



Alumni Newsletter: Issue 1, November 2011



A Word from our Club Captain

Hello and welcome to the first issue of the University of St Andrews Rugby Club Alumni newsletter. I trust you are well and hope that this publication will give you a good insight into the activities and progress of the club that I am sure played a significant part in your time at St Andrews. The rugby club has made some notable progress and changes over the past few years. In keeping ahead of the transition in university rugby across Scotland, St Andrews University were the first to appoint a full-time director of rugby, David Ross, whose role has been to coach and manage the development of all teams across the club. With the help of Dave, the 1st XV is back competing in the top flight of Scottish university rugby, and remain determined to win their division in BUCS 1A. The past two years have also seen the beginning of an off-field relationship with our local rivals Madras College FP, with several of our members coaching their youth teams every Sunday as part of the club's outreach programme. In return they have allowed us the exclusive use of their clubhouse and bar for post match socials on Wednesday evenings, until a time that we have a clubhouse we can call our own. But the on-pitch rivalry remains as fierce as ever, and we can take pride in saying the Drummond Cup remains firmly in our hands, with already two comprehensive victories over Madras this season!

The club is in good health, with well over a hundred members and four XV's this year, a consistently vibrant social scene and a high level of optimism throughout the whole club. There continues to be exciting times ahead, with a proposed tour to Western Canada in 2012 and, of course, the imminent prospect of the inaugural varsity match at London Scottish RFC. Rugby is a game and culture that forges lifelong friendships, and I have no doubt that you will hold fond memories of the University of St Andrews Rugby Club. I urge you to remain involved and give your support to what is the greatest and most successful sports club at St Andrews, and I hope that you thoroughly enjoy what this newsletter has to offer.

All the best, Jamie Irvine



Scottish Varsity Game: 30th Nov 2011

The Inaugural Scottish Varsity game between University of St Andrews RFC and Edinburgh University RFC will take place on St Andrews Day, Nov 30th hosted by [London Scottish RFC](http://www.london-scottish.com) in West London. The Scottish Varsity game pre-dates the Oxford vs Cambridge Varsity match, by quite a few years and as such should take its rightful place on the rugby calendar as the Original Varsity Match.

This epic event which pits Scotland's two most prestigious Universities is aimed at all Alumni who now live in the South East of the Country and is the perfect way to meet old friends and have the chance to cheer on your Universities current rugby squad against their 'arch' enemies.

The match is also aiming to attract any Scottish Rugby supporters, friends, family and anyone who wishes to watch some entertaining rugby with some friends on a Wednesday night in West London. The University team has been looking forward to this game since the start of pre-season back in late of August and hopes to do the history and the tradition of the club justice.

Some glitz and glamour will be added to the event by the attendance of Alesha Dixon who will be cheering on the teams. Add to that the presentation of the trophy to the winning captain by British Lions Legend Sir Ian McGeechan after the game. Entry to the game is free with food and drink available to purchase on the night along with some official varsity merchandise.

The poster features two rugby players standing side-by-side. The player on the left is wearing a light blue jersey with 'KPMG' and the University of St Andrews crest. The player on the right is wearing a dark blue and green jersey with the University of Edinburgh crest. Above them, the text reads 'LONDON SCOTTISH ARE PROUD TO HOST THE OLDEST VARSITY MATCH IN THE WORLD'. A red circular badge on the left says 'GO TO WWW.LONDONSCOTTISH.COM TO REGISTER FOR FREE TICKETS'. Below the players, the names of the universities are separated by a large white 'V'. The date and location are 'WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 30TH THE RICHMOND ATHLETIC GROUND, RICHMOND.' and the event details are 'GATES OPEN FROM 6PM - KICK OFF 8PM FOOD AND DRINK • LIVE MUSIC'. At the bottom, it says 'PRE-REGISTER FOR FREE TICKETS AT WWW.LONDONSCOTTISH.COM TO WIN A SIGNED BRITISH AND IRISH LIONS SHIRT COURTESY OF FIRSTCAPE WINES.' and lists sponsors: 'Scottish Varsity Rugby is proudly supported by: THE GROUSE, FIRSTCAPE WINES, CALEDONIAN, Media Partner: CITYA.M.'





