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## Hamburg Native Gains National Prominence as Rugby Standout

By FRANK BAKER  
Special to The Sun

As University of Buffalo continues its quest to be recognized nationally as a great university, one of its own students has quietly gained national prominence in the sport he plays.

Normally, such an honor would be a public relations dream. However, unfortunately for the University — and its public relations and athletic departments — the player in question isn't a football or basketball player. As a matter of fact, he doesn't even play a recognized collegiate sport.

But for Jim Walier, a senior engineering student, being recognized as the best under-25-year-old outside center in the U.S. in the relatively unknown — in this country — sport of rugby, is quite enough.

"To be honest, I was really surprised I made the team," said the modest Walier.

The team he speaks of is the Junior Eagles, a group of men, all under 25, who will represent the United States in various games and tournaments against other squads from overseas. An over-25 team, called simply the Eagles, is considered to be the national rugby team.

Walier, a Hamburg native, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Walier of Lake View.

While rugby is one of the national sports of Great Britain, New Zealand, South Africa, and Australia, among others, it has never gained wide appeal — outside of colleges — in the U.S. That is surprising, because at last count there were approximately 600,000 rugby players nationally.

This lack of public recognition, however, has done nothing to deter Walier, who first played rugby as a member of UB's own Mad Turtles rugby club.

"I have no regrets about not playing a more popular sport, like football or basketball," said Walier, a star football player in high school. "Rugby's a fun game; there's not as much politics involved."

In order to achieve his number-one national ranking at outside center on the Junior Eagles, a position akin to running back in football, Walier had to go through what he called "the whole song and dance." He had to make no fewer than four different teams, beginning with UB's.

After leading the Mad Turtles to a third-place finish in New York State's Upstate Rugby Union (URU), and after making the URU's select side team, Walier was picked to play on an all-star team composed of players from all over the Northeast.

His impressive showing there resulted in the opportunity to play on the Eastern Rugby Union's team at a tournament in New Orleans last winter.

The next hurdle for the 21-year-old was to have a good outing at the Inter-Territorial Tournament (ITT) held just outside Albany in late May. Success there, he knew, would mean a chance at making the Junior Eagles.

"I didn't really think I played that well at the ITTs, so I didn't know how good a chance I had," recalled Walier. "But I did play well at a camp in Baltimore (before the ITTs) where we played a team from Tunisia. I also think my coach from the Eastern team helped me get picked."

Surprised or not, Walier made the team and will hold onto his number-one ranking and spot on the Junior Eagles until next year's ITTs.

"I thought my age might hinder me some," he said, "but I guess the coaches decided to go with a younger guy rather than having a 25-year-old who could play on the team only for one year."

Being a member of the Junior Eagles also makes it financially easier for Walier to pursue the sporting life.

Up to this point, he has had to pick up one-third of his expenses, one-third has been paid for by his team, and the remainder, by the particular rugby union, or league, that his team played in.

Now the Eagles will pay for everything.

"That will help a lot," said Walier.

Especially next fall, when his team will head to New Zealand for a tour.

As for now, Walier plans to finish at UB by the spring and will continue to play rugby for the Buffalo Old Boys, the local men's team.

By playing for the Old Boys, he will be able to continue to improve, and someday, he said, will give his knowledge to other players.

"I'll probably end up coaching," said Walier. "But I have no desire to go to Europe, or anywhere else, to try to make a living at it. My goal now is to make the Eagles."

With all he has accomplished in rugby, Walier remembers his humble beginnings in the sport.

Playing and being captain at UB helped me a lot," he said. "By being a club sport that we had to run ourselves, UB's rugby team helped me to learn administration and other things that will aid me in the future."

(Story reprinted, with permission, from the U.B. Reporter.)

### Lady Raiders Dunk In Eden Swimming Opener

Winning seven of its 11 events, the Eden Lady Raiders opened its fall season with a win over Dunkirk in recent action.

First place winners included the 200 medley relay team of Darci Cooper, Kristen Salzman, Jenny Bennett and Kristen Greenquist; Beth Dalrymple in the 500 and 200 freestyle; Bennett in the 100 butterfly and 200 I.M.; Cooper in the 100 back; and the 400 free relay team of Greenquist, Andrea Waldeck, Dalrymple and Cooper.

In a scrimmage against Frontier, Eden fell by a 44-38 score. Greenquist in the 100 free, Dalrymple in the 500 free and the 400 free relay of Greenquist, Waldeck, Dalrymple and Cooper were the first place finishers for the Lady Raiders.

In a close loss, Eden fell to Pioneer by a 41-40 count. Bennett in the 100 fly and Greenquist, Salzman, Dalrymple and Cooper in the 400 free relay were the Eden winners.

### Bulldogs Rebound With Pair of Triumphs

Two wins took some of the heat but then matched as the Bulldogs rebounded.



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