

Eastern Pennsylvania Rugby Union

A Member of the Mid-Atlantic Rugby Football Union

KEYSTONE COLLEGIATE COMMUNICATOR

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Visit us on the World Wide Web at our NEW website at:
<http://www.epru.org>

Welcome to the "Keystone Collegiate Communicator"!

The voice of college rugby in the EPRU has awoken from its snowy winter hiatus to bring you 'all the rugby news fit to share'! I hope everyone is as excited as I am about experiencing the joys of Spring rugby...with MARFU championship action followed by the national championships, along with tours and tournaments highlighting the season!

The standard distribution of this newsletter is to mail it to each EPRU college club president, Director of Club Sports and faculty advisor, collegiate officials throughout the country, as well as having it available at the all EPRU meetings. It is also available at the EPRU website. **The club president is responsible to share it** with his or her teammates, coach, parents, other school officials, etc. It is also available at our website.

Your feedback on content and ideas, as well as articles for inclusion, are welcome.

The due date for input for the Fall 2000 issue is August 1.

The EPRU Collegiate Rugby Program - The Finest in the Land

The East Penn RU collegiate program is recognized as the premier collegiate program in the United States. The program serves nearly 60 men and women's collegiate club and consists of a number of components, such as, a semi-annual newsletter, league play and playoffs, coaching clinics, administrative and safer rugby guidance, and an All-Star program. This newsletter is a communication tool to provide players, coaches, school officials and others with current information regarding individual clubs, events, safety, skills, resource materials, on-field results, the lighter side of rugby, coaching tips, etc.

The EPRU collegiate program has a number of goals in trying to improve the quality and enjoyment of rugby. These include:

- **teaching application of the laws of the game for player advantage**
- **instructing teams in positional skills, game strategies, and coaching techniques**
- **offering organizational and administrative guidance**
- **providing medical and coaching knowledge for safer rugby**

East Penn Men's Playoffs

Princeton Beats East Stroudsburg to Win Division 1 Championship

On September 18th, league play began for 9 Division 1 teams in 2 leagues. The top 2 finishers in each league qualified for the playoffs. The playoff results were:

Sun. Oct. 24th - Semi-Finals

Princeton 32 - Kutztown 14

E. Stroudsburg 26 - Millersville 5

On Sunday Oct. 31st, East Penn's USA Super League club, Philadelphia-Whitemarsh RFC, hosted the championship final. Defending champion, East Stroudsburg found itself in quite the battle with improving Princeton. Princeton's level of play has been on the rise since last Spring, largely due to a rededication of the club to a winning program and a new coach, Tom McFarlane. As expected the match was evenly played by the solid pack of both sides, but the skill of the Princeton back's proved the difference in their 29 to 19 victory. Both teams had a season to be proud of and they also earned a right to play in the Spring MARFU Collegiate Division 1 Playoffs and a chance to make it to Nationals.

Lock Haven Dominates Division and Wins Division 2 Championship

On September 18th, league play began for 16 Division 2 teams in 4 leagues. The top 2 finishers in each league qualified for the playoffs. The playoff results were:

Sat. Oct. 16th - Quarter-Finals

Lock Haven 118 - Widener 0

Villanova 34 - Lehigh 24

St. Joseph's 3 - Swarthmore 0

Bucknell 24 - Bloomsburg 17

Sat. Oct. 23rd - Semi-Finals

Lock Haven 66 - Villanova 10

Bucknell 19 - St. Joseph's 13

On Saturday October 30th, Villanova upended St. Joseph's 38 to 17 to finish in 3rd place. While on Sunday Oct. 31st at the site of the Division 1 Championship match, Lock Haven faced Bucknell. Lock Haven had been steamrolling through its league and all other opponents. When they played earlier in the season, Bucknell was the only team to stay with Haven for most of the game. The first half showed Bucknell was not to be taken lightly and gave Haven concern, but when the dust settled Haven finished strong with a 46 to 5 win. Both teams, along with 3rd placer finisher Villanova, earned a right to play in the Spring MARFU Collegiate Division 2 Playoffs and a chance to make it to Nationals.

