

# OLD BOY QUARTERLY



### The Old Boy Quarterly

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

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

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

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

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

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

**The Kansas Rugby Foundation, Inc.**  
PO Box 1074  
Lawrence, KS, 66044

Featured In the next Issue:

**2005 – 2010**

## INSIDE THIS EDITION

**50TH ANNIVERSARY PLANS - PRELIMINARY AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 4 WEEKEND & MONTHLY EVENTS SPREAD THROUGH 2014**

- **OPEN LETTER TO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES**
- **2000-2005 ERA - INTERVIEWS WITH:**
  - **JASON AHRENS**
  - **OLIVER PARKINSON**

**THE KU RUGBY EXPERIENCE IS "DIFFERENT" FROM OTHER SCHOOLS. WE GO ON FOREIGN TOURS AND HAVE CONNECTIONS AROUND THE WORLD.**

**IN THIS ISSUE WE INTERVIEW TWO PLAYERS WHO PLAYED AT KU AND THEN LIVED ABROAD TO PLAY A SEASON OVERSEAS.**
- **COMMENTS FROM THE LINKEDIN GROUP**
- **A CHANCE ENCOUNTER IN AN ALLEY HUMOR SUBMITTED BY DAN KATZ**
- **1964-1967 ERA - GEORGE BUNTING MAILS IN A BOX OF PHOTOS & NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS**

**Did you play for the club between 2005 — 2010?**

**We are always looking for current news, too.**



This newsletter needs your scanned photos and your personal stories. Send material to [pd4bicycles@aol.com](mailto:pd4bicycles@aol.com) before July 15, 2014. Please provide your contact information.

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

## What's Going on This Spring Season...

Well another season is under way. The weather was rough the first month of practice. We have had a few film sessions, but the guys have been going out every Tuesday and Thursday. We had two "snow" practices with 12" to 15" on the ground and the wind blowing pretty good. I sat in my car with the windshield wipers on, but we had 25 guys out getting fit.

We have been getting 25-30 players showing up for practice and have played two games (44-22 win over Northern

Oklahoma and 17-15 loss to UMKC). We are playing in a Topeka Tourney and then will take a week off for Spring Break. We will play two games in KC at the Blues pitch on March 29<sup>th</sup>. Jayhawks Club vs. Blues Reserves and Jayhawks College vs. CMSU at 2:30 and 4pm. **We play our first home match April 5<sup>th</sup> vs. Missouri and KC Islanders. April 12<sup>th</sup> we play two games vs. K-State in Lawrence. We would love to see the Old Boys at the home games to cheer us on. The rest of the schedule can be found on the web site at [www.kurugby.org](http://www.kurugby.org)**

**The Alumni match will be the weekend of May 3<sup>rd</sup>.** Same deal as usual. Talk to Grant.

I have heard from a lot of you about the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and it looks like we will have a big turnout for the weekend of October 4<sup>th</sup>. Please make arrangements to spend the weekend as we celebrate 50 years of friendship. \*\*\*\*

Rock Chalk Jayhawk Rick Renfro

## Open Letter to High School Student-Athletes & Parents



Coach Adamson

Extracurricular activities are a large part of the college experience. Clubs, sports, work and other pursuits outside of the classroom can give students additional skills and perspectives that will improve their chances of connecting with an employer. They also reveal things that grades and test scores can't. By sticking with a sport through high school and college; a student shows that they are able to make a long-term commitment.

We want all student-athletes who come to KU to continue in athletic pursuits. The Kansas Jayhawk Rugby Club has built a 'complete' program which addresses the specific needs that a college athlete requires. **Our program includes; Academic Advisory, help finding housing that meets all budgets, job and internship aid, foreign student exchange, biannual tour of foreign countries (Ireland in 2015) and more.**

We play in a very competitive league which includes other Midwest schools; Arkansas, Iowa State, Kansas State, Missouri, Northeastern State (OK), Oklahoma State, Truman State (MO). And we compete for a national championship

within the USA Rugby structure. More about USA Rugby can be found at [www.USARugby.com](http://www.USARugby.com).

To ensure academic success we would like the student-athlete and their parents to meet with our **academic advisor Professor Bartholomew Dean**, Biological Anthropology. Professor Dean is passionate that each student should get the most out of their freshman year and their entire college experience.

Students who will need a job or help finding affordable housing should meet with our Director of Rugby, **Rick Renfro**. Rick is a KU alum and has been a business owner in Lawrence for over 30 years. With 50 years of KU Rugby alumni to draw from, Rick can also introduce students to other business owners and industry leaders in the Lawrence community who participated in the rugby program when they attended KU. These college jobs, internships, and business connections can be a real advantage to the student after graduation.

**The rugby coaching staff are each certified through USA and undergo biennial background checks to ensure the player-athlete is in a safe and 'high quality' environment.** Each coach is also required to complete the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) 'Player Protection Package' which

educates the coach on 'Concussion in Sports' and the NFHS 'Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment' which defines and provides recommendations in three specific areas; inappropriate relationships and behaviors, hazing, and bullying, including cyber bullying.

College is when a young adult can form relationships that will last a lifetime. It is important that these are 'high quality' relationships. Our program is an example of 50 years of relationship building that boasts of assets that are the envy of other clubs. KU Rugby Alumni have worked together to own and operate their very own rugby park known as Westwick Rugby Complex. Because the bonds of friendship have continued long after graduation; **former players are now business partners all over the country and even around the world.** They use each other's business' as "preferred partners" and give priority to job applicants that have KU Rugby on their applications.

**We would like to meet your student-athletes and their parents to make them aware of all that we have to offer.**

To facilitate the meetings, we can come to your school, contact the students and their parents through a mailing list that you provide, or you can forward this letter to the students and/or parents. \*\*\*\*

# Commentary on Player Internships & Scholarships

From LinkedIn Discussion – Kansas Jayhawks Rugby Club Alumni Group

## From Kelby Marks:

When I was playing for KU (88-94) there was a feeling that the club was moving forward in a way that few other clubs in the US were. We were competing on a national level, touring internationally, placing players on all the select sides, and we even acquired our own land! Heady times! When I graduated and got my first professional job, I bought a dual set of drinking yards and gave them to the club. At the Christmas banquet I presented them to the guys and said a few words about how I felt moved to give back to my club and community . . . At any rate, what I wanted to share was this: there was always talk then of how we needed to give back. Certainly **Louie, Rick, Mark, Grant, O.D.** and many others over the years have given us examples of how this works. In my time, I remember we had an honor that we would bestow every "X" number of years

by sending a promising youth to live overseas (NZ) to play and study rugby. **Scott Stites and Hans** were the first two and then I don't know what happened with that scholarship tradition.

I am holding back from going on a rant here about the current state of US rugby traditions and the current evils of the "professional era". Let me just suggest this: as an alumni that feels very passionate about giving back to my club, **could we offer an annual fee/donation option that gives us status as a club member and also generates funds to be used as a scholarship resource for 1) Touring costs, 2) University Study incentives 3) Exceptional Player abroad award?**

**Something like this could start small and perhaps (if launched at the Oct. event) it might get enough backing to really create a meaningful "endowment".**

## From Steve Merdinger:

Our firm does offer paid internships every summer, in fact we have hired 3 of our interns as permanent employees. The value of these programs isn't just the experience; it is the connections and future employment opportunity. **The percentage of graduates that did internships and got jobs is far greater than the percentage that get jobs without doing any internship.** To Kelby's point, I believe there many discussions going on regarding increasing the number ways —people can contribute to the club with more to come at the Alumni weekend and the 50th anniversary celebration. \*\*\*\*

## You Should Join the Club's LinkedIn Group !!!



The idea is to link the Old Boys' in the business community in a "members-only" group on LinkedIn.

We can also link with current undergrad players on the club. Student-players pursuing a degree and are interested in a summer internship (or a job) in a specific industry could post their interest to the Old Boy network on LinkedIn. Then Alumni could either offer the student a sum-

mer internship at their company if a fit, or see if they can facilitate it with a friend.

The easiest way to do this without a middle-man is for the Old Boy Alumni and the current student-players to use LinkedIn and join the **Kansas Jayhawks Rugby Football Alumni Group**.

### All interested in participating should:

- 1) If you don't already have one, establish a LinkedIn page. That's free and easy. Just go to this website and fill in the screen. [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)
- 2) Then search out "groups" and join the **Kansas Jayhawks Rugby Football Alumni Group**. It's a

"members-only" group and I will let you join.

3) Players can then post their interest in the "discussion" area and alumni can post their open positions in the same "discussion" area.

Both ends of the internship deal can then contact each other and work out the details.