The Season So Far

As the students of St Andrews returned for the new academic year with the minor concerns of lectures and a degree hanging over them, there was a group of 60 men who had come back two weeks early with one purpose in mind; the forthcoming rugby season and the desire for trophies. Director of Rugby Dave Ross watched over a diverse bunch of players, ranging from veteran fourth years to freshers, as we sweated in the relative heat of a Scottish September. In between the gym, fitness sessions and ice baths the club managed to pull together as a squad with team building at the Kingarrock Hickory Golf Course and the swimming pool at Dundee. The Caledonian team put a brilliant showing during the preseason, dispatching Carnoustie and Kinross with ease.

A week later a scratch side collected themselves to face Cambridge University RFC, the most anticipated match of the early part of our season. The touring side arrived to a packed sideline and a thin blue line of defence (or not so thin in the case of some of the pack.) Despite conceding early the Saints put a massive shift in and turned the Fenland polytechnic over in the second half. Three tries from a scintillating backline were orchestrated by the imperious second's out half Tare 'terrible' Nyabadza, who kicked 12 points, with the game ending 27 – 5.

This form has carried through for the 1st XV, who have only lost one game out of the previous ten to Grangemouth in the Saturday league. Indeed, the return fixture on the 10th of December could see the two top teams in the Caledonia 2 league fight it out for the title.

The Wednesday 1st XV, however, have fared less well in a challenging league. In the BUCS Scottish 1A league there is a quickly developing gap between all comers and Dundee University RFC, who are a comfortable six points clear at the top of the table at the time of writing. The firsts have seen strong performances from playing captain Alan Little at number

8 and new talent Jack Hannay, brother of recent alumni Matt, in the centres. The league campaign was typified by an ugly scrap against Dundee with perhaps some of the foulest weather that particular city has experienced in the past year. With Dundee adapting to conditions better, the Saints were sent packing 27 – 18. High points thus far have included a 63 – 3 thrashing of Heriot-Watt at University Park, and also a very tight game against Dundee at home, with our best performance of the season leaving us just short at 19 – 21 to the visitors.



The Bucs 2nd XV have had a mixed season so far. After a 25-0 opening day victory at home to archrivals Aberdeen the team entered a little bit of a slump. The week after dominating Aberdeen we came up against a strong Heriot-Watt side. Our early season confidence got the better of us and we were not ready for the step up in physicality. This resulted in a performance well below our own standards and a fairly unflattering score line. Since then, however, the boys have bounced back well and have been steadily improving both on the training field and when it matters during games. This was exemplified in our most recent fixture against the Scottish Agricultural College. In all fairness to the opposition we really put them to the sword, winning by a colossal 122-0. Flying winger Luke ‘Gerladinho’ Turnbull put in a tremendous performance scoring 9 tries while the rest of the team got 11. At the final whistle there were only 5 or 6 players who failed to get on the score sheet. In contrast to last season, this year’s Bucs 2nds have a settled squad and, injuries permitting, a degree of continuity in selection. As well as proving more success on the pitch this has fostered a good team spirit and has helped in integrating a large contingent of fresher’s into the club.

Indeed, there were even first years that made their debuts for the University in our victory against Aberdeen and more have since made the step up. Under the jovial leadership of 2nd year Gino de Castri and such luminaries as 3rd years Fraser MacNeil and 'Big' Jim Smith the team will no doubt be successful over the next half of the season.

Word from the Coach

Some things about the Rugby club have changed dramatically in the last two years but crucially some have remained the same, will never change and will always be the foundations of what the University of St Andrews RFC is all about. Since being appointed as the University's full time Director of Rugby, changes in the way the club is structured to produce the best possible performances on the field have been activated. Examples include video analysis of all home games, structured Strength and Conditioning sessions for all 1st XV players and a greater focus on our defence are just a few examples what the current breed of players are embracing to give the club the best possible chance to play and win. However, the Champagne rugby of the Saints with ball in hand is still more evident than ever at University Park. Joining from Scottish Rugby's High Performance Program, it was hard to transition into Student rugby but now after getting the program to where it needs to be, I am extremely excited about the potential and possibilities of what the club could achieve. As one of the oldest Rugby Clubs in the world, with all its history, tradition and reputation, the club still lacks a home of its own. With decades' worth of team photos, jerseys and caps from former International's, plaques and gifts from teams all across the world, it is a crying shame that we have nowhere to display them. It would be great if we could host fundraisers, dinners or simply get the lads together to watch the Scotland team play on TV whilst enjoying the surroundings of the history of the club that helped form the Scottish Rugby Union. The committee has set up 'The clubhouse appeal' in which we would welcome any financial contribution to the cause or any assistance whatsoever in an attempt to make this legacy of the current committee possible for future students of this great club.

Please contact me at david.ross@st-andrews.ac.uk if you are able to help or if you would like any further information on the rugby program at the University.

Yours In Champagne Rugby, David Ross



Tour

June 2010 saw the return of the University of St Andrews bi-annual summer tour. Twenty-six players were chosen to represent the rugby club in Argentina. Our trip saw us face opposition in Mendoza and Cordoba while our final game against Buenos Aires University, was unfortunately cancelled by the hosts at the last moment. Both of the matches we did play ended in victories thus preceding the Scottish national team in recording a 100% record in the southern hemisphere.

We arrived in Argentina's capital, Buenos Aires, on the 2nd June. The group spent a night in the capital and the next morning we travelled to Mar del Plata on the Argentine coast, where we stayed for the next two days. Incidentally the 3rd June was Gerald Landels birthday so we helped him celebrate in traditional Saints style (Special mention must go to Fraser Mitchell and Duncan Browne for putting on a memorable night). The next day was spent exploring the modern coastline and historic old town of Mar del Plata. By the 5th of June we were ready to head to the Andes and, after a brief interlude in Bahia Blanca, we arrived at our destination of Mendoza. Mendoza was generally seen as the highlight of our tour because of the stunning setting, the variety of activities on offer and the fact that we won our first match there. Both ourselves and the locals had been eagerly awaiting the match between St Andrews and Los Tordos RFC, and it did not disappoint. Two tries either side of half time by Harry Duthie and Will Webb provided a platform for a nail-biting 15-13 victory.



After the game we were invited by our opponents to join them for a traditional Argentinean asado as our post-match dinner. An asado involves a large barbecue of assorted meats along

with traditional Argentinean accompaniments. In a sense an asado was somewhat similar to a South African braai, which arguably goes some way to explaining why both countries share such massive forward packs! Argentina is renowned for the quality of its vineyards with Mendoza being the premier wine-growing region. Whilst in Mendoza we were fortunate to be able to visit three of the most successful wineries where we could sample a variety of wines including the country's specialty, the malbec. The next morning was spent white water rafting and in the afternoon we split into smaller groups to either go horseback riding, zip-lining, kayaking or mountain biking. All in all the Andes part of our trip and I wouldn't hesitate to go back. Up next was Cordoba where we played our second match against Cordoba Athletic FC. A man of the match performance from Matt Hannay and another try from 'man-of-tour' Will Webb provided another victory, final score 29-20, for the Saints and sealed our unbeaten tour. As well as being home to some good rugby teams Cordoba is also one of the oldest cities in Argentina and site of 'The Jesuit Quarter' a UNESCO world heritage site which was a particular highlight. After our brief visit to Rosario it was back to Buenos Aires for the last leg of our trip. Our first stop in Buenos Aires was quite short but this time we had the opportunity to explore the sites of the capital. Highlights included visits to the Boca Juniors stadium, home of Diego Maradona; the Playa Mayo where the Argentinean parliament sits and President lives; the Obelisk and The Casa Rosado amongst others. There really was far too much to see in Buenos Aires that it was impossible to fit it all in.

In June 2012 the Men's Rugby Club will be jetting off to the West coast of Canada on a 2-week tour of Vancouver and the surrounding area. The club will spend time in Vancouver city, Vancouver Island and also head up to Whistler for a few nights, playing 3 games in total in one of the most beautiful areas on the planet. There is plenty on offer for the boys to do including, zip lining, white-water rafting and bear watching and will be a once in a lifetime opportunity for the 26 man squad involved.

Alumni Rugby Dinner and Game

After the success of the alumni rugby game and dinner at the Stewart's Melville ground 2 years ago and at the London Scottish ground last year there was a decision made to create an alumni committee. Consisting of Jonny Brock, Jamie Zegleman, Will Bunn, Fraser Mitchell and Alan Little, the committee have been given the responsibility of promoting and growing the alumni club throughout the UK. We will be organising another alumni game and dinner in Edinburgh sometime next spring and will be looking to alternate between venues in London and Edinburgh each year. If any of you would like to get involved with the alumni club or gain further information on anything you have read about throughout the newsletter please don't hesitate to contact us at standrewsrugbyalumni@gmail.com.



