

Buffalo Can-Am 7s:

Old Blue

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The first annual Buffalo CAN AM 7s was won by Old Blue (Met, NY) who defeated the Niagara Wasps (NRU) 28-0 in the Grand Final. In addition to winning the overall championship, Old Blue also qualified for the USARE 7s Championship.

Format

Teams were divided into two divisions (the USARE Qualifier and an Open Division) with the winner of the USARE Division going on to the Rugby East 7s Championship in Virginia. The winners of the two divisions then played for the overall tournament championship.

A Blue Homecoming

Old Blue's appearance provided a homecoming for several former Upstate Conference players. Five members of the squad had played for the host, Buffalo Old Boys, and two other had played college rugby at nearby Brockport State. Included on Old Blue were four current or former USARE All-Stars: Jim Walier, Carter Mann, Mark Nolan and Dave Contompasis.

Qualifying Division

Old Blue cruised through the preliminary rounds, defeating Buffalo State College (24-0), Syracuse Chargers II (26-0) and Genesee Creamers (26-0).

In the other USARE bracket, Syracuse BRASS had a more difficult run to the final. BRASS beat a pesky Lockport RFC (24-4), the Rochester Colonials (16-0), and then overcame a 4-0 halftime lead to beat the Buffalo Old Boys 10-4.

In the final, Old Blue battered the tired BRASS 20-0 to win the USARE Qualifier.

Open Division

In the Open Division, the Wasps survived an opening round tie with Fredonia and advanced to the Grand Final by defeating Old Toads (30-0) and Buffalo Too (18-10).

Grand Final

In the Grand Finale the Wasps, who fielded only two players over the age of 20, were game but outmatched. The Canadians played tremendous defense but lacked the experience and skill to stop powerful Old Blue.

The Wasps were especially vulnerable when Old Blue worked the ball to speedy wing, Carter Mann. Mann, who is regaining form after a series of injuries, scored four tries in the final which gave him a total of 10 for the tournament.

When referee Dave Swift signalled fulltime, Old Blue had outscored the Wasps 28-0.

Postscript

The first Buffalo CAN/AM 7s was part of the Friendship Festival, a week long event that takes place in Buffalo, N.Y. and Fort Erie, Canada. Besides the rugby, there were concerts, a food fair, crafts shows and many family oriented events. In 1991, the Buffalo Old Boys plan to expand the tournament and provide players an opportunity to bring families who can enjoy the Friendship Festival.

Thanks

Many thanks are due to people who helped make the event a success. Included are the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce, Paul Russo and his excellent referees, Matt and (soon to be) Leslie Szkotak, and Fast Eddie.

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