Both the club's coach and the club's faculty advisor like this idea. **The coach believes it will help him recruit players.** Your company needs to encourage bright young people, so why not consider your club's rugby players? \*\*\*\*

## *Celebrating 50 Years of Rugby at the University of Kansas 1964 – 2014*

Join us in 2014 as we celebrate 50 years of Jayhawk Rugby! There will be numerous opportunities to renew old friendships and reflect on all that has happened over the past half-century. **The celebration culminates on Saturday, October 4, 2014, with a reception and dinner at the Adams Alumni Center on the campus of the University of Kansas.** Former players from across the country and around the world are expected to attend. Don't you dare miss it!

In addition to the events scheduled for October 2-4 (see details below), we've listed other activities taking place in the months leading up to October. For further information, please contact the persons designated. You can also reach out to other alums and arrange your own get-together. The whole idea is to rekindle happy memories and enjoy the off-the-charts hospitality that has characterized our Club since its inception. Remember that as an ex-KU rugby player, you can never be accused of having squandered your youth!

### April

On Saturday, **April 12th** witness the renewal of a great rivalry as the **KU Rugby Club takes on K-State at Westwick.** Afterwards, enjoy the traditional "third half" at Johnny's Tavern. Contact

**Doug McCauley** at (785) 218-6268  
or [mccauley@sunflower.com](mailto:mccauley@sunflower.com).

### May

The Club hosts its annual **Alumni Weekend on May 2-3**, which is always a beautiful time of year. This is a great opportunity to get back to Lawrence, particularly if you can't attend the big bash in October. Contact **Grant Lechtenberg** at (785) 423-3175 or [grant@sunflower.com](mailto:grant@sunflower.com).



### June

Dust off your kilt and attend the **USA vs. Scotland rugby match in Houston, Texas on June 7th.** The BBVA Compass Stadium has hosted international matches

in each of the past two years and has received rave reviews. Contact **David Hay** at (281) 923-7473 or [obno-sports@sbcglobal.net](mailto:obno-sports@sbcglobal.net).

### July

July is the "wild card" month. We invite someone to step forward and organize a summertime activity that everyone will enjoy.

### August

Can't beat fun at the old ballpark! Attend the baseball game between the **Kansas City Royals and Minnesota Twins on Thursday, August 28 at Kauffman Stadium.** Contact **Don Harris** at (913) 915-6774 or [dharris@rewmaterials.com](mailto:dharris@rewmaterials.com).

### September

Embark on the ultimate rugby road trip – the annual **Aspen Ruggerfest** – in which KU has participated since the 1960's. The event takes place on **September 11-14** and includes matches for old boys teams in several age brackets (Over 45, Over 50, Over 55). If there is sufficient interest we may be able to organize a Grayhawk team. If not, Aspen is still a great place to kick back, relax and enjoy. Contact **Gregg Jarvis** at (817) 690-1791 or [gjarvis1210@aim.com](mailto:gjarvis1210@aim.com).

## **Grand Celebration** **October 2-4**

On the evening of **Thursday, October 2**, plan to meet in the **Turn 2 Sports Bar at the Hollywood Casino in the Legends Entertainment District**, which is conveniently located for those who live in Lawrence, Kansas City and also for those flying into KCI.



On **Friday**, a **golf outing will be held at Alvamar Country Club** in Lawrence. Lunch will be served for everyone (golfers and non-golfers) beginning at 11:30 AM. Golf scramble starts at 1:30 PM. Other afternoon activities (cigars, shotguns, and single-malt) will be arranged for non-golfers. Reserve your spot by contacting **Paul Diedrich** at (785) 841-1084 or [diedrich@ku.edu](mailto:diedrich@ku.edu).

On **Friday evening**, **Johnny's Tavern** welcomes everyone to its flagship location in North Lawrence, the spiritual home of the KU Rugby Club since the 1970's. **Visit the clubhouse on the second floor where decades of rugby memorabilia is displayed.**

On **Saturday afternoon**, rugby matches will be played at **Westwick Rugby Complex** located two miles west of U.S. 59 Highway (South Iowa Street) on County Road 458. Picnic-style food and drink will be available.

You and your guest are cordially invited to attend a **banquet** honoring the Club and its members on **Saturday evening from 6:00 PM to 11:00 PM at KU's Adams Alumni Center**. This is a formal event. Seating is limited and **advance reservations are required**. Contact **Paul Diedrich** to reserve. You will be billed at a later date.

Costs for the above events are yet to be determined, as they are contingent upon the amount of participation for the respective events. Be assured we are doing everything possible to keep these events accessible to all who wish to join the festivities.



## **Lodging Options in Lawrence**

There are many fine hotels in Lawrence and you are sure to find one that suits your needs. Here are several suggestions.

**The Oread**, 1200 Oread Avenue, Lawrence, KS 66044. Located 1/2 block north of the Adams Alumni Center. Contact (785) 843-1200 or [www.theoread.com](http://www.theoread.com) (Ask about block of rooms reserved for "Rugby Alumni Reunion").

**Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites**, 3411 S. Iowa Street, Lawrence, KS 66046. Close to rugby fields, cinema complex and restaurants. Contact 1-888-465-4329 or (785) 749-7555.

**Comfort Inn & Suites**, 151 McDonald Drive, Lawrence, KS 66044. A new hotel near the West Lawrence turnpike exit. Contact (855) 849-1513.

**Holiday Inn Holidome**, 200 McDonald Drive, Lawrence, KS 66044. Contact (877) 859-5095.

**Hampton Inn**, 2300 W. Sixth Street, Lawrence, KS 66049. Contact (855) 271-3622.

**Best Western**, 2309 Iowa Street, Lawrence, KS 66046. Close to KU. Contact (800) 568-8520.

The following hotels have limited availability during October 2-4 (not all nights available):

**The Eldridge Hotel**, 701 Massachusetts Street, Lawrence, KS 66044. In the heart of historic downtown Lawrence. Contact (800) 527-0909 (toll free), (785) 749-5011 or [info@eldridgehotel.com](mailto:info@eldridgehotel.com)

**Marriott Springhill Suites**, One Riverfront Plaza, Lawrence, KS 66044. Just across the bridge from Johnny's Tavern. Contact (785) 841-2700. \*\*\*\*

Many thanks for literally years of planning by **Jimmy Bartle** and assistance of **Paul Diedrich**

In mid-March this year, current players **Kyle Richardson & Sean Rothwell** moved all the contents of the club house above Johnny's Tavern to the Up & Under Club next door. They then took on the challenge of cleaning up the club house.

Alumni **Doug McCauley, Paul Diedrich, and Steve Lange** came by to address the task of sorting through the accumulated 35 years of collected debris and figure out what to save for the anniversary exhibit in the club house.

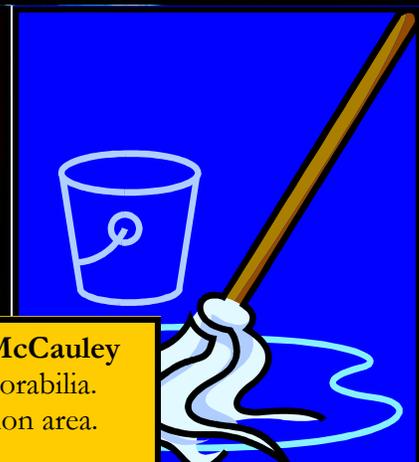
**Kyle Richardson & Sean Rothwell**, will move the selected items back to the club house and get them displayed on the walls.

The Rugby Club House was built right after **Rick Renfro & Doug Hassig** bought the building housing Johnny's Tavern. (See [April 2013 edition of this Newsletter for the story of the club house.](#))

The use of the club house was central to the club's operation in the early years of its existence. However, the Kansas liquor laws changed, so 18 year olds could no longer gather in Johnny's and the club's practices moved to Westwick on the far side of town. The Club House has rarely been used for a number of years.

The plan is to exhibit its collection of team photos, jerseys, trophies, and tour items for the 50th celebration activities. It will later be re-purposed to feature things that will help recruit players. \*\*\*\*

## Rugby Club House is Re-Purposed



Alumni **Paul Diedrich (L)** and **Doug McCauley** sort through the accumulated club memorabilia. The space will be turned into an exhibition area.



