

THE GAIN LINE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
MIAMI UNIVERSITY MEN'S RUGBY CLUB ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Miami U. Men's Rugby Football Club Alumni Association, Inc. shall be organized and operated to develop, support and sustain collegiate rugby football at Miami University.

The MAC is Back

Coach Moore Predicts continued domination of Old Boys

By Jared Moore, Class of 1998

As part of a growing national trend, many college conferences have formed this season. The MAC is in the beginning stages and it is still unclear if it will be called the MAC this season, but we have seven traditional MAC schools and two non-conference clubs (Dayton & Cincinnati) combining to form our own D1-AA conference. We will be competing from September 15 through November 3 with: Bowling Green State University, Ohio University, Western Michigan, Central Michigan, Ball State, Northern Illinois, and University of Dayton. There not will be an end-of-season MAC tourney. The conference champion will be determined by Super League scoring. The conference champion will receive an automatic bid to the D1-AA national tournament. The Big Ten (IU, OSU, and Purdue) will have their own conference and two time national champion, Davenport has been elevated to D1-A. Kent State, UC, XU, and newcomer and varsity program Wheeling Jesuit (West Virginia) will most likely be competing in a D2 conference with several Michigan teams. Prior to starting the MAC competition Miami will start things off with our traditional domination of the Old Boys (traditional since I have taken over as Head Coach).



JR Hassett wants you at the 44th Annual Old Boys

Although the Old Boys may have an influx of young talent, it will not be an easy game for the alumni. The club's numbers show the the alumni will need a solid two sides on September 8th....so

please make your plans now to attend!

The History of the MAC (credit Roger Mazzarella)

When rugby took off in this country in the late 60's, the organizational structure of the sport was the one brought over by the ex-pats that were in the forefront of creating the rugby teams in the USA. The "HOME" unions served as their model. If you still carry the "RFC" initials as part of your club name then you have a direct line to that influence. Lionel Young at Miami, Roger Holliday at Bowling Green, Glyn Meyrick and Reg Gollidge at Ohio State are just some of the ex-pat pioneers that created not only those clubs, but also the Ohio and Midwest Rugby Football Unions.

That structure basically had the "union" (at whatever level – state, region, national) as a sort of grandfatherly personage that set the guidelines that the clubs would follow. As new clubs formed, they were easily transitioned into the existing organizational administration – be that scheduling, referee acquisition, discipline, etc. In the spring of 1968 there were just four rugby clubs in Ohio – Ohio State, Denison, the Cleveland Blues and John Carroll. By the end of the fall of 1968 there were five more – Kent, Bowling Green, Hiram, Miami and Ohio Wesleyan. Wheeling was already a varsity sport. By the fall of 1972 with the addition of Ohio Univ., Ohio had 31 clubs. (the first women's clubs do not come along until 1978). Growth was slower in Indiana and Michigan. Ball State came online in 1980, followed by Western Michigan and Central Michigan in 1985.

The Midwest RFU formed in 1964. In 1971, Miami Univ. sent out an invitation (I still have the original letter) to split up the Indiana, Ohio and Michigan Tri-State Union and form the individual LAU's that still exist today. The first state championships were held in the fall of 1973. While there had been a loose invitational Midwest championship tournament (senior men's and college mixed together playing each other), the first true Midwest collegiate event (as well as the first National Championship) was not held until 1981. We were either tougher or more stupid back then, but until 1993 the MW championship was a 16 team, one weekend, two day event that featured two 25 minute half games on Saturday, a 30 minute half semi-final and a full 40 half championship match Sunday afternoon.

Predating all of that was the MAC championship. First held in Bowling Green in 1973, brand new club Ohio University came out of nowhere to take the title. That event, with an accompanying "B" side championship was held every year until 2002. For a very long time – the MAC was the ONLY collegiate (Continued on Page 2)



DON'T MISS IT
OLD BOYS WEEKEND
SEPTEMBER 8-9, 2012

The only way to be as cool as Mike Coco.