Fall 1999 Top Five - EPRU Men

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>TEAM</u>
1	PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
2	EAST STROUDBURG UNIVERSITY
3	MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY
4	KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY
5	LOCK HAVEN UNIVERSITY

East Penn Men's Collegiate All-Stars Conquer Potomac and Virginia

The 1999 MARFU Men's Collegiate All-Star Event was held in Philadelphia on Nov. 13-14, 1999. The EPRU side, well-coached by Rob Grassi and Marcus Maffei, was a truly representative side with 26 players selected from 9 different schools. The schools represented were: Lock Haven, Temple, Scranton, Bucknell, St. Joseph's, Shippensburg, Kutztown, East Stroudsburg and Villanova.

** Report From the Sidelines **

EPRU 47 - Virginia RU 36

The team had its up and downs during the match against Virginia. After taking an early lead, it relaxed a bit and the VRU got back in the game. But a determined second half held back the Virginias who put on a final flurry. You could start to see the team gel into a cohesive unit.

Potomac RU 88 - Virginia RU 3

No contest from the get-go as Potomac came out fired up and never cooled down. Hats off to the Virginia boys as they never gave up.

EPRU 38 - Potomac RU 29

After watching the Potomac boys dismantle the Virginias late Saturday, we knew it was going to be a real challenge come Sunday morning when we squared off against them. Both sides were fired up on Sunday and the PRU after failing to cross the goal line against a determined East Penn defense early in the match, kicked a penalty to take a 3-0 lead. The PRU scored a converted try and took a 10-0 lead. With time running out in the half, a 'not to be denied' run by Jason Evans resulted in a try; Jason also fractured his hand on the play and had to leave the match. This try really fired up the boys in red as the second half started and under the cool guidance of Irish scrumhalf John Galvin, East Penn started to attack the gain line as a team and do so successfully. Strong running by Aaron Lankford, Joe Cassidy and Tom Broughman along with the slithery moves of Taku Mizutani, Ian Hincken and Tim Karabin brought about 4 tries. The forwards, despite struggling at times in the set pieces, fought hard in the loose to win ball and then drive off the base of rucks through the gain line to help open up the defense for the backs. In the end, East Penn truly outclassed the Potomac lads and came away with a strong 38-29 win. This match really showed those lucky enough to witness it, what rugby players can do when they reach inside themselves and raise their standards of excellence to a higher level. After 10 years of running the EPRU Collegiate Program, it was such a grand moment to see such deserved players do so well and it really helps to make my hard work and dedication to the EPRU worthwhile.

East Penn Women's Under-23 All-Stars Defeat Potomac & Virginia

The East Penn Women's Under-23 All-Star team, led by coaches Oscar Matthews and Alyssa Wykes, impressed everyone with their outstanding performance at the MARFU All-Star Event with a dominating win over Virginia and a thrilling victory over Potomac. Match results were: EPRU U23 29 - VRU U23 10; PRU U23 27 - VRU U23 5 and EPRU U23 15 - PRU U23 0.

MARFU Spring Collegiate Playoffs are Set

With USA Rugby now supporting National collegiate playoffs for men and women in both Divisions 1 and 2, MARFU teams have been readying themselves this Winter for the chance to make it to Nationals. Quarterfinals will be primarily held on March 25 in all 4 divisions at the home of the higher seeded team. The QF winners will qualify for the MARFU Final Four scheduled for April 1 and 2. Penn State University will host the Division 1 Final Fours along with the Men's Plate Round. Mt. St. Mary's College of Emmitsburg, Maryland will host the Division 2 Final Fours.

Details for the MARFU Collegiate Playoffs can be found at the MARFU website:

<http://www.rugby.org/marfu.htm>

Due the continued strength of MARFU Collegiate teams and with their success at both the men and women's Division 1 National Championships in 1999, MARFU has earned 4 seeds in the National's men and women's Division 1 Sweet 16's set for April 15-16. In keeping with MARFU's strong administrative and organizational capabilities, USA Rugby has awarded five of the eight Sweet 16 pools to MARFU. Princeton University Women will host 3 women's pools, while the US Naval Academy Men will host 2 men's pools in Annapolis. The Sweet 16 pool winners will earn a spot in the Final Fours to be hosted at the University of South Florida in Tampa on May 6-7.