## KJRFC SPRING 2014 Schedule

Date	CLUB	COLLEGE	B-Side
Sat Feb 15			
Sat Feb 22			
Sat March 1		at NSU OK merit	
Sun. March 2		at OSU	
Sat March 8	at TopekavskKC	at UMKC	at UMKC
Sat March 15	Topeka Tourney	Topeka Tourney	
Sat March 22		Spring Break	
Sat March 29	at Blues Re-serves	at KC vs CMSU	
			Thurs JR Blues
Sat April 5	Islanders	MU merit	MU B
Sat April 12	K-State	K-State	
Sat April 19	at Des Moines	at Des Moines	
Sat April 26	at Wichita	at Wichita	
Sat May 3	Alumni Game	Alumni Game	SM East
Sat May 10		Kansas HS Tourney	

**UMKC Scoring Summary**

30:00	UMKC	Try	0-7
37:00	Griffin Hastings	Try	5-7
	Sean Rothwell	Miss	
45:00	Chris Vaughan	Try	10-7
	Sean Rothwell	Miss	
52:00	UMKC	Try	10-12
54:00	UMKC	Try	10-17
60:00	Tyler Steffes	Try	15-17
	Sean Rothwell	Miss	

**Vs. Blues**

2:00	Blues	Try	0-7
3:00	Blues	Try	0-12
7:00	Blues	Try	0-19
10:00	Blues	Try	0-26
13:00	Blues	Try	0-31
16:00	Blues	Try	0-38
18:00	Blues	Try	0-45
Half			
26:00	Blues	Try	0-50
27:00	Blues	Try	0-57
35:00	Blues	Try	0-62

**Vs. GOATS**

3:00	Goats	Try	0-7
5:00	Sean Rothwell	PK	3-7
Half			
23:00	Goats	Try	3-12
26:00	Goats	Try	3-19
30:00	Goats	Try	3-26
37:00	Goats	Try	3-33
39:00	Tyler Steffes	Try	8-33
	Sean Rothwell	Conv	10-33

**Vs. Salina**

2:00	Chris Vaughan	Try	5-0
	Sean Rothwell	Conv	7-0
14:00	Chris Vaughan	Try	12-0
	Sean Rothwell	Conv	14-0
Half			
23:00	Salina	Try	14-5
32:00	Kylar	Try	19-5
	Sean Rothwell	miss	
36:00	Sean Rothwell	PK	22-5
38:00	Sean Rothwell	Try	27-5
	Jeremy Francis	miss	

**Back row:** Paul King, Paul Dietrich, Mark "Boomer" Mitscher

**Middle row:** Don Harris, Scott Riley, Louie Riederer, Steve Merdinger, Rick Renfro, Buffalo Darrell (Bus Driver), Lou Blanco, Bill Boyle, John Brooks

**Front row:** Larry Krisman, Gregg Jarvis, Mike Hammond, Tony Rio, Dave Hammil

**Rugby Club Game Results so far this spring**

↓ **Golf Rodeo in Ft. Lauderdale** ↓

The 2014 Kansas Rugby Bucks vs Baby Bucks Golf Rodeo brought good friends and teammates together in sunny Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, this past January. After much pre-event bantering by both sides, a squad of 16 participated in the much anticipated competition. The Bucks consist of alumni club members, who played prior and during the mid 1980's, and the Baby-Bucks are collegiate guys who played in the early and mid-eighties. Many have been friends for over 30 years. All were past participants of the golf rodeo, with the exception of a new Baby-Baby Buck member, former All American Wing Forward Tony Rio from Chicago. A new tradition may be starting.

The golf events and after parties were held over a 3 day period, with 2 competitive Buck vs. Baby-Buck matches. The Bucks were captained by Louie Riederer, event organizer, and the Baby Bucks by Paul King. Local residents and team managers, Larry Krisman and Lou Blanco, arranged the itinerary, hotel, and tour bus. Aside from golf, a tour stop at the famous Ft. Lauderdale beach and

Elbow Room Bar, Bokampers Sports Bar & Restaurant, and an alumni meeting held by Rick Renfro and Paul Diedrich, addressing the club status and upcoming 50 year anniversary events were discussed.

The competition was played at the Emerald Isles and Hillcrest courses, and went deep into the final day, with the Baby-Bucks prevailing in the end, and taking home the traveling plaque. Captain Paul King, and Mike Hammond were the most consistent Baby Buck players, and led the team in scoring.

The Golf Rodeo has been traced back to 1998, with the Bucks leading the overall victories, with 9 wins in the 17 years.

This group of alumni looks forward to this event; to revisit old stories and build new ones. Lots of laughs and good times. Most are planning to participate in many of the upcoming 50 year reunion events, and attend the big get together in Lawrence this coming October. For more information on participating in the Alumni Golf Rodeo, please contact Louie Riederer. \*\*\*\*



## A Chance Encounter in an Alley

Submitted by Dan Katz

Well, I was walking home one foggy and chilled evening from yet another "only mens" outing at the IHOP sponsored by our PTA. The wind started to blow a bit and eventually a full moon lit the sky. I found myself thinking about the conversations that drifted around the table from my fellow meeting participants.

Harold, formally known as "the Hair" was telling us about the new coating he applied to the bottom of his lawn mower to keep the grass from clinging. Richard shared with us his new use for sugar to keep ants away. Robert served up a solution to make sure the right size towels were stacked appropriately and Phillip once again proclaimed his appreciation for fabric softener. I did in fact become a bit dizzy from walking with those thoughts circling around my brain and had to search for a place to sit down. I found an alley that would also serve as a short cut home.

I sat on an empty beer case and thought of the years past. The smell of dew laden grass and how it could cure a hangover drifted pass my nose. The burn of a scab being scraped off with the first tackle tickled my knees. The memories of a well refined ruck, or even the ones I screwed up, passed by my consciousness. Then there were parties that were best forgotten albeit I never planned to run for political office. In the day, I dislocated my shoulder, broke my nose, and still played on. Today, I catch a cold which one of my kids brought home from school and I am in bed. What the hell happened?

The smell of the jerseys that were not washed was an oft time remembrance, however that night it was as if it was right next to me. Thinking of all those self improvement courses that were selected for me, I looked at my feet. Next to my docksiders was a pair of beat up tennis shoes underneath a couple of trash bags....Oh my God!!!!.....they were attached to a pair of legs.

Frightened, I wrestled the bags of trash

off the body and poked it with a stick I found nearby, only to be surprised by the lad yelling..... "WHAT....?" I stepped back and stuttered "Do you need a little help" He responded "I didn't until some guy sat down on my box and started talking to himself"



I looked at the man that apparently had not shaved nor bathed in a year, wearing a tattered ripped collar rugby shirt and I wondered if he had eaten a decent meal in a month. I reached into my pocket and grabbed whatever cash I had (\$27.00) and started to hand it to him. He looked at the cash with desire.....I said "Now, you are not going to spend this on beer and whisky are you?"

He responded: "I have not had a drink let alone a single beer in over 18 months, the Missy did not approve of my behavior while drinking"

I asked: "Well then are you going to spend this money on drugs?"

He looked at me and scoffed "No need nor desire for the last 18 months as well"

"OK, I asked, are you going to spend this money for sex with the gal down the street?"

He said "No, I plum forgot about sex about 36 months ago"

"Well how about going to the IHOP around the corner and have a decent meal" I suggested.

"IHOP?" He squelched. "I do not want your money if I have to eat there" (I took this as a no)

"Man, I want to help you; you are a fellow past rucker I can tell. Can I at least bring you home so that you can get cleaned up and get a good nights rest?"

"Well, you are right, my Missy told me to quit playing Rugby, however I do sleep well when I want to, but why are you so fixed to take me home.?"

I thought for a minute....then I told him. "Well to be honest, I want to show my wife what a man looks like when he can't drink, have sex, or play rugby!" \*\*\*\*



**Dan Katz was the club's hooker in the late 1970's. His rants on life are always a good read.**

## 2000 - 2005 Era of the Jayhawks

### Jason Ahrens - A Spiritual Journey

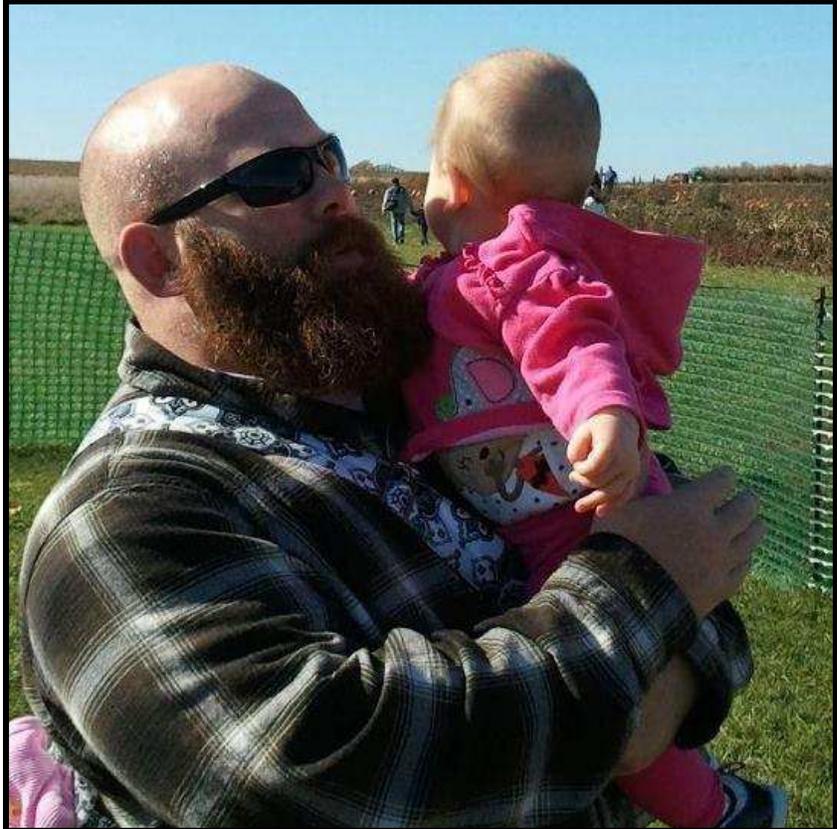
One the best players from the 2000-2005 era travels an unexpected road

