

April, 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.

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:

**1986 - 1990**

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## Did you play for the club between 1986 & 1990?

This newsletter needs your scanned photos and your personal stories.



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

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

# Notes on the half way mark of the Spring 2013 Season

## By Rick Renfro, Coaching Coordinator KJRFC

**Wow what a late winter!!!** We have been able to practice outside 10 times out of 20 and have played 2 of 5 games. Worst late winter/spring I have seen. Westwick was covered with 13 inches of snow for two weeks. We have had a lot of film sessions in the clubhouse at Johnny's. **Scott Adamson** (head coach) is a master at video technology. He has filmed the guys at practice and lets them watch before they do the next drill. He has the game tapes broken down into offensive and defense plays the day after the game and he has shown us extensive coaching tapes and international games. It has been very good.

It seems the players are getting a better grasp of the finer points of the game. Now I hope the weather

will get better for us so we can actually play.

**We go to The Saint Louis Ruggerfest April 6<sup>th</sup> to defend our championship from last year.**

**On April 20<sup>th</sup> we play two home games with the club side vs. Wichita and the college vs. CMSU. That will be a good weekend to watch if you are around.**

**The alumni game is May 4<sup>th</sup> with the golf tourney on Friday May 3<sup>rd</sup>. We are trying to schedule a competitive match for our club side that weekend**

**The June tour to South Africa is almost upon us. We are playing**

**four matches. One will be an opener for the Super 15 game at Ellis Park in Johannesburg. We are also playing the Nelspruit team that we played on the 1997 tour. We are staying at the South African Rugby Performance Camp for three days and will have 6 training sessions there. We will also see 2 Super 15's and 2 internationals. We are taking 26 players and 17 tourists. Time is running out but you could still climb aboard if you want to.**

Looking forward to seeing everyone in Lawrence whenever you can make it.

Rick Renfro Coaching Coordinator  
KJRFC

### KC Blues D1 team defeats Jayhawks 73-5

#### Paybacks are Hell - By Steve Lange

I guess its because I'm old. I remember playing against the Blues when half their roster names seemed like they came from the Dublin phone book.. This spring game was being played at Rockhurst University (sort of Irish) and the date was St. Patrick's Day weekend (Irish). As I drove to the game; I thought a Jayhawk win would be overcoming some **MAJOR** Irish voodoo. This would be one to tell the grandkids about.

It ended up being one to forget, however in fairness the story must be told. The Fall Newsletter crowed about a win over the Blues, so the re-match is likewise reported.

It was in the low 40's with a stiff wind blowing down field. The field itself was artificial turf, which is great for speedy play. The Blues had the wind in the first half and started scoring early. After their third score, there was a brawl for stomping in a ruck which led to the ejection of the Jayhawks' ace fullback **Sean Rothwell** and the Blues # 8. Both clubs played the remainder of the match with only 14 players.

The Jayhawks' lone try was near the end of the match and without Rothwell's toe; was not converted.

The lone bright spot of the game was that the Jayhawks held their own in all of the set scrums. The front rows fought their private little war of "hooks against the feed" which can lead to props in a losing game to chalk up a win.

It's still a great Jayhawks side. The snow needs to let up, so they can practice.

S\_\_\_ Happens.

## Rick Renfro & Doug Hassig – The Game Changers



Rick and Doug were interviewed in the original Johnny's Tavern the night before the start of the 2013 Big XII Basketball tournament. Rick was once a 6' 190 lbs flanker & #8. Doug was a 5'10" 180 lbs back who played center & wing.

### Whose idea was it to buy Johnny's Tavern?

Rick said he was a bartender at the Eagles Club in Lawrence. The owner of Johnny's was a regular customer. "I had been playing rugby for 3 years and I wasn't doing that well in school, but I wanted a way I could stay around town and continue to play rugby. The Johnny's owner kept bugging me to buy Johnny's and finally I decided I would try it for a year or two to see how it would go." Rick talked Doug into helping him with the plan.

### Where did the money come from?

The price was \$6,000 and Rick & Doug didn't have it. Rick asked his dad for help. His dad made them work up a business proforma to show how it would cash flow. In the end, Rick's dad co-signed on the notes. His dad gave him \$3,000 which they gave the former owner as a deposit and then they agreed to pay the owner monthly for the balance. They paid off the owner in about 18 months and then repaid Rick's dad after that.

Supposedly, they were buying all furniture and the beer/food inventory. The morning after the deal closed, the boys came to the place and nearly every stick of furniture was gone and there were only a couple of cases of beer left. They called the owner who said the employees must have thrown a party on the last night and the stuff all disappeared.

Rick and Doug had to run to the liquor store to buy enough beer to open the first day.

### What were the early years like?

We hired two of the prior employees, who were retirement age, **Edith and Goody**. Goody was a fat little retired rail road man who didn't take grief from anybody. Later we hired a couple of town girls and that started changing the customers. The rugby guys started coming down, then the college kids started coming in.

Rick said he thought he was a real stud. He was captain of the rugby club, but he still had a number of evenings when the place first opened where he was uneasy. North Lawrence is the rough side of town. Doug (who was no slouch as the place's bouncer) offered he was also nervous coming to work quite a few times. The place had been a local town bar. Over time, they made the customer base a better mix of locals, college kids, and business people.

Doug said "We had a grill that was 32 inches wide. One of us would load that grill up with as many burgers as it would hold and the other one would run around and wait tables. We finally got a fryer that we stuck back there." They were open

from 7:00 am to midnight. It was nothing but burgers & beer. We lived together, worked together, and played rugby together. We only had two other employees. Goody would open the place, Edith would work lunch and we would take turns on alternate days coming in and work the rest of the day. At the end of the first year, we had seen lots of money pass through our hands, but had nothing to show for it. We were living here and eating the food and that was the payoff. There was no way you could justify it today, but at the time it was our passion to do it that made it all happen."

### Johnny's was probably even more "rugby player friendly" than prior Lawrence bars owned by players. Was that an important part of your business plan?

The only people we knew were rugby people. Before we had this bar, the rugby players used to party in their houses. When we bought this bar, this became the place where the rugby players would come to drink after practice and party after games. They would come and bring their friends and the customer base grew.

Rick said he even toyed with the idea of taking the concept of Johnny's to all the Big 8 schools. He would work a deal with the captain of the rugby clubs in all those towns. He decided that would be too much to try to do.

"As far as rugby players as your customers goes, you can get to a point where it hurts your business more than helps it. The downside is that guys can come in and act like idiots and run off customers. You have to remember they are young guys and young guys can sometimes be idiots. They need to have someone tell them to settle down from time to time. This isn't unique to the rugby club guys; it happened with every group, like the football players, and even the "in crowd" from school. They can all get out of line from time to time."

This Johnny's goes through cycles. Every



**Doug Hassig**

4 or 5 years, Johnny's becomes "the in place" for the college kids to come. That runs off a lot of locals. After a while, the college kids finally pick another place for new "in place" and the locals come back.

**I notice you do not have the "yard of beer" glasses hung on the wall anymore; what are some of the stories about those glasses?**

Rick bought a yard glass during the 1977 Tour of England. He carried it around for an entire week to keep it from getting broken. The very last day of the trip, they were standing in the airport and **Rich Coulson** tossed a nickel into it and shattered it. All was not lost, because the following year when they opened Johnny's, the restaurant suppliers were selling the glasses in the catalogues. They started using them during Happy Hour. "We used to think it was a big deal if someone drank one in under a minute. Then Palmer Chiropractic College from Iowa came down to play. They had a giant farm boy they called "Jaws". He was like 6'8" tall and 300 lbs. He could drink the yard as fast as you could pour it out (just a few seconds). Later in the evening, his team mates couldn't find him and they went off to their motel. They came back the next morning to catch their bus home and we found Jaws sleeping in the back of a parked car in the lot out back."

The yard held 40+ ounces of beers, so it was about 4 cans of beer. Some people kept track of how much they drank in "feet". They remember **Bill Mills** wander-

ing around one night, saying he had "9 feet of beer", meaning he had chugged the yard 3 times that night. That was the record.

**How did you come to build the rugby clubhouse on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor?**

When we bought the bar, the building was owned by someone else and we were paying rent. The building owner decided to sell one day and talked with a different guy without talking to us. The would-be buyer came in here and told us he was going to buy the place and double our rent. We went to the owner and told him we had a lease and the rent couldn't be changed. At the same time, we started toying with the idea of selling out of Johnny's and buying into The Flamingo Club, here in North Lawrence. We had some meetings with the Flamingo owner **Wes Kabler**. All that kind of blew the interest of the would-be buyer of the building, so we ended up buying the building.

Once we bought this building, we went upstairs. There were two apartments and an open area. We came back from the 1979 tour of Scotland and Ireland and saw their clubhouses. We decided to turn the upstairs into a clubhouse, if the players would do the work. We didn't have the money to do the improvement, because Johnny's was just breaking even. The players did a great job. We only spent about \$2,000 on materials.

For the first 3 years, we used it all the time. We used it after every practice and for all the club meetings. On Thursday night, we would pick the starters for the weekend game and post it downstairs in the bar. We were one of the only rugby clubs in the whole region that had a clubhouse.

The use of the clubhouse goes in cycles. The first guys fixed the place up and took good care of it. A couple of years later, the new guys started to abuse it by stomping out cigarettes on the floor and leaving the place a pigsty after they used it. There have been several times they had to tell the club they couldn't use the clubhouse anymore.

Since the liquor laws have changed and 18 years old can't drink 3.2 beer, the reason for the clubhouse has changed. Today it's sort of our archive of trophies etc. When visiting teams come, we bring them over here because we are set up for the food and drinks. The players are out at the field at Westwick for workouts, so coming over here after practice isn't what it used to be. We only use the club house 6-10 times a year. We have an occasional meeting up there and when we have teams come through, we show them through.

The important thing is that the guys on the team need to line the field and do all the other things that you do when you have a club. The up-keep of the clubhouse is all part of that. The guys on the club now are in that part of the cycle where they are getting better at fulfilling all these responsibilities.

In this newsletter's last edition, **Paul Die-drich** was interviewed and it included the org charts of the club's officers and committees from the 1980's. The current club still has that sort of org chart. Some of the committee assignments are different, but the level of player involvement is still like it was in the 1980's.

The difference is that in the 1980's there was a core of 20 or so guys that did everything together for 8 or more years. We still have cycles where we have tight groups like that, but the number of people in those groups is smaller than the 1980's.

That clubhouse is still a great feature to show people. We have taken all sorts of visitors up there to show the clubhouse. It's a great thing for the bar to have. The clubhouse has made this bar a magnet for a lot of rugby people.

**How did you get the idea for the Up & Under club?**

After the clubhouse construction experience, we saw what kind of work we could do when the players helped with the labor. We decided to build the Up & Under in the open space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. I think we spent \$40,000. We went to the bank to borrow that money, but the bankers actually laughed at us. However **Cliff McDon-**



Rick Renfro

full. Everybody up there had fun, because it was an intimate place. It would be midnight and people would be out on the town and still looking for somewhere to go to spend money.

Some of the crazy guys on the rugby club had a game they would play called “**Running Water**”. They would get all liquored up and then slide down the steep, carpeted stairs from the club on their backs or stomachs. They occasionally broke shoulders and everything. We put a stop to that.”

