

COLLEGE RUGBY

Clubs Supporting College Programs

by Lex Maccubbin

Like many clubs, the Buffalo (NY) Old Boys are faced with the problem of recruiting and training new players. For the Old Boys, however, a pool of new players is right at their doorstep in the form of college clubs. The Buffalo Old Boys have recently taken advantage of this gold mine and at the same time provided much needed service to the college clubs; namely coaching.

For years there have been two Buffalo area colleges with well established rugby programs: The University of Buffalo (UB) and The State University College at Buffalo (Buffalo State). Each has played a good standard of rugby and produced a number of talented players who have gone on to play for senior clubs and at the representative level. In general, however, the colleges have had little or no coaching and many problems trying to convince the school that they are a legitimate sport.

Recently, the coaching of both clubs was taken over by members of the Buffalo Old Boys.

Buffalo State

Buffalo State is being coached by Tim Lucca, an active player on the Old Boys and a graduate of Buffalo State. Tim has played for the USARE junior team and got into coaching when he was sidelined by an injury. Tim has molded the Buffalo State pro-

gram into an organized and extremely competitive club that fields three sides each weekend.

University of Buffalo

The University of Buffalo has been a top college side in Upstate NY despite the lack of a fulltime coach. This past year the coaching was taken over by Mike McGuire, a Buffalo State graduate.

McGuire is an administrator at a small college in Buffalo and is familiar with college politics. In addition, Mike has been the P.A. announcer for UB football and knows that school well. This spring he took a club that was

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floundering and helped them get to the finals of the Upstate Tournament in both the College A and B divisions. UB fields 3-4 sides each weekend.

Canisius

A third rugby program in Buffalo is at Canisius College. Canisius is a relatively small college that until two years ago had no rugby program. Enter Ron Astridge and Jack Schweigel and the Canisius College Crabs were born.

Astridge and Schweigel are members of the Old Boys' sub-

stantial over-40 population and are still active as players on the over-35 circuit. Ron is a school teacher who played football and rugby at Rutgers University and Jack is a computer wizard at Canisius who, according to legend, played at UB and was an original member of the Old Boys. They started the Canisius club from scratch and now have three sides including several football players in the spring season.

This past year, Pat Giles joined the coaching staff, providing expert coaching for the backs. Giles is also the guiding force (he fronts money for tournaments) of Old Buffalo, the Old Boys over-35 side.

BOBCAT

In addition to providing coaching, the Old Boys have extended their collegiate commitment by hosting an event to select the BOBCAT (Buffalo Old Boys College All-Star Team). Each year the captains/coaches of the three colleges and the Old Boys get together to hold trials and then pick an all-star team from the three colleges. A future goal is to have BOBCAT play Old Boys A-side in a charity curtain raiser each year.

The Old Boys' efforts are now beginning to pay dividends. The club is getting players from the colleges who have been coached in their style and exposed to organized rugby. The colleges are getting much needed coaching and now have advocates who can communicate effectively with the college administrators. Both the club and college programs benefit.

The Old Boys strongly encourage other senior clubs to explore the possibilities of helping college programs in their area.