Jayhawk Old Boy **Kacey Slusher** opened the last quarter's newsletter within minutes of its sending. He read **Derek Mannell's** interview and shot me an email immediately after that. He offered up a humorous observation about the rugby club: "The Marine Corps was like this in the fact that your guys and the guys before were tough as (hell), but everyone after you is a huge pussy." He then rattled off a few players I should contact about his 2000 -2005 era and foremost was **Jason Ahrens**, a college side captain from the era.

I knew from the context of the referral that Jason would be a beast of a player. I got Jason's contact information and set an appointment to interview him. What followed was a surprise for to me to hear and perhaps for Jason to tell. It's an interesting story.

Jason grew up in Oakley, KS out on I-70, nearly to the Colorado line. He said it was a town known for its motels when blizzards close the highway and "The Worlds Largest Prairie Dog". He excelled in high school sports, playing football, basketball, and track. He quit wrestling, the sport he had the most natural talent, to focus on basketball. The game of basketball was the sport that was probably hardest for him. The reason for the shift was because of his dad's interest in the higher-profile sport of basketball.

He came to KU in 1996 and lived in the TKE house. He decided when he became a sophomore that next fall in 1997; he would try to be a walk-on football player. At 5'10" and 225-250 lbs, Jason was a formidable athlete. He had some meetings with the football coaching staff and was ready to go, but then he ran into Jayhawks rugby players **Zak Martin, Eric Radtke, Mike Efferts, and Ryan Crosby** at a bar off campus one afternoon. They told him about rugby and



**Kacey Slusher - Retired Marine & Former Jayhawk Hooker.**  
He suggested interviews of Jason Ahrens & Oliver Parkinson

suggested that he go to both some rugby practices and football practices and choose which one he liked best. He came out to Westwick and got hooked. He was immediately put at flanker or # 8, where his size and quickness could be put to use.

One of the biggest games he can remember was winning the College Division of the Heart of America Tournament, when it was played at the former Richards Gabauer Air Force Base in southern KC in 2000. The final was against Truman State who had beaten the Jayhawks in several previous meetings. Ahrens said he scored a total of 4 tries in that game (but the ref called 2 of them back).

#### New Zealand

In 2001, **Rick Renfro** encouraged Ahrens to go to New Zealand to play for a few months. Ahrens had a teammate & roommate from New Zealand named **Aaron Hoare**. That May it was arranged that Ahrens would go to New Zealand and stay with Aaron's dad and step-mom in Porirua located 20 kilometers north of Wellington. Another Jayhawks player named **Matt Schwartz** also went to New Zealand with Ahrens, but stayed and played somewhere else. To cover expenses, Ahrens landed a job working on a construction project that was rehabbing a big building. Ahrens joined a Wellington rugby club on their Senior 2nd side. It turned out that the weak point of that

### Jason Ahrens—continued

side's roster was at center, so Ahrens was assigned to play there. Most of the club's players were Polynesian. Ahrens stuck out as a white American. His coach wanted to test his toughness so on the first day, he had them do a one-on-one tackling drill. They paired Ahrens with a huge Polynesian who was a professional rugby league player, who had just moved back to New Zealand. Ahrens was given the ball and elected to try to run right through the guy. It was big impact with the Polynesian smashing Ahrens to the ground, but the team gave him a lot of respect for what he did. Ahrens said in most of the games, the players were all big Polynesians and because he was a white American, his toughness continued to be tested. In the first game he played, he ended up being named "Man of the Match". He returned home after 4 months to re-join the Jayhawks in the fall.

### Indiana Street Rugby House

Ahrens said that the social life on the club was a ball. **Matt Kenney** was looking for a house to rent and found a house that could house 9 people located at 1142 Indiana on the footprint of what is now the Oread Hotel (two blocks north of the Student Union). This was near a 1990's rugby house a few doors away. They leased it for two years (2001-2003) and the house was filled with rugby players including **Nick Jansen, Kasey Slusher, Matt Schwartz, Aaron Hoare, Will Lenz, and Jimmy Des Garennes**. The house was located one block away from the freshman women's dorm GSP- Corbin. Ahrens future wife Kelly was a freshman in that dorm. The Resident Advisor on her floor had an orientation meeting and told the girls to **"NEVER go to parties in that house! It's full of RUGBY PLAYERS!!! If you walk past that house and they start yelling at you; just keep on walking!!!"** Ahrens laughed; of course after the RA said that, the rugby house was the **ONLY** place those girls wanted to go.

He said the house had a porch with columns on the front and they used to lay on the roof above the porch to work on their tans. One time they had a party and so many people were on the porch that it partially collapsed. (We shared a laugh because the same thing happened a generation earlier on the side porch at the 103 Club rugby house in the 1970's.)

### Direction

I asked about the observation in **Derek Mannell's** interview, that although there were still great athletes, the quantity started to reduce in numbers. Ahrens agreed. Ahrens said that when he left the Jayhawks in 2005, they had some very good, but young players joining the club. The future of the club looked like it was turning up when he left. They just needed a larger numbers of players.

While Ahrens played, he said there were probably around 10 really good & committed college players, but there was not

a big enough pool of other decent players to fill out the side to make it as good as it could have been. He thought the cause was directly the result of the shrinkage of the older club side team. Those older players started to retire. He noted that the college players need to have a good team to scrimmage and train against. The quality of practices and college side numbers went downhill as the more experienced club side shrank. That left the club mostly college players and that encouraged a cycle to be more of a social side.

### Laramie

A prime example of this shift to a social side was in 2001, they had enough college victories in the HoA to qualify for the national playoffs. However, their first round game would be against the University of Wyoming on the Laramie pitch. Wyoming had a great coach named Cortez who was running arguably the best college program in the Western Union at that time.



Jason Ahrens & Family

### Jason Ahrens—continued

The club chartered a big van with a driver to take the team, but only 13 Jayhawks showed for the trip. They decided to go anyway and took off. As they approached western Nebraska, the bravado wore off and it sunk in that the Jayhawks didn't have the roster to compete. They would go all the way to Laramie just to be pounded by a power-house on their home field and then have to turn around and drive all that way back home. They elected to overnight in Kearney and just drive back to Lawrence the next day, without ever showing up for the game. There was a Jayhawk player named **Rocco Danno** who had elected to fly to Laramie, rather than drive. He flew to Laramie and his team wasn't there.

The team was at the point of deciding if it was going to be serious team or a party team. They had 9 or 10 that wanted to be serious, but didn't have enough other serious players to get to the next level. Looking back on it, Ahrens is sorry the Laramie trip went down that way, but is sure they would have been pummeled in the game.

#### The Injury & A New Direction

It took him until 2003 to get his degree at KU. Ahrens said he switched majors from Journalism to Education. He also made some bad decisions about money and had to drop out to work a while and then come back.

Ahrens loved the sport and was very good at it. His focused vision was to someday become an Eagle and to be on the field as the National Anthem played before a match. However he seriously injured his knee in a club side game in 2004 and it all came as a crushing blow. He realized his dream was now pretty much shattered.

I may have interviewed religious players in past editions, but Ahrens is the first to offer his relationship with God in a story. He could not believe that the injury had happened to him and his dream. He turned to prayer and wondered about his future. He had to take a hard look at everything in his life. It turned out that his

hard look made him a better person in a lot of ways. His whole life up to that point had made his athletic ability his emotional center. Ahrens had been a guy who thought his ability was all he needed in life. He was always a "star" and people focused on him as something of a sports hero. It even affected his relationship with his father, which had been troubled. He excelled at sports partially for his father's approval.