In Division 2, the MARFU Men's Champion will be playing the Northeast RU Champion, Colby College, on April 15 in Waterville, Maine for a spot in the Final Four scheduled for May 6-7 in Cincinnati, Ohio. For the women, the MARFU Champion will play in the Final Four at the same venue as the men.

EPRU Launches New Website

The EPRU is proud to announce the launching of its new website at: <http://www.epru.org> Design and maintained by Steve Siano and Amy Held, it provides the rugby world access to the EPRU's organization, renowned as the best in this country.

East Penn Collegiate Tournaments Highlight Exciting Spring

Three major East Penn RU sanctioned collegiate tournaments offering collegiate teams an outstanding opportunity to play competitive rugby and enjoy themselves in a tournament setting are planned this Spring. These events are:

April 8-9 - Schuylkill River RFC's 3rd Annual Collegiate Rugby Tournament will feature 12 East Penn men's teams.

April 8-9 - West Chester University Women's 4th Annual Collegiate Classic Tournament will have 24 of the finest women's teams in the Mid-Atlantic RFU.

April 29 - Kutztown University Men's inaugural Eastern Penn Collegiate Tournament 2000 will bring 8 East Penn men's collegiate teams together to test their skills against each other.

MARFU Women's Under-23 Program is Established

by Dan LeBlanc, MARFU U23 Coach; email: dleblanc@netzero.net

Several years ago Penn State Women's coach, Peter Steinberg, started coaching the National U23 Women's team. Each year, since then, there has been an incredible increase in the not only the number of players that attended the selection camps, but also of the quality of the players. Still, one of the greatest problems facing U.S. women's rugby today is player development. Other nations are pouring resources into women's programs yet here in the U.S. players do not always get the coaching and competition that they need to make it to the next level. The MARFU U23 Women's team, along with the other territorial sides, were seen as a way of introducing increased competition and coaching to players. An Inter-Territorial Tournament (ITT) for the U23's, similar to the Club ITT's, was proposed and the first competition held last November. The event is an important selection vehicle for the National U23 team, allowing the National coaches to see the top players from each region, and while for many this is the best way to be selected to play for the U23 Eagles, it is still an important part of developing collegiate and club rugby in MARFU. More players than ever have played in games more challenging than they ever could have played at their respective clubs or colleges. My hope is that they take the skills and level of play back with them and as a whole make the level of play in MARFU better. There is no reason in my mind why MARFU shouldn't be able to produce the women's club and collegiate national champions.

The U23 ITT's will take place during the month of July this year, and two selection/development camps will be held during the month of May. The first, either in Washington DC, or Virginia will be on May 20-21. The second, in Philadelphia will be held May 27-28. Please contact me regarding the MARFU U23 select side.

MARFU U23 Women Win Inaugural U23 ITT'S at Ruggerfest

On November 18th, 1999, twenty-six players drawn from ten colleges and two clubs with MARFU traveled to Atlanta to play in the first U23 Women's ITT's hosted by the Atlanta Harlequins at their annual Ruggerfest tournament. After a morning and afternoon practice on Friday, the team played their first game against the West. Down early, MARFU stormed back to win the game 19-8. Saturday had us playing against the Pacific Coast. The first half was a see-saw battle seeing incredible support and runs from both sides, with MARFU going on to win 29-14. A great final was set for Sunday afternoon against the Mid-West. The Mid-West was favored to win having seven U23 National Team players (five in the pack), however the MARFU pack stood up to the challenge and met the Mid-West pack toe-to-toe. When the dust settled, MARFU had beaten the Mid-West to become the Champions of the Inaugural U23 ITT's 19-16. Adrianna Salamone, a winger from the University of Delaware was named MVP of the event; in the final she scored one try and set up another with great runs and also played some terrific defense.

East Penn RU Welcomes New Collegiate Clubs as Recognized Members

The EPRU continues to see growth in the collegiate ranks, as both St. Joseph's and Drexel University's have started women's clubs. Both schools have men's clubs as well.

