

SBU Rugby Alumni Newsletter

Tom Ren '78

Dear Fellow Ruggers:

WOW...30 years later and SBU Rugby is still alive and going strong. What started with a bunch of guys having fun, drinking beer (can you believe that) and learning a European game after growing up with American Football has now become a widely played sport by both sexes.

HOW IT ALL GOT STARTED: During my first semester sophomore year a freshman from England named Frank Dooley recruited able bodied and not so able minded Bona students to take up the game of Rugby. About 40 of us got together to learn what it was all about, terms like "scrum", "lineout", "pitch" and others were rehashed over a few frosties in the "Skellar". Practice began and we all looked forward with wild anticipation to our first spring season. Dooley was the founder and acted as the first coach of SBU Rugby. Financially we were on our own and hoped for some funding in semesters to come. The University had had a few bad experiences in funding programs that had died on the vine and decided to wait and see what developed. Seems like it really made a difference, right? We ended up with about 30 players and paid all of our own expenses and were accepted as a club sport.

THE FIRST GAME: With four weeks of serious practice under our belts we were uncertain of where we stood. We were soundly defeated (28-0) against Brockport State "B's", on the road, but played tough in our first game. Worst of all we lost the "third half", as we didn't have much experience there either. OUCH!! The good thing was that the only place for us to go was forward. According to a quote attributed to the Brockport Club President "They (Bonaventure) better not come back here next semester because they'll blow us out." We were an athletic, physical bunch that could hit and tackle hard but we had a lot to learn on the offensive side of the ball.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT: Good question! I spoke with several of my life long SBU Rugged friends, Nick Benvenuto '77, Bill Sherwood '80, and Randy Farnsworth and here is what we could best come up with. Please Note: a very special "Thank You" to Lorraine Welsh, Archives Supervisor, "The Bona Venture" for forwarding some old articles to us so that I had some facts to work from. Don't hold us to any of this, OK? Frank Dooley didn't return for his sophomore year. So Tim Burke, Bob Hodge (still can't remember who he is for sure, but believe he was our "hooker"), and I decided to try and carry on as best we could. We were looking to schedule a few games for the fall and book a complete Spring season. We had about 6-8 players return so we basically were starting over. We got a sponsor to donate kegs for our home games so that we could bribe our fellow students to come out and cheer us on. It worked, and we soon had a very strong student following, isn't beer wonderful! We then won our first game against the Genesee County Creamers; the ice had been broken.

A NEW COACH AND OUTLOOK: We were very fortunate to have been graced with the presence of our new full-time coach Al Silliker. Al had great experience and with the addition of experienced "off-campus" players Randy Farnsworth and Roy Doty we were primed to make a better showing. We all had agreed that we needed to be the "most fit" team on the pitch to make up for our lack of experience. We began winning games, became members of the Upstate Union and almost stole our inaugural Tournament, finishing as runner-ups. This propelled us to being a force within the Upstate Union for years to come.

SOME OF MY FAVORITE MEMORIES: Our pitch on McGraw-Jennings was considered off-campus by most! Good thing we served beer! As co-captain during my junior and

senior year with Bob Bellairs we had great fun, won our fair share of games, AND never lost a third half, something we were all very proud of. I'm certain that many of you have special memories of your playing days and have developed friendships that continue today. I was extremely impressed with the social and gentlemanly aspect of the game, trying to hit someone as hard as possible, run them over or rake them with your spikes, only to then shake hands and drink with them like they were your long lost brother. One evening after having a few dozen beers, Randy Farnsworth and Roy Doty explained to me that all western schools and most eastern schools had sister teams. The lights came on and from there our woman's team was launched. We took turns coaching them based on whose injuries were the worst. I often wondered if some of us were really hurt that badly.

I could probably go on for pages but this has to get to the press. I've been looking forward to coming in from Colorado and seeing my old teammates and meeting as many of you as possible. Hopefully we will have an even bigger turnout for our 30th anniversary as we did for the 25th (60 alumni members were there). My goal is to meet everyone and enjoy another round of beers with you in the future. To you younger lads please help and protect us old guys during the games. We'll need all the help we can get! To those playing against us, remember that you'll be older some day too so please take it easy on these old bones and muscles.

Sincerely,

Tom "Whaleman" Ren '78

P.S. Just so you know, I was a business major. At times like this I wish I had taken a journalism class or two! Thanks for bearing with me. May all your dreams turn to goals and your goals turn to reality.

Billy Kelly '95

We are putting the 30-year history of St. Bonaventure Rugby together on a CD that will be available on alumni weekend. We need your help. Please send any (and all!) Bona rugby and rugby related pictures, articles, and video so we can include them. If you remember the 25th anniversary weekend, Brian Conley '86 put together an awesome program that included history and pictures that people sent in. This will be similar, except it will be saved on a CD for people to take home with them. If you absolutely cannot attend alumni weekend, we can arrange to have a copy sent to you. Here's what to do:

- Emailing scanned photos is the easiest way to do this. If possible, please email what ever you would like to include to [Paul Fordiani-fordianip@comcast.net](mailto:Paul.Fordiani@comcast.net)
- If you are mailing photos, articles, or video, please send it to (include a self-addressed stamped envelope if you are not going to be able to attend rugby alumni weekend):

Paul Fordiani
19525 Ridge Heights Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20879
PH: 301.926.8622

- Please send as many items as possible...as soon as possible so we can begin to work on this. We hope to show it for the first time after the alumni game.
- In order to receive a copy, all we ask for is a small donation to the "Robert David Peraza Scholarship" at SBU- all proceeds will go directly into Rob's scholarship.