The injury made him create a different relationship with his dad; one where he communicated better and was more dimensional than just being his dad's "star-athlete". That ended up being a blessing. His father passed away unexpectedly in 2011. Between the time of his injury and his father's death, Jason spent more quality time with his father than he probably would have otherwise. That quality time is something he treasures now.

He wanted to stay in the sport of rugby, but could no longer play. He became the coach of the **Jayhawks Women's Club** for a year in 2004. It was a good team and he enjoyed his role performing coaching duties. He was learning to be involved in a sport in a way other than being a star.

In 2005, his rugby buddy **Kacey Slusher** worked for the shipping company JB Hunt and got Ahrens working with him. Ahrens took his long-time girl friend Kelly (now wife) and moved to Lansing Michigan in 2005 to work for the shipping company. He rehabbed his knee enough to start to play for a rugby club. They put him in the backfield as inside center, but Ahrens knew his old speed was no longer there. A year later he transferred with the same company and ended up moving to his current home in Minneapolis and playing for the Metropolis Rugby Club.

He became a loosehead prop. He noted that most people don't really notice a prop's contribution to a game. Props quietly win balls in scrums and loose play. Without their hard play, the backs would not get the ball and those backs would have a miserable time. Nobody comes up to a prop after a game and complements

them on the great job they were doing in scrums and rucks. It's a role player's spot and maybe one that only those who play the position can appreciate. It's a spot that some athletes wouldn't play if their ego requires them to be a star. The idea of being a humble contributor to other people is something that carried over from rugby to other facets of his life.

The Metropolis club was a powerful one with a Division I and a Division III side. The Division I side made the national club playoffs to the "round of 32" in 2009 and "elite 8" in 2010 with Ahrens at prop.

A few players were around the same age or older than Ahrens and were on the cusp of retirement. They agreed that they would all stay on the club together one last year in 2011 and play on the Division III team and then retire after that season. It ended up being a terrific season. Ahrens's side became the Division III National Champions.

Jason said that as that final game kicked off, he looked up into the sky as the ball was coming towards his team, he had this wave of peace come over him. When he was young and playing for the Jayhawks; he imagined himself someday as a star on the Eagle team. The course of his life still ended up with him playing in a "big game", but not the one he had dreamed of, nor was he playing it as a star. He had made the journey a different way than he had envisioned, but he would not have changed anything. His life ended up in a better place. He had a great wife, one son, and another boy on the way. He felt that his dad was with him. More good things had come of his life than probably would have otherwise occurred.

Jason Ahrens lives in Minneapolis with his wife Kelly and two young sons. He still works in the logistics industry. He is retired from actively playing the sport.\*\*\*\*

## Oliver Parkinson 1998 – 2004 Player

### Poster boy for what we hope is the Jayhawk's Future

(An experienced High School Player - Comes to KU to Play - Then Lives & Plays Over Seas)

#### Why would you label someone a “poster boy for the future”?

Consider that Oliver played 4 years of rugby in high school before he came to KU. He played on the Jayhawks' college side for 4 years. Then after graduating, he took advantage of the KU tradition of playing abroad and lived in Australia for 15 months, where he put to work both his KU biochemistry degree and rugby skills.

*Oliver Parkinson is exactly the kind of guy the Jayhawks would like to attract.*

- He had 4 years of experience by the time he turned 18.
- He played steadily for the Jayhawks through college.
- He took advantage of the foreign experiences that the club could uniquely offer.

I caught up with Oliver at his Seattle home after he was wrapping up a day

working for a pharmaceutical consulting company that helps bring drugs to market.

#### Q: How were you first exposed to rugby?

My dad was born in England, so I was always exposed to it through him. My dad ended up playing for Johnson County Rugby Club in Kansas City, when I was a kid. My older brother and I started playing youth rugby and played for the club at Shawnee Mission East High School. When my brother started playing there, my dad became the assistant coach. My dad had been a back and the coach had been a forward with the KC Blues (**Tom Shawver**), so they worked well together. By the time I enrolled at SM East, my dad was the head coach, so I was the “coaches boy” while I played in high school.

#### Q: A number of older alumni around my age went to SM East. Was your SM East club good?

We were “in the pack”. The really good clubs were Rockhurst (and now so is

Thomas Aquinas). The difference was the number of players on their clubs. We barely had 15 and they each had two full sides that could scrimmage. We beat Rockhurst once in my senior year. That was because we had a core of guys who had played together for several years.

#### Q: What position did you play and how big were you?

By the time I got to KU, I was 6 feet tall. I started out at 155 pounds and grew up at age 22 to 210 pounds. I was a flyhalf and sometimes fullback. I had a pretty good right foot for kicking and a not -so-good left foot.

#### Q: How did you get recruited to play rugby for the Jayhawks? How did you find out about the club in Lawrence?

I always knew about the Jayhawk club. I played against the Lawrence high school team at Westwick. What cemented the deal was that my dad played for the Johnson County Rugby Club and I played with that club at wing in the fall of my senior year. (High school rugby only had a spring season.) I went to Johnson



Oliver Parkinson running over a player in a game at K-State in February 2003. He later went to Australia to live & play.

**Oliver Parkinson—continued**

County's practice field the summer I graduated from high school expecting to practice with Johnson County. Instead, there were a bunch of Jayhawks that were home for the summer and practicing there. I fell in with them that summer playing 7's. When I came to KU that fall; after the first week practice, they took me with them to play wing in Minneapolis.

**Q: The Jayhawks are considering a program of small scholarships that would pay a high school player something like \$1,000 a year to play for the Jayhawks. They would like to recruit an entire high school rugby club to come to KU. Do you think that money would be an attractive incentive for high school kids at SM East, Thomas Aquinas, or Rockhurst?**

Honestly, I doubt that would be much of an incentive. Most of those kids come from affluent homes in Johnson County. Many are looking at Ivy League schools that also play rugby. I don't think \$1,000 a year would sway a decision. If they went to Thomas Aquinas or Rockhurst, the annual high school tuition is thousands of dollars. Their parents are willing to pay for their educations. However, that financial incentive may be more effective with high school players from somewhere besides Johnson County.

**Q: Tell me about some of the players on the Jayhawks side during your years in college?**

Some of the good players were **Matt Schwartz** and older brother **Mike Schwartz**, **Ryan Crosby**, **Mike Eferetz**, and **Ryan Kilainy** was the captain the first year I played.



**Mike & Matt Schwarz in 1999**

Oliver said that Matt was the best player on the team and the best back he ever played with.

The front row was **Mili Dimitrijevic** who was a Serbian & **Nick Jansen** at props. Nick loved snack cakes. The hooker was **Kasey Slusher** at 5'9" 200 pounds. The first time I met Slusher, we were practicing indoors in the winter at the Anschutz Pavilion behind Allen Field House. Slusher showed up fresh out of the Marine Corp, covered in tattoos, and one of the fittest people I ever saw. He was all muscle and could run full-tilt all day. Until you got to know him; he was a scary dude.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> rows were a position that had a lot of turnover. **Matt Kenney** was about 6'5" and every bit 250 pounds at age 18.

He was a terrific 2<sup>nd</sup> row. He had played in high school at Park Hill and I had played against him. The back row guys were led by **Jason Ahrens** and **Brendan Cross** who were terrific. Cross was a small guy, but he was a beast.

We had trouble finding and keeping scrumhalves. We had **Ryan Crosby** my first year. We ended up taking a series of wings and playing them there, like **Will Lenz**. He did a good job of passing the balls, but we never had anyone that could play the game the way you need; by marshalling the forwards and controlling the pace of the game. Playing scrumhalf has its own science and you need someone to really devote to the position. I think scrumhalf was the club's weak link during my time there.

In the backfield, I played either flyhalf or fullback. I swapped those positions with **Matt Schwartz**, who was the club's best player, hands down. Matt was 5'10" 200 pounds. He had played in high school in Lawrence.

He wasn't exceptionally fast, but was a phenomenal passer & kicker. He made everybody who played with him better. If you got close to the right spot, he would set you up for a score. He went to live and play in New Zealand for awhile. **He was the best back I ever played with**, and that includes 2 Wallabies (**Peter Hines** and **Drew Mitchell**).

We had **JP Davies** playing in the centers and he was terrific. He was 6'2" and 220 pounds. When he showed up to practice the first time; they wanted to play him in the forwards. I told them "No you don't!

I want him outside of me so I can feed

**Oliver Parkinson with ball in Queensland, Australia.**

He said he scored on this play after a 60 meter run.

Unfortunately, he planted his foot wrong as he crossed the try line and his knee blew - nobody hit him. His last play in Australia.



