

# OLD BOY QUARTERLY



### The Old Boy Quarterly

is targeted to the alumni rugby players of the Kansas Jayhawks Rugby Football Club, its current players, parents of players, prospective athletes considering us, and interested 3rd parties such as sponsors.

These issues chronicle both interesting parts of the club's **59 YEAR** history and inform the readers about the club's current status & future plans.

It is meant to supplement and not replace the information on the club's website

[JayhawkRugby.com](http://JayhawkRugby.com)

### Official Club Email:

[KansasRugby@gmail.com](mailto:KansasRugby@gmail.com)

The club also has actively managed information on:

**Facebook:** ([Kansas Jayhawks Rugby Football Club](#))

### Instagram:

[@jayhawkrugby](#)

Charitable gifts can be made to:

### The Kansas Rugby Foundation, Inc.

Go to [www.JayhawkRugby.com](http://www.JayhawkRugby.com)  
Click on "DONATE".  
(Services by PayPal)

OR

Mail a check to:  
The Kansas Rugby Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1182  
Lawrence, KS 66044

## WINTER EDITION

# High Point of a Good Fall Season



# 24 | 13



### Heart of America Conference Semifinal

OUR  
CHANT  
RISES | KU

## WHAT'S GOING ON

It was a good fall season, but less than the outcome we hoped for because we didn't beat Iowa State to enter the National Playoffs. We won the Heart of America South with wins over Oklahoma State, Kansas State, Missouri, and Arkansas. As we hosted the Heart of America Championship to take on the HoA North's runner up Iowa, we were ranked #3 in College 1AA by Goff Rugby Report. Iowa State was ranked #5. We ended the season at #8 after our ISU loss. In this edition we will give you more details of our season.

Off the pitch, the club managed to complete more than \$200,000 of Westwick improvements and get them into use.

Looking ahead, the Jayhawks are planning an Australian Tour in May. Our touring cycle was broken by COVID.

Maybe the biggest future event for you alums and friends is the club's 60th Anniversary coming next fall. That will be epic. We still have some club founders to help us celebrate.

One of our Old Boys John Colville is a referee in North Carolina. He was invited to a referee swap in the United Kingdom in October, where he called matches from all levels. We asked him to provide a summary of that experience.

The PARENTS of current players are a key group of the club supporters. We have a number of parents as first-time readers. We provide a brief history of the club for you.

**THANKS FOR STAYING CONNECTED!**

Jayhawk Rugby @60  
Coming October 2024

## FALL RESULTS

**Details of Season**  
Input by Quentin Pithey

## Westwick Upgrades

## Australia Tour

John Colville

Refs matches in Nottingham, UK

## Hello Parents !!!

Here is a brief club history

Donating to KRF **TAX-FREE**  
(stretches your bucks)

## In Memoriam

Passing of Some Famous Ruggers

## On The Cover - Iowa in HoA Semi

The emotion of #9 Luke Connor's late score that broke open a stalled KU 4 point lead. Kansas had a ruck 20 meters from Iowa's goal. Connor was in the process of pulling out the ball to pass to his backfield, but noticed his Iowa opponent glancing over his shoulder to assess his Iowa support. That diversion was all Connor needed to keep the ball and scamper for a try under the posts.

(L-R) Trevor Lister (8), Wyatt Parsons (15), Luke Connor (9), and Jonah Dolphino (11).



Photo & Graphics by Griff Hastings

# 60th Anniversary

## Alumni Weekend

*Date to be determined*

# October 2024

We are seeking a weekend that is **NOT** in conflict with a home KU football game, so hotel rooms will be available.

As of this newsletter's writing, the 2024 KU football schedule is not firm, therefore we are frozen on making hard plans until that football schedule gets settled.

More details will be provided in the coming editions of this newsletter.

# FALL RESULTS

Date	Opponent	Venue	Result
Aug--26	Southern Nazarene (friendly in Bethany, OK)	Away	POSTPONED by KU due to heat wave
Sep--2	<del>Oklahoma State</del> KC Blues Div. 2 (friendly)	Home	Oklahoma State lacked school approval for travel. The Blues were a last minute replacement. We beat the Blues.
9 & 10	<b>Middle of the Map Round Robin</b> Oklahoma/ Colorado State/ Northern Iowa (friendly)	Home	Beat Northern Iowa & Oklahoma. Tied Colorado State
16	Missouri (friendly)	Home	Missouri cancelled so could watch their home football game with Kansas State. No replacement match scheduled so had a scrimmage for parents.
23	Kansas State* (Alumni Weekend)	Home	Won
30	Oklahoma State*	Away	Won
Oct--7	Arkansas*	Home	Won
14	Missouri* (fall break)	Away	Won
21	Wichita Barbarians (friendly)	Away	Lost
28	Kansas City RFC (friendly)	Away	Won
Nov--4	Southern Nazarene (friendly in Bethany, OK)	Away	Lost
11 & 12	Heart of America Semi & Final for entry to National Playoffs in College Division 1AA	Home	Beat Iowa. Lost to Iowa State

# Details of the Fall Season

## Input offered by **Quentin Pithey**

There was drama entering this season. We had a new head coach, a very strong roster of returning players, and an expectation that we would return to the College National Playoffs next spring.

