another time. Suffice it to say I didn’t get the last of the yellow spots out of my Mustang for nearly a year.



**Set Scrum
Aspen Finals 1970**

**Jayhawks
vs
Denver Barbarians**

**KU Scrum Half (on right) is
George “Shorty” Lawrence**

Photo by John Brown

Dan Marting "The Danimal"

Dan is the Federal Compliance Officer for the international engineering-construction company, Fluor and lives in Orange County, CA. He was interviewed while he and his younger brothers were on a bicycle vacation tour across Kentucky in May 2012. His brothers refer to Dan as "The Danimal" and its apparent why. Even as he enters his early 60's, Dan is an imposing figure and fit enough to ride an average of 65 miles a day for 4 days through Kentucky's rolling hills.



Marting in 2012 at Keenland Race Track, Lexington, KY

Dan played on the club the entire 4 years he went to KU, from the spring of 1968 to 1971. At 6' 2" – 205 lbs, Dan played 2nd row and was the club President at the end of his playing days.

Dan was recruited by **Phil Conner** who was the

club's prop and Dan's fellow fraternity brother at Phi Kappa Tau. After Dan & Phil started playing, another 6 or 7 of their fraternity brothers picked up the sport, including **Bob Coffin**. Dan said the club had two sides of players which allowed lively practices. **Pat Rapp** was still around from the earlier era of the club and was the coach when Dan started to play. Pat would drive in for practices from his job in Kansas City. Dan said that at first, they were taught how to sort of cheat while they played their position, but then the club started to play better and better rugby and all of that became unnecessary. Around 1970, he remembers a back from Scotland started to play named **Colin McMillan**, who was an excellent player/coach and built on what Rapp had taught them.

Asked what it was like to play on that team, Dan rattled off the names of his fellow forwards. (See names under the Aspen line-out picture in this edition of the newsletter.) **He said all of the forwards were VERY hard hitters.** He remembered the backfield featured three particularly talented guys in **Jim Thurman, Tom McCormack, and Shorty Lawrence.** Thurman was a center, McCormack a wing, and Lawrence was the scrum half.

As far as "big games", Dan of course remembers playing in Aspen every year. They went to Chicago to play in a tournament. He liked the parties when they played MU. He particularly liked playing a

game in the mud in Swope Park in Kansas City, but can't remember the opponent or outcome.

Marting's car ran out of gas as they topped Independence Pass after midnight.

They coasted all the way down the treacherous pass into Aspen in the middle of the night.

Aspen – No Stopping for Gas

In the fall of 1969, Dan, **Phil Conner** and two other players loaded into Dan's Dodge station wagon named the "Beige Pie Wagon" and drove to Aspen for the Ruggerfest. In those days you could only get to Aspen by driving over Independence Pass. They had driven all the way from Lawrence and were in the mountains after sunset. The car was running low on gas, but they pressed on towards Leadville, assuming that an open gas station would be encountered somewhere along the way. Of course they assumed wrong. They passed through a very dark Leadville after midnight and drove on thru the pass. As they started the downhill, the car sputtered dead. The players coasted the dead car all the way down the pass and into Aspen; rolling to a stop in a closed gas station. The guys sat there for an hour or two until the sun came up and the gas station crew arrived to refill the car.

Hammond – Losing Coulson

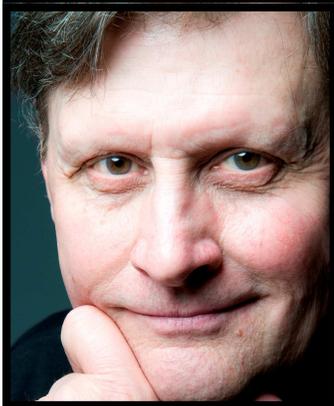
In the spring of 1971, the club entered the Mardi Gras Tournament in Hammond, LA (outside New Orleans). The players went to Bourbon Street the night before the tournament and quickly lost track of their fullback, **Phil Coulson**. They searched for awhile and then gave up and returned to Hammond on the other side of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway. KU was assigned to play the host, Hammond Rugby Club at 8:00 AM the next morning. As they warmed up, the KU team was short several players. Besides Coulson; the club also failed to bring a hooker on their squad.