**Oliver Parkinson—continued**

him the ball 50 times a game!?” He was one of our best players. He played along with **Matt Kenney, Matt Schwartz** and me on the HoA All-Star squad. Davies got familiar with the University of Wyoming’s coach **Rich Cortez** who was coaching the Western RFU All-Stars. Cortez had a terrific rugby program at Wyoming and had a habit of scooping up great players off clubs that weren’t on a marquee level. The Wyoming rugby club was a big deal on their campus, because they didn’t have a good football or basketball team. JP Davies transferred to Wyoming along with **Kacey Slusher**, who went there after he graduated from KU. Davies went on to play for the Eagles’ 7’s team.

**Q: How competitive were the Jayhawks against the best teams in the area?**

The best club we played was probably Truman State. Their coach **Bill Sexton** has been there for decades and has built his own personal brand at the club. That club recruits, trains, and retains a consistently good side. They were our biggest rivals. The first season I was at KU, we lost to them by 60 or 80 points. During the time I was there, we beat them 3 or 4

times and lost to them 8 or 9 times. The Jayhawks got more competitive and we started beating them my junior year. Truman State was consistently in the playoffs. The Jayhawks problem was always numbers of players. When I was there, we skipped going into the playoffs a few times after qualifying, because we couldn’t field a full team during spring break. We got all kinds of sanctions against us by the Heart of America, because we wouldn’t field a team in the playoffs. The worst was when we went to play Wyoming in the playoffs. The Jayhawks hired a driver for the van and he took all day to drive only 1/3 of the way there. Then he checked the team into a hotel at 6:00 PM; with 700 miles left to drive and a 10:00 AM game the next day. The club only had 13 players in the van and they decided to blow off the game and drove home.

**Q: What kept the Jayhawks from being a consistently dominant club like Truman State?**

I think it was the coaching. The Jayhawks had a lot of turnover in coaches and didn’t have that a consistent, talented guy who could gear up a program like Cortez at Wyoming or Sexton at Truman State.

**Q: What was the most memorable game you played as a Jayhawk?**

It was the last game we played against Truman State at Westwick my senior year. We came from behind to win 20-18. It was a personal triumph for me. **I scored a drop kick, a conversion, a penalty, and scored the go-ahead try at the end of the game for the win.** I accounted for 13 of the 20 points scored. That was fun.

**Q: Tell me about your time in Australia?**

The first year I was on the club, the club had a couple of Kiwis, **Aaron Hoar** and **John Whitaker**. I talked to Whitaker about coming over and playing in New Zealand. **Matt Schwartz** and **Jason Ahrens** had already gone over and played in Wellington. I made up my mind to go over seas. I wasn’t able to track down a work opportunity. My dad worked for a scientific company and had a friend-of-a-friend who just happened to be looking for a full-time lab assistant in Australia. I had just graduated with a degree in biochemistry, so my dad called her up and got me a job in a research lab in Brisbane. It didn’t hurt that the World Cup was in Brisbane that year. I was there for 15 months. I got on the University of Queensland Rugby Club that was nearby. That was a club with 7 sides and 120 players at practice. I made the 2<sup>nd</sup> side for

them. I got there in March and their final game was in October. I was a reserve on the 1<sup>st</sup> side. I was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> side’s league championship game and was able to score a try, however I injured my knee on the play. It was really stupid. Nobody hit me; I just planted my foot wrong.

**Oliver Parkinson on right approaching a ruck.**

**@ Ballymore Rugby Stadium in Queensland.**



**Oliver Parkinson—continued**

**Q: How did you end up in Seattle?**

After coming back from Australia, I worked for a small lab in Kansas City that my dad started. I decided to go to grad school. My former boss in Brisbane was friends with a guy at the University of Washington. So when I told her in Brisbane that I wanted to go to grad school; she said this Seattle lab is the one I should join. **So my decision to play rugby over seas ended up helping me pick a grad school and where to live in the US. \*\*\*\***



←	↑
<p>2002 Sevens (L-R)</p> <p>Brandon Cross, Charlie ?, Kyle “JD” Ricketts, Dirk Liebert, Oliver Parkinson, Will Lenz, “Kiwi” Aaron Hoare, Matt Schwartz</p>	<p>Aspen “Social Team” 1999 (L-R)</p> <p>Colin “Go Go” Gotham, Derek Mannell, Matt Schwartz, Hayden Krizman, Mike Schwarz, Zack Martin, Ray Stillions</p>



Aspen team pic on Rio Grande field 2000

Back row: (L-R ) Derek Mannell, Graham Mcharge, Pat Roberts, Wayne Gray, Kiwi (Aaron Hoare), Phil Olson  
 Front row: (L-R) Jeff Hoobler, Milivoje Dimitriovic, Bob ‘Guns’ Rossen, Grant Lechtenberg, Greg Jarvis, Aaron Haehn, Mike & Matt Schwartz

# **A 50th Anniversary Event**

**Saturday  
April 12**

## **Jayhawks vs K-State Rugby** **at Westwick Rugby Complex** **In Lawrence**

Some of you who played before 1990 have never seen Westwick.

**Come out to see a renewal of an old rivalry and  
proceed to the “3rd half”  
at Johnny’s Tavern.**

**We want to get a grip on numbers. For interest  
please contact **Doug McCauley**  
at (785) 218-6268  
or [mccauley@sunflower.com](mailto:mccauley@sunflower.com)**

# A Box of Photos & Clippings From George Bunting

In February, the club's founder mailed us a box of his photos & newspaper clips from his time with the club. It's a great "time capsule" from the period 1964 -1967. There is so much in the box that we will present it over the next few editions. The early photos show how much the Jayhawks & the Kansas City Rugby Club's paths intersected.

[For more about Bunting and the formation of the club, see the January 2012 edition of this newsletter.](#)

Bunting was the absolute perfect guy to start our rugby club.

- He focused the newspaper on the club and was a terrific recruiter who attracted a talented 40-man squad.
- He negotiated with the football team for the use of old practices jerseys and got permission to use the athletic fields near Allen Field House.
- He personally purchased the club's first set of rugby jerseys in their second season.
- He orchestrated a tour of Ivy League Schools during spring break 1966 and proposed similar tours should occur every year.



- More than anything, he stressed that the sport should be played as a fun past-time by the students. He notes it was relatively inexpensive to buy the equipment to play, the game was pretty easy to pick up, and the players could be all sizes.

[Thank you George for the memorabilia \*and\* for starting the club.](#)

**EX-GRIDDERS RETURN**  
**Rugby Game Features Dusenbury and Burton**  
 (By The Star's Own Service)  
 Lawrence, Kas.—While Iowa State and Kansas were getting ready for their football battle yesterday, a pair of former Big Eight gridgers helped their respective rugby teams fight to a 3-3 tie.  
 Doug Dusenbury, K-State's former booming punter, joined the K. U. Rugby club, which met the Kansas City Rugby Football club in a match preceding the football game. Newt Burton, co-captain of last year's Oklahoma Sooners, gave the Kansas City team equal Big Eight representation.  
 A drop-kick by Steve Schuman of K. C. R. F. C. tied the game with five minutes left to play.



**KC's Steve Schuman on right talks to an unidentified Jayhawk (Bob Wisdom?) and two other KC players.**

**Can you identify the guys in this photo?**

# KU Rugby Enthusiasts Have Opportunity to Kick Off Steam

By Jerry Kern

The casual sound of football for fun and all of its fringe benefits lured 21 men to the first meeting of the KU Rugby Football Club held last Monday evening.

The KU Rugby Club is headed by George Bunting, who says he would rather consider the game of rugby as football for fun because of its easy-going attitude by the players and their usual post-game get-together with the other team.

It is a tradition in the game of rugby, that after kicking each other all over the playing field, teams acquaint themselves over a keg of beer.

**BUNTING POINTED** out, however, that although a lot of fun is involved, it is necessary to be in good physical condition.

This is necessary because rugby is a rough game. It involves 15 players who play in 40-minute halves, continuously, with no padding and lots of running, kicking, hitting and tackling.

The meeting Monday night was primarily a discussion of when and where to practice, and of the coming fall schedule which was high-

lighted by the mention of plans for a trip to Minneapolis, Minn., Oct. 16-17, to play the Minnesota University rugby team.

**THE CLUB DOES CHARGE.** \$4.00 per person per year which is used for the aftergame refreshments and rugby jerseys. The shoes and shorts, which are the only other part of the uniform, are furnished by the players themselves.

Bunting said that the rugby clubs also furnish their own officials. Foreign students who have played on organized rugby teams

overseas often do the officiating.

The KU Rugby Club has had 44 men sign up for the club. Bunting hopes that 30 will be able to play.

A policy of separation from University control permits the club to train as it wishes and conduct its own social activities. It also means that there are no eligibility requirements for participation in the sport.