We began with a “rugby training camp” a week before school started to introduce new players to the team and lay down the playing format of the team.

### First Weekend Match

One week after the start of school we had planned on a

match with **Southern Nazarene's** fledgling varsity rugby team in Bethany, OK, located on the north side of Oklahoma City.

To further this away match as a “team-building event” the club paid \$5,000 to charter a bus so the players would be together during the 5 hour trip.

Fate intervened. We had a Kansas heat wave that gave us daily temperatures in excess of 100 degrees. The KU Recreation Services execs (who manage all 32 club sports teams at KU) issued an edict that we could not

practice and were forbidden to travel to Oklahoma for our game. **So we had to cancel our chartered bus and lost our \$5,000 deposit.** (The bus company gave us a \$1,000 credit towards a future charter.)

### Second Weekend Match

In our season's 2nd weekend, **Oklahoma State** had their own snafu with getting their university's approval to travel and scratched our home match mid-week. Luckily, the **KC Blues** had the Division2 side available and played us at home. The Jayhawks won that match.



We appreciated getting the last-minute match with the Blues. We did not want to miss playing the first 2 weeks of the season and then face the nationally ranked opponents that came to Lawrence the next weekend for the “**Middle of the Map**” Round Robin.

We are grateful for our relationship with the Blues!

### Third Weekend Matches

To leverage our great Westwick facility and our central location in the country, we invited 3 strong teams from north, west, and south for a “**Middle of the Map**” Round Robin. These were stout opponents and Kansas did well against them. Playing tough teams outside our conference

**Quentin Pithey** is a Pasadena, CA senior. His South African-born father was coach of the Pasadena Rugby Club and had Quentin playing organized rugby since grade school. He's played mostly flanker all his career. In high school he also played football and was an All-Conference middle linebacker. Because of his athleticism and this season's abundance of forwards, the Jayhawks moved Quentin to outside center, where he has excelled. He was “Man of the Match” in the conference final with Iowa State.

enhanced the Jayhawks' standing nationally.

**Colorado State** is in College Division 1A and ended this fall ranked #15 in country.

**Oklahoma** is also in Division 1A and has been a regional rugby powerhouse.

**Northern Iowa** is in Division 2, but concluded this fall ranked #1 in that division.

The Jayhawks tied Colorado State and beat Oklahoma and Northern Iowa.

The way we played that weekend set the tone for the whole season. We knew Colorado State was Division 1A and was nationally ranked. When we played them strong; it gave us a real boost. We knew we could play anybody tough.

#### **Fourth Weekend Match**

This was to be a "friendly" at home against conference rival **Missouri**. It turned out our rugby match coincided with the Kansas State football game at Missouri. Since those ranked football teams had a rivalry, the Missouri rugby players begged off coming to Lawrence so they could watch their football game.

We had made this weekend "**Parents Weekend**" and had events planned at Westwick. It turned out that we had an intersquad scrimmage for the parents and the festivities didn't miss a beat.

The parents brought "pot luck" food and set up TV's on the sidelines. The parents got to meet each other and the players. It was fun just hanging out.

#### **Fifth Weekend Match**

This match began our formal "Conference Schedule", where outcomes against conference rivals establish our rankings for the championship at the end of the season.

We beat **Kansas State** at home during the our club's **Alumni Weekend**. The score was 34-12 and that meant we got 4 match points for the win and a bonus match point for scoring 4 or more trys. Further, Kansas State lost by more than 7 points and failed to score at least 4 trys, so got no match points in their loss.

In the match, K-State scored right off the bat. This was a trend we had in the beginning and middle of the season. We would allow our opponents to get a quick score before we got into gear. That early K-State score was sort of a reality check. We remembered last year, K-State won in our Alumni Weekend game. We got together after that first score and committed that isn't happening again on our special day. We held off K-State until the final minute of the match when they got their other score.

#### **Alumni Weekend**

**The banquet was the high point of the season.** We beat K-State in front of a big crowd of all our fans on the sidelines. We came



out with a big win and after that, heading over to the Lawrence Country Club to celebrate with everybody. I really enjoy meeting the alums and hearing their stories. The Alumni Weekend is always something I circle on my calendar. It's always a blast.

#### **Sixth Weekend Match**

**Oklahoma State** on the road in a conference match. The Cowboys have great athletes, but the Jayhawks hit them like a machine, winning 81-0. Kansas sophomore wing **Jonah Dolphino** had a good day, scoring 4 trys.