**Your ownership of the bar put you in the business community of the town.**

The rugby players as customers made us a little different than other places in town, but a lot of times when we get interviewed for rugby stories, it’s because we own Johnny’s. It’s all intertwined. If any-

body asks around town “Where is the rugby club?” they get sent to Johnny’s.

**Has owning Johnny’s helped the club recruit players for the club?**

It works best for people who already play rugby that come to town. They come in because they know about Johnny’s relationship with rugby. About once a week someone comes in asking about the club. Sometimes it’s somebody that is retired from the sport and just interested in the club. Sometimes it’s someone from a foreign country that’s in graduate school and wants to play. It’s been great for the club to find experienced talent.

Johnny’s has been even better for retaining good players. We can offer them a job at Johnny’s to keep them here playing with us. We sometimes have 6 rugby players working here at once. However, we have to limit that, because the downside is that they all want to be off for practices and games at the same time. Your schedule gets complicated.

**You have been active in both managing the club and financially supporting the club since 1978. A lot of people**

**have been important parts of the club history, but nearly all have only been involved for a few years and moved on. What are your thoughts on your tremendous commitment?**

Rick said that everybody has choices about what they do in their spare time. “You pick things that give you enjoyment and fulfillment. I wouldn’t be putting so much personal time and money into the club unless I thought I got as much out of it as I put into it.”

Some of it is business. He thinks it helps to have a relationship with the rugby club, but most of it is his PERSONAL satisfaction of putting time into the rugby club. That satisfaction covers the whole spectrum, from working with clueless teams that lose games by 55 points, to being able to meet professional people involved in the sport from all over the world. “When we host a dinner down here, it may cost \$200 for beer and pizza, but the relationships that come from that are worth way more.”

Rick continued “It’s just sort of the natural progression of things. I was able to find something where I could make a living, doing what I like to do. That’s pretty sweet. I met people like **Allen Chapman** and others who helped with the vision for the club. I have been able to travel the world and its crystal clear where we were and where we need to be. I can see the steps we need to take. Its really fun being part of that and helping it happen.”

**What would you like from the Old Boys who are reading this newsletter?**

We would like to see them come to watch games. Maybe come and tailgate.

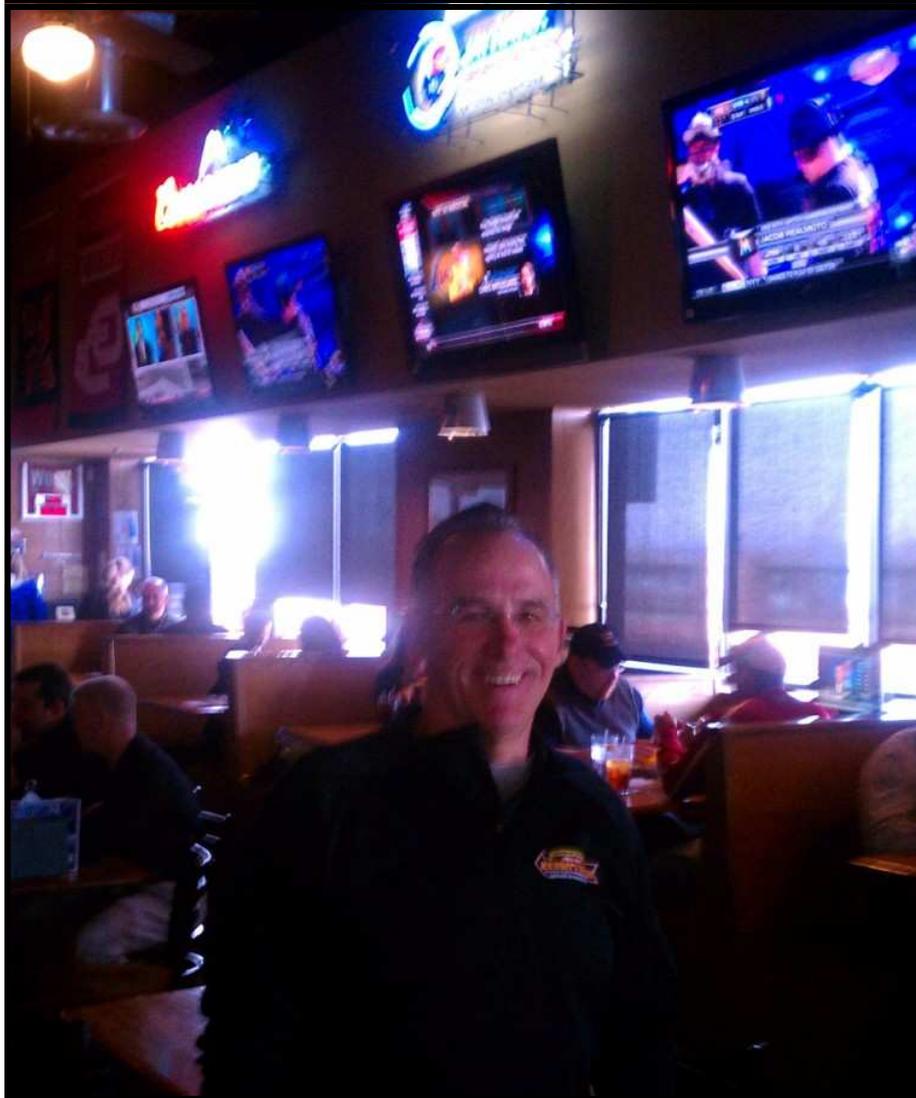
We need money for a building at the field so we can do things there. For instance, we have a coach who videos the games. Then he breaks the video down between offensive and defensive plays. He shows the team what they did in the prior games to coach them on tactics. Right now we have to travel across town and go upstairs here to have access to the gear. It would be great if we could do all that right at the pitch.\*\*\*\*

ald owned the Budweiser distributor in town and was a supplier to us. He came in and asked how thing were going and we told him of our problem with our loan application at the bank. Cliff sat on the bank’s board. I guess he went back to the bank and said “**If there were ever two boys who will pay this bank back; it’s those two.**” The next thing we knew, the bank called and approved our loan.

It also gave us a chance to do something with **Louie Riederer**. He was tending bar for us and finishing up school. We gave him some ownership with us in the Up & Under and he would run it.

“The name Up & Under was perfect. It’s a rugby play (a short, high punt) and it related to an upstairs-downstairs pair of bars. It was also the absolute perfect business model. It was beer bar for 18 year olds with food downstairs and an age 21 liquor club that stayed open to 3:00 am upstairs. We were open and doing business from 7:00 am to 3:00 am. You know it’s amazing that the Up & Under ONLY held 83 customers. It was a good thing - bad thing. It always SEEMED something was going on up there, even if it was half

## Louie Riederer – Player, Restaurant Owner, & Old Boy Golf Trips



### Quick Overview as a Player

**Louie Riederer**, was the mainstay tight-head prop for the club for over a decade (1975 -1992). He played in some of the club's biggest games ever. He has also been a mainstay off the field. He continues to organize an annual golf trip for Jayhawk old boys. You can't talk about Jayhawk Rugby without talking about Louie.

Louie grew up in Dodge City, KS. After he got out of high school, he went to Los Angeles for a year or two then moved back to Dodge to get a job. A year later,

he realized he needed to go to college and decided to go to KU to meet new people. Most of the Dodge City kids went to K-State. **Doug McCauley** was living in Dodge, going to Dodge JuCo. Louie said "I barely knew Doug. He worked in a bar I hung around. I heard he was going to go to KU and needed a roommate." So in the fall of 1975, they both moved to Lawrence and into a trailer park way out on east 19<sup>th</sup> Street. **Bob Tucker** and **Fritz Kruzen** had a trailer nearby and all became friends.

As a 21 year old freshman, he ran into

Jayhawk rugby player, 2<sup>nd</sup> row **Doug Gunn** at an enrollment table on campus. Gunn was a year ahead of Louie in high school where they had played football together. Gunn invited Louie to come out and play rugby. Louie went on a Tuesday and then the other guys from the trailer park joined him on Thursday. All of them started playing on the club.

Louie always focused on his own fitness. Jayhawk coach **Clive Emmanuel**, who came from Wales, gave out the **Cymru Awards** for fitness to 2 players, one called the "**Persistent Perspirer**" and the other called the "**Magnificent Masochist**". The former was for the player who worked the hardest at fitness and the later was for the overall fittest player. "I won the "**Persistent Perspirer**" award 3 times. The award winners were given a **Welsh Dragon pin**. Both of these awards were very special because of the respect Clive earned while he was with us. You know Clive passed away last year and we had a memorial for Clive at one of the Club's game games last fall."

**Clive Emmanuel** was a visiting accounting professor while he was here. If you imagined a bespectacled accounting professor; it would be his picture. He was at best 5' 6" and weighed around 160 lbs. He came to a few early practices and asked **Joe Kielyka** if he could hang around and Joe welcomed him with open arms. He very carefully and slowly took over the coaching duties, but always deferred to Joe. He gained everyone's respect with his knowledge of the game and his ability to teach and motivate the group he was working with. He was an amazing man.

Louie quit playing seriously in 1992 and just played occasionally until 1994 when he played his last game in Chicago. He had met his future wife and went up to Chicago to help her move down to Kansas City. He took some time out from the



L-R: Louie Riederer, Dave Adudule, David Hay, and Paul Diedrich

moving chores over that moving weekend to play in a 7's rugby tournament with some friends in a Chicago park. Unfortunately, he got injured and tore his bicep in one arm while making (or was that missing) a tackle. His girlfriend's nephews had to move her. He did not help with the move. His girlfriend was in a new city and he was on pain killers in the hospital and could not give her any directions on how to get around for a couple of days.

### 1982 OU & Falcons Games

Louie was not in this newsletter's game photo of front rows in the Falcons game, because he broke his ribs in middle of the game and was replaced. "We had to play both OU and the Falcons in the same day. We were getting beat by OU at half and beat them in the second half. OU played a lot like us. They would pass the ball all the way out through their excellent backfield and then work it back. They also were one of the few good teams that were near our small size in the forwards. We could push them in the scrumdowns. We ended up beating them with our fitness."

### "Our game plan against the Falcons was all about fitness.

The Falcons' team was all giants. I played prop for years at 5'10" and 190 lbs. In the Falcons game, I played directly against a Samoan prop who was nearly 300 pounds. The only thing was; after a scrumdown, their big, tight-5 forwards would just walk away from the set piece. The Jayhawk pack would run across the field and get into the loose play. The Jayhawks would out-number the Falcons on the loose play, because their big forwards would still be walking on the other side of the field. We always matched up well against the Falcons because our forwards ran to loose play."

### Denver Barbo Game

"It was very fast paced game - both offense and defense. Our fitness coach, **Clive Emmanuel** had told us a game like this would come along someday and had us ready for a game like that. I think the Barbos underestimated us a little bit. They probably thought they would be playing the KC Blues or the Falcons. The

Jayhawks were leading throughout the game and the Barbos had to play catch up. They were a much more talented club. They had several players who were Eagles or possible Eagles, but as a **TEAM**, we played a very fast-paced game and moved the ball around the field. We had a lot of guys on the team that were filling in due to injuries. We had some guys who were normally B-Side types, who stepped up and played an incredible game.

### Joe KIELTYKA, The Stonewall Inn, and the HoA Tournament

The Stonewall was special at the HoA. Joe would always feed the entire team. Anybody that wanted to stay over could sleep in the "bunkhouse" that was in the little house behind the Stonewall. Joe always took great care of us. We won the HoA Tournament in 1985. Joe had the whole team over on Saturday night, for a quiet night, because we were playing in the finals the next day.