Right before kickoff, a rented Lincoln Continental roared up driven by Coulson. (Everyone wondered if Coulson has stolen it during a wild night.) It turned out Coulson had run into a former KU player on Bourbon Street named **Jeff Lloyd**, who as luck would have it, was previously KU's hooker. Lloyd had graduated and was in the Navy. He just happened to be on Bourbon Street for Mardi Gras. The KU side played Hammond Rugby Club a close game, but lost by 3.

Marting's solid red jersey is framed on the wall of the clubhouse above Johnny's in Lawrence.

Dan still keeps in touch with **Phil Conner, Bob Coffin, and Bill Peterson**. He remembers the beers and songs from the rugby club. Playing for KU was one of the highlights of his life. ****

Kim "Ewo" Ewonus – Big Hitter/Bigger Personality



Ewo played rugby at KU from 1968 until the fall of 1971, initially as a center in his first season and then settled in as flanker. He was also the team's kicker which meant that during that span of years, he was the club's highest scorer. You could say Kim Ewonus had it all in his chromosomes. His father was a hockey player and oil driller. Kim followed along in his father's footsteps as far as playing hard and not backing down from challenging careers.

In 1966 he was 1st Team All-State middle linebacker on the Wichita Southeast football team. That landed him a football scholarship to Tulsa in 1967. He hurt his knee in the last game of his freshman season, which led him to transfer to KU the next year. His Sigma Chi fraternity brother, **Mac Crowther** recruited him to play rugby. He played center in the same backfield as **Crowther, Joe Groner, and Jay Clancy** (*All 3 were in their last season at KU. See last quarter's newsletter for more about them*). **Ewonus said that Jay Clancy was the finest wing he ever played with.** That is saying something, since Ewonus ended up playing rugby on a variety of clubs until the age of 40. That

long, multi-club playing career had him cross paths with several other Jayhawks from different eras. In the 1970's he was a player-coach on the University of Illinois rugby club, where he helped mentor KU's future scrum half, **Jimmy Bartle**. In 1980, he returned to his hometown of Wichita and played on Old Yeller with former KU forwards, **Steve Lange and Doug Gunn**.

Ewo said although he was in a fraternity, his best friends at KU were on the rugby club. **"The 1969-1970 team was a hell of a side. I think we only lost a couple of games over the course of a year."** They traveled to Chicago to play the marquee club, Chicago Lions, they entered the St. Louis Easter Ruggedfest, and they went to Aspen and played in the finals against the Denver Barbarians. He noted how close friends those guys were on the KU club. They came from all walks of life and were very different kinds of people. There were guys who were probably selling pot and straight-arrow guys who were ROTC. None of that made any difference.

Asked what game was the best at KU, he said there was a bunch that he really enjoyed. **The 1969 Aspen Tournament really put KU on the map as a rugby power.** He believes they played 5 games in Aspen that year; against some excellent clubs. He always liked playing against their Big 8 rivals, MU. He especially liked playing away games at MU, because they had two all-girl schools nearby and so it was easy to find someone

to come out and party. The Kansas City Blues were their main rivals. He liked playing against and partying with the Blues, like **Frank Mirikitani** and **Pat O'Neil**.

Going to Aspen

Regarding **Dan Marting's** all night adventure of coasting into Aspen in 1969; Ewo said most of the team stayed out virtually all night before that tournament. His carload including **Shorty Lawrence** stopped at the historic bar in Leadville, CO right before Independence Pass and drank until closing. They arrived late in Aspen and talked a motel into renting them 2 rooms, which ended up bedding 17 players. The team was at the field bleary-eyed the next morning and played their first match at 10:00. He said that behavior just wasn't that unusual for

them back then.