**COMPETITION** is provided by the schools and clubs contacted by the club. Eventually the club will attempt to send a team on a spring trip every year.

For Coffee, Pastry, Folksingers, Poetry Readings,  
Quiet, and Occasional Controversy

## THE FIERY FURNACE

Open

Fridays 8:30-12:30

Saturdays

1116 Louisiana

(Enter Thru

Garage)

### Things to note in article:

- Dues are \$ 4.00 a year (wow!)
- Desire to go on tour every year.
- Players only have to buy shoes & shorts.
- A policy of separation from the university permits the club to train as it wishes and conduct its own social policy.
- Its fun, but you have to be in good physical condition.
- Best quote:

Consider the game of rugby as "football for fun", because of its easy-going attitude by the players and their usual post-game get-togethers with the other team.

THE KANSAS CITY TIMES, MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1965

# In Rugby, Sir, Winning Isn't All

By Harry Krause

(A Member of The Star's Staff)

**L**AURENCE, K. A. S.—Few athletes can successfully combine competition, fellowship, physical fitness, beautiful spectators and post-game parties, but the rugby players, those nonprofessional athletes at the University of Kansas, are doing a fine job of it.

Last Saturday, the K. U. Rugby club, host to the Kansas City ruggers, played to a 3-3 tie. The score, it seemed, was the least important aspect of the game. At least three times during the play, members of the teams could be heard asking the spectators what the score was.

It isn't that the teams don't care who wins; it's just that they are more concerned that the game is played as befitting gentlemen.

## It's Rough, With No Padding

Rugby, one might assume from the above, is rather tame. But just the opposite is true. It is a ferocious, contact sport, and the players wear no padding; the uniform consists of long socks, shorts, jerseys and soft-cleated shoes.

It is similar to football or soccer, but no forward passing is allowed. The game is divided into two 40-minute halves, which are played continuously. The only occurrence which can halt the game is a serious injury to a player. And if a player is injured, the team plays with 14 instead of 15—substitutions are not allowed.

A football field is used, and the playing area is extended to 110 yards.

George Bunting, president of the K. U. Rugby club and a second-year law student from Kansas City, organized the club last fall. Bunting led a Dartmouth college in during his undergraduate years and is enthusiastic about the sport's reception here.

## Exciting, Fast-Moving

"The goal of our club," Bunting said, "is to have fun playing a sport and to build up the game in this area. For the spectator, it is exciting and fast-moving, with enough body contact to satiate the most blood-thirsty types.

"We seem to be winning more converts from the slower, high-pressure football all the time.

"Who plays rugby and why? I think of rugby as football for fun. Many other sports that are so highly competitive could take a lesson from the true sportsmanship and amateurism of rugby.

## The Applause Is Mutual

"It is traditional to applaud the opponent's efforts. If a team shows up a man short, then we lend them one, usually our best



AFTER THE GAME both teams joined in a beer party and talked over the K. U.'s game this weekend with the University of Minnesota. K. U. will play the Kansas City club and the University of Missouri at Kansas City club October 23 in Lawrence.

requirements—let the N. C. A. A. or A. A. U. ruin some other sport—we play for fun," Bunting said.

After the game, the players and their girls—in some cases,

wives—joined in the traditional beer party, sponsored by the host team. The talk centered around K. U.'s trip to the University of Minnesota this weekend and the two games there.

A neighbor wandered into the yard and asked what was going on. When told, he replied, "Rugby Oh, yeah, that game is like the Civil war." Civil, perhaps, but certainly not like a war.

**Beehive hairdos on the girls & who remembers a "pony keg"?**

**Great quotes by George Bunting:**

The goal of our club is to have fun playing the sport and to build up the game in this area. For the spectator it is exciting and fast-moving with enough body contact to satisfy the most blood-thirsty types.

We seem to be winning more converts from the slower, high-pressure football all the time.

Who plays rugby and why? I think rugby is football for fun. Many other sports that are so highly competitive could take a lesson from the true sportsmanship and amateurism of rugby.

It is a tradition to applaud the opponent's efforts. If a team shows up a man short, then we lend them one, usually our best player.

# Rugby Wins, Ties In Weekend Dual

By Mike Griffith  
(Staff Writer)

KU's Rugby Club returned with a victory and a tie after a weekend trip to Minneapolis, Minn., this weekend.

KU trounced previously unbeaten Minnesota 10-0, and played to a 5-5 tie in the two game series.

**GEORGE BUNTING**, Shawnee Mission second year law student and president of Rugby Club, said this was the finest victory the club has captured in its previous nine games.

"We moved the ball real well and our backs made some spectacular plays," Bunting said.

Many of KU's players were forced to play both games because

the traveling squad was cut to 21 instead of the usual 35 players.

"**WE WERE REALLY** tired in the second game and I was real pleased with the performance of our team under the tiring circumstances," Bunting said.

Bunting said Minnesota had two complete teams and threatened to tie the second game on several occasions but the determined Kansans managed to stifle the Minnesota attack.

KU has won one and tied two this season and plays Kansas City at 10 a.m. Saturday and the University of Missouri of Kansas City at 11:15 a.m. Saturday on the intramural fields south of Allen Field House.



I think the ball shot over here & its not a hike play.



Why does a # 7 flanker linger and a # 14 wing push in a set scrum?



Can you identify any of these people?  
Write to the newsletter.







Game appears to be in field where Watkins Hospital now sits.  
This is a view facing east. Houses should still be there.

# Law Student Seeks Rugby Enthusiasts

By Glen Phillips  
 needed: At least 30 rugged individuals who are interested in trying to play rugby.  
 George Bunting, Kansas City, a first-year law student, with friends at colleges in this area, is trying to organize a team and eventually develop a rugby circuit among schools in the Midwest.  
 Bunting describes the rough European game as great for persons who want to keep in shape without buying a lot of equipment, but the only things you need are football shoes, someone with a rugby ball and the desire to play. THE GAME IS A cross between football and soccer. Players move

the ball downfield by kicking it, dribbling it with their feet, or picking it up and carrying it. When they pick up the ball they are fair game for tacklers on the other team. There is no blocking allowed for the ball carrier as in football.

The game is divided into two 40-minute halves with a five-minute rest period between halves. Play

is continuous without timeouts. It is played on a regular football field.

There are 15 men on a team, divided roughly into two groups called the scrum and the backfield. These divisions correspond to the line and backfield in football.

Backfield players do most of the running in rugby. Scoring is by a touchdown over the goal line, a drop-kick through the uprights, or by place-kick through the uprights on a penalty.

BUNTING, A June graduate of Dartmouth, played rugby for three years on the school squad. He took the Dartmouth second team to

Nassau last spring while the first team was touring Europe under People-to-People sanction. The Dartmouth team is rated as the best team on the East Coast.

Bunting recommended the game highly both for keeping in condition and for the good sportsmanship it develops. No matter how rough-and-tumble the contest may have been, there are no hard feelings at the end. In fact, the host team usually has a keg or two of beer for all the players, he said.

There will be a short organizational meeting tonight in Rooms 305 A and B of the Kansas Union, Bunting said.

First rugby club story in the UDK

First KU Game Ever

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1964

## Rugby Makes Debut Here

College rugby gets an introduction here this Sunday when the newly-formed University of Missouri at Kansas City and the University of Kansas squads initiated the game at the U. M. K. C. athletic field at 2 o'clock.

Rugby is a form of football, which contains aspects of hockey, basketball and soccer. The ball used is more round than the padded football, which makes it more accessible to drop kicking. Each team fields 15 players. There is no substitution. When a team loses a man by injury, it must play short-handed. Play is stopped for downs when the ball carrier is tackled.

Teams can score on "tries" when the ball is touched down in the in-goal area for three points and is given two for a conversion. Or a kicker can score five points on a drop kick or penalty kick.

The U. M. K. C. squad is made up of students and faculty members and captained by Tim McNally. Rolly Coleman, a former captain for Dartmouth's rugby team for two years, is the player-coach.

George Bunting, also a former Dartmouth player, is K. U.'s

captain. ... arker Young, ...

## Rugby Team Ties Again With Kansas City Team

The KU and University of Missouri at Kansas City rugby teams battled to another tie, 8-8, here last Sunday in a return match between the two teams.

The two inexperienced teams fought to a scoreless deadlock the previous Sunday at Kansas City, in the first game for both newly-organized squads.

KU opened the scoring here in the first half on a three-point

conversion of a penalty kick by Pete Anderson. Later in the same period, Don Dale recovered the ball in the UMKC end zone for a three-point "try," equivalent of a touchdown. Anderson added two more points on the conversion attempt which followed.

The second half was a duplicate of the first half, with UMKC scoring its eight points on a try, conversion and penalty kick.

