



2019MAR12Fromthe300LevelBRCHostingEGUplayoffs

# Buffalo Rugby Club To Host Empire NY Playoff Matches

By **Matt O'Rourke** - March 12, 2019  1003  0

After a successful fall 2018 campaign in which each of Buffalo Rugby Club's (BRC) men's sides won their respective conference titles, both the Division 2 and Division 3 squads will host Empire Geographical Union (EGU) Northeast Playoff matches on Saturday, March 30th (site TBA).



BRC's Collin DeGuehery against South Buffalo RFC in October 2018

The Division 2 squad backed up its EGU Upstate conference title from 2017 with another one last fall under first year head coach and longtime BRC member Steve Caruana. However, in the spring 2018 home playoff quarterfinal against Village Lions RFC, the Buffalo side came up short in a heartbreaker of a loss. Now, a refocused group of experienced players will look to make a statement with a win against Montclair Rugby Club in the EGU playoff quarterfinal on March 30th.

"We know they will be a big and physical side and our boys will be up to the challenge both mentally and physically," said Caruana. "We have spent the spring season playing top Division 1 Mid-Atlantic sides in Rocky Gorge and Pittsburgh Harlequins who both advanced to the USA Rugby Division 1 Playoffs."

With spring training and out of town friendlies currently underway, BRC will look to rebound on a disappointing spring 2018 playoff that saw both the D2 and D3 teams eliminated before reaching their respective finals.

BRC D2 went 7-1 in the fall, with the only loss coming in a non-conference crossover match against Pittsburgh Forge Rugby Club. The side scored 348 points for and yielded 146 points against, good for a 43.5 points per game average. After posting a 7-0 conference record on the way to the Upstate conference title, Buffalo earned the 3-seed in the upcoming EGU Northeast Playoffs.

Kyle Johannsson scored five tries and made twenty-two kicks for either conversions or penalties to lead the team with 77 points in the fall. Matt Webber added five tries and eleven kicks for 41 total points, and James Stewart scored seven tries for a 35-point season total.

The Division 3 side hammered the competition in fall 2018, winning the EGU Upstate D3 conference title with a perfect 8-0 record and scoring 461 points for while yielding only 80 points against.

The side earned the 2-seed in the D3 playoffs and will host cross town rival Ken-Ton Misfits RFC on the 30th. BRC earned two wins over the Misfits in the fall, but the club isn't looking past their local rival in the upcoming playoff match.



BRC after a win in November 2018

Buffalo traveled twice for playoff games last spring. The side advanced to the EGU D3 semifinal following a quarterfinal round win at Rochester Colonials RFC. Then, the team traveled to Danbury, CT for an EGU semifinal match against Danbury Madhatters RFC. It was a long drive home for the team as they fell 43-27, ending any postseason championship hopes for the club.

The leading scorer for the D3 team in the fall was Chris Wells who scored a club high 80 points, which included three tries, thirty-one conversion kicks, and one penalty kick. Aaron Wright was second on the D3 side with a club high nine tries for 45 points. Maninderjit Singh was third in scoring for the team with eight tries for 40 total points. Collin DeGuehery was fourth with 36 points, and Sean Kolb added 35 points in the fall for the D3 team.



Josh Bennett looking to pass in an August 2018 EGU Upstate match

By the time the club hosts two playoff games on Saturday, March 30th, BRC will have nearly two-months of spring practice and three out of town friendlies for each side complete.



Over the course of the past year, the club has shown improvement in many areas and continues to add new members while being supported by its Board of Directors, alumni, and sponsors. The club should be able to find postseason success in sticking with its brand of a balanced attack from the backs, disciplined play by the forwards, staunch defense, and efficient kicking.

Buffalo Rugby Club was started in 1966, making it the area's oldest and longest running club.

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