Coaching

Ewo said the club went to an even higher playing level in late 1969 or 1970 with the arrival of a player-coach from Scotland named **Colin McMillan**. Ewo said that up until that point they were good athletes, but still largely using football skills. McMillan taught them better fundamentals on how to play the game. For instance, **McMillan stressed holding off entering a ruck or maul until you had at least one other teammate to go in with you.** He wanted the ruck or maul to be hit with the weight of several people at once; to move the whole pile. The KU team would hit open rucks with 3 or 4 players at once. That paid off as KU forwards won just about all the balls in open field play and main-



Jack Kline & Kim Ewonus

Relaxing the day before the 1970 Aspen Ruggedfest

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Kim Ewonus

tained ball possession. **Another item coached was the way jumpers went after the ball in lineouts.** Most teams just jumped and tapped the ball to their scrumhalf. Much of the time that tapped ball would go to the wrong place and cause a breakdown in the possession of the ball. **McMillan stressed the lineout jumper come down with the ball, have the forwards bind around the jumper, and hold the ball until the scrumhalf called for it.** This resulted in better ball control and a better percentage of good movements through the backs. Ewonus said **“Although these seem like minor things; nobody we played against at the time was doing them and it made a huge difference.”** He said that they were so confident in their ability to get a ball from their opponent in open field play that the team used to give him the green light to kick for points virtually anytime they were at their opponent’s end of the field.

Career

Lessons from McMillan:

Always hit a ruck or maul with at least one other teammate; for momentum to blow the other team off the ball.

Lineout jumpers bring down the ball (never tap) and give it to scrumhalf when he asks for it.

Ewonus and his younger brother followed their father into the oil business. Their father died unexpectedly in the mid 1980’s and the Ewonus boys realized the business had been built on their father’s

50 year relationships. Those personal relationships did not easily transfer to other people in the rough and tumble world of oil drilling. Kim next pursued sports marketing, which moved him to Cleveland. He specialized in Eastern Europe. Between 1989 and 1995 he made 7 trips to USSR and later Russia. He was the exclusive registered agent to the Soviet Union and Russia to buy & sell thoroughbred race horses. He next started a company that did minor auto body repairs for auto dealers. He moved the business to upstate New York in 1999 and lived there until last year.

All along the way, Ewo fed his other passion which is acting. He played the lead at KU in “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” as the boisterous hooligan, Randle McMurphy. Those who know Ewo see the humor in this, since Ewonus’ own personality at that time closely mirrored that of the role. Over the years he has appeared in numerous plays and films.

Today he and his wife live in Wilmington, NC to be near their daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren. He still has his auto repair business for car dealers, and he umpires softballs games.

To earn a little extra money and feed his love of acting, Ewo conducts historic tours 3 days a week through historic Wilmington. Ewo puts on an 1880’s costume and drives an antique coach pulled by a team of Percherons. That’s somehow perfectly Ewo!

Tom McCormack “KU was my favorite team”



Tom was one of the best wings to ever play at KU and his career extended into rep side play for decades after graduating. Tom was interviewed from his home in Dallas, where he is HR Director of an international steel foundry that makes digging teeth for construction and mining equipment.

McCormack was a 1968 graduate of Paola High School where he was a running back on the football team. He was offered a scholarship at Air Force, but decided that may involve taking orders, so decided to go to KU instead. He was recruited to play rugby by his friend **Tex Robinson** in the spring of 1969. He came to a couple of practices and sat on his car. On the second day he was there,

the players asked if he was going to come out and play and Tom jumped at the chance.

Tom was 5’10” and 170 lbs. He had terrific speed, but what really set him apart was his ability to start, stop or change directions. The KU club put him at wing (maybe because as a football player he didn’t understand the concept of passing). He quickly was selected to be on the first side. **In his initial game as a starter, he scored 5 tries by half-time.** The captain of the team came over at halftime and told him he had to come out of the game. He couldn’t believe it and asked “why?” The captain told him it was because other guys needed to play. It was something that always stuck with him the

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Tom McCormack

rest of his career; that everyone gets to play; that we are here to have a good time.

KU's Playing Style

Colin McMillan was the player/coach around the same time McCormack started to play. Colin played flyhalf and was from Scotland. Colin encouraged the team to turn the ball back towards the forwards. They worked the ball in the forwards and then when the ball came out to the backs, they tried to have an overload. Colin set up plays that would have McCormack come into the backfield from his wing position behind a lineout to create a mismatch in the backfield.