### Johnny's Tavern Timeline – Total: 9 Johnny's Taverns + Marisco's = 10 restaurant group

- 1978 - **Doug Hassig** and **Rick Renfro** buy existing Johnny's Tavern in North Lawrence.
- 1981 – At the same time they built club house upstairs, they built the Up & Under upstairs to be a private liquor club, under the laws then in Kansas. **Louie Riederer** became an equity owner in the Up & Under. It could stay open until 3:00. Food would come up from Johnny's downstairs until midnight, when Johnny's had to close. It was a great place. The “city hall people” & business people came over, because it was a nice place to come. They had appetizers in the afternoon. We had a great cross section of customers. We had a little different atmosphere from downstairs. They sometimes had acoustic acts playing music upstairs.
- 1985 - The Kansas liquor laws raised the drinking age to 21, so the two bars were merged. Louie became part owner in the whole North Lawrence operation.
- 1991 – Johnny's at 119<sup>th</sup> & Glenwood opened in Overland Park, KS. Jayhawks rugby player **Pat Roberts** was

given an opportunity to become a partner. When first opened, it was out in the middle of nowhere. It turned out it was a great demographic of KU alumni in the area. Louie moved to KC to get that place going.

- 1996 - Johnny's at SM Parkway and Pflumm in Shawnee, KS. **Doug Hassig** was going to run it, but then got into the home building industry and started R&H Builders back in Lawrence. The group decided if the houses didn't sell, they could make them rental properties. So **Pat Roberts** moved over to the new Johnny's and ran it.

- 2001 – Additional Overland Park, KS Johnny's opened with former Jayhawks player **Hal Edwards** as a partner at 135<sup>th</sup> & Quiviera. It was next to Edward's fitness club. It was a “smoke free”

Johnny's. Louie remembers that club in particular, because they were just days away from opening the place and had all the TV's up on the walls and September 11 happened. “We all sat in the closed bar and watched all that on the TV's.”

**Pat Roberts** came over to run that with some guys who had come up through the ranks at Johnny's in Lawrence. The Johnny's guys had done everything from being cooks to bartenders and were now becoming managers.

- 2001 – The group got involved in another Lawrence sports bar concept called JB Stouts in northwest Lawrence, off 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Waukarusa. They bought into that restaurant as minority partners with the original owner group. That majority group wanted to have control of another restaurant across the street so they could avoid having a competitor. So the combined group opened an up-scale restaurant called Marisco's. The Johnny's group were just investors and not involved in management. In 2007 **Rick Renfro** ended up buying everyone out of both restaurants. By 2009 they changed JB Stouts to a Johnny's and Rick eventually had his wife manage Marisco's.

- 2002 - Johnny's at 83<sup>rd</sup> and Mission Road in Corinth Square in Prairie Village, KS. **Pat Roberts** went over and ran that

new restaurant.

- 2006 - Johnny's at K-10 and Ridgeview, Olathe, KS. The site's developer wanted a sports bar and the Johnny's team got involved in investing in both the land and building ownership. Louie said “It's been a great location, since its right off K-10 and is close to Lawrence.”
- 2009 - Got opportunity to open a Johnny's in the Power & Light District in downtown, Kansas City, MO. They were reluctant at first, but soon learned an incredible amount of beer gets sold from the establishments in that area.
- 2011 - They opened a Johnny's at 95th & Antioch in Overland Park, KS.

### Golfing Old Boys

Louie said anybody can be in the group. It started out with trips to Phoenix in the early 1990's. It wasn't just rugby guys in the beginning. It kept spreading out. Louie didn't want it to be a list of 200 guys, because he couldn't manage and coordinate it. It was just guys he had kept in touch with over the years. They have changed the format by limited it to only guys who have played rugby at KU.

The golf group has gone all over: Phoenix, San Diego, Miami, San Antonio, Orlando, and Mesquite, Nevada a couple of times. The trip is usually in January and its just one trip per year. Each golf trip is normally 12-20 guys. 2-4 days. Some guys go out a day early for a “drinking round”. The group plays one 18-hole round a day. Normally its a scramble format.

Louise said they are not great golfers. It's really about getting together and having fun. Most of the guy can barely break 100, although 2 or 3 guys are very good. A lot of the golfers are players from early 1980's like Louie and then another group who are about 10 years younger.

We lately have been going to a golf community in Mesquite, which is an hour north of Las Vegas. They have a nice course and this year (2013) we timed it so we could also go to the International 7's Tournament in Las Vegas.\*\*\*\*

## January 2013 Jayhawk Rugby Old Boy Golf Trip

Louie Riederer and team mates stay friends through the decades



Front Row - Kneeling L-R:

Grant Lechtenberg, Matt Lechtenberg, Scott Ryley, Bill Boyle, Louie Riederer, John Brooks

Back Row - Standing L-R:

Don "Duck" Harris, Pat Roberts, Dave Hamill, Lou Blanco, George Reyes, Larry Smith, Mike Hammond, Mark Mitscher, Steve Merdinger, Greg Jarvis, Quint Nufer, Rick Renfro

Missing from Picture:

Paul Diedrich and Paul King

# The **Improbable** 1981-82 Jayhawks

## They were little and one of the best teams in the nation



**Back row:** Nevin Whitely, Rick von Ende, Phil Dyer, Doug Schimke, Doug McCauley, Dave Prather, Randy Renfro, Bob Lynch, Rick Bess, not sure -- maybe Herb Lwellyn, Bob Hills, not sure -- could be Dave Pearlman, Rick Renfro, Doug Hassig, Louie Riederer, Bill Boyle, Joe KIELTYKA, ?, Paul Die-drich

**Middle row:** -?-, Kenny Dunn, David Kim, Mike Herrick, Jim Bartle, David Hay, Craig Oliphant, Jan Burrows, Steve Brack, ?, Rick Hessling (I think)

**Bottom row:** John Chirello, Steve Dawkins, ?, Kirk Goza, George Neale, John Bengé, Bernie Zarda, Ted McGrade, Don Huggins, Pat Kennedy.

### Story # 1 by Jimmy Bartle The lead up to the Western Finals

In the May 4, 1979 edition of the University Daily Kansan, **Rick Renfro** discussed the growing popularity of rugby in the United States and at KU. He summarized the Club's recent tour of Scotland and Ireland, its improved organizational structure, growing number of players, and winning record. But his closing comments – equal parts optimism and ambition – proved to be the most prophetic: **“Yeah, we’ve done all right,” Renfro said, “but we can do a hell of a lot better.”**

**The 1979 fall season** was a time of transition for the Club. **Doug Gunn** had gone to Wichita and was playing for Old Yeller RFC. **Steve Merdinger** and **Mike Forth** were in their final year of school and moved away by 1980. **Allen Chapman** had accepted an academic position at K-State and was no longer involved with the day-to-day running of the Club. **Joe KIELTYKA** was busy with his restaurant venture in Lenexa, the Stone-

wall Inn, while **Rick Renfro** and **Doug Hassig** had recently acquired Johnny's Tavern in North Lawrence.

Things got off to a roaring start in August when we played an exhibition against Kansas City RFC during halftime of a pre-season game between the Chiefs and the New York Jets. At first the crowd of over 40,000 sat in stunned silence, but it wasn't long before they were cheering the big hits and screaming for blood. **Ted McGrade** and **Billy Pryor** both scored tries and we ran off the field to a thunderous ovation. According to urban legend, the folks at Arrowhead Stadium never invited us back because too many spectators stayed in their seats to watch rugby instead of spending money at the concession stands.

**In the spring of 1980**, we won a really hard-fought match against Des Moines RFC, which was a highly regarded team at that time. In many respects, this was a microcosm of the many big-time

matches we would play in the months and years to come.

Due to our comparative lack of size (we were sometimes referred to as “the munchkins”), we often struggled to compete in the set pieces. In those days, you needed tall, rangy jumpers in lineouts, because lifting was not allowed. Unlike today, referees did not control the scrum engagement. Instead, the front rows just rammed into each other and attempted to be as disruptive as possible. The rules governing rucks were very strict and made it difficult to recycle the ball after a tackle. This led to more scrums, which inevitably led to more rucks, then more scrums, and more rucks, etc. We were really bucking the trend by trying to play open, running rugby.

To put things in perspective, the St. Louis Falcons were one of the top teams back then and made it to the finals of the USA RFU national club championship in 1979 and 1980. The Falcons were really



Spring 1980—Jayhawks in Swope Park, taken right before a victory over the powerful Des Moines Rugby Club

big guys who played grind-it-out rugby. Their strategy was effective; they stuck to it, and won a lot of games.

We were competing against the big boys both on and off the field. People running rugby nationally believed that first phase was the only phase. The bigger, stronger team should always win. To their way of thinking, there was something morally objectionable about a team like KU; where mostly undersized college kids competed against “real men”.

When we started achieving success by playing our brand of rugby; it upset the natural order of things and stirred resentment among the entrenched elite. We were consistently stuck in the “bracket of death” at tournaments and play-off competitions. Referees would frequently detect a phantom forward pass so they could disallow our tries. It seemed that the fix was in.

1980 was the first year for the USA RFU national collegiate championship. We had a good team and **KU won the Heart of America RFU collegiate tournament** by defeating Mizzou in the final. This may have been the last time rugby was ever played at the field behind Oliver Hall. **Mark Allen** was a member of that team and he was tragically killed months later when a motorist plowed into him while he

was riding his motorcycle. The Club’s award for Rookie of the Year is named in his memory.

At the end of the 1980 spring season, we hosted a match between Welsh touring side Cross Keys RFC and the Heart of America Combined Universities XV, **which included 8 KU players**. Cross Keys was one of the senior clubs in Wales, which meant they regularly competed against heavyweights such as Cardiff, Swansea, Llanelli, Newport, Pontypool, and Bridgend, and faced many of the famous Welsh superstars from that era. How could this makeshift HoA side hope to survive, let alone defeat the visitors? Somehow **HoA won 27-11**.

This setback so enraged Cross Keys that their match the following weekend against the Heart of America senior side had to be halted after a full-scale riot erupted, with mayhem on the field and spectators coming off the touchlines to attack the players.

Back in Lawrence, skilled players with valuable experience were starting to form the nucleus of a team that would eventually surpass all expectations. **Randy Renfro** could play hooker, flanker, and even in the backline. **Paul Diedrich** was at 2nd row and helped hold things together in the scrum. **Roger Walter** had lost some of his top-end speed, but his

passing skills were undiminished. Roger had gone under the knife for shoulder surgery, but inside center **Bill Boyle** was a defensive stopper and made sure no one penetrated our midfield. **Rick Renfro** was shifted to #8 to take better advantage of his leadership and decision-making abilities. **Kenny Dunn**, who had played full-back, swapped places with **David Kim** on the wing. This was a win-win, since Kenny was virtually unstoppable when given a chance to run with the ball in the open field, while David was great at fielding kicks and counterattacking.

**Kirk Goza** was working hard trying to get good grades in law school and disassociate himself from the rest of us degenerate rugby players, but could always be counted on to play scrum half. **Billy Pryor** was at fly half and never backed down from anyone. After sitting out a couple seasons, **Doug Hassig** was back in action on the wing. **Martin Gray** and **Dave Hamill** were backline alternates.

