

THE GAIN LINE

Mark Your Calendar: Old Boys Weekend September 8-10, 2006

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OLD BOYS WEEKEND 2005



Our 33rd annual Old Boys Weekend was a great success. Although turnout (42 alums) was down from normal levels, a fantastic time was had by all. Former players from as far away as California came to town to see their old teammates and to get acquainted with the current roster of Miami ruggers. The "young" Old Boys prevailed in the match with the University A-side (41-26). In the second match against the University B side, the really Old Boys (ages 40-50+) showed some flashes of former brilliance, but in the end were overwhelmed by the superior fitness of the youngsters. Overall, the University boys played extremely well, attesting to the leadership of coach Kevin Kittredge. A grand feast prepared by Bill and Nancy Griffes was served under a tent at the pitch. Speeches and awards were given, and stories/lies were perpetuated. A more complete description of Old Boys weekend is online at <http://www.orgs.muohio.edu/murugby/>.

Miami U. RFC Fall Wrapup

Club Goes 5-1 In Regular Season: Makes Midwest Playoffs

*From Joe "Mario" Nauman,
Club President*

Our season started off with the Old Boys weekend, which we all saw as a great time. Once again, we want to thank all of the Old Boys for coming to Oxford. The team enjoyed having you and can't wait for next year's game. After Old Boys, we started our season with our first Ohio Rugby Union game against U. of Dayton. We ended up pulling out a victory but saw that a lot of work was needed to play Ohio U. Due to some confusion in the scheduling this year we had a bye week in between Dayton and OU. We used that weekend as an inter-squad scrimmage which we felt really helped us out. The following week, though, we had our only regular season loss to OU. Many of us felt we did not play to our full potential against them. The next three weeks we played Kent State, U. of Cincinnati and Marshall. We defeated these teams with no problem, and by doing so we received

our bid to the Midwest playoffs. Our pool for the Midwest playoffs consisted of Michigan State (Michigan RU), Ohio U. (ORU) and Franciscan U. (Alleghany RU). Michigan State was our first playoff game of the weekend and we ended up losing to them 24-6. The following day we played a consolation game against Franciscan and with the leadership of our graduating seniors we finished our season with a 37-19 victory.

Our B-side had the same schedule as the A-side and all of our new rookies did an amazing job at learning the game. From what I remember, they lost only one or two games the entire season. We are hoping that many of these new guys can step in and fill the incredible holes left by our seniors graduating in December.

These new graduates, BJ Brick, John Coughlin, Mike Cahill, Eric Van Wagoner, and Stu Donnett are now part of the Miami Old Boys and are welcomed into the MUM RFC AA.

Miami University RFC News

Fall A-Side Record				
Miami Old Boys	9/10	Home	L	41-26
U. of Dayton	9/17	Away	W	20-10
Ohio U.	10/1	Home	L	28-8
Kent State	10/8	Away	W	48-17
U. of Cincinnati	10/15	Home	W	24-8
Marshall U.	10/22	Home	W	36-0
*Michigan State	10/29	Away	L	24-6
*Franciscan U.	10/30	Away	W	37-19
* Midwest Collegiate Division II Playoffs				

Upcoming Spring Schedule		
U. of Florida	1/14	Won 22-3
Nash Bash	3/25	Away
Ohio U.	4/1	Away
Ball State	4/8	Home
U. of Cincinnati	4/15	Away
Bowling Green	4/22	Away
Ohio Classic	4/29	Away

MU Men's Alumni Association Highlights

Financial: For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005, our association shows cash and assets of \$62,741. This reflects an addition of \$37,716 from a successful poker tournament held this past year. These funds have been invested in a portfolio that provides good diversification and higher than average growth potential while maintaining liquidity and low fees.

Communications: We will publish at least two Gain Line newsletters each year (following the University club's fall and spring seasons). We have previously used the University club's website to post these newsletters and other information, but are in the process of developing our own website which is planned to be available by May, 2006. In addition to our newsletters, it will have a photo gallery reflecting club history and a facility to update our alumni database and establish contacts between rugby alumni. To contribute memorabilia to the website, contact Steve Gustin, 890 Windsor Trail, Roswell, GA 30076-1301 (jbns@charter.net).

Field Committee: Our primary goal is to assure that the University club has access to good-quality pitches for matches and practice. We have pursued the possibility of purchasing grounds for the Club's exclusive use, but have determined that this is not feasible at this time, mainly due to the difficulty in finding property that is close enough to the university. Instead, we are pursuing a partnership with the University in which we can assist monetarily in some form of field enhancement.

Scholarships: We currently award two \$500 memorial scholarships (Doug Edwards, Lionel Young) to University club members who demonstrate an understanding of the true spirit of rugby, and a willingness to promote this spirit both on and off the rugby field. This year's recipients were Peter Griffith, '06 (Lionel Young) and Joe "Mario" Nauman, '07 (Doug Edwards).

Coaching: We provide monetary support to assure that the Club has adult coaching leadership. At present we provide a \$500 expense reimbursement to the coach each season. We have also supported Coach Kittredge in becoming a member of the USA Rugby's College Coaches Association and receiving his Level I and II coaching certificate with USA Rugby.

Old Boys On Tour
Critterfest, Scottsdale, AZ
12/3/05

Sixteen Miami Rugby alums and two "Friends of Miami Rugby" traveled to Scottsdale, AZ for the **Critterfest** rugby tournament: Dike Ajiri, BJ Brick, Mike Coco, Bobbie Deck, Toby Edison, Steve Fazekas, Jeremy

Huelsman, Randy Mahlerwein, Jared Moore, Craig Scheiderer, Brian Slutzky, Grant Smith, Paul Soltis, Skip Tramontana, Mark Wiet, Joe Woycke, Tom-Tom Landauer (Friend of the Program), Bill Boston (Friend of the Program). This is the fifth time since 1998 that this group of alumni from the early and mid 1990's traveled to Scottsdale to compete, wearing the Miami RFC crest in competition. Once again, graciously hosted by Randy "Frontal" Mahlerwein, '96 and his wife Rebecca, most members of the group spent an extended weekend to catch up with each other and enjoy the fresh air of the Southwest.



Critterfest, sponsored by the Cave Creek (AZ) Critters R.F.C. is both a social and competitive tournament, providing three matches for each club, all played on Saturday. This year, the Miami alumni accepted close losses to all three opponents: (Continued on Page 3)

Old Boys On Tour

Division III Tucson Magpies, Division II Old Pueblo and the Southern California Union Manwhores ("SCUM"), which had 7 teams represented on their squad. While this year's on-field performance was the group's worst in its five trips out west, it was none-the-less a good time to catch up with old teammates. Even though the scoreboard was tilted in favor of the opponents, Miami's highlight of the weekend was the pack play with the tight-five dominating all three matches in the scrums.

Following its annual dinner at Ponchos, the group retired to Randy's abode for a night of conversing and bragging about how life used to be when we won. The next tournament is scheduled for December 2, 2006 and it already on our calendars.

Church St. Barbarians Alan Weber Wedding Phoenix, AZ 11/11/05

The Church St. Barbarians is a touring side that originated at Miami in the fall of 1974. For many years, Alan Weber chose outstanding players from Miami, as well as opponents from Michigan, Ohio State, Louisville and other clubs to form teams that played wide-open rugby with "flair." The Barbarians won numerous top-level matches and tournaments in the U.S. and Canada throughout the 70's, 80's, and early 90's.



In 2004, Alan organized a Barbarians 30-year reunion to compete in an over 40's tournament in Phoenix, where he now lives. The group won two of three matches, and had an extraordinary time. This year, the Barbarians descended on Phoenix once again, not only to exhibit their renowned flair, but also to attend Alan's wedding, which was held on the same day as their scheduled match with the Old Southwest over-40 side. Unfortunately, the aging Barbarians were less successful this year, losing to a somewhat younger side (5 tries to 3). However, a great time was had by all, with ample opportunity for several Miami Old Boys (Alan, Tim Butler, Chris Hines, Charlie Howard, Bill Griffes, Ron

Pruitt, Steve Seilkop, Dave Weber) to renew old friendships. The wedding ceremony was distinctive, with the bride (Casey) arriving in a horse-drawn carriage, wearing a flowing white dress complemented by red sneakers. At the reception Alan was, of course, the last man standing on the dance floor.



