



**Erik Brady**

## ***Doc Muldoon Finds Beer, Skittles Here***

*Life isn't all beer and skittles; but beer and skittles, or something better of the same sort, must form a good part of every Englishman's education.*

**Thomas Hughes**  
***In Tom Brown's School Days***

OR, JOE MULDOON might add, a good part of every Irishman's education, as well.

Dr. Joseph Muldoon learned the skills of a surgeon during his school days in Ireland. He had his beer and skittles, too, although the "something better" was, in this case, rugby.

Skittles, by the way, is a form of nine-pin bowling, the sort that was being played in the Catskills by those dwarfs in Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* tale.)

And even after he had finished his schooling, Dr. Muldoon continued to play rugby in one of the many amateur leagues that flourish on the British Isles. He was fast becoming a most prominent doctor specializing in the field of cancer, but rugby continued to provide the beer and skittles in his life — rugby being, after all, a sport where the post-game beers with the opposition are nearly as important as the competition itself.

THAT WAS UNTIL last May, when Dr. Joe Muldoon's life took a dramatic turn. He moved to Buffalo.

"When you specialize in cancer surgery, Buffalo is the place to be," the 42-year-old explains, speaking with a true global view. He lived in Ireland most of his life, except for short spells in Rhodesia, England and New York City. He is at present a surgeon on the staff of Veterans Hospital.

"I happened to come here through a number of contacts I had made over the years," he says. "We're a small bunch in the cancer field, and people write articles in various publications, so you get to know who your colleagues are."

"I feel very fortunate to have gotten the opportunity to move here. I like Buffalo, I even get a great kick out of the snow and have taken up cross-country skiing. And I plan on staying — you might say I'm committed to a life sentence here."

BUT THERE WAS one thing missing in Dr. Muldoon's life after he moved here, one thing he had had in Ireland that he didn't expect to have here — the opportunity to play rugby. Then he read a story in The Courier-Express about the Buffalo Old Boys, a local rugby club, and he looked them up.

"I found the club congenial and felt it would be nice to join," says the man who has since become a driving force in the organization. He has been a member for only a short while, but he already has organized the most ambitious undertaking of the club's history.

The Old Boys have a two-week trip planned to Dr. Muldoon's native Ireland next month for a number of rugby matches, and they will be leaving, naturally, on March 17 — St. Patrick's Day. (And returning home, not quite as naturally, on April 1 — April Fool's Day.)

"It should be a fun jaunt, and we're getting one hell of a welcome, especially considering that we are not up to the caliber of the six teams we'll be meeting," Dr. Muldoon says. "The Buffalo Old Boys are the best team in this area, but we're only a fifth level team in Ireland."

"There is a tremendous potential for rugby in this area, but some of the finer points of the game are lacking. That is what we hope to gain over there. We'll be playing mostly third level teams in Ireland, and I hope we'll learn some things against the fine competition."

THE 25 OLD BOYS making the trip will stay in such places as Tullamore, Kildare, Rathdrum and Dublin. The last match will be against St. Mary's, the defending provincial champ and Dr. Muldoon's alma mater, the place where he learned his most serious profession, and where he engaged in a little beer and skittles, in the form of rugby, as well.

"When I was at University in Dublin, there were 17 rugby teams," he says, marveling at it himself now. "just to give you an idea of the kind of depth there is in Ireland."

You don't find that kind of depth at Western New York schools, to be sure, but there are a number of schools with teams. One of them is the Buffalo State College club rugby team, and although they didn't go out of the country, they engaged in a little travel of their own this month.

The team attended a Mardi Gras tournament in New Orleans with about 60 other college rugby teams from all over the United States. The level of play was excellent, and so were the parties.

Doc Muldoon has his Old Boys looking forward to an old fashioned Irish "hooley," but if you're going to stay in the States, the Mardi Gras is as good a time as you are going to find anywhere.

All of which just goes to show that beer and skittles ought to form a good part of every American's education, too.