(MAC History continued) conference championship held in the United States. In fact if you were to go back and peruse the rankings that were published in Rugby Magazine during the 80's and very early 90's, MAC teams often held six of the top ten spots in the Midwest during that time – Ball State, Bowling Green, Central Michigan, Kent State, Miami and Western Michigan. Marshall started crashing the usually Big Ten dominated party in the early 2000's (or early 21st Century – doesn't sound cool to say?) and Buffalo has come on strong in recent years while part of the Empire Union.

The point being – the MAC already has a very long and proud history.

As I said at the beginning though – we are poised to make a “leap of faith” – no longer will our individuals fates be handed down to us by the grandfatherly rugby union. We are going to be collectively responsible for ourselves both individually but more importantly as a group linked together under the Mid American Conference banner.

2012 PREVIEW

REDHAWKS LOOK TO CONTINUE RESURGENCE

2012 Schedule

- Sept 2 MAC 7s National
Qualifier@Bowling Green
- Sept 8 44th Annual Old Boys
- Sept 15 @University of
Cincinnati
- Sept 22 University of Dayton
- Sept 29 @Western Michigan
- Oct 6 @Ohio University
- Oct 13 Central Michigan
- Oct 20 Northern Illinois
- Oct 27 @Ball State University
- Nov 3 Bowling Green
- Nov 30 USA Rugby 7's National
Tourney

By Jared Moore, '98

After graduating a tremendous amount of talent last year we are entering a “new” conference and it looks like we will have a great chance to return to the national playoffs both in 7s and 15s. Robert Gildea, Jordan Dickman, and Steve Hall are the



holdovers from the national tournament run in 2010. Hall and Dickman will be anchoring our pack and Gildea will be a utility player at flanker and center. Gildea will also be returning as President of the club. He has done a great job off the pitch, along with the other officers, improving the administration of the club. We have a very loyal and solid junior class entering this season with stand outs at loosehead prop (St. Ignatius grad), Connor Mathews, flyhalf/fullback Connor McCarthy, and fullback/wing Connor Murray. We have several seniors and juniors also looking to make an impact now that over a third of the starters have graduated from last year. They plan on picking up where the 2012 team left off, except accomplishing what they could not – a D1AA national playoff berth. Leading the sophomore class is Sam McCarthy at #12; he made a great impact as a freshman on the squad last year and will be able to mentor a significantly large and talented incoming freshman class. Then there are the '12 spring rookies, most notably Jake Knowles (#3), Jake White (#1, #7), Zack Cox (#6), Tyrin Nelson (#13 & #14), Ben Coudriet (#15, #10), and Andrew Perkins (#14). We also expect good things out of returning veterans Kyle Searer (#2) and TJ Ganser (#6), playing the last 2 years on and off due to school and other commitments. Finally we have an incoming class of freshman of 17 recruits and counting, several of them were team captains of their high school teams – the most notable being Greenwich (Connecticut, ranked 3rd in the country) and St. Ignatius (Ohio), as well as players that lead their teams to the Ohio State High School final four tournament and finals (Avon, Indian Spring, Hudson, and Tri-Villages).

Interview by Ian Weir, '99

Editor's Note: You may have noticed that there have been some pretty fair backs coming from Miami in recent years. The Alumni Association has been contributing to the development of those players by funding coaches (paying travel costs and stipends). One of the people helping to develop those players is Elliot Pollard.

COACHING PROFILE

ELLIOT POLLARD, DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY

Hailing from South Africa, Elliot has been essential to the team's success and helped raise Miami's profile at the national level. In recent years, Elliott has also been used as a consultant by NBC on its collegiate sevens coverage. He, his wife, and daughter reside in Delaware, Ohio.

Q: Can you tell us a bit about your background?

A: I grew up in a small town in South Africa and grew up playing rugby until I was 15 before getting hurt. I was able to play again during my last year of school and ended up with a club team playing on their under 21 team. My town is very small, but we have a lot of really strong rugby players, some of the best in the country. The problem is they all leave. The local college started a Sports Administration and Marketing program to keep talented sportsmen in the area, so I got into that and also began coaching high school while I was playing. My last year there was in 1999. I came to the states planning on being here six months, met my wife and have been here ever since.