McCormack said they had terrific forwards. The 2nd rows were enormous in **Bill Mills** and **Mike Wiley**. He remembered them both as being 6'5" tall. "In an era when you couldn't lift players in lineouts, most teams were lucky to have one tall guy who could jump and KU had two of them. **Dave Hazelett** was so big at prop that he would pull the scrum along behind him. **Hal Edwards** was a terrific exterior forward, playing flanker and number 8." (Edwards went on to be an Eagle in the following years as a number 8.) In the backfield, McCormack recalled the bruising power of center **Nick Niewald**. Although Tom has been very proud of his own speed, he noted the incredible speed of **John Miller**; his counterpart at wing.

1972 - "The Gentlemen of KU Rugby Club Will Entertain"

Tom was the club's president in 1972 and had a fund raiser party at the KU Student Union. They made a promotional poster with a black and white photo of a fellow wearing a gorilla costume, carrying off a naked girl. The party's theme was "**The Gentlemen of the KU Rugby Club Will Entertain...dance till you stink; drink till you puke**". The club bought a lot of kegs of beer and hired a 1950's revival band that entered the Student Union facility riding motorcycles. The paying crowd was small at first and the club thought the night was going to be a financial disaster; then the crowd surged in. The night was a huge success.

Tom's Car

"I had an SS 396 Malibu and KU used to give a gas budget to the rugby club. If you traveled to Aspen, the school would pay for your gas. It was the only guarantee. You were not assured of a place in a game, but your gas expenses would be covered." Coming back from Aspen one year with another couple, his car keys got lost in the snow. He had to call his father to get the key code to the car so a duplicate could be made. He then was so tired, he fell asleep in the back seat and let the other couple drive. He told them just to avoid flooring the powerful car. He woke up when the highway patrol pulled the car over. They had been driving at 110 mph. The patrolman had been chasing them for over 5 miles and ended up not writing them a ticket because he had not officially

been able to track their speed.

Favorite Games

Asked about "best game" at KU, he had several. There was an alumni game in 1977 where he showed up and the current KU players didn't know who he was. He came into the game and quickly scored 3 tries. There were the Aspen games in 1970, where he had to catch balls in a snow storm with huge snow flakes the size of silver dollars. The 1972 team played a very close game against Air Force in Aspen in the opening round. (Air Force went on to win the whole tournament that year.) He said the neat thing about KU is that they are a college team, but they have always been able to compete against the well-established city clubs.

Rugby & Life After KU

After graduating from KU, Tom played for the Houston Old Boys. Another former KU player, **Larry Krisman** played on that club. McCormack later moved to Dallas and played for the Dallas Harlequins with former KU player, **Greg Jarvis**. The Harlequins never played 7's, but **Tom organized a 7's team and advanced to the nationals**. He recalls the other guys from the Harlequins getting involved late and attempted to pressure him into playing a bunch of foreign guys who had not come to practice. Tom refused. He stuck with the guys who had put in the practice time. **Tom thinks he may be the oldest guy to score in a territorial 7's championship**. He was in his mid 40's. Tom played rep side for the Western RFU and later

became a selector for the Eagles 7's.

Even now in his 60's he is thinking of entering old boy tournaments to play 7's. He has always loved teaching players the game. **"Rugby was everything. It was great exercise, I enjoyed the social aspect. The players were my friends and had parties after the games and on weekends. It just provided me with my life."**

He has stayed in touch with the owners of **Johnny's Tavern** over the years and has come back to a number of alumni events. He has also interacted with **Louie Riederer** and **Rick Renfro** because of his selection duties on the territorial and national teams. He has remained friends with **Bill Mills** over the years, because he was from the rival high school town of Osawatomie.

Tom plans on returning to the 50-year reunion in 2014.

He has lost track of a lot of friends over the years who he would like to see again.

KU was his favorite team.

Hal Edwards – Marquee Player



Edwards had played some touch rugby in high school gym class, so he knew a little about the game, but this was different. He was in Aspen's Wagner Park, getting ready for his first REAL game. There was a deep crowd all the way around the pitch and the atmosphere was like a carnival. KU's **Jack Kline** took him aside and gave him a 5 minute primer on what to do in the game. Jack wrapped up the tutorial by telling Hal to "just follow me around and do

what I do".