**Louie Riederer, David Hay, and Dan Katz** had returned from wherever it was they had been and were playing in the front row. **Doug McCauley** was a second row/flanker. **Phil Dyer** and **David Prather** were valuable utility players. **Bob Lynch** and **Tim Harris** were KU students who had played high school rugby together back in Washington, D.C. Lynch was a second row and Tim played hooker.



**David Kim**

On two brief occasions we had the services of **Barry Howarth**, a flanker from Allen Chapman's hometown of Newquay. Two exchange students from Sterling University in Scotland showed up. **Nevin Whiteley**, now deceased, was a forward and **Jan Burrows**, an outside back.

**Joe KIELTYKA** received coaching assistance from **Bill Mills**, who was constantly devising trick penalty plays, short lineouts, and special scrummaging techniques to give our forwards a leg up on the opposition. **Clive Emmanuel** was also on board and enough cannot be said about the contributions he made in fitness.

Some people may have thought that **Senator Wint Winter** and **Rick von Ende** would provide the Club with some much-needed wisdom and maturity, but

they were sadly mistaken. The level of insanity always shot through the roof whenever these two were around.

**In the fall of 1980**, I got knocked out cold during a match in Wichita and my memory of those days is a little hazy. If you want to know what happened that season; ask someone else.

**In the spring of 1981**, international rugby returned to Lawrence when the City of Derry RFC visited the USA and defeated us 16-7. At the going away party for our Irish friends, **David Hay** convinced one of their players to smash a fully-loaded custard pie into the unsuspecting face of the Derry club president.

By mid-1981, the same core group of individuals had been playing together for several years. In addition to the regular spring and fall seasons, there had been European tours in 1979 and again in 1981 (England, Wales & France), plus a steady diet of seven-a-side tournaments in the summer. **These guys were playing rugby 10 months out of the year and things started to coalesce.**

**Tactics** - For the record, it's important to dispel a couple myths about those days:

**First**, even though our game plan was based on ball movement, our passing skills were neither textbook-perfect nor aesthetically pleasing. Even if we didn't know everything about **how** to pass, we certainly knew **when** to pass. Our strategy hinged on avoiding set pieces and breakdowns, so players made every effort to off-load the ball before being tackled. Support players simply had to be there to accept the pass and others had to be trailing the play to clean up any loose balls or passes that went astray. When we had gone as far as we could go in one direction; we would reverse the angle of attack and head back the other way. Spreading the field in this manner enabled our forwards to mix in with the backs which created many overload situations and try scoring opportunities. There were some "wild and crazy" passes being thrown, but thankfully someone was usually there to catch them.

**Second**, fitness and conditioning meant more to us than simply running further and faster. **It was a state of mind**, attributable to the coaching we received. **Joe KIELTYKA** had been constantly haranguing us: "Don't Get Beat!" "Be Tough!" "Don't Quit!" Because these exhortations never seemed to have any specific meaning, they became more of a mantra that echoed in our collective psyche. Each player had to internalize these concepts and determine for himself what needed to be done in order to meet Joe's expectations.

**Clive Emmanuel's** legendary fitness sessions were really about **winning the battle against mental fatigue**. The



**David Hay**

Loosehead prop, place kicker, pie thrower



**Clive Emmanuel**

Inspirational Past Jayhawk Coach

“Death Run” came at the end of practice when players were very tired. There wasn’t much sprinting going on (staggering, maybe). It would be pitch dark and the entire scene had an eerie, otherworldly feel to it. What we were doing made absolutely no sense, but we kept on doing it; maybe because no one else was doing it. If we were doing something they weren’t, maybe that would give us some sort of advantage. Regardless of whether this was actually true, it was a belief we all shared and “MORE PAIN!” became our rallying cry.

**The 1981 fall season** was the first time the merit table system was used to determine the **Heart of America RFU club champion**. We won all of our merit table matches, including a 24-19 victory over the Kansas City Blues in Swope Park. Another memorable match that season was against Jefferson City RFC in the **semi-finals of the Heart Tournament**. They had good athletes and a really outstanding player in #8 **Greg Wilson**. He had to be the best American-born rugby player in the Midwest. He could score tries, kick goals, and win lineouts

In the first half we simply could not stop Wilson, who was doing anything he wanted. At half time, **Clive Emmanuel** said we needed to have multiple players tackle him every time he touched the ball. In the second half, Wilson looked like an aircraft carrier being hit by a constant barrage of bombs and torpedoes. Few human beings could have survived the battering that poor Greg received that day and the result was KU won the game 11-4.

**Spring 1982** - Excitement was at a fever pitch. By winning the Heart of America RFU merit table, **we had qualified to compete for the Western RFU club championship**. Our college team also made it to the **finals of the HoA collegiate tournament** that season before losing to Kansas State, 11-0. Guys like **“Banzai Bob” Hills** and **George Neale** were doing a great job laying the foundation for the success of our college team in the mid-1980’s.

Our season opener against Tulsa ended in a draw. We defeated Minneapolis, 21-4 (despite having a man sent off and playing shorthanded for 60 minutes). We beat the KC Blues 9-8. Several key players were injured in a subsequent match against Johnson County RFC, forcing us to re-jigger our lineup for the first round of the WRFU playoffs the following weekend against **University of Oklahoma** (Ozark Union champs) and the above-mentioned **St. Louis Falcons** (Missouri Union champs).

## The OU Game

OU had become a thorn in our side. They had defeated us on several occasions in the annual Big 8 Tournament and we never seemed to play to our potential when we faced them. The match kicked off on Saturday morning and we found ourselves trailing at halftime, 18-0. Things weren’t looking good. Determined to go down fighting, we tried every possible attacking strategy. At one

point, we aimed a high up-and-under kick at their right wing. Fine player though he was, he let the ball drop and could only watch as **Kenny Dunn** gathered it in and sped off for a try. Next possession we kicked the ball to him again... Same result... Maybe the sun was in his eyes, or his confidence was shaken, or he was near-sighted, or had a phobia about flying objects. For whatever reason, he simply could not catch the high ball. We started riding this one-trick pony for all she was worth and soon the score was tied. Our outside backs were gasping for breath after having scored so many long-distance tries. Some of the nastiest curse words I’ve ever heard were directed that day by OU players at their hapless teammate. We wound up winning, 30-18. Afterwards he told us: **“Don’t you kick me that ball no more!”** ...We never saw him again.

## The Falcons Game

Since this was a three-way competition, one team sat out while the other two



Spring 1982 playoff game against the St. Louis Falcons

The Jayhawks on right are outsized by the massive Falcons

Jayhawk front row L-R is Phil Dyer, Tim Harris, and David Hay

Tighthead prop Louie Riederer had started the game, but left with broken ribs. Riederer started at flanker the very next weekend against the Denver Barbarians in the Western Territorial RFU Championship



## Spring 1982—Team Photo After Defeating the St. Louis Falcons to become Eastern Zone Champions of the Western RFU

played. While we were battling against the Sooners; the Falcons were relaxing on the sidelines and licking their chops as they waited to play us that afternoon. We were small, tired, and our ranks depleted. They were big, strong, and fresh as daisies.

We didn't go into this match expecting to lose, but realistically there was little doubt that we were all going to die. Our injury list had grown longer and we were scrounging for players. Some guys couldn't run, they could only limp. They shouldn't have played, but they did.

The gigantic Falcons controlled most of the scrums and lineouts. We defended like demons and tackled like there was no tomorrow. When there were turnovers, we quickly shifted into attack mode and utilized our handling skills to devastating effect. In the closing minutes, we were backed up in our own end and the Falcons were hammering away. One of their players emerged from a tangle of bodies

and lunged toward the goal line, but because **"God is a Jayhawk"**, the ball somehow slipped from his grasp. The physical and mental strain of playing these two matches back-to-back was overwhelming. After the final whistle, my body convulsed in sobs and my eyes filled with tears. **KU 21, Falcons 15.**\*\*\*\*

Story # 2 by Bill Mills  
The Jayhawk Coach  
On the OU & Falcons Games

## KANSAS RUGBY: "Veni, Vidi, Vici" April 17, 1982

LAWRENCE, KS – Scoring three tries from three different players, and a 30-meter penalty kick by **David Hay**, Kansas University fought through 80 grueling minutes of intense rugby to defeat the St.

Louis Falcons, 20-15. The Saturday afternoon fixture, in front of a cheering partisan home crowd on the playing fields at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Iowa St, would be a true "David vs. Goliath" affair. The Falcons, representing the Missouri Union, had competed on the national scale finishing second to Old Blues in both the 1979 and 1980 National Championship game. The final match of the day would be for the Eastern Division Zone of the Western Rugby Football Union Championship.

The Falcons inside center, South African **Nigel VanBrook** kicked three penalties, scored a try and made one conversion to account for all 15 of his team's points.

"It means a great deal to get a victory over the Falcons," said Coach **Joe Kieltyka**. "I couldn't be prouder of these guys, they never gave up."

**The weekend of play began on Saturday morning with the Jayhawks squaring off against Oklahoma University, representing the Ozark Union. The OU match was played at a staggering pace and both teams put on a thrilling display of running and passing rugby. The KU squad went on to defeat the Sooners 30-18.**

In the Falcon match, the St. Louis team was awarded the first opportunity to score following a KU penalty for entering the ruck off-side. Although the penalty was in KU's own end, the ball soared just right of the uprights. The Jayhawks, known for attacking from anywhere on the pitch, chose to run the ball out of the end zone and caught the sleeping Maroon pack by surprise. The ball was handled by no less than six different players in attack and would have been turned into a try had not **Kenny Dunn** been pounded into touch.

The Falcons were again on the attack just three minutes later before a thunderous crushing tackle by Kansas inside center **Bill Boyle** sent the ball into touch and Kansas were awarded a lineout. The ball was secured by lock **Paul Diedrich** and was spun out left to the Jayhawk backline. **Jim Bartle**, playing at fly half, side stepped his opposite number and broke through the covering defense. The ball was quickly moved to outside center **Roger Walter** who drew his opposite number and sprung winger **Kenny Dunn** at full pace for a race to the goal line and a try in the left corner. A shout of "allez les bleus!" was heard from the opposite touch line as **Senator Wint Winter** raised his arms to the heavens. This undersized group of Jayhawks had just accomplished what no other team had been able to do this season against the Falcons. They had scored a try. The conversion was successful for a 9-0 Jayhawk lead.

**Don "Duck" Harris** increased the Kansas lead at the 38 minute mark, when a scrum movement resulted in an improvised try. The

Jayhawk backline attacking sequence had hit a Falcons roadblock. The Falcons were awarded a scrum down but the Kansas hooker **Tim Harris** took the ball against the head. **Rick Renfro** broke left of the scrum and fed the ball back inside to **Bob Lynch**, who was stood up in the tackle but refused to go to the ground. **David Hay** ripped the ball loose from the maul and fed the ball to his tight head prop **Phil Dyer**, who burrowed forward to the 2 meter line. **Kirk Goza** fed a quick ball to **Harris** who crashed over under the posts at the north end of the pitch to give the Jayhawks a 15-9 halftime lead.

Soon after play resumed, VanBrook scored an early try for the Falcons and made his own conversion to tie the score 15-15.

The second half was a seesaw event with neither team gaining much momentum. The larger Falcons pack choose to keep the ball in tight, and continued to set up rolling mauls to repeatedly pass the gain line. Kansas, in contrast, continued to play running rugby but could not breach the line as the Falcon defense stiffened.