Miami Rugby—The Early Years As Remembered by Steve Seilkop (with Help From Bill Hansel, Bob Lyon, and Bob Morrissey)

The 1960's was a period in which many U.S. men's rugby clubs were formed, and Miami was no exception. The spark which started rugby at Miami in the fall of 1968 was a Brit named Lionel Young. He had recently arrived on Miami's campus along with his wife Jane, who was starting a two-year faculty appointment. Lionel, who was in his late 40's, had been a standout rugby player in England before immigrating to Canada, where he played a pivotal role in getting rugby started in the Toronto area. To broaden his horizons while at Miami, Lionel decided to take advantage of the free tuition for spouses that came along with Jane's position, enrolling in the elementary education program. This is an important part of the story, as Lionel, with his British accent, natural charm, and silver-fox good looks always seemed to have an entourage of attractive coed classmates with whom he often shared coffee at the Res. This spectacle naturally attracted the attention (and envy) of curious male students, who edged closer to Lionel's table, hoping for female fallout. By chance, one of these guys had played rugby outside the U.S. (Bill Sommer-Australia), and on hearing Lionel's accent, he engaged him in a conversation that quickly turned to rugby.

From there, it did not take long for Lionel, Bill, and a few others to consider trying to get rugby started at Miami. They put up fliers around campus and placed an advertisement in the Miami Student to generate interest. The first practice with six players (including Lionel) was held on a rough field at the Tallawanda Sports Recreation Center on Fairfield Road. Subsequently, Lionel managed to convince the University to give the group access to a small field in front of the maintenance building by Cook Field, where curious onlookers began to watch practices. Lionel brought along his collection of old rugby boots, piling them up next to the field, and would grab anyone that showed the slightest interest, telling them to try on a pair of boots and join the fun.

We practiced all that fall and winter of 1968, learning the fundamentals of the game from Lionel, and started to understand how to function as a team. Our practices consisted mainly of scrimmaging, with Lionel (remember, he was in his late 40's) occasionally joining in to show us how it was done. And show us he did, with a great sidestep, swerve, and straight-arm; in his prime, he must have been sensational! By spring of 1969, we had about 20 players, and scheduled our first match against Ohio State's B-side in Columbus. We were not expected to be very competitive, since OSU had been playing rugby for several

Miami University Men's Rugby
Football Club
Alumni Association
P.O. Box 1603
Traverse City, MI 49685

years before us, and they had a strong contingent of experienced foreign players. We didn't let this get in our way; on a cold, windy day in March we managed to pull out a narrow victory (11-10), with the go ahead try scored by Bill Hansel on a long run. My recollections of that day are still vivid. As an 18-year old kid, I remember being completely exhausted, but terrifically satisfied with the victory against "old" men (some were graduate students in their mid 20s). I was also surprised and delighted by the singing and camaraderie at the post-match party. Two weeks later, we had a return match with our new OSU friends in Oxford on Cook Field. This time around, we gave them a resounding thrashing (43-10), in which I scored my first try for Miami.

One interesting story from this time relates to Bill Hansel (who was the club's first president). Bill had been a standout high school football player with a scholarship to play at Miami. His football career at Miami was cut short by a serious neck injury, and he was put on probation from participating in vigorous school-sponsored athletic activities (probably to protect the university from liability for further injury). To hide his participation in rugby from the school and his parents, Bill enlisted the aid of a reporter friend from the Miami Student who covered our games. Together, they developed an alias based on Bill's middle name (Gregory) and his mother's maiden name (McMullen). So in Miami Student articles, Bill became an exchange student from Scotland, who was described as "Greg McMullen, the speedy Scotsman." Thus was born the time-honored tradition for Miami rugby players to change their identities as circumstances required.

We didn't have any more matches that spring of 1969, but in the fall of that year we had a fuller schedule, and had grown to two sides. Our first side went 4-3-1 that season, so overall we were 6-3-1 in our first ten A team matches - quite respectable for a new club. During this time and through the spring of 1970, Lionel Young continued to help us develop as players and as a club, which was then fielding three sides. Sadly, Lionel and Jane moved to Florida that summer, and we were then on our own without a coach. Fortunately, Lionel had left us with a strong base in terms of fundamentals and club organization, and we remained highly competitive throughout the early to mid 70's, fielding four sides, with more than 500 spectators watching some of our games.

Contact Us

Membership: Contributions of \$50/year (or more) qualify you as a member of the MU Men's RFC Alumni Association. Mail them to Brian Slutsky, 1720 McLean Ct., Glenview, IL 60025.

Gain Line News: If you have a story or other information that you'd like to contribute, contact Steve Seilkop, 3942 Rives Chapel Rd., Siler City, NC 27344 (seilkop@centernet.net)