

Buffalo Old Boy's RFC

Win First Tourney

The Buffalo Old Boys RFC took a big step toward maturity as a rugby club by winning the first tournament championship in their nine year history last weekend in Brantford, Ontario.

Buffalo, the defending NRU intermediate champion and the 1974 Ontario Rugby Union intermediate champion breezed to the final with shutout victories over Crusaders RFC (Mississauga, Ont.) and the Brantford Harlequins.

In the final a young and enthusiastic Stoney Creek RFC side gave the Old Boys some trouble, but Buffalo's superior size in the forwards and greater cohesiveness in the backs finally won out. Final score: Buffalo 28, Stoney Creek 6.

For many years the Old Boys distinguished themselves at tournaments only by their staying power at piss-ups. Recently the club has turned its attention to rugby, especially since learning some valuable

lessons from Providence RFC at the 1976 Saranac Lake Can-Am Tourney.

In the first round Buffalo warmed up against the Crusaders RFC winning the lion's share of scrummages, line-outs as well as ball in loose play but exhibiting a back-line attack that didn't quite finish off its rushes. Out-side centre, Larry Ksionzyk, put across two tries and Bradshaw Hovey contributed a convert and a penalty goal.

The Old Boys were able to nullify the short-kicking game of defending tournament champions Brantford. The Harlequins were helpless against the slashing attacks of fly-half Dick Basile who scored three times through the guts of the Brantford three-quarters.

Fullback, Bradshaw Hovey scored a try on an overload and added a pair of conversions. Buffalo 20, Brantford 0.

A large measure of the Old Boys' success must be attributed

to the blossoming of number eight, Ron Astridge. The big red-head initiated countless attacks on the lock break and led the pack in giving the backs clean ball from loose rucks.

Astridge, who has played on both NRU and Upstate Rugby Unions select teams, literally made the Spectators gasp as he snatched the tap from the number two jumper on the peel and took the ball upfield.

In the final, Buffalo struggled with the young Stoney Creek side for the first half but Stoney Creek's lack of size in the pack clearly left them without enough good ball to fashion an effective attack.

Scrumhalf, Terry Lee showed off his uncanny side-step to good advantage, scoring two tries. Ksionzyk scored his third try of the day, this time from wing, and centre-turned-loose-forward Patrick Giles scored a try off the five-yard penalty play.

Hovey, who has also played for

both NRU and URU Selects kicked two penalty goals and two conversions.

With their first tournament championship under their belts and a third straight NRU intermediate championship within reach the Old Boys entertained high hopes of being invited to play in the Ontario Union Senior division.

Buffalo's geographical location at the tail-end of the Upstate Rugby Union and on the edge of the Niagara Rugby Union has left the Old Boy's in a netherworld of Rugby politics. Many of their possible American opponents are two to three hours drive away. And, although their Canadian opponents are generally closer the question of Buffalo's eligibility in the Canadian government funded rugby program remains unresolved.

The Old Boy's problem with the Canadian Rugby Union was highlighted when Astridge, who had been chosen by selectors to play for Ontario against the Midwest RFU, was ruled ineligible, apparently because of his American citizenship.