In the 79<sup>th</sup> minute the game stalemate would be broken. **Kenny Dunn** had been dangerously tackled around the

neck and the Jayhawks were awarded a penalty kick 60 meters from the goal line. Instead of going for touch, **Jimmy Bartle** toed the ball and raced forward catching the weary Falcon pack by surprise.

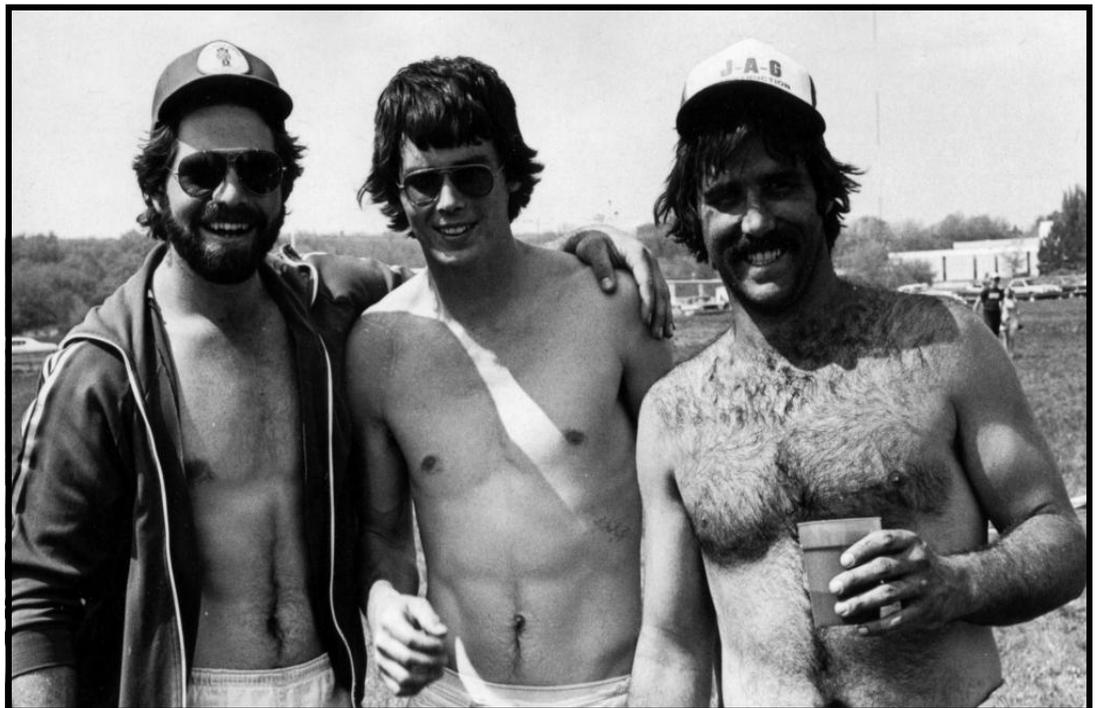
**Bartle** was brought down but managed to get the ball back for a quick ruck. The call "Utah" was shouted by **Roger Walter** and the ball was spun left. In a stunning display of ball handling and coordinated passing, the ball would go from the backline back to the linking forwards and back to the backline with lightening quickness and precise passing. The Jayhawks were rewarded for their efforts as **Roger Walter** dove over the try line for the final score of the game, conversion good by **Hay**.

**The Jayhawks will travel to Denver, Colorado, next weekend to play the Denver Barbarians RFC for a chance at the Final Four.**

**The Jayhawks vs. St. Louis Falcons:**

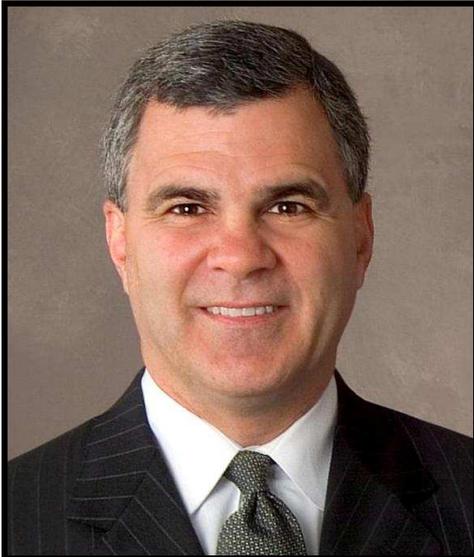
15 Kim, 14 Dunn , 13 Walter, 12 Boyle, 11 Hassig, 10 Bartle, 9 Goza, 1 Hay, 2 Harris, 3 Riederer (Dyer), 4 Diedrich, 5 Lynch, 6 McCauley, 7 Harris , 8 Renfro, 16 Hills, 17 Herrick, 18 Burrows, 19 Huggins

\*\*\*\*



**L-R: Bill Boyle, Randy Renfro, Louie Riederer**

Story # 3 by Kirk Goza  
Scorer of the stunning first try



Kirk Goza (today)

## The Barbo Game

1982 Western Championship

Winner Goes to "Final Four"

The 1981-82 rugby season was, by any measure, a tremendous success and marked one of many high points in what has become a long and storied KU Rugby history. In the fall of 1981, we won the Heart of America title for the first time, beating the KC Blues in one of the great regional rivalries. In the spring of 1982, we went on to beat OU and then the St. Louis Falcons to win the Eastern Division Zone of the Western Rugby Football Union Territorial Championship. These were tremendous games, played by guys who made up what they lacked in size with big hearts and a high pain tolerance. The telling of the stories of these games I will leave to others.

**We had now arguably just become one of the top eight teams in the country.** We knew we had not gotten there alone. There were a multitude of people who had played and/or coached before us and who had laid the foundation for the "KU" fast and furious style

of play. The 1982 team was also the culmination of a core group of guys who had received great coaching, (**Joe Kiltyka, Bill Mills, Clive Emmanuel**) been pounded into good physical shape (who can forget Kiltyka's after practice wind sprints or Clive's death jogs under the moonlit skies), and had the benefit of playing together for 5 or 6 years (who says everyone has to finish college in four.)

The **only** thing standing between us and a shot at the National Championship were the Western Division Zone Champions, the Denver Barbarians, one of the most established, well respected and successful rugby clubs in the country - big, fast and downright mean on the pitch. And, we had to play them in Denver, Colorado, the "Mile-High" City creatively name because it sits at exactly 5,280 feet altitude.

Our team co-captain, spiritual leader, and person in control of anything requiring organizational skills was **Rick Renfro**, had arranged for us to travel together on a bus. In an unprecedented show of commitment, we left a day early on Thursday morning before the Saturday afternoon game. I know there were hilarious moments that occurred on the bus ride, but I can't remember one of them. I do remember a great feeling of camaraderie. Every guy on that bus would have done whatever it took to protect the guy next to him. The one fact that became painfully clear during the ride was that we had all had the ever loving crap kicked out of us over the last month. **Louis Riederer** had fractured ribs, I had torn rib muscles (I had to keep explaining to Louie it was actually more painful than simple fractures), **Kenny Dunn** was nursing a bad shoulder. Everyone was in pain. Co-captains for the game **Rick Renfro** and **Bill Boyle** and Club President **Paul Diederich** spent a fair amount of time on the trip figuring out exactly who we could put on the pitch.

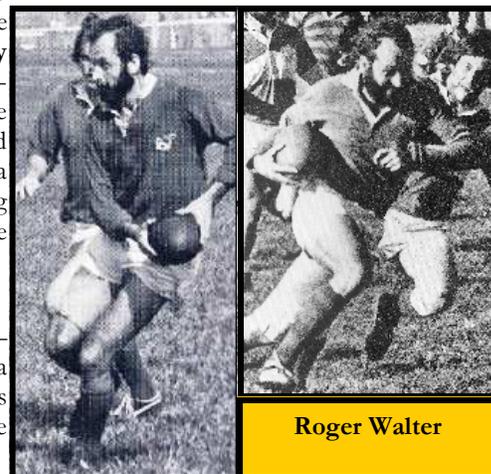
The next day we actually had a mid-morning practice. Hard to believe. Also, a little eye opening to spend a day on a bus then get out and start sprinting in the

altitude. The first half of the practice felt like slow motion and we were sucking air like we were having a mass asthma attack. By the end, however, we got our legs under us and our wind back and we were grateful for having come up a day early.

The next morning, April 24, 1982, we awoke to a beautiful, bright spring day. We actually had a short team run and meeting that morning, dressed for the game and took the team bus to the pitch. The match was to take place at the Kent Denver Country Day School in Englewood, Colorado. The noon collegiate championship game was being played between Air Force and K-State. The game ended regulation play in a tie. We waited, and waited and waited. The game seemed to go on forever, but finally ended with Air Force winning (I think.) It was our turn.

The passage of time, thirty years of it, has dulled my recollection of many of the game's details. I now have more of a sense of how it felt, which I will tell you about along with the few details I do remember, the ones I have been able to get from others and probably some I just made up.

We had been warming-up some distance from the pitch, I don't think Kiltyka or Mills wanted us to actually see the other team for fear we might just call the whole thing off. **Doug McCauley** had been selected to start at flanker. **He managed to blow out his knee while jogging around the field.** This resulted in some very dramatic last minute coaching decisions. **Louie Riederer**, broken ribs and



Roger Walter

all, agreed to play although not in his usual prop position (he could not stay bent over with his arms up) but flanker. The team that initially took the pitch that day was **David Hay**, **Phil Dyer** at props, **Tim Harris** hooker, **Bob Lynch** and **Paul Diedrich** at locks, **Louie Riederer** and **Randy Renfro** at flankers and **Rick Renfro** at number 8. **I was scrum half**, **Jim Bartle** at stand-off, **Bill Boyle** first center, **Roger Walter**, second center, **Doug Hassig** and **Kenny Dunn** at wings and **David Kim** at fullback. Undaunted, we climbed on the bus, sat quietly while we drove to the field, then unloaded shouting the rock chalk dead dog chant. Quite a spectacle. It felt great.

**The last-minute injury, coaching change and bus ride resulted in us arriving to the field a couple of minutes late. The Barbarians were awarded a penalty for the late start - a call that has never been made in any important game before or since I am sure. (We were getting home-towned and the game had not even started.)** The Barbarians kicked off. Rick swears it was an attempt at goal. Anyway, we fielded the ball, the Barbarians got it back and within two minutes of play the Barbarians made a long kick deep to our end of the field. We counter-attacked, had a short ruck, the ball came quickly and we moved it down the line. **Roger Walter** made a classic juke, beat his man then made a textbook pass to **Kenny Dunn** at wing. Kenny was at the ten meter line when he was dragged down by the opposing fullback. The scrum-half (okay me), had followed the ball down the line. I had played with Kenny a long time, we had grown up next-door neighbors, and, as good a player as he was, I had never actually seen him let go of the ball within ten meters of the goal. But it felt like the sun shined just a little brighter at that moment and as Kenny was going down he swung the ball around the defender and into my arms. I was the most surprised guy on the field. **We had scored the first try in the first real play of the game. You could have knocked the whole Barbarian team down with a feather. We had come to play and now they knew it.**

The Barbarians quickly recovered from

their shock, however and settled down to business of the “ground and pound” game. They scored a few minutes later when one of their props picked up a loose ball and managed a quick pass to the backfield.