First Rugby Game: Aspen Ruggerfest

Hal Edwards had been considering quitting the KU football team for a couple of months. Then on a Thursday afternoon in the fall of 1970, he ran into his fraternity brother, **Kim Ewonus** down at the Hawk. Ewonus had been encouraging him to try rugby and Ewonus said he was about to leave for the Aspen Ruggerfest. Ewo invited Hal to come along.

Hal and **Tex Robinson** followed Ewo, heading west and passed through a snow storm in western Kansas. A car was broken down at an interstate exit near the Colorado state line. They pulled over to see if the occupants needed help. It was a couple with a child. They were all wrapped in a blanket. **They invited the family into their warm car and no sooner was the family in the rugby players' car, when the father pulled out a pistol and demanded a ride.** The rugby players assured them that they would not have left the family at the side of the road anyway and talked the pistol back into the man's pocket. They dropped the family off in Denver and kept on to Aspen.

The game was in a sleet storm and the visibility was so poor that a ball kicked high would disappear. You almost had to wait for the ball to hit the field and react. Hal caught a kick and the first couple of opponents defended poorly bouncing off as Hal got away. The Wagner Park field has a gentle slope and Edwards was running downhill. "It was one of the longest runs I ever had in my entire rugby career. I was running down the left sideline and somebody hit me with an illegal tackle and dove into my feet. The tackle took nothing off my forward momentum. I cart wheeled onto my back and into the icy mud along the sidelines. I slid deep into the crowd for about a dozen yards. I was helped up in the middle of the wild sidelines crowd. One person had a joint in one hand and somebody else offered a bottle of wine as I reached my feet. I started thinking.....a week ago; I had football coaches screaming in my ear in practice.... I was hooked on rugby!"

Aspen

Asked what was the draw to go to Aspen, Hal said it was the

equivalent of going to Ft. Lauderdale or Brownsville for spring break. Guys and girls from the all Colorado schools would be there, so there was that party atmosphere. The rugby clubs would come in from the west coast, so you got to play the top teams in the country. The crowds on the sidelines would be 4 or 5 people deep all the way around the field, so you were definitely playing a sport that was above the intramural level. KU had some good crowds, but sometimes you played with only a handful of people on the sidelines. Aspen always had big crowds of spectators.

Prime Recruit

The 6'3" 220 lbs Edwards (his college rugby weight) was an accomplished athlete before he started playing rugby. In 1969 at high school in Kansas City, he was the Kansas state champion in discus and #3 in shot put. He was 1st team all state in football as a linebacker, center, and he could long snap. He was also a Parade Magazine All American high school football player. At KU, he played freshman ball in 1969 and freshmen were barred from playing varsity. The varsity football team's fortunes had shifted as the team went from a 9-1 season to 1-9 the following season. In 1970, the coaches were taking it out on the players. The campus was in an uproar over the Kent State shootings. Hal started having doubts if it was all worth it. When they told him he needed to sell his Triumph motorcycle; that was the final straw.

Playing Style & Other Players

Edwards recalled the arrival of **Colin McMillan**, who was a quiet leader. "When McMillan started playing with the club he didn't come out and try to take over; he just offered suggestions. He showed us how to play 10-man ball, although that probably wasn't what he called it then. He would have the ball

go out to just one or two backs and then take it back into the forwards. He was a great coach. McMillan was a phenomenal kicker. He constantly put us inside the opponent's 25 yard line. He played flyhalf and was the biggest game-changer, ever."

Hal said that the Jayhawk's rugby club was incredible. It could have been a nationally ranked team, but they only played a few good teams a year. **Dave Hazelett** was prototypical prop and was able to move. **Skip Quimby, Bill Mills, and Mike Wiley** were all great jumpers in an era when you really had to jump in line-outs. The backs were excellent in **Tom McCormack, John Miller, and Nick Niewald**. The talent was so good outside that they used to throw skip passes to get it outside quickly to the exterior backs. He recalled Pittsburg State's inaugural rugby game at KU. KU back **Jim Thurman** ran up to a ball laying on the ground and kicked it. The ball went through the Pittsburg uprights. The ref was stunned on what had happened until Edwards started cheering it as a field goal.

