

Socializing part of game

Ruggers play hard, party hard

By JEFF PETERSEN
Of the Emerald

Two padless men collide head-on and a funny looking white ball squirts away. One crawls up and dashes after the loose ball. The other, staggers up but runs the wrong way.

Rugby is not for the timid.

Players give and take punishment, but rugby club member Andy Thompson says the game could not be played any other way. To walk away from a rugby match unscathed, players must have a strong constitution.

Thompson says rugby players suffer fewer injuries than football players. He attributes the greater number of serious injuries in foot-

ball to a false sense of security that the pads provide. Because rugby players wear no pads, there are many minor injuries.

"I think we get a lot more bumps, cuts, bruises and cauliflower ears than football players do," he says.

Thompson, one of few veterans on a young, inexperienced team, says last year club members suffered two or three bad injuries, the worst of which, a separated shoulder, required surgery. No serious injuries have occurred this fall.

Rugby team play is not limited to the fall, continues through the winter with unscheduled games and in the spring with tournaments. This spring the team will



Photo courtesy of Andy Thompson

Rugby is not a game for the timid. The game is rough, but according to team member Andy Thompson the injuries are minor despite the fact that players don't wear pads. Burt Rose is shown making a tackle on a Portland Pig in a game last year in Portland's Delta Park.

play in the Seattle "Mud Bowl" tournament, the Portland "Blitz" tournament and in a tournament at Pebble Beach, California. On November 18 the team will play in an all-collegiate tournament at University of California-Davis.

There is a tradition of good feeling among rugby players that grows from working together to achieve a difficult task — scoring.

"There's a certain camaraderie in rugby that you don't find in most sports," says Thompson. "We may scream, yell and hate the opposing team while we play against them, but after a game we usually get together over a beer, talk about the game and sing songs."

Often at tournaments points are given for winning the tournament, drinking the most beer and singing the best rugby songs, he says. The tournament winner is the team with the best combined total.

Because rugby combines the best of athletics and socializing, coach Casey Gadway thinks rugby is more suitable as a lifetime sport than football. Not long ago Gadway watched an over-60 match between a team from British Columbia and Japanese club.

Besides being a game one can play all one's life, rugby is relatively inexpensive. "In rugby all you need is a pair of shorts, a jock,

a mouthpiece, a rugby ball and 30 players," says Thompson.

"Tackle football would cost too much to be organized at an amateur level," Gadway says. Rugby, meanwhile, thrives.

Gadway, from Calgary, Alberta, feels football has had a bad influence on United States rugby.

"Americans play more rough and ready than the British," he says. "There is less finesse, less skillful ball handling and a lot more cheap shots. Many who are former football players still have the old football attitude: 'Go out there and take his head off; crunch him to the ground.'"

Until the football attitude is put aside, Gadway thinks ruggers will suffer more injuries than necessary. "When you play rugby with skill — sure the game is rough — but you don't get hurt."

Gadway says football often brings out an athlete's need for glory. Since rugby is a team sport of scrums and laterals, this can be a problem when a player switches from football to rugby.

Rugby players have few statistics to proclaim their brilliance and fewer headlines.

"There is no room for individuals in rugby," Gadway says. "It is more of a ball control game than a yardage game. To run through five guys for 40 yards and get tackled is not a constructive play, but to run through five guys for 40

yards and make a pass is constructive."

Gadway says ideally a rugby team is "setting up situations where the ball is continually flowing." He says that rugby is a more spontaneous game than football. You don't rest between plays, and in 40 minute halves of action there are no time outs.

Where an offensive lineman in football has about 120 options to different defensive sets in his blocking assignments, the rugby player's every move is different. "You have to think on your feet because no two situations are the same," says Gadway.

Smashing your shoulder into the hip of an opposing player may not be your idea of "a terrific way to meet people," Thompson suggests. Ruggers like to work and play hard.

Last year after a biting, scratching and clawing game against Coos Bay, Thompson says the host team served clam chowder. "They took over the whole bar; they brought in good food, and served us beer all night long."

It's a combination of rugged play and good sportsmanship that keeps ruggers like Thompson coming back each fall for another season. There's nothing like a clean, crisp tackle, a hot dog, a beer and a song to quicken a rugger's pulse.

Club Sports round-up



Water Polo

The water polo club travels to Portland State University Friday for the Northwest Inter-collegiate Water Polo championships for an 8 p.m. match.



Sailing

Among the schools invited to this weekend's all-Oregon Regatta are Oregon State University, Lewis and Clark College and Reed College.

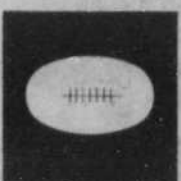
Saturday races will begin on Dexter Lake at 10 a.m. The regatta sailing team will unveil eight new Coronado 15 boats, which are designed for crews of two.



Soccer

The men's team plays two games this week at Autzen Stadium. Saturday it plays host to Seattle University in a 4 p.m. game. Tuesday they go against the University of Portland for a 7:30 p.m. matchup.

The women's team, meanwhile, plays host to Western Washington State College Sunday at 11 a.m. on the 18th Avenue and Agate Street pitch.



Rugby

Saturday the rugby club travels to Oregon State University to play the rugger's version of the civil war.

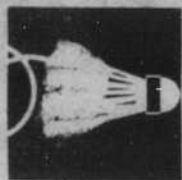
If anyone is interested in practicing or playing rugby, they should come to practice Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. or call Andy Thompson at 484-1587.



Bicycling

An organizational meeting will be held Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in the Erb Memorial Union. Room number will be posted.

All bicyclers who wish to help decide what the club will do should attend.



Badminton

Today the badminton club will discuss practice schedules, tournament play, financial matters and other general business. All recreational and competitive players are welcome. The room number for the 7 p.m. meeting will be posted on the EMU activities boards.



Volleyball

The volleyball club played in its first tournament of the year in the Washington Junior Fellowship tourney. The team took the single "A" championship by defeating Washington in the final match 15-2 and 16-14. The men's club will assist the women's team in its tournament in McArthur Court this weekend.

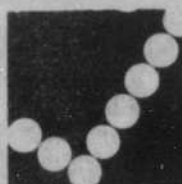


Table tennis

The table tennis team defeated Portland State 8-6 and Oregon State 15-0 in matches last Saturday. Leading the way were Young Jo Kim and John Kretchmer, the number two and three players. Kretchmer won all six of his matches, while Kim went 4-2 and upset Jay Crystal of PSU, the top college player in the Northwest.

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