We received the kick off and quickly went back to work. **Jim Bartle**, as highly skilled with his foot as his hands, launched a high kick. The Barbarian backfield seemed unable to locate or at least decide who should catch the ball. The hard-hitting and much more decisive **Bill Boyle caught the ball on the bounce and sprinted in untouched for the second Jayhawk try.**

The rest of the first half was a back and forth battle with both teams fighting for every advantage. The refs awarded the Barbarians a number of penalty kicks at which they were very adept. **We were down at half. I have judged the score to be about 19 to 15 based on the average of the different scores I got from those players with whom I spoke.**

**The half-time scene was surreal.** **The coaching-staff looked each and every player in the eye telling us “we can win this thing.” We were tired, bloody and beat-up, but faith is a strong motivator and despite long odds we believed we could win.**

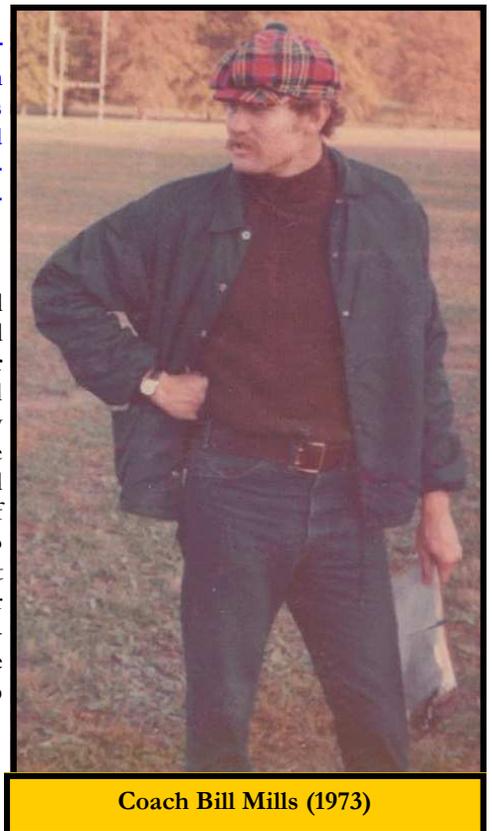
Unbelievably, because of our delayed start, dusk was starting to settle in, and sunlight was quickly diminishing. **Roger Walter**, known for his highly touted passing skills (see above), used his very underrated agility and quickness and the cover of darkness to intercept a would be Barbarian pass. Roger quickly off loaded the ball to **Jim Bartle** who quickly went outside to **Kenny Dunn** at wing. Kenny never look backed or thought about passing (much more typical) and scored the third KU try. **The kick was good and we were now up 21-19.**

At scrum half, I had a first hand view

of our pack in the scrum and line-outs. We were outsized at every position, but fought with amazing heart. Our guys were inspirational. But deep into the second half, the effort and altitude was starting to take its toll. With less than 5 minutes remaining, the Barbarians scored, made the kick and went up 25-21.

We were one try down and the minutes were ticking away. We launched another kick into the Barbarians side of the field. This was our last chance and we knew it. Everyone chased the ball down with one last great effort. Neither side was able to field the ball cleanly. Everyone ended up in a big pile on when the whistle blew ending the match Barbarians 25 KU 21. \*\*\*\*

We walked, limped off the field defeated but proud. We had earned the Barbarians respect and that of a number of knowledgeable rugby observers. I remember **Fred Paoli**, a good friend, (but Barbarian prop that day) and Eagle player for many years, saying to me as we left “that game was what rugby is all about.” It felt like he was right. \*\*\*\*



Coach Bill Mills (1973)

Story # 4 by Jimmy Bartle  
Background Story of Barbo game

Epilogue on 1979-1982 Era

## The Barbos Game

**Our victories over OU and the Falcons sent shock-waves throughout the entire WRFU.**

In the event of a win the following weekend against the Denver Barbarians, a college team would represent the West in the national finals against the East, Midwest, and Pacific. Oh, the shame and humiliation! Something had to be done! There was no question which team would receive the home field advantage. We were required to travel to Colorado and play the Barbos on their turf, in front of their fans.

There was one other problem. An empty seat on the bus to Denver was causing us a lot of concern. We got to know **Don Harris** when he played for K-State. "Duck" was a really hard-nosed flanker/#8 and everyone knew not to mess with him. He was a member of our 1981 touring party and joined the Club on a full-time basis after graduating from K-State. We relied on him for protection against the intimidation and cheap shots that were frequently aimed in our direction. Months earlier, Don had promised to stand up for a good friend whose wedding happened to fall on the same day as our showdown with the Barbos. Being a man of his word, he went to the wedding.

Prior to kick off on game day, **Bill Boyle** and **Rick Renfro** met with the referee to sort out the boot check and other details. The ref immediately started reading them "the riot act", making no secret of his displeasure, which seemed a trifle premature since we hadn't even done anything yet. It later became apparent that this guy had been bought and paid for by the WRFU officials who had



L-R: Jimmy Bartle, David Kim, Kenny Dunn, and Kirk Goza

flown him in to referee the match. Once play started, he saw to it that Denver scored 15 points on penalty kicks compared to a single 3-pointer for us good guys.

Denver had a powerful pack and we knew they would try to push us around in the scrums. Once the match started, they immediately signaled their intentions by resorting to the illegal submarine technique – pushing upwards, not forward as the law requires. This caused our prop **Phil Dyer** to be lifted completely off the ground with his hips above his head. Since Phil was playing on the tight-head side of the scrum, he had no way to extricate himself from this extremely dangerous situation and was at risk of having his neck broken. The referee saw no problem with what had happened and ordered play to continue.

In the early minutes, the Barbarians made the mistake of kicking long, but not finding touch. This gifted us a counter-attacking opportunity. Before the home team knew what had happened, **Kirk Goza** scored a try in the left corner.

Denver responded when the prop who had participated in the hatchet job on **Phil Dyer** passed the ball to one of his

backs. Instead of dropping back into an on-side position, he continued to advance forward so that his body remained in front of the ball carrier. He looked like an offensive lineman doing some down-field blocking for the Green Bay Packers. Would-be tacklers were unable to fight through this blatant obstruction and a try was awarded. Had **Duck Harris** been there, he would have paid dearly for his transgressions.

Before long, it became obvious that Denver had been given carte blanche to do as they pleased. Once, when we were putting the ball into the scrum, their flanker casually reached in, plucked the ball out of the tunnel, and rolled it back under the feet of his #8. We struck back when **Roger Walter** intercepted a pass and the ball was relayed to **Kenny Dunn** on the left wing. He dashed down the field to score untouched.

We had been scheduled to kick off after the conclusion of a earlier match, but that other match went into overtime. Our match was delayed by 45 minutes. In Denver, daylight is lost once the sun dips below the range of mountains to the west. Late in the second half, we were playing in semi-darkness. **Maybe there was some way to turn these conditions to our advantage.**

Earlier in the match, the up-and-under we previously employed to such great effect against OU had once again worked like a charm. We punted the ball high in the air and the Barbos' centers stood waiting for their fullback to catch it. Meanwhile, the fullback stood waiting for his centers to catch it. The ball landed between them, bounced into **Bill Boyle's** arms, and he cruised in for a try. Visibility now was limited. Perhaps another kick would prove just as difficult to handle. So from a scrum in the attacking half on the right side of the field, we booted the ball and pursued it, hoping to either claim it ourselves or nail the opposition and jar it loose. The Barbos didn't catch the ball, but we didn't catch it either. We didn't get a favorable bounce like the one when **Bill Boyle** had scored earlier. Instead, the ball got scrambled around and neither side could control it. Moments later, the match was over.

Despite the 25-21 loss, everyone was pretty upbeat. We had taken Denver's

best shot without backing down and out-scored them, three tries to two. In our minds, we were the winners. There was a tremendous amount of mutual respect among our players, none of whom were thugs or goons. We were proud of who we were and what we had accomplished.

Denver went on to take second place at nationals, losing in the finals to the Old Blues from Berkeley, California. We extracted a measure of revenge in May of the following year when we defeated the Barbarians in Lawrence.

**Aftermath...**we ended the season in style with a 21-17 win over Rumney RFC from Cardiff, Wales. **Kenny Dunn** scored a hat trick of tries and **Dave Hay** added 9 points with the boot. This was the only loss for Rumney on their 5-match USA tour and they learned the hard way what everyone else already knew – the KU Rugby Club were simply in a class by themselves.

**Clive Emmanuel's** visiting professorship at the University of Kansas ended that spring and he went back to the UK. He returned ten years later with his Scottish club, Strathendrick RFC, and led them to a victory over KU, 9-8. Clive passed away in October 2012.

**As we close this chapter in the Club's history, one lingering question remains. Did we, as Rick Renfro predicted, do a hell of a lot better?**

**You decide.\*\*\*\***

**If you have enjoyed reading this article about one of the most memorable eras in the history of the KU Rugby Club, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to The Kansas Rugby Foundation, Inc.**

**Our efforts are devoted to supporting the Club and helping to maintain its unique character and traditions. We are also responsible for management, maintenance, and improvement of the Club's playing facility and there are many projects that require assistance.**

**If you will contact me at (785) 218-2676 or westwick@sunflower.com, I will help you determine an appropriate level of giving and insure that your dollars are well-spent.**

**Jimmy Bartle**

# 1983 – 1985

## By Lou Blanco



**Lou Blanco**

Today at his Miami home.

He is the Latin American Sales Director for a medical supply company

I started playing rugby at KU in January 1983. At the start of the second semester, a flyer was posted at my dorm, Ellsworth Hall that the KU Rugby Club was “looking for new players - no experience needed”. Practice would be starting in the upcoming week and that club representatives were coming to Ellsworth to give a brief presentation and answer any questions. **Bob Hills** and **Mike Herrick** represented the club that day, and about 20 or so interested guys from Ellsworth and McCollum dorms came to the meeting. Practice would be on Tuesday and Thursday nights at Allen field house until the snow and the frost were off the fields at Iowa & 23rd.

So about, 12 of us “dorm boys” went to that first practice at the field house. There were easily 50-60 guys already there, up on the dingy hall walkways of the second floor, stretching and getting ready for practice. Lots of big burley men, several older guys, and a bunch of

young college guys. Pretty intimidating group. I started to wonder if I was at the right place. A tall curly haired guy had the whistle, so I figured he was the coach. That was **Bill Mills**. After a few words welcoming everyone, we started running and running. We carried guys, we ran stairs...you know the drill. It was exhausting, but exhilarating.

I am not sure why, but I was surprised that the older guys were helping the younger guys; taking them under their wing, and showing them pointers about the game. I guess because in the other sports I had played in high school; you were always competing with the guy next to you. This caught me off guard. I think I was the only one from my dorm group that came back on Thursday night. By the time we got out to the fields, I remember running through some snow piled up in a few areas. At those first outdoor practices, I was put at wing, probably because I knew nothing about the game and definitely not because of my speed.