It was the same scenario as the prior week on match points. Kansas got 5 points and Oklahoma State got zero.

We went down in vans and put a whipping on them. It allowed us to get some new players into the game and work on our playing

structure. We worked on how we would play other teams later in the season.

### Seventh Weekend Match

Conference foe **Arkansas** came to Westwick. They are another team with great players and in years past were the alpha dog club in our conference. The Jayhawks beat them 46-12 in a match that was tighter than the score. The match point scenario continued as before with Jayhawks getting 5 and the Razorbacks getting zero.

Repeating a bad trend, Arkansas scored first on us with a big hooker who bowled us over out of a ruck. It was a tougher game than the score would indicate. It got us ready to play harder opponents. It showed us how you couldn't take any conference opponent for granted.

### Eighth Weekend Match

We finally got our **Missouri** match on the road in Columbia. The wind and wet grass made the 55 degree weather feel freezing. The parents of the Kansas players who traveled to watch the match were huddled together in a ball of blankets on the sidelines.

Missouri scored first, but Kansas' **Jackson Schemmel**, **Quentin Pithey**, and **Conor Sexton** answered with first half tries to make it 19-12 at half. In the second half, **Wyatt Parsons** and **Trevor Lister** scored to win the match 31-17. KU got 5 match points and their opponent zero.

This made Kansas the undefeated winner of the Heart of America—South, so the Jayhawks would be in the conference finals playing in the first round against the HoA-Notrth's 2nd place team **Iowa**.

### Ninth Weekend Match

The season's series of Conference round robin matches was now over and the challenge was to keep the club practicing and playing up to the November 11 & 12 Conference Playoffs. So we played an away match with the men's club **Wichita Barbarians**. This is also the home club of our head coach **Seth Akpovona**.

**This match was probably the low point of the season.** The mood of the team was just "off".

Wichita was a rough weekend. They have big players. Some of our guys didn't want to go down there and play a big men's side going into our Conference Championship.

We lost the match, but the worst impact was that **Jack Bowersox** and **Jackson Schemmel** were injured for the season. Bowersox is a senior and a great player capable of playing multiple positions, including prop.



The speedy **Jackson Schemmel** got KU's first score on MU

### Tenth Weekend Match

The Jayhawks played an away match with another men's club, the **Kansas City Rugby Football Club**. They and the Jayhawks were founded in the same fall in 1964 and we are the oldest clubs in this region.

The Jayhawks won this game and like the prior week, that resulted in no changes to our college status.

Kansas City was another big men's team. The big issue for us was that KU freshman **Trace Eslinger** played against his dad, **Dean Eslinger**. Some of the KC players are former Jayhawks like **Mike Callahan**. That made it fun. It was also the day of the **World Cup Final**. We watched it in KC's bar and the **KC Mayor** stopped by.

### Eleventh Weekend Match

The Jayhawks made up the postponed **Southern Nazarene** match from the beginning of the season. It had been cancelled because of the heat wave. However, this time the scope of the match was very different from what had been planned as our season opener. We did not charter a bus and take the whole team down. The Jayhawks lost the match, but since it was just a "friendly", it did not affect our college standings. This important regional college side now owes us a return match in a coming season.

The road trip was a logistical shit show. The KU team forgot to bring our jerseys, balls, water bottles and practice cones. So we ended up playing in our warm up tee shirts. A lot of guys didn't go. Some of the guys would have preferred taking the weekend off in front of the

championship, We ended up playing our asses off. SNU had a player from South Africa and a Pacific Islander. KU was playing without 5 probable starters. **Trevor Lister** had a cool try, where he chipped the ball over an opponent, picked up the ball and dove for a score. Over-all it was good we went down there because it set the stage to play **Iowa** and **Iowa State** the next weekend.

### Twelfth Weekend Matches

**Showtime !!! Westwick hosts the Heart of America Championship. Winner enters National Playoffs.**

It's a long-held goal of our Conference's exec, **Bill Sexton** to have all the teams in the Heart of America playing games in one location at the same time. Westwick has the multi-field facilities to host the event and has done so before.



The season's earlier schedule of round-robin play established a pecking order in the North and South.

**Kansas** was undefeated in the South and **Kansas State** only lost to Kansas. So they were the #1 & #2 teams from the South.

In the North, **Iowa State** was undefeated and **Iowa** lost only to Iowa State, so they were the North's #1 & #2.

On Saturday, the championship contestants were South #1, **Kansas** vs North #2, **Iowa**. Then North #1, **Iowa State** played South #2 **Kansas State**. Winners to meet the following day.

The other teams in North & South played against their opposite ranking numbers to settle conference 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th place.