KU captain Wynand Pienaar averted a loss by making a shoe-string tackle of a UMKC player who had broken through the backfield with the ball and was within yards of a score.

In the final minutes, KU kept the ball near the opponents' goal line, and had a score by Tom Russell nullified by a minor infraction.

About 200 spectators watched the game, officiated by Neville Epstein, assistant professor of architecture.

### RUGBY TEAMS TIE AGAIN

Kansas U. and U. M. K. C. in 8-8 Draw

(By The Star's Own Service)

Lawrence, Kas.—Kansas and the University of Missouri at Kansas City squared off yesterday in a rugby match and again the teams ended in a deadlock—this time, 8-8. Last week the two schools, playing on a club basis, tied, 0-0.

Kansas jumped off to an early 8-point lead in the first period with a penalty kick, a try (equivalent to a touchdown) and a conversion. Dick Putthoff then brought the U. M. K. C. squad to life with a 3-point penalty kick and Larry Barnett followed with a try from 10 yards out for three points. Putthoff added the extra points for the 8-8 outcome. K.C. TIMES OCT. 20, 1964

P.K. Oct 20, 1964

## KU, UMKC Deadlock In First Rugby Game

The newly-formed KU rugby team fought the equally inexperienced University of Missouri at Kansas City team to a scoreless tie in a 70 minute bout last Sunday afternoon. About 500 spectators watched the first organized rugby game in the midwest on the UMKC field.

The same clubs will meet again 7:30 p.m. next Sunday on the athletic field.

## K.U., U.M.K.C. Score Firsts In Rugby Tie

Organized rugby wrote the first chapter in its Kansas City history yesterday as the University of Missouri at Kansas City and Kansas university fought high winds and inexperience for a 0-0 draw on the U. M. K. C. athletic field before a crowd of 500.

The match was the first ever played in Kansas City, the first intercollegiate appearance for U. M. K. C., the first rugby match for both schools, and the initial athletic meeting between U. M. K. C. and K. U.

U. M. K. C. took control of the ball in the first half but fought hard to hold off a strong Jayhawk bid in the second.

Both teams suffered from wind interference on kicking attempts and were unable to handle hard-charging scrums or forwards.

Inexperience with offensive techniques also hindered scoring.

Rugby is a cross between soccer and football. The game is interrupted only in case of injury. There is no blocking or forward passing, but teams can kick the ball at any time as well as run. The match is divided into 40-minute halves.

Lt. Col. Ian Gilmore of the Australian armed forces, who has called matches in international competition, was the referee.

## New Rugby Team Schedules Games

KU's newly-formed rugby team is well on its way toward implementing the sport on the campus, as two games have already been scheduled, and others are being planned.

The first game for the KU team will be with the University of Missouri at Kansas City on Oct. 18, at Kansas City. A return match with UMKC is scheduled for Oct. 25 at Lawrence.

At a meeting last week, the team elected George Bunting, organizer of the group, as president, and Wynand Pienaar as captain. Other officers elected were: Dave Beal, treasurer; Kit Cornett, secretary; Elwin Col-

K.C. Star Oct. 19, 1964

OCT. 7, 1964



If you can identify any players, please write to the newsletter.

We think KC is in what appears to be stripes and KU is in solids (which is two dark stripes.)

Many thanks to former Jayhawk and KC player, Steve Swalwell for the digital work.  
Architecturalfoto.com

JOURNAL WORLD, FRI. MARCH 11, 1966

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# Oread Rugby Team Is After Funds for an Eastern Tour

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Rugby enthusiasts at Kansas University have arranged a 20-match spring schedule that will take them deep into Ivy League competition in the northeast.

The student-organized squad can man two teams of 15 each and hopes to take a 33-man contingent on the eastern trip during the spring recess.

"But we do need \$1,650 for bus transportation," said Bernie N. Hayen, senior from Belleville, who is KU Rugby Club president. "Individuals will pay their personal expenses but we are seeking contributions for the bus."

The KU Endowment Association has agreed to administer the fund and contributions should be sent to it.

The eastern tour calls for matches against Holy Cross, Dartmouth, Yale, Princeton, and a large tournament in St. Louis. The spring schedule opens March 19 against the Kansas City Rugby Club and Rockhurst College, there, and closes May 14 at home against Palmer College of Davenport Ia. Indiana University and the Rolla division of Missouri University also will play here.

Rugby at KU got its first boost in 1964 from George Bunting, second-year law student from Shawnee Mission, who had

competed in his undergraduate years at Dartmouth. More than 60 persons, cutting through all parts of the University from freshmen to graduate and law levels have since learned the sport.

"Last fall our No. 1 team was undefeated, some ties but no losses," said Bunting. "We knocked Minnesota University from the undefeated ranks."

Rugby is an informal competitive sport at KU financed by club dues but the University has recognized it to the extent of preparing a field south of the Quigley Field baseball diamond.

The rugby field is larger than for football — 110 by 75 yards with end zones 25 yards deep. A team has 15 men, each half is 40 minutes, with no substitutions allowed. If a player is injured or must leave the game, his team is shorthanded.

Rugby is fast-moving body-contact sport. Football blocking is not allowed by there is tackling. Players have no padding, wearing socks, shorts, jerseys and soft-cleated shoes. The object is to advance the ball across the opponent's goal by kicking and ball carrying. Lateral and backward passing is permissible for forward passes are banned. Action is continuous with only serious injury bringing a pause.

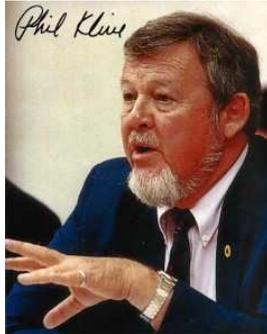
"Rough and hard as rugby may be," Bunting said, "the traditions of sportsmanship may be the strongest in any team sport. No matter how hard fought the contest, the teams have a get-together after the game."

"Football for fun" is the way some rugby fans describe it.

Plans for the club's first tour.  
The Ivy League Schools during Spring Break 1966.  
See April 2012 edition of the newsletter about the tour.

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## Some Friends We Have Lost



Founding era club member **Joe Groner** age 67

Passed away in December, 2013 in Libertyville (Chicago), IL.

Joe was pictured in the 1966 team photo and discussed at some length in the April 2012 edition of this Newsletter in the interview with **John LaRocca** and **Pat Rapp**.

He was a phenomenal athlete.

**Phil Kline** in February age 92 -

Players of the late 1960's and 1970's will remember **Jack Kline's** dad. He was a steady fan on the sidelines.

"Big Phil" was a longtime public servant in Overland Park, Johnson County, the State of Kansas and an advocate for public education, caring for deaf and blind children and those mainstream (moderate) values he held for more than 35 years as an elected official

(Republican precinct committeeman, school board member and State Representative in the Kansas Legislature).

As a founding partner in the firm of Shafer and Kline, Civil Engineers, (today, Shafer, Kline and Warren), Phil was responsible for the design and survey work on many of the roads (cloverleaf intersections were a specialty), highways, sub-divisions and major commercial developments in the greater Kansas City area.

## Help us find these people!

(In the next edition, we will give you an update on those contacted. Sorry if we have you MIA and you are already getting this newsletter. Please tell us, so we get you off the list of the missing.)

<b>Bob Carter (have email)</b>	Larry Hartnett	Larry Carden	Dave Pearlman
Roger Vincent	Austair McGregor	Aaron Jensen	David Kim
Lee Mills	Anthony Reese-Thomas	Jerry Brown	Mike Herrick
Rocky Rothrock	Bill Byers	George True	Jan Burrows
Craig Oliphant	Rich Coffman	<b>Tom Walls (Colorado)</b>	Steve Brack
Craig Huntley	Steve Francisconi	Jay Reed	Rick Hessling
Rich Millard	<b>Greg Usher (Houston)</b>	Cole Guyer	John Chirello
<b>Dick Holloway (Virginia)</b>	Larry Bond	Rick Langenwalter	Steve Dawkins
<b>Greg Allen (was on email)</b>	<b>Jim Thurman (Virginia)</b>	<b>Tom Oakson (Lawrence)</b>	George Neale
Ray Ditaro	Craig Parker	John Yost	Bernie Zarda
<b>Joe Groner (died)</b>	"Crazy" Dave Moore	Dave Prather	Don Huggins
Bill Chambers	Don Price	Nevin Whitely	Pat Kennedy
Ken Leonard	"Fast" John Miller	Doug Schimke	Craig Haake
Lane Greason	Dave Hazelett	Bob Lynch	
Jay Clancy	Hank Winslow	Rick Bess	
Jim Brandon	Jim Dubois	Bob Hills	

Those in blue have been found since last newsletter.