The first event of the year was an intra-squad scrimmage. I was playing wing

and somehow ended up next to **Paul Dietrich** who passed me the ball resulting in a try as I ran past **Bill Boyle** (who pounced on me anyway). **Welcome to KU Rugby...**

### Worst Practice to Skip

One of the great benefits of KU Rugby was that if you came to practice, there would be a spot for you on one of three sides we normally fielded. Maybe only as a reserve, but you were almost certain to get in one of the matches. In that spring of 1983, I missed the Tuesday night practice before the first game of the season. At the end of Thursday night’s practice, **Rick Renfro** gathered together all the new guys and asked us who also came to Tuesday’s practice. I thought about lying, but that didn’t happen. Bottom line, I wasn’t picked to play, obviously not on the club or college side, and not even listed as a reserve on the third side. Regardless, being the smart guy that I am, I told several friends in the dorm to come watch me play. A few friends and I came at 1pm, and watched the first 2 matches. Then we watched almost the entire 3rd match, where I was dying to get in the game. The backs playing ahead of me



**Warming Up at 23rd & Iowa**

L-R: Mike Lipari, Lou Blanco, Pat Roberts, and Quint Nufer



## Fall 1985 Heart of America Tournament Champions Team and Alumni in Swope Park after defeating KC Blues

**Back Row:** Roger Walters, Bill Byers, Doug Hassig, Lea Ann Robertson(Trainer), Scott Meyers, Larry Clarke, Doug McCauley, Paul Diedrich, Lou Blanco, Pete Knudsen, Pat Roberts, Don Harris, Bryan Hunter, Quint Nufer, Don't know, CC Buck, Bill Mills, Steve Lange, Steve Powers, Rick Renfro.

**Middle Row:** Rich Coulson, Greg Salvati, Todd Tumbleson, John Brooks, Kip Elliott, Dominic Bornaio, Louie Riederer, Paul Berardi, David Hay

**Front Row:** Jim Loarie, Al Tebben, Drew Pollack, Rob Mason, Larry Krisman, Mike Vanderbosch, Jimmy Bartle, Vic Clark, Scott Stites, Randy Renfro, Chris Nicely

**Note angled "goal posts". It was just PVC pipe stuck in the ground. The "cross bar" was a strip of duct tape.**

were terrible and I was pacing the sideline hoping to get in the action. It was almost certain I would not play at all. But with about 1 minute left in the match, a second row went down, and I got the green light to go in. I had to borrow cleats and somebody gave me their jersey. I ran out to the field to an opposing team scrum down and told this grey haired giant (**Wint Winter, Sr.**) that I'd never been in a scrum before and didn't know what to do. He said "son, put your arm around me, grab my jersey, put your arm up between that guys legs, grab his jersey, stick your head in there, and push with all your might." I nearly exploded from all the excitement and ran out of the scrum down and tackled the fly half, (after he kicked the ball of course- I didn't know what I was doing). Whistle blew, and I played my first game of rugby. I was then stuck at second row forever

(even though I had great hair and could have played wing!) I was hooked on KU Rugby.

As I started to learn and develop in the game, I started to play a fill-in roll on the Club side at second row. Mostly playing behind the front row of **David Hay, Paul Berardi, and Louie Riederer**, and next to 2<sup>nd</sup> row **Paul Diedrich**. The third row was normally **Don Harris, Larry Krisman, and Rick Renfro**. And then out to **Al Tebben, Jimmy Bartle, Bill Boyle, Doug Hassig, Pete Knudsen, Doug McCauley** (Twin Towers of Power!), and a slew of other players as well.

### 1984 Little Rock Arkansas Tournament

The 1984-1985 timeframe was a really

good period for KU Rugby, and I was fortunate to be there for the experience. We had great turnouts for practice and could pretty much field 3 sides each weekend. **Quint Nufer** was the college side captain, and led a solid group of consistent players. During this period, we made the memorable never-ending bus ride to the Little Rock, Arkansas Rugby Tournament in the fall of 1984. We played with a mixed team of mostly college side players along with some club players. Some historical marks were made on the rugby pitch on that cold rainy weekend. One of the first matches was against **Oklahoma State**. **Mark "Boomer" Mitscher**, played maybe one of the best games of his career, running over 2 and 3 OSU players at a time as they tried to bring him down. He set the precedent for the match and we ran away with the game.



**Individual 1985  
HoA Tournament Trophy**

The next match was against the **Old Number 7** from Memphis, Tennessee. They were a club stacked with several select side players including a U.S. Eagle scrum half. Two key players on our mixed side were Kiwi's **Dominic Borna** at Scrum or Fly Half, and the hard-hitting **Richard Brookie** at #8. Old Number 7 scored first with an early try between the posts. The guy who scored mocked "the college kids" as he jogged back to his teammates. Bad idea for them. I think that was the only try that they scored. From then on it was a constant barrage of Jayhawk scoring. The ensuing short kick-off resulted in a try from series of open field short passes between **Pat Roberts** and **Richard Brookie**. The dominating open field play was repeated various times throughout the match. Dominic worked both sides of the field with the ball, finding openings and creating plays. **John Brooks** had a break away, 70 yard run down the sideline for a try. Nobody could catch him. **Fritz Edmunds** played a key role that day by stepping up replace **Jim Loarie** who had taken ill, and played loose head prop (not Fritz's position). It was a classic game for KU Rugby. We lost the semi-final game against a select-side loaded **Oklahoma University** team, but many strong bonds were formed on that trip.

In addition to the Little Rock tournament, the team rented a Winnebago and traveled to the **Aspen Ruggerfest**, hosted the **Los Condors All-stars Touring Side** from Argentina, and toured Argentina in the summer of 1985. I went with the Jayhawks the **1985 tour to Argentina**. The club loaned me the money to go. I was the translator for the tour, and won the OSVA. (**Optimus Socius Viator Athela**. It is the tour award for on & off field MVP.)

### **1985 Heart of America Rugby Tournament Champions**

The pinnacle of that period was winning the Heart of America Tournament in October of 1985. It was another wet and cold fall weekend at Swope Park. We fielded a solid expanded tournament roster of combined Club and College side players. Three matches were played on Saturday with decisive victories against regional teams. **The Club's five wins were against Oklahoma State Univ. (18-0); Omaha Goats (14-0); Johnson County RFC (entire field was under water) (12-0); St. Louis Falcons (6-3); and KC Blues (10-0).**

Our pack dominated in set-piece plays and got around the field better than the opposition. We were led by **Larry Krisman's** explosive bursts, sending guys to the ground on defense and gaining valuable yardage with the ball on offense. Our backs yielded no gaps, and were led at the wings, by the likes of **Mike Vanderbosch, Vic Clark, and the Jayhawks' All American Pete Knudsen**. On Sunday morning we played the **St. Louis Falcons** in the semi-final match, winning the match, but giving up 3 points on a penalty kick. These would be the **only** points conceded the entire weekend. In the final, we faced our nemesis, the **Kansas City Blues**, who had dominated at the HOARFU tournament throughout the years. The field was muddy and a light rain fell. The Blues rarely, if at all crossed our 22. We scored several times and at the end raised our arms in victory.

**This was the first time KU Rugby had ever won that tournament.**

The tournament victory was a complete team effort, where we had played hard in each of the matches, and left nothing on the field. An exhilarating feeling of exhaustion and satisfaction ran through us all. A fantastic victory picture was taken right afterwards under the goal posts. Look at the happy faces on all of those guys. No better feeling. We carried our celebration onto **Joe Kieltyka's Stone-wall Inn** in Lenexa, where Joe hosted the team along with friends and family. What a great day that was in the history of KU Rugby!

KU Rugby has meant a great deal to me. I was looking for an athletic activity while in college and found a home on the team. What an exclusive group we are; college guys mixed-in with older town guys, providing guidance and a unique learning experience on and off the field. The club takes in whoever you are and it does not matter where you come from. Just put in the time, pay your dues, and you can become a member of the club. I am excited about the 50-year anniversary, and hope to see old friends and make some new



**Although not a part of this story, here is a terrific photo of Lou Blanco scoring a try on the Denver Barbarians in the 1987 semifinal game for Western RFU Championship. Fellow 2nd row Paul Diedrich is to left and set up Lou with the scoring pass.**

# Rugby Shorts

## Were you in the greatest era of the rugby club?

We are now about 1/2 way through our 50-year story. Imagine getting all of this past rugby talent together at once and what they could do today.

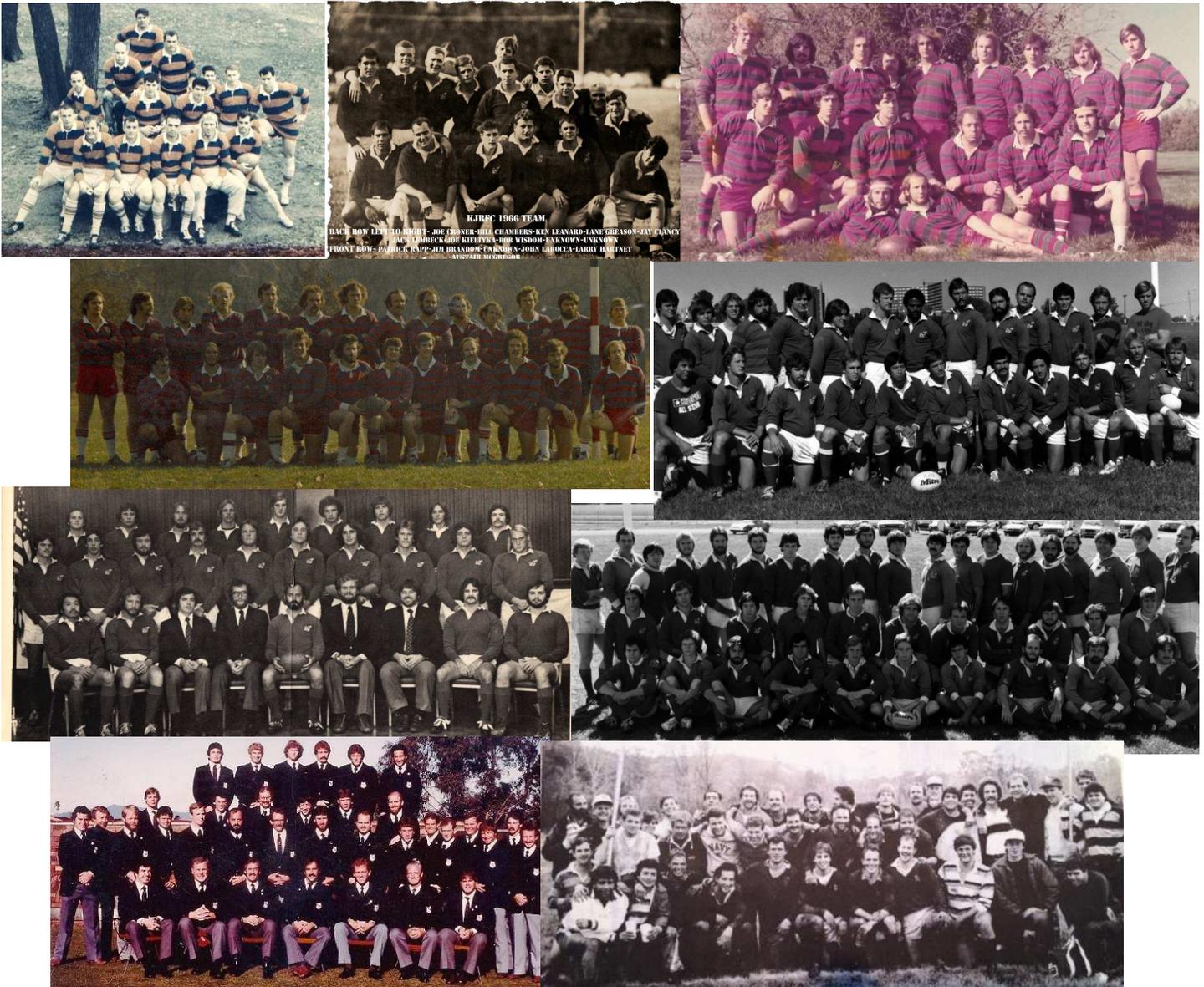
Do you know how much funding was donated to the rugby club by past players during this past year?