Life after KU

After KU, Edwards went on to play for the KCRFC and then the KC Blues. He played rep side ball and went all the way to becoming a member of the USA team, the Eagles, playing #8. He was also part of the initial Jayhawk rugby tour of England in 1977. Outside of rugby he has always been an entrepreneur, founding numerous restaurant/bars that are still part of the Kansas City scene such as Charlie Hooper's & Buzzard Beach (originally Happy Buzzard). He has also operated a number of large fitness clubs. He is currently putting a deal together for a sports training facility for kids 10-17 years olds.****

Iowa State @ KU — Fall 1972

Jayhawks in Crimson & Blue



We salute parents who show up to photo their child's athletics. If not for them, photos like this would not exist.

This is a game against Iowa State, played on the same day as the football teams met. The Iowa State band and cheerleaders were warming up in the open field next to the pitch and realized their rugby club was playing KU. The band came to the sidelines and fired up their school's fight song. The Jayhawks liked the tune, too and quickly scored a few times for the win.

The lineout rules were VERY different in 1972.

- You did not have to have a set spacing between players. You matched the other team's lineout length by bunching as many players as possible into the lineout.
- Jumpers had to jump under their own power.
- Only a 5 yard line on pitch.

Above L-R: Larry Carden, Bill Byers (ref), Hal Edwards, Jack Kline, Jeff Joyce, Luke Miller, Steve Lange, Rick Whitson, and Jim DuBois (partial).

(Whitson threw in if KU's ball. DuBois in gap to pursue if Iowa State's ball.)

Below L-R: Hal Edwards (fielding long throw in), Jim Thurman (scrumhalf) Jack Kline, Jeff Joyce, Luke Miller, Larry Carden, Steve Lange, and Jim DuBois.





Half Time L-R: Steve Lange, Jeff Joyce, Dave Gatchel (putting on jersey), Iowa State player negotiating substitutions, Jack Kline (4), Hal Edwards, Jim Thurman, Tom McCormack (headband) , unknown (partial face), Rick Whitson (facing away), CC Buck, and Jim Dubois.



**Iowa State Marching Band
&
Varsity Cheerleaders**



**Jack Kline "Takes 2 Minutes"
for injury**

L-R: Jim DuBois, Dave Gatchel, Larry Carden, Steve Lange, Jeff Joyce (bent over), Jack Kline (in pain), Hal Edwards, and Jim Thurman.

Rock Chalk Dead Dog – The Somewhat Definitive Version

Jack Kline 1968 – 1972 (1977 England Tour)

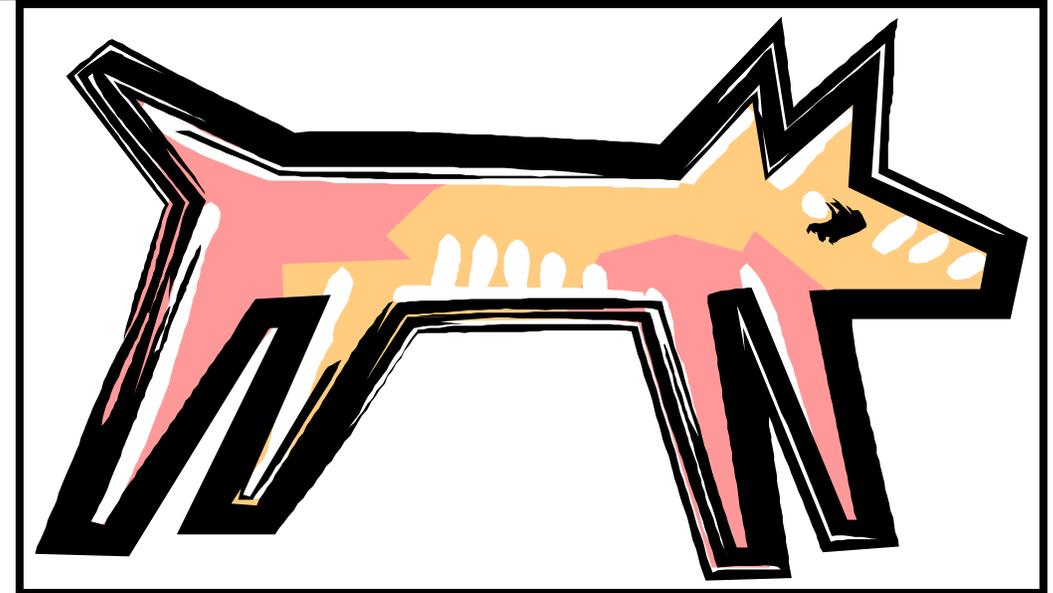
The Jayhawks traveled to Rolla for a Sunday match in the spring of 1970. One of the carloads of players – my carload – had an adventure which led to a pregame chant used by subsequent Jayhawks for nearly a decade. I think there are 47 old-timers who claim to have been in that car that day. Forty-three of them have some issues with senility. The four actual passengers that rumbled down to Rolla in **Tom McCormack's** near-new Malibu Super Sport 396 muscle car were:

The driver, **Tom McCormack** (wing – like his car, fast as the wind): **Rick Katz** (outside center – slightly slower than the wind): **George “Shorty” Lawrence** (scrum half – crafty, rugged and frizzy-haired): **Jack Kline** (wing forward/flanker – hard hitting, tough to bring down when carrying the ball and extremely handsome)

At first I felt concern riding in a car in which I was the only scrummie, for I knew that if we had a breakdown or ran out of gas (remember, no cell phones back then) I would have to push the carload of backs to the nearest town while our scrum half, Shorty, yelled out the window “push! push scrum!”

Someone, I suspect Rick, brought a 12-pack for the drive. As far as drinking and driving, 1970 was a different era, but I make no excuses for the foolishness of our youth. It seems that the beer tasted most peculiarly good that morning and we stopped in KC to replenish. Those too went down easily and once more we stopped, this time in Columbia. Spirits were high.

We turned south on 63, a two-lane highway. As often happens



when folks drink a lot of beer, the necessity to expel waste becomes a priority, as it did with us. On one particular occasion we pulled off on the scant shoulder and traipsed down into a ditch. As we expelled our liquid waste we spotted a border collie in repose. We discovered its repose was due primarily to the fact that it was dead. Our spirits being high, we campaigned to Tom to give the mutt a lift to Rolla. But Tom had a problem with dead animals riding in his new car. A closer examination revealed that although our new friend was stiff as plywood, he had not yet become fragrant. A compromise was struck and Tom allowed him to ride in the trunk. It was a lucky thing that those old cars had big trunks, for our new friend's legs stuck out as if he had been standing upright then just keeled over. And believe me, there was no bending his legs without a chain saw.

The five of us proceeded to Rolla with only one or two more potty breaks. En-route, we crafted a special pregame show. Because of our frequent stops, however, we arrived just

at game time, to the relief of our teammates. We quickly gathered our team on the sideline and coached them on their roles in our pregame extravaganza. At midfield we lined up as the referee examined cleats. Once that ritual was completed we four ran to Tom's car, gathered our friend and as **paw bearers** placed him at mid-field. Our team then circled the reclining beast, dropped to our knees and slowly kow-towed as we sang the familiar Rock Chalk chant – with the exception that we replaced “Jayhawk” with “dead dog,” and also the exception that we replaced the K in KU with a crass four letter word that rhymes with ruck. After the two sing-song kow-towed Rock Chalk repetitions we leapt to our feet and danced around our friend chanting the final verse.

Following the chant we trotted the dog off the field and propped him standing against the post and cable barrier that kept cars off the field so that he could view the match. I can humbly say that both the Rolla team and their fans were suitably impressed.

We were a very strong side back then, rarely losing a match, and we usually drubbed Rolla. Given the condition in which we arrived, and perhaps another Jayhawk carload or two, we were lucky to eke out a victory with a late try on a long run. I recall suffering a severely sprained ankle early in the second half and I watched the remainder of the match, beer in hand with my new canine friend. Anyway, that's how it all started. I don't know what became of the dog.



Jack Kline
(Who Actually Loves Dogs)