### **Kansas vs Iowa**

We knew the **Kansas/Iowa match** would be a tough one. KU went to Iowa last spring and lost by 6 or 7 tries.

In this fall's playoff match, the teams traded penalty kicks and then tries to get to a 10-10 tie. Kansas then scored a try and Iowa responded with a penalty kick, so the match was a 4 point spread of 17-13. It stayed that way for some time. But as time was ticking down, Kansas had a ruck in the center of the field 20 meters from Iowa's goal line. Kansas scrum half **Luke Connor** was cocking to throw the ball to his backfield, but noticed his op-

posite number glancing over his shoulder. That moment of distraction was all Connor needed to get a first step on his opponent and race around the ruck for a try. The game ended 24-13 Kansas ([See this newsletter cover](#))

The downside of this match was that the Jayhawks' players suffered two (2) broken legs. It's a fairly rare injury in rugby and a freak to have 2 in one match. We lost 2 of our big boys; **Jesse Fennely** (prop) and **Andrew Augustine** (flanker).

In the **Iowa State/Kansas State match**, Iowa State ran away with the game, winning 39-3.

**The next day**, the prior day's losers **Iowa/Kansas State match** ended with Iowa winning 38-10 and securing Conference 3rd place.

### **Kansas vs Iowa State**

We knew Iowa State players were big and they were running through opponents. I think maybe only one try got scored on them in conference play. In the last minutes of the first half, KU was playing great. We were at the ISU end of the pitch. Then we had half time and ISU came out and scored 3 quick tries in the opening 15 minutes of the second half. It gave us a sense of urgency, but we only scored one try. ISU is just a great team.

In the first half of the **Kansas/Iowa State final**, Iowa State scored tries and Kansas scored penalty kicks to end the half 19-

9 ISU. In the second half, Iowa State took over management of the game and won 31-14. The ISU side has an excellent roster and are well-coached. They will be great representatives of our conference in the National Playoffs.

### **Pithey's Final Comments**

The future of the club looks strong. There is a big crop of talented underclassmen returning next fall.

### **Westwick Looked Great**

A few observations:

- The long-awaited changing room building got its hardware and shelving installed and both home/visitor rooms painted. That's a great development when 9 clubs come to play at the same time.
- The completed flush toilets are a boost to women fans who otherwise struggle getting comfortable with portapotties.
- The turf was in terrific shape due to a whole season of being tended.

Thanks are given to a lot of Old Boys and players who got the facility set up for the Conference Tournament. Special thanks to Life Member **Mike Forth** who has managed completion of the changing rooms and tended the turf all year. He was at Westwick working every day for the three weeks leading up to the championship weekend. We couldn't have pulled this off without his service.

\*\*\*\*\*

# SPECIAL for 60th Anniversary Limited Time Offer Retro Jayhawk Rugby Jersey

## Want an “old school” jersey?

We have a deal with a supplier that will take our orders in a batch and then will ship yours to your home per spec.

These are cotton with “relax fit” design for us “older guys”.

You order your size and decide if you want your number on the back.  
(Pick your number.)

### PRICING

\$75 per jersey

\$14 for number (option)

+ \$ shipping

4-6 weeks for delivery

Supplier will fulfill order when they achieve their 12 jersey minimum batch.



Website to order is presented below or use “live link” in the email that delivered this newsletter edition.

<https://www.rugbygear.com/ecommerce/kansas-jayhawks-rugby-club/jayhawks---rugby-jersey.html>

# Westwick Upgrades

Flush Toilets for the ladies  
Changing rooms for players



Rock bench where one of the rugby teams sit during a match.  
There is a twin bench to the right (out of photo) for the other team.

Two flush toilets for the ladies.  
(This is a big deal if you want moms, wives, girlfriends, or women fans in general)

Fan concessions area  
(A focal point of our rugby fan experience and sets us apart from other clubs who don't have a private pitch.)



Changing Room Building (Has a large room with roll up door on left and a pair of changing rooms on right.) (Mike Forth waves hello)





Changing room interior and the view as a player exits off the mud porch. The mud porch is covered and has a cedar bench for players to sit outside while removing muddy boots. These changing rooms end the days of dressing behind a car.



# *Australia Tour*

## Factoids:

29 **KU** players have made their deposit so far.

Seeking a crew of 35 players + 5 support staff.

Will look to outside clubs for tourists.