The front page of the newsletter has a PO Box and the name of the rugby club's charity entity.

Actually that's exactly what we have. You **ALL** are reading this newsletter.

None

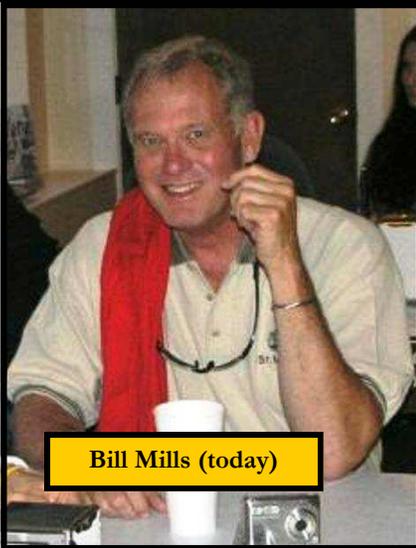
You could show the club that you were and still are one of the greatest to ever play. Let's all pull together and send a generous donation.



# “Sherman, set the WABAC machine to 1970”.

By Bill Mills

-- Mr. Peabody



Bill Mills (today)

It was the spring of 1970 and I was taking a Communications class in Fraser Hall at the University of Kansas. Seated next to me, in the back row, was a likeable fellow named **Bob Coffin**. I noticed during the semester that every Monday morning Bob would come to class looking like he had been hit in the face with a sweat sock full of padlocks. Curiosity finally got the best of me and I asked him after class one day, “Hey Bob are you on the boxing team or something?” He just laughed and said no, he played rugby.

Let’s see, what did I know about rugby? That would be nothing. He asked me to come out on Thursday for practice and I said I would see him there. I was living at Jayhawk Towers, so when Thursday rolled around, I walked over to the rugby pitch behind Oliver Hall to take a look.

There were about twenty-five or thirty guys running around the field slamming into each other and shouting out calls like “give him weight!” and “corner flag!”. The funny oval ball came flying out of bounds and landed at my feet. A blond haired winger named **Vic Clark** came running over to retrieve the ball and said, “Hey, we need players, come on and play.” I told him I didn’t know how to play, and he shouted back over his shoulder, “no one else does either, it’s just fun.”

After practice I started walking back home, a car pulled up next to me and **Rick Whitson** rolled down his window and offered me a ride. I said I just lived across the street and he said, “Get in; you’re not going home anyway”. We drove directly to the Bierstube, a bar that was owned by a player named **Pat Rapp**. We walked in the front door and to my amazement, **Tom Walls, Larry Carden, Mark “Mushy” Mullins** and all of the other rugby players from practice were at the bar downing 12oz longnecks and singing “funny” songs. After a few lavations, I stumbled down the stairs into the basement of this tiny establishment; and there sat **Jim Thurman, Greg Allen** and **Tex Robinson** with a rather lovely congregation of Chi Omegas. I thought, let’s see...you get to tackle, you get punched in the face, you get to run with the ball, you drink lots of beer and there are pretty girls all around. Yes, rugby was indeed fun.

These guys were good! It didn’t matter how much knowledge of the game or skill they possessed; they made up for it with pure athletic ability. I was amazed at how fast and how strong these guys were and how athletic they were. I thought, “Why aren’t these guys playing football for KU”? It turned out some of them had been on the football team, but got fed up with the program and turned to rugby.

I remember that **John Brown** and **Mike Wiley** could run all day without a break. **Skip Quimby** and **Kim “Ewo” Ewonus** could hit opposite players with such ferociousness in the open field, you would think somebody might get killed. **Hal Edwards** always played a steady game and was a great field captain. Then there was **Luke Miller**, he played hard every minute of every game; a “take no prisoners” kind of guy. These guys were tough. Not just mentally tough, I mean physically tough. No one ever backed down or ever took a step backward.

Our backs were something to watch. You had **Tommy “Motor Mouse” McCor-**

**mack**, cutting through and jockeying his way through the opposition, (I think Tom and I both “dated” the same girl in high school, I think at the same time...but that’s another story). **Nick Niewald** was a powerful runner; he didn’t need to run around his opposite number, he would just run over them, breaking tackles like a runaway truck through Independence Pass.

“Crazy” **Dave Moore** was an interesting study. On one road trip to the Aspen Ruggedfest we went over to pick Dave up as his apartment on Kentucky Street. He lived in the basement and had a side door entrance. I knocked on the door and he asked me to come in. I notice there were several sets of goulashes at the top of the stairs and wondered why? When I walked down to his apartment I realized why, his basement apartment was flooded, and had been for months. He had his bed up on cinderblocks and he just waded around the place in gumboots. Dave just shrugged off his environment with, “Cuts down on unwanted guests dropping by”.

And then there was **Colin McMillan** a diminutive Scotsman that played fly half and knew the game; he was an excellent player and a great teacher. Before his arrival most of the coaching just involved playing the game and learning as you played. Colin would always shout out, “continuity lads!” as he raced around the pitch.

No one ever had any money, but there was always a flood of cold beer. Dues were \$5.00 a semester, which included your jersey and some of the guys couldn’t afford that. When on a road trip, we always managed to secure a couple of rooms at some unsuspecting motel. Mattresses were pulled off the beds and deposited on the floor which made the room a four bed room. Right? Ten players to a room; no problem.

We stayed at the Christmas Tree Inn for the Aspen Ruggedfest. **Bill “Beezo” Byers** came over to our room in his un-



derpants demanding beer at 6:00 am. He had an open can of Olympia with him that he poured on gigantic prop **Dave Hazlett** by accident. Dave threw near-naked Bill and his beer can into the parking lot.

I was wandering around the empty swimming pool area before our Saturday morning game and noticed grey smoke pouring out of a door like Jeff Spicoli's stoner van in *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. I approached the room and walked right on in.

The room was full of what appeared to be gypsies or migrant beet pickers or remnants from Woodstock, I couldn't tell. It was a bunch of famous (but unnamed here) members of a 1960's rock & roll band. In the middle of the room was a hookah water pipe with a hash rock the size of a coconut. They were either finishing off a really long night or getting an early morning Rocky Mountain High. The horn was honking, our vehicle was leaving and I was off to play the Zoomies. (Air Force Academy)

On one cold and bleak day we were playing in Warrensburg, Mo., on a particularly nasty field that had broken glass bottles strewn about near the half way line. We were warming up, and I looked over to see **Jack Kline** becoming ill on the sidelines. I asked him if he had pre-game jitters? He raised his head and looking exactly like Linda Blair, complete with split-pea soup on her lower lip snarled, "I'm not nervous dumbshit, I'm hung over, and leave me alone." Rugby was fun.

The first KU Alumni game was played in the spring of 1974 at the field behind Oliver Hall. I thought it would be a great time to see all the old faces again. The

alumni played the college boys that day and the varsity were short a front row player. With **Joe KIELTYKA's** coaxing, I came in for the college boys in the front row. Joe assured me it was going to be just a "runaround" anyway. Right? The first scrum-down occurred following

an errant pass and we were packing down at the half way line. I was at loose head and as we crouched to come together, I noticed my opposing tight head was the legendary **John LaRocca**. He resembled a cigarette machine with stubby legs attached. When we came together, he immediately grabbed my left arm high up under my arm pit. He cranked down hard and I thought at one point he was actually going to sever my appendage and take it home with him. After half a dozen more "runaround" scrums, I figured enough of this. At the next scrum down, I pulled my hooker **Jack Fluker** by his jersey and said "hang on tight!" As the scrums came together, I drove my head directly into John's forehead just above his right eye. After the game I noticed his right eye was already starting to close shut and was turning the color of a ripe plum, as John shook my hand in line he said "nice head butt asshole." I agreed. John and I have been great friends ever since. **Rugby was fun.\*\*\*\***

**About Bill Mills**

It would be impossible to tell the history of rugby at Kansas University, without discussing **Bill Mills**. The 6'4", 235 lbs bruiser from Osawatomie, KS started playing on the club in the spring of 1970 and continued as an outstanding forward until the middle of the fall 1972 season. In that season, his knee was speared by an opponent as he caught and "up & under". Mills played a few more games in the following years, but never regained his playing form.

Mills loved the game and came back to coach the Jayhawks in the fall of 1973. In 1974 he moved to Topeka and took a high school teaching job. He also became an excellent referee for the next two years. In 1976, he began coaching

the Topeka Rugby Club. That same year, the Jayhawks line up moved to younger players, and that displaced one of Mill's best friends, the perennial Jayhawk inside center/fly half **George Dalke**. Dalke had played for years next to the likes of **Ian Henry, Roger Walter, Bill McGillvray, and Craig Oliphant**, so he really knew how to play ball. Dalke switched to Topeka's club and within a year or so, Topeka was the top club in the Heart of America Union for a year.



**George Dalke**

In 1980, Mills quit teaching school and moved back to Lawrence. He devoted his coaching talent to the Jayhawks for most of the next 20 years. In the spring of 2006, he decided it was time to make a life change and moved to the desert Southwest. He had been working as a realtor/homebuilder for 25 years and with the help of Barney Frank and Freddie Mac, it was obvious to him that the building trade was headed for bad times. An early retirement would be a good thing.

Everything went as planned except he was driving his wife crazy by puttering around the house all day. Early retirement was not what it was cropped up to be. He went back to school, got his Teaching License, and found a job teaching high school again. He discovered that the educational system in America had morphed into something unrecognizable after a 30 year hiatus. Mills lives in Phoenix today.\*\*\*\*

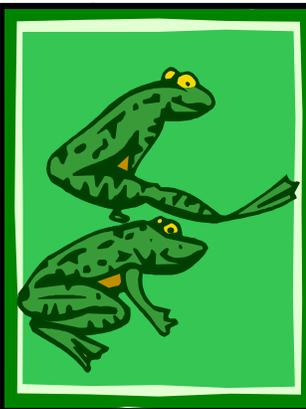


**1977 at just then opened Stonewall Inn**  
**L-R: Jim Slaughter, George Dalke, Bill Mills, Joe Kieltyka, and Roger Walter**

# Spring 2013 Schedule

Date	Day	Club	College
23-Feb	Sat	at Springfield	at Springfield
2-Mar	Sat	Islanders	John Brown U
9-Mar	Sat	at Ark Griffs	at Arkansas *
16-Mar	Sat	at KC Blues	Spring Break
23-Mar	Sat	Spring Break	
30-Mar	Sat		at Iowa St*
6-Apr	Sat	St Louis Fest	at Pittsburg
13-Apr	Sat	K State Club	at Lindenwood*
20-Apr	Sat	Wichita	CMSU
27-Apr	Sat		
4-May	Sat		
11-May	Sat		
18-May	Sat		
12-Jun	Wed	South Africa Tour	

\* Merit Table



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

The “Rugby Shorts” section is where we go back and cover those missed stories (ie Bill Mills article on prior page). 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...