- If everyone chips in, we have enough alumni to make this a great collection- please get on this and send in what ever you have!
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Bob Sims '83

Below is a mock-up of the kit we are going to put together for the next "Rob Peraza Rugby Alumni Weekend" when we will celebrate our club's 30th anniversary (to be held the last weekend in April). The entire kit will include:

- Jersey made out of Adidas' newest and highest end product made with "Climalite" technology (durable and breathable fabric). Jerseys will be numbered with 30th Anniversary and SBURFC patches (as seen below).
- Adidas drawstring rugby shorts (as seen below).
- Yellow rugby socks...like they were 30 years ago.

We are still working on the cost, but the entire kit should cost approximately \$75.00. As soon as we firm up the price we ask that you send us your order as soon as possible. We will not have much flexibility with making additional orders once the order period is over. Stay tuned for more details!



John Mudano '90, '93

Gentlemen:

First I want to thank Bill Kelly and Drew Carozza for doing a phenomenal job with the alumni network. It was Drew's letter that inspired me to submit this thought.

One of the things that always impressed me about our team was what a close-knit bond I had with my teammates. During a match I always knew that someone had my back, and the camaraderie that was displayed on the field was carried into the bars, basements, garages, or fields where we gathered, drank, bullshitted, and sang. Jim Connell, Mike Quinn, and I were surprised that at the end of last year's game that aspect of the club seemed to be missing. Please do not misunderstand me: the raffle was great and gathering at the OP was an obvious

choice, but I think we need a way to gather as a large group and come together as a team during our reunion weekends. As an undergrad I remember looking forward to drinking heavily, singing, and getting to know the alums. As an alum I want to catch up with friends and get to know present members of the club. I hope that the 30th Anniversary proves to be an event that once again reestablishes the camaraderie that the team was built upon.

Let me finish by saying I echo Drew's thoughts. We need to get it together and beat the undergrads.

P.S. Chris "Wheels" Heil - get your ass down to Bona's this alumni weekend and score some try's!

I look forward to seeing you all,

John

Bill Gleason '81

Attention: Older alumni players

After reading Drew Carozza's message about our poor performance in '04, I tend to agree with him. Although the weekend is a social event, the game itself should still be a competitive one. I think both the alumni and students deserve a better effort. The alumni pack always has the size and weight advantage, but last year we were pushed all over the field. Personally, I have had injuries in the past 2 years, which prevented me from training properly for the past couple of games. As we age, we must work harder to get in "game shape".

If we get a good turnout for the 30th Anniversary, which it appears we will, the alumni who are not physically prepared to give a good performance should step aside for those who are. We will have enough players for more than 1 game, and everyone will have a chance to play.

I recently played in over 45 division of the Can Am Tournament in Lake Placid, (Fitz '81, was there as well), and it amazed me how well some older guys do. There were players in their 50's who would put some 30 year olds to shame. The point is, start working out and get in shape for the Alumni game. We will be playing the same undergrads as last year, and it would be nice to turn things around.

David Conley '02

Lots of babies to welcome into the world- Congratulations to Bradley "freestyle" Eastham and his wife Paula, they had a baby girl named Erica Michelle ... Scott Bryant and his wife recently welcomed Tanner Bryant to their family (hopefully Scott will be able to make it for alumni weekend next year!)... Mark and Gretchen Pittman recently welcome Austin David into their family... Mike and Andrea Minardi are expecting their first.

Weddings/Engagements- Mark Lomanico was married to Julie Thompson on Sept 4th... Andy Mac was married in June to Erin Guditus, she's an '98 alum. The next one to go might be Tozzi... Mike Wyse is engaged (God help Maria)... Tommy Lemondola is engaged as well...

Paul Fordiani '84

Thanks for the newsletter. I have two items I would like included:

To whomever won the Web Hosting and Domain Registration at RobFest '04:

Please contact Paul Fordiani (fordiani@fordiani-consulting.com) to collect.

To Nick Benvenuto:

Thanks for the J-E-T-S Tickets!!

Regards,

Paul

Drew Carozza '86

SBU Campus webcam: <http://149.76.15.5/>

Matt Fernandes '05

This Saturday we played U of R as our season opener. Plain and simple we played terrible. The first half was a mess. Nothing went well for us there. We were down 10-7 at the half. The game ended in a 10-10 tie without playing injury time while we were 5 meters out with our put in at a scrum. There was supposed to be a good 5 minutes of injury time left. League rules say that you can have an overtime period if both teams agree to it. We didn't even think twice, we were out on the field waiting and U of R turned it down. Their coach was adamant that the tie stand. Needless to say it wasn't the ideal way to open the season, but we're going to bounce back. U of R is regarded as the best team in Division 2 and we will definitely get our chance to finish the job come playoff time. This weekend we will be looking to regain our playing form by traveling to Geneseo, which is another tough team. Kickoff will be on Sunday at 1pm.

Player of the game: 8-man Pat Harnisch- Scored our lone try and was everywhere on the field.

<http://student.sbu.edu/Clubs/Rugby/>

Steve Comber (Rob Peraza's Uncle)

Hello Family and Friends,

Hope this email finds all of you in the best of health!

As you may know, this year Billy Comber (Rob's cousin from way down South in Miami, FL,) will be running the NYC Marathon in continued CELEBRATION of Rob's life. This will be Billy's 1st marathon, so we are looking forward to seeing as many supporters as possible.

Following the marathon, we are planning to gather for a meal and toast to Rob, and of course to congratulate Billy for what I now will be a very successful run.

Billy, your meal is covered! You just concentrate on running!!!!!!

Love you all,

Steve / Uncle Steve

www.rdperazamemorial.com

25th Anniversary Team Picture taken in 1999 (Missing- Tom Ren '78 & Nick Benvenuto '77)



Please reply with anything you would like to submit to the next newsletter.