Rugby Safety Program

Rugby is a strenuous physical contact game incorporating running, handling, kicking and contact. Basic safety precautions should be considered, as a minimum, for adequate protection for all participants. Responsibility for being prepared to play is shared among the administrators, coaches, referees, and most important, the participant.

Due to the risk of spinal and catastrophic neck injuries and other forms of injury while playing any contact sport, such as rugby, the EPRU has prepared and distributed safety papers entitled "Safety Precaution Recommendations" and "Making Rugby Safer". They can be found at the EPRU website or can be mailed to you by request.

Player Safety Alert

Do **NOT** let anyone practice or play with your team unless they have **medical insurance**. Please be sure you, as the club president, **VERIFIES** their proof of insurance!

Do **NOT** let anyone play with your team unless they have watched the **USARFU Safety Video Tape** (contact the USA Rugby National Office to purchase a copy) and have completed and signed their **CIPP** registration form. CIPP forms and dues are to be sent into USARFU prior to their first match!

Club Safety Alert

Do **NOT** practice or play unless you have a complete medical kit at the field!

Do **NOT** play unless either a trainer, EMT or ambulance is present. Whether an ambulance is present or not, you **MUST** have a telephone at or adjacent to the field and the phone number for requesting an ambulance readily available!

The Concept of Injury Prevention

by Dr. Don de Winter, Sports Physician; email: don@rugbycoach.com

Article Website: <http://www.rugbycoach.com/Injuries/injury.htm>

What precisely does injury prevention mean? It means to avoid injuries and it can be divided on 3 levels:

- avoid the possibility that injuries occur (*primary prevention*)
- treat a injury the best possible way (*secondary prevention*), so that permanent damage does not occur.
- as soon as possible after treatment of the injury (*tertiary prevention*), in such a way that an injury does not repeat itself.

The rugby trainer has the most important task concerning the primary prevention. By doing so, less work may be necessary at the secondary prevention level. He does not need to treat an injury, although he must handle it the right way. First aid is essential. The trainer must be aware that in the case of the tertiary prevention he should not put the injured player back into the match too soon.

When one wants to avoid injuries, one should know how injuries occur. The factors that create injuries can be divided into two groups: **individual bound** factors and **environmental bound** factors.

Individual bound factors

Presence of a physical deviation or illness:	If the rugby player has a specific illness, e.g. diabetes, asthma, epilepsy, then it is advisable to consult a GP or a sport physician. One can then ask what the consequences are and what to do when something occurs.
Level of physical fitness:	Stamina, power, speed, rugby technique, flexibility.
Psychological factors:	Concentration, aggression, taking risks.
Body structure:	Length, weight, fat percentage, X-legs, O-legs, instability of the joints, proportions of the neck. In rugby one's position in the team usually depends on the build of the body.
Age of a youth:	As children grow their bone structure becomes thicker and longer. This lengthening occurs from the growth discs, which are situated at the extremity of the bones and at the attachments of the tendons. The growth discs are vulnerable, because they can be slid off (disrupted) from the bone by a sudden brutal force. The growth discs can soften due to overburden by an one-sided (non variation) training, or by a too heavy training, or by technical mistakes. Any complaints at the age of 11-16 year concerning their back should always be treated as serious. The sex of a child starts to have influence at the age of 12-13.

Environmental bound factors

Sports bound: Rugby is a physical contact sport. How many times a week does one practice? Does one play matches? How is the opposition? Is one's position a forward or a three quarter?

Sports accommodation: What is the condition of the playing field, the practice field, the materials, e.g. scrum machine, cushions, etc.

Sports gear: The rugby trainer can recommend the specific rugby gear, such as a shinprotector, mouth guard and ear covers. The trainer can observe whether or not a player wears jewelry.

Specific weather conditions: If necessary the trainer will adjust the outdoor training.

Trainer: The structure during the training program before and during the season. Warming-up. Organized training. Those are the exact areas in which the rugby trainer can prevent injury.

Referees: They should be alert that the scrum will be executed correctly. They ought to have a touch of the atmosphere of the match, to respond (whistle) immediately if a possible danger occurs.

The pressure on the player depends on the environmental factors and the capability of carrying it depends on individual bounding factors. A perfect situation is there when the pressure and capability of carrying it are in balance. One becomes injury prone when this balance is disrupted. Within injury prevention it is an art to increase the capability of carrying and not to build up the mental pressure too high.

HOW TO AVOID INJURIES?

Measurements to avoid sport injuries

1. **Medical Sport Tests.** The rugby trainer can recommend a rugby player to have a medical test by a sport physician. The quality of those tests has improved over the last years. During the test the physician usually advises about diet, taping, stretch exercises, power training etc. The sport test consists of a number of items. Including a very detailed medical questionnaire filled out with the sportsman, followed by a physical test in which the accent lies on the movement capacity. The fat percentage is measured as well as the length and weight measurements. If one prefers a more extensive test, then a lung function test will be executed. One can also request for an electrocardiogram = a film of the heart. However, such a test is seldom required with youth players. A maximum effort test is part of the extensive test. It is usually done on a bicycle ergonomic meter (= a kind of home trainer). The medical sport test is done to detect risk factors and to provide sport orientated recommendations.
2. The **rugby trainer** should initiate a good warming-up and a cooling-down exercise. The trainer should instruct the correct way of doing stretch exercises.
3. **Teaching** the correct rugby techniques.
4. **Revalidation.** An injury should be well healed before one fully participates in the sport again. For example: after an injury at the ankle, the muscles of the lower leg must be fully healed. The rugby trainer should guard himself against sending or allowing his pupils to play a match too soon. He can ask for a recommendation from a physician.

5. **Taping.** A weakened joint can, in some cases, be supported by taping. This works well with fingers and ankles but not so good with shoulders, elbows and knees and not at all with the hips, back and neck.
6. **Rules.** They should be adjustable. An adjustment is to be on an international level. The medical advice committees of the international union are constantly checking and judging the safety aspect of the rules. Rules within particular age categories do differ. Such adjustments can be done on a national level.
7. **The Playing Field.** The flags used for marking the field are to be safe. The railings and poles are to be covered and the field well maintained.
8. **Sports Gear.** Wear protectors for shin. Knee or elbow protector in case of mucous membrane inflammation. Wear strong rugby gear of the correct size, cleaned and without wear and tear. All players to wear a mouth guard! The forwards should wear ear bandages. The rugby trainer should make his pupils aware of all this. Even the studs of the boots are very essential. The studs should not fail, or be worn out, or of a different length. The use of unsuitable studs is a danger for the player himself as well for the opponent.
9. **Education.** The club or the district can arrange information or education sessions by a club physician, or physiotherapist, or an union doctor.
10. **First Aid.** Does the club kit comply with the standards, e.g. is there ice, bandages, cotton wool, plasters, etc. The club is responsible to replace used items. It is also important to know **whom to phone** after a serious injury occurs; i.e. have the telephone numbers of the GP and the ambulance on hand.

WARMING-UP

The warming-up has 3 functions:

1. The rugby player performs better after a warming-up.
2. He prepares himself physiological for the training or the game.
3. A good warming-up reduces the risks of injuries.

A warming-up can be **passive** or **active**.

The **passive** warming-up comprises of a massage, or sometimes a warming balm or salve. A passive warming up alone is always insufficient and it should be followed by an active warming-up of approximate 15 - 30 minutes as well.

An **active** warming-up can be divided in 3 stages:

1. Getting on temperature, for 5 -10 minutes. This can be done by running around the field, but with the youth it could be done by means of entertaining games.
2. Muscle loosening and stretching exercises, for 5 - 10 minutes.
Note : Under the age of 10-12 stretch exercises are not required, for the child is supple enough for rugby. Injury prevention has probably little effect. However, the stretch exercises should be done regularly, in order to teach the children the importance of them and how they should be performed.
3. Specific rugby warming-up is with coordination exercises, for 5 - 10 minutes.

STRETCH RULES

1. Stretching has the best results when one is warmed up by running.
2. Start with the correct posture
3. Stretch 8 - 10 seconds.
4. Breath calmly during stretching.
5. Do not push or bounce.
6. Stretching must not be painful, but one should feel it.
7. Relax after stretching.
8. Stretch every muscle or muscle group 1 - 5 times.
9. Change to left and right.

COOLING-DOWN

At the end of the training or a match. Usually, after the last exercise has been done or a match is over, the participants take a shower. However, the last years it is more popular to finish with a cooling-down exercise. Cooling-down is in fact the opposite to the warming-up: like the body adjusts slowly from a rest position into a strained position, so it gradually needs to return from a strained position into a rest position.

Not having a cooling-down results in the abrupt decline of the blood circulation in the muscles. Then the waste products (e.g. lactic acid) accumulate. This initiates a tense and tired feeling in the muscles, which can eventually lead to stiffness the next day. The muscles are then unable to function fully during the next training or game. The risk of injuries increases.

The effect of a well executed cooling-down is that the blood circulation within the various muscle groups gradually decreases. The metabolism will not accumulate within the muscle cells.

A cooling-down should consists of :

- Easy run in a slower pace, a calm jog, varied with hopping passes.
- Sway with the arms calmly. Do this for 3 - 5 minutes.
- Quiet and easy exercises at the spot. This is in principle in motion with gravity.
- For instance bending forwards with the torso (trunk) and dangling the arms.
- Shaking the legs or let the legs be shaken.
- Stretching exercises.
- Warm shower followed by a short, cold shower.
- Eventually a massage.

MOTORIAL CHARACTERISTICS AND YOUTH

Until the age of 10 to 12 years the motorial characteristics of boys and girls is equivalent. After that age a clear difference appear. Boys are stronger and have more stamina. Girls are more flexible.

1. **Infant period** : 3 - 6 years of age

Avoid at this age every systematic dictated training load. Forced power and flexibility training and intensive stamina practices are advised against. The speed and agility (skills) characteristics can be built in through entertaining games.

2. **Childhood** : 6 - 12 years of age

This period is very important to practice agility and flexibility. The duration-stamina capacity can be trained for. However, a need for an intensive stamina is not yet required. The muscles can be strengthened by dynamical exercises, but only by use of their own body weight.

3. **Puberty**: 12 - 16 years of age

These years are suitable for increasing power and stamina capacity. The stamina capacity can now intensively be trained. Speed, flexibility and agility are receiving, as a matter of course, all attention.

4. **Adolescents** : 16 - 20 years of age

With the young adult every sort of training can be done. The frame is matured and heavy power exercises can be done as well.

OVERVIEW OF PREVENTIVE MEASUREMENTS

- sufficient fitness: power - speed - technique - stamina
- when in doubt about fitness discuss this with family doctor sports physician for check up (weight, flexibility, power, joints, condition)
- allow for sufficient recuperation after sickness/injury and ensure a good body hygiene (regular washing, clean clothes and socks, take care of wounds)
- ensure a sufficient and varied diet (fresh vegetables and fruit, not too much fat)
- avoid an overloaded programme in relation to training, matches and school.
- provide good accommodation, such as field, dressing rooms
- check the use of good gear : shoes, shin protectors, mouth guard, tape bandage (ankles and head) and clothes.
- watch "fair play" and the adherence to the rules.
- initiate good warming-up, stretching exercises and cooling down.
- good first aid kit e.g. the top teams kit.

A Positive Approach to Building the Image of Collegiate Rugby

The Kutztown University Men's RFC, who have been a continual collegiate power in the East Penn RU, has taken a major step in improving its attitude towards the sport of rugby both on-and-off the field by adapting a 0% Alcohol/Drug Tolerance Policy. The policy states that "any player observed consuming any alcoholic beverages, non-prescribed drugs/medications, or being under the effect of any one or more of these substances during any Kutztown University Rugby Football Club event, will be dismissed from the team immediately; pending reinstatement by the discretion of the Administrators and/or Coaches." All players must sign a statement stating that they will abide by this Policy.

In response to this Policy, Kutztown University President, David E. McFarland wrote to the team that "I believe this step at Kutztown University will help promote a very positive image about your team."

For more info, contact: Jason Horowitz, Assistant Coach, KURFC at jason@bigbearpromo.com

The Lock Haven University Women's RFC have embarked on a number of community service and fundraising projects, including: setting up a community dog wash in conjunction with the Lock Haven SPCA that will give half of the proceeds to the animal shelter; holding a car wash at local Wal-Mart and donating the money raised to the Lock Haven Women's Shelter; and a local woods clean-up program coordinated with a LHU ecology professor.

For more info, contact: Melissa Long, LHUWRF's Public Representative:
m1ong1@falcon.lhup.edu

The Coaching Side of Rugby

For information on coaching and other important aspects of developing a quality rugby program, please check out the following world wide web sites:

International Rugby Board: <http://www.irfb.com/>

University of Idaho: <http://www.phys.uidaho.edu:80/rugby/>

Coaching Info for Members [nominal fee]: <http://ultimaterugby.on.ca>

Rugby Coaching Notes: <http://www.hutchinson29.freeserve.co.uk/ahcoach.htm>

Graham Henry, Coach, Welsh National Team: <http://www.grahamhenry.com/home.html>

Martin's Rugby Coaching Archive: <http://www.rugbycoach.com/>

Lance Hayward's Rugby Coach: <http://www.homestead.com/rugbycoach/>

Harrisburg RFC to Host Coaching Clinic

The Harrisburg RFC is holding a rugby player's clinic on March 18, 2000 at Fort Indiantown Gap. This is an entire team clinic but feel free to have a few representatives take part to pick up new drills. This clinic will stress ball handling, tackling, ruck/maul, and decision making on the field. The cost will be \$10 per person, which includes lunch. If you or your team is interested please Scott Stratton at (717) 932-7785 or ss Stratton@mbgsd.k12.pa.us

Youngsters to Lead the Way

by Scrum.com's Steve Black found at <http://www.scrum.com>

I've just finished reading an excellent book I picked up in New York just before Christmas. 'How to win' - an insight from the great coaches. Superb! Full of interesting anecdotes used to illustrate each coaches philosophy concerning how they achieve success. Incredibly they all said the same thing; it's the quality of your training, the quality of your play, and the quality of your life outside the first two that determines your success. Probably the underlining factors that support success are the will to excel and the will to win. Their importance is paramount to any long term success.

It is absolutely vital that this frame of mind is the approach taken by each individual at our top clubs. I believe that it is only a matter of overcoming the initial habit of the current players. They have got into a routine of playing and training in an accepted rugby fashion which has been designed from a blueprint forged by our weather conditions and inadequate weekly competition. Players don't react fast enough. Although the sport is now professional there still exists an underlying amateur spirit in our game, something which we must outgrow if we are to be dominant on the world stage.

Few players are as sharp as they could be from-the-off in training and games.

In training their response to communication is sluggish. I am not doubting for one minute their hearts, stamina and commitment that's praiseworthy in itself, and if we are satisfied with being fourth or fifth in the world rankings, all well and good. I'd never be satisfied with that. To be first we need to be quicker in mind and body in everything we do. Not just the players, we as coaches need to create the environment that will allow them to develop and flourish. We need to ensure our training runs are thought through, planned and are slickly executed. The training field itself is not a place to hold debating society seminars - they slow the sessions down and players associate that relatively low intensity stop/start energy output with playing their chosen game. We need to change this. It shouldn't really be hard, it's just a habit. And a habit we need to cultivate if we're to have a chance of taking our place at the forefront of world rugby.

Perhaps this task of introducing high intensity, top quality work into our clubs on a day to day basis is the most difficult job we'll ever face. Our current established players have had to adjust to life as professional sportsmen. They know what it's like to be amateur, they've had to be shown what professionalism is like, or how other amateurs have perceived it would be. Maybe we need to now fine tune that perceived behaviour to a higher plane of effort, where speed, quickness and optimum intensity can not only sit comfortably with, but promote an increasingly ascending quality output from our players. This season marks the arrival of the first batch of youth products who are coming straight into life as professional sportsmen and as a result they won't know any other environment than the professional one. This is when the habit must be formed. Players like Rhys and Shane Williams are in the most impressionable years of their entire careers, and now is the time for them to take on board an attitude of high quality work. Dare I say their good habits may even influence the established players, or at least scare them into action. Players will have a natural 'pride injection' when they see the youngsters on par with them in training, and I eagerly await the effect of this.

Hazard Management - It's Part of Rugby Coaching

by Dick Borkowski; email: drbork@home.com

The subject of safety is boring. No one ever played or went into coaching to become an expert in managing risks. There is no coaching award for fewest injuries or law suits. In short, safety is boring - until an injury occurs.

What I like to offer are some simple ideas to lower the chance of players being injured and programs becoming litigiously involved.

Here's a one-minute hazard management program for coaches. Every time you walk on the field to coach:

1. **Look for a potential hazard** - Two feet off the sideline stood a baseball backstop. The backstop is an excellent safety structure for baseball, but zero for rugby players.
2. **Remove the Hazard** - Removing a baseball backstop, while not impossible, would be impractical, so you can
3. **Cover the Hazard** - Portable mats, similar to those used on walls behind basketball backboards, would diffuse this hazard.
4. **Adjust the Hazard** - Another strategy is to such is to make the playing area a bit smaller. This creates a buffer zone. Ask yourself - is it better to play on a pitch a bit smaller and safer or a regulation site and unsafe? If you can't adjust the environment.
5. **Remove the Participants from the Hazard** - Once you recognize the hazard and: can't remove the hazard, can't cover the hazard, can't adjust the situation, then your next step is to remove the participants from the hazardous area.

Think of these five "Hazard Management" steps not only in terms of equipment and facilities, but also about people. Yes, people can sometimes be more of a hazard than metal backstops. The hazard control plan applies to instruction, conditioning, and supervision techniques.

Coaching is being a hazard manager.

NZRFU Hints on Selection, Ethics and Managing Players

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The following three brief coaching checklists - on Selection, the Coaches' Code of Ethics, and Managing Players - come from the New Zealand Rugby Union's Coaching Manual.

Selection - Points of Principle

Relating to team selection, the following nine points are most important:

1. In the positions with a high risk for injuries, body typing is essential.
2. Select a squad, not fifteen players plus extras.
3. The dropped player must have the situation spelt out before demotion takes place.
4. Upon demotion, the player must be the first to know.
5. It is important to have a mechanism for the feedback of player grievances.
6. All selection policies must be well-communicated to the players.
7. Be flexible in selection, fitting resources to best meet needs. E.g., locks need not be tall so long as they are balanced, loose forwards can be lineout forwards anywhere in the lineout; anyone with the skill can throw the ball in; backs should be coached to fulfill any backline role.
8. Clubs should have a consistent club pattern that all selectors aim for, so that players are prepared for what it takes to make higher honors.
9. Assume all players are aiming to play at the highest level, unless they specifically indicate otherwise.

The Coaches' Code of Ethics

These are the ethics of coaching on which both credibility and success are most fundamentally based.

The coach must:

1. Be impartial in the treatment of players.
2. Be a good personal example to players.
3. Positively discipline the actions of players.
4. Involve players in the making of team decisions.
5. Set realistic aims for the team and its individuals.
6. Be open-minded concerning the treatment of players and attitudes towards the game.
7. Be thorough, knowledgeable and effective in the latest coaching methods.
8. Be personally honest, and honest with players.
9. Follow informed, professional, medical advice at all times.
10. Create an enjoyable environment in which to play the game.

Managing of Players: New vs. Mature

The following points refer to differences in coaching new and mature players:

1. Coaches of young players should emphasize the development of techniques and skills, while those of more mature players should seek to develop these skills under increasing pressure.
2. Many skills are applicable to individual positions, and it is up to individuals to practice them. The coach should concentrate more on the individual skills that are less specialized and more complimentary -- the best example of which is passing.
3. The younger player gets fit by practicing and playing rugby, while the mature player gets fit to play rugby.
4. The coach must make sure that an over-emphasis on fitness in younger players does not erode their ability to practice skills correctly.
5. It is the responsibility of the coach of mature players to use experts to allow players to prepare effectively out-of-season for their in-season efforts.