## Funds:

\$4,800 expected per person cost

\$3,200 player cost + \$1,600 club subsidy = above \$4,800

35 players x \$1,600 subsidy = \$56,000 subsidy funding

## Target subsidy funding sources:

\$35,000 from donors

\$15,000 from club's legacy "tour fund"

\$ 6,000 tour program, gear sales, and club fund raisers

\$56,000

## More tour details on next page

# Kansas Jayhawks Rugby Football Club Australian Tour 2024

May 14 – June 1 2024 (16 days in country)  
 East Coast Australia  
 Fundraising available  
 Work opportunities &  
 Long term loan opportunities

30-35 Players Invited  
 Retail Value \$5000-\$6000  
 Club subsidizes up to \$2000/player



**PAYMENT STRUCTURE**  
 Deposit \$200 due September 30<sup>th</sup>  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Payment \$200 due December 31<sup>st</sup>  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Payment \$300 due March 1<sup>st</sup>  
 4<sup>th</sup> Payment \$500 due April 15<sup>th</sup>  
**TOTAL PAYMENT BY PLAYER = \$1200**  
*Players responsible for own International Flights*  
*\*Refundable until December 31*  
*\*\*Non refundable*



SYDNEY MAY 16-20



NEWCASTLE MAY 20-23



BYRON BAY MAY 23-27



GOLD COAST MAY 23-27



BRISBANE MAY 23-27

## 4 Quality Club Side Matches

The Kansas Jayhawks Rugby Football Club is resuming its tradition of International touring with a trip *Down Under* in 2024. This is a fantastic opportunity to visit a country rich in rugby culture, history and magnificent native scenery. Playing rugby up the Eastern Seaboard will be the true International tour experience, creating unforgettable memories with good mates. Join us as we tour the Great Southern Land

## KJRFC Australia Tour May 14<sup>th</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 18 Days



### Sydney – Newcastle – Byron Bay – Gold Coast – Brisbane

Four Club Matches – Quality Opposition – Idyllic Locations – World Class Beaches  
 Once in a Lifetime Opportunity – New Friends & Rugby Contacts – Experience  
 New Cultures

# John Colville

## Jayhawk Old Boy Refs Matches in Nottingham, UK

### A Life Devoted to Rugby

I played for the KU college side from 1990-1995 and then the club side from 1996-2000, mostly at scrumhalf.

As a collegiate player, I was a member of the **Heart of America Collegiate All-Stars in 1994 and 1995**. My college coaches were **Dominic Barnao** and **Bill Mills**, and club coach was **Ron Collins**. I also helped coach the KU women's rugby team in the late '90s with **Marlin Carlson** and **John Wiley**, both KJRFC alumni.

In 2000, I left my hometown of Kansas City (Leawood) to attend physical therapy graduate school in St. Augustine, FL from 2000-2002. During that time, I continued to play club rugby for the **Jacksonville RFC**. Upon graduating, I moved to Charleston, SC in 2002 and continued to play club rugby for the **Charleston Outlaws RFC**, while working as a physical therapist in a local outpatient clinic.

My wife and I, whom I met in grad school and married in 2003, moved to Charlotte, NC in 2005. I retired from playing and began coaching a local men's collegiate team, the **University of North Carolina-Charlotte**. I coached them from 2005-2014, then as the demands of coaching became too much, I picked up the whistle and began refereeing rugby and have been since.

Currently, I work as a physical therapist for **OrthoCarolina in Charlotte, NC** and specialize in sports performance and orthopedic rehabilitation. My wife (**Tonya**) and I have been married for 20 years and have two children, **Emily** (16) and **Will** (14). Will also plays rugby and enjoys helping his old man by running touch.

I am a member of the **Southeast Rugby Referee Society (SERRS)** and have been refereeing for about 8 years. I referee high school, collegiate and club rugby at all levels, year-round. Our referee society has an exchange program established with another society in **Nottingham, England (NLDRFU)** and **I was offered the oppor-**



**John Colville at Rugby School with William Webb Ellis who exactly 200 years ago invented the game of rugby.**

tunity to travel to England this past October and spent 12 days refereeing rugby at all levels, while touring the countryside and watching the knockout stages of the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

The highlight of my tour was taking a train to London and sharing a few pints and lots of laughs and memories with **Paddy** and **Matt Delargy**, legendary KJRFC alumni, and both former teammates during our days at KU.

I look forward to seeing them and the entire KU Rugby family in the fall for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary alumni weekend. \*\*\*\*



Above: Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem (Oldest pub in England)  
Below: John with Paddy & Matt Delargy (Famous KJRFC alums)



# Hello Parents !!!

## The Cultural History of our Rugby Club

This is a review of the watershed changes in the organization which, when viewed in retrospect, have had a big impact on the path of the club. These organizational changes may not have been recognized for their degree of importance at the time and in fact may have been enhanced in effect by the way the organization later embraced them.

This outline of events is shaped by Newsletter interviews of dozens of alumni who played since the club's founding.

**Here is the list of watershed changes.**

### 1964 CLUB'S FOUNDING

George Bunting was an undergrad at Dartmouth and after graduation, came to the University of Kansas to go to law school. He ran an ad in the school newspaper and recruited the initial team.