Q: What brought you to the US?

A: I wanted to travel and also thought the millennium would be fun to experience over here. There was a shady deal where an American guy was advertising in the local paper about opportunities for South Africans to play rugby in the states. I contacted him, and he got back to me with an opportunity in Columbus. But when I got here, no one knew anything about a contract or that I was even coming to town. I stayed with someone from the local club and pretty much ended up eating him out of house and home. From there I bounced around from rugby guy's house to rugby guy's house until I ended up meeting my wife at a party at the Scioto Valley Rugby Clubhouse.

Q: What position did you play?

A: I played Center, Fullback, and Wing. In sevens I played mostly Center and Fly Half.

Q: How did you get hooked up with Miami Rugby?

A: It was pretty much through the Ohio Select Side. A large majority of the team was made up of Miami guys. My first year of coaching we were more or less in the 'second tier,' but we were able to win out of there. By the third year we were winning the tournament. Miami asked me to come down and run some camps, which I did, and ended up being asked to coach the sevens team. It made sense because of my familiarity with the players. They were driving up to Columbus during the summer, so I kind of felt indebted to them. You're no use as a coach without good players.

Q: How is the coaching dynamic structured?

A: At first, I was the [7's] coach and Jared was the manager/administrator in addition to him coaching the fifteens team. My role's changing a bit this year with Luke [Markovich] coming in as a coach. I'll be more of a mentor to him and advisor..

Q: What are some of your observations of Miami Rugby and its reputation?

A: I don't think the team gets the recognition it deserves, even here in Ohio. I think that's changing, but no one would blame the team for playing with a chip on its shoulder. I think everything the team accomplished last year opened a lot of people's eyes. I spoke with some friends of mine in USA rugby after a tournament who told me there was a lot of buzz around the Miami players, saying they were one of the best teams they've seen. But I still think most people overlook Miami, which is fine by me.

Read the rest of the interview in the Gainline Online. Available at www.murugby.com

What Can You Do?

There are several ways that you can contribute to sustaining and further developing Miami Rugby:

- **Annual Dues:** Most importantly, keep your MU RFC Alumni Association membership current by paying your \$50/annual dues. This can be done through PayPal at murugby.com
- **Annual Donations:** Consider an annual donation above and beyond dues this year. Better yet, set up an automatic annual (or monthly) donation via PayPal (which helps us plan). One time or automatic payments are easily made through PayPal at murugby.com
- **Lionel Young/Doug Edwards Endowment:** This new permanent fund was established through M.U.'s development office by Dike Ajiri, '93 with an initial pledge of \$25K over three years. This fund will help us further ensure that we'll meet the long-term needs of the program. If you're interested in contributing to this fund, contact Craig Scheiderer at scheidcs@gmail.com.
- **Old Boys:** Attend Old Boys weekend to share in the current Miami rugby experience, and relive great memories with old friends.

Miami Rugby Alumni Association
P.O. Box 1603
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USA



Blast from the Past

An unidentified Miami player looks to launch a counterattack. Do you know who this is and what game this was taken at? Post your best guess to the list serve and share your photos there as well:

Murugby@yahoogroups.com

**Or post to our new Alumni
FaceBook Page:**

www.facebook.com/groups/murugby/

**Please send your old action
photos to:**

woycke@gmail.com

Contact Us

Membership: Contributions of \$50 or more per year qualify you as a member of the Miami Rugby Alumni Association. Mail them to Mike Coco, P.O. Box 1603, Traverse City, MI 49685, use the enclosed envelope or pay via PayPal at www.murugby.com

Gain Line News: If you have a story, picture, or other information that you'd like to contribute, contact Joe Woycke, 129 Apple Valley Dr, Woodstock, GA 30188 (woycke@gmail.com)

List Serve: Get the latest news. To join our email list serve, send an email to: murugby-subscribe@yahoogroups.com