The **reason** he started the club was because his undergrad experience at Dartmouth encouraged students to experiment participating in different sports. Bunting had tried rowing, throwing the javelin and playing squash. His interest quickly focused on rugby, where he was a "B side" 2nd row forward. When he came to KU he wanted to expose KU students to the sport.

Bunting came from a wealthy family and he bought the club its first set of rugby jerseys and 18 months after the club's founding, arranged and gave the majority of funding to charter a bus to take the club on a tour of Ivy League schools over Spring Break 1966. He showed the KU players what more established college clubs were like on the east coast.

Bunting stepped away from managing the club at the start of his 2nd year and assumed the role of club advisor, so that the club would not be dependant on him.

His advice was to have a student-player club, in good standing with the university, and have 50 or more participants so that the club would be seen as an important organization to the university.

All of the above values of Bunting are still central to the club. Note that sport was in its infancy in Bunting's time at KU, so having a "dominant side" was not even on the horizon. Most players had not seen or played rugby before their exposure at KU.

## 1974 ALUMNI WEEKEND & AWARDS BANQUET

The year the club turned 10 years old it had 2 events that were fun events at the time, but grew in importance because they became institutionalized as annual events.

The fall 1974 team had a breakout of winning success on the field and had 2 strong sides of players, so the club held its first Annual Banquet. The club recognized its MVP and Rookie, but most of the awards were funny awards.

The more significant event occurred in the spring of 1974, with the first Alumni Weekend. Rick Whitson worked for the Endowment Association and therefore had access to alumni contact information. In a pre-internet era, having access to contact information was central for having an event like this. Whitson got the word out to as many past players as possible. They came from all segments of the prior 10 years.

Why this is important:

- The existing club hosted the alumni, as opposed to alumni organizing their own reunion.
- The alumni invited were not from a particular team year or from a big game. Instead it was all alumni, from all years, no matter how good the alum or his team was on the field.
- These 2 things are in contrast to “anniversary celebrations” at some other area rugby clubs.
- The Jayhawks’ Alumni Weekend has promoted from its inception that existing players and the alumni are all “one club” and is the reason our alumni stay engaged.

## 1976 CLUB CONSTITUTION

The easiest management system for an amateur group is “the great man”, where one person or a few people over-functions. It works great until that person or small group departs and then a vacuum consumes the organization if the replacement person lacks his predecessor’s talent. College rugby organizations have a lot of turnover due to the transient nature of a college environment.

Allen Chapman’s 1975 arrival to the club led to a very elaborate written constitution and written procedures. While someone could still serve and over-function, the new policies made collaboration among many people essential. Chapman’s written documents changed the whole management structure of the club. It awaited a talented CEO in Paul Diedrich to effectively use the structure to engage the faithful work of more than a dozen club members. Over the next 15 years, under the management of Diedrich, the club **simultaneously** managed the details of international tours, hosting incoming tours, special tournaments and national coaching clinics as well as run both a successful college and men’s rugby club.

This 15 year “Diedrich period” was probably the organizational high-water mark of the club. The successes in one thing created and fed other things. It was the definition of synergy.

So now I will itemize the various cultural accomplishments in that period.

## 1977 INTERNATIONAL TOUR

The Jayhawks went on tour in the Cornwall area of England. It was Allen Chapman’s hometown area and he had a relationship with the clubs that hosted us.

It began a long series of tours that made friends for the Jayhawks around the globe. Many clubs and players who hosted us were then invited to come to Lawrence. It made the Jayhawks a “global team”.

1977 England

1979 Scotland & Ireland

1981 England, Wales, and France

1983 New Zealand

1985 Argentina

1987 Belgium & Holland

1989 British Columbia, Canada

1992 New Zealand

1994 Ireland

1997 South Africa

2009 New Zealand

2011 Brazil

2013 South Africa

2015 Ireland

2017 New Zealand

2019 Wales & Scotland

## 1978 JOHNNY'S TAVERN

There have been other bar owners that were closely associated with the Kansas rugby club, but when team captain Rick Renfro worked with a few teammates to buy Johnny's, it was the first actual rugby bar for the club.

This was coming off the 1977 England Tour where the importance of a club bar was exhibited.

It also signaled the beginning of a sea-change event for players who were graduating.—They stayed in Lawrence to continue to play for the Jayhawks. It started a very strong men's club side that coexisted with the college side.

The practices and home games were played on or near the campus and the liquor laws for 18 year olds allowed the sale of 3.2 % alcohol beer that Johnny's sold. The Johnny's/KU Rugby Club pairing was the best thing imaginable. The players came to Johnny's after practice and after games. Graduating players from other colleges flocked to become Jayhawks. Foreign players met on tour came to Lawrence.

Then the after-hours private club "Up & Under" was established above Johnny's, setting the stage for a nearly 24 hour cycle of an open tavern.

The rugby club's players built their "Club House" in the back of the Up & Under. Johnny's Tavern made our club infrastructure the toast of regional rugby.

## 1992 KANSAS RUGBY FOUNDATION & WESTWICK

Through the 1980's, the club managed an active schedule of major rugby events on the school-provided fields at 23rd and Iowa. It was observed by the university that the club's player membership was not entirely college students. Demand for use of the fields increased from other sports. The school became an increasingly difficult landlord, especially on a wet day where the field would be damaged by a rugby match.

A farm's land became available and was purchased to become Westwick Rugby Complex. It took 2 years and over \$100,000 to convert the farm to the basics of the rugby pitches you see today. The Kansas Rugby Foundation, a 501©(3) charity was established to handle the funding for that conversion. The KU Endowment Association was reluctant to get involved with that funding, since it wasn't a school asset.

Play began at Westwick in 1994. That was a good thing and a bad thing ...as we discuss next.

## 1994 PERFECT STORM

When an organization starts to wobble, its rarely an isolated event. Its usually what people will later describe as a "A Perfect Storm". Meaning that a series of adverse situations acted in concert with each other to become a truly big problem. If a series of independent problems don't get the corrective attention they deserve, the solution becomes multifaceted and resists a quick fix.

Around the time that play began at Westwick, other things happened.

- Paul Diedrich retired as CEO. The loss of his talent was big.
- The men's team from the 1980's started to age out of playing and weren't replaced.
- USA Rugby changed the rules about a hybrid men's and college team, limiting the men's side to "recreational" status.
- Westwick is far from Johnny's.
- Kansas liquor laws changed the drinking age to 21.
- The practices and games at Westwick were no longer in routine sight of the campus population, so organic recruiting stopped (a very big deal).
- The club didn't run an effective campus recruiting program to bolster the college side.

The proof of this malaise was that the club quit touring in 1997 and didn't resume until 2009 (12 years later).

It wasn't all dark. The club had a high school team and the college side won the Heart of America, around 2000 (but then forfeited their Wyoming playoff appearance due to a travel roster less than 15).

## 1998 THE COWBOYS

The successful 1980's era of the club had a lasting legacy of a close group of teammates. Louie Riederer began an annual golf trip for this networked group. They picked a warm destination the weekend before the NFL Super Bowl and spent 3 days playing golf, drinking, and playing cards. The group's golf weekend created their own way of staying together beyond the alumni weekend that the club provided.

Over the years the roster of people attending the golf event has expanded beyond the 1980's players and even beyond Jayhawk rugby players.

Today the group of golfers are mostly in their 50's 60's and 70's and are in a financial place in their life where they provide a steady source of funding for the Kansas Rugby Foundation.—They are the organization's largest block of financial supporters.

Prior to "The Cowboys" the financing of the club and Westwick fell heavily on a very small group of alums. "The Cowboys" have spread out the financial load and have safe guarded a lasting source of funding.

## 2012 OLD BOY QUARTERLY

In 2010 a handful of alumni met at Rick Renfro's house to discuss the state of the rugby club and what needed to be done in advance of its 50th Anniversary in 2014. We had over 1,000 past players, but had email connection with only Louie Riederer's golf group. We needed a newsletter to achieve 4 goals:

- **FIND:** Started by Steve Lange in 2011 as a project to find & start dialogue with decades of alumni who are scattered around the world.
- **STORY:** 50 years of alumni from different eras would otherwise not know each other's stories. The newsletter accomplished that by sequentially telling the history of the club in 4 or 5 year time segments .
- **ARCHIVE:** The newsletter collected digital scans of its historical news clipping, photos, and especially the stories that accompanied those photos. Thanks to those that submitted photos, stories and sat for interviews.
- **RALLY:** The newsletter's goal is to assemble alumni & keep them engaged. The consistently great college clubs in the country benefit from a large alumni base.

In addition to covering the club's current events, the initial editions told the club's history in chronological order. It started with a 2011 interview with club founder George Bunting.

The email list expanded virally as recipients added their friends. Today the email list is just under 500. Every newsletter edition includes an archive of past editions, so our complete history remains available.

## 2014 50th ANNIVERSARY

This would be the greatest of all Alumni Weekends. We had literally years of planning, spearheaded by Jimmy Bartle. The organizational needs would be beyond the capabilities of the current club management. The solution was to recruit the best of our club's management's past to come back and serve on this special project. One of the first calls was to Paul Diedrich who had been away from the club's management for 20 years. Past captains and Kernow Cup winners were enlisted.

The anniversary weekend was a huge success and the assembled team from the past stayed together to assist the club, by serving as an expanded Kansas Rugby Foundation Board.

The year prior to the run up to 2014 exposed the fact that the club didn't have 15 student-players enrolled at KU. This would not sit well with alumni who would expect a robust student team. So a major change in direction occurred to focus the club as a college rugby club. Several college recruitment campaigns were initiated.—The club had a good student team by the fall of 2014

## 2012 SOCIAL MEDIA

This is an on-going development that accelerated in 2020 with the establishment of Griff Hastings as a paid Social Media Director who upgraded the content on the Web Page, Facebook, and expanded into Instagram.

In 2012, the club's Web Page underwent its first major re-design to include historic information about the club.

Also in 2012, the Facebook page began to carry the Old Boy Quarterly newsletter, which expanded its readership.

The Facebook page carried game summaries and game photos, which kept parents and alumni connected to the performance on the field.

In 2022, Marcus Williamson expanded the club's capabilities to broadcast live streams of games on a club YouTube channel for alumni and parents to watch. He saves the recordings of those games for later viewing. He also records interviews with key individuals.

The club's use of social media is a key to player recruitment and retention. It also encourage financial donations.

## 2016 BARCLEY WEST & STUDY ABROAD

The Jayhawks have always had a flow of Study Abroad players passing through the club. Their arrival was a welcome surprise to both the club and a surprise to the foreign students who didn't have foreknowledge KU had a club. The athletic impact of these Study Abroad players was full spectrum.

An inventive idea was to contact KU's sister schools' rugby clubs and encourage their first side players to get into Study Abroad and join the Jayhawks for a year.

In 2015 Conor Taft contacted the University of Essex and recruited their First XV captain to come to KU for the entire 2016/17 school year. He was offered a minor room & board stipend to defray costs.

The financial donors for that room & board stipend wanted to run their donation through the Kansas Rugby Foundation. Prior to that request, the KRF funding had been reserved exclusively for the support of Westwick. The funneling of the stipend funding was a watershed event for KRF which now funds a variety of the club's needs.

Our handling of Barclay West became a template for handling subsequent Study Abroad students who are First XV players.

## 2016 FUND DRIVES & EARMARKS

Part of the discussion about Barclay West's stipend was that a designated earmark presented a dilemma. The Kansas Rugby Foundation had non-existent cash flow after the initial years of Westwick. How could the KRF allow earmarks to flow through for the club, when the basic needs of Westwick were unfunded?

The problem was scarcity.

The KRF woke up to the requirement that a charity needs to put a priority focus on staff doing fund raising.

Today, The Cowboys funding covers the basic needs of Westwick and that enables earmark funding to cover a list of other targets.

KRF regularly earmarks and the club runs "Crowd Funds" of small donations through the KRF.

## 2016 KRF BOARD EXPANSION

As part of the new inclusion of KRF funding for club projects and the need for fund raising, the KRF Board underwent a makeover that added Don Harris as President and Paul Diedrich as Secretary.

The structure of the Board was changed to have a 3-stage Presidency (President Elect, President, and Past President) to assure continuity. Bob Tucker has since replaced Harris as President.

The Board has begun more strategic planning than previously and broadened its scope to include fund raising as a key duty.

A developing trend is that the KRF Board is a place where people with business acumen and past club management expertise can be concentrated to assist the managers of the rugby club as needed.

**The KRF Board also began including a PARENT as well as CURRENT PLAYERS (1 upper classman and 1 lower classman), which harmonizes the direction of the KRF with the rugby club.**

## 2016 PAYPAL

Establishing an easy way for donors to give to the Kansas Rugby Foundation had been a goal for several years. Adam Roush added the “Donate” button to the club’s Website and the KRF donation traffic increased dramatically.

## 2022 WESTWICK EXPERIENCE: CHANGING ROOMS, FLUSH TOILETS, and REFRESHMENT STAND

The facility improvements at Westwick will draw more events.

Changing rooms are terrific for teams that need to change into and out of their kit at the field

The women who attend matches at Westwick have previously suffered using the porta-potties

The addition of a refreshment stand at home games is making attending games even more fun.

The Jayhawks regularly have hundreds on their sidelines, while other clubs barely have a fan-base.

## CONCLUSION

The events that occurred since the 50th Anniversary in 2014 make the most recent years as active and exciting as those of the 1980’s. The successful results on the field have matched those of the 1980’s.

The example of the 1990’s “Perfect Storm” provide us a cautionary warning to avoid a series of bad events. Like the 1990’s, much of what we have built today relies on the people from the 1980’s who are now in their 60’s and 70’s. They are aging-out of participation. One thing we must do as an org is get a younger generation involved to take over in all management areas and as donors. \*\*\*\*

# Donating to KRF TAX-FREE (stretches your bucks)

A month before the recent Heart of America Championship that was to showcase our Westwick facilities, the “Changing Room Building” still had a lengthily list of unfinished items that would have ruined its appearance. The changing rooms were lined with raw plywood. They had no shelving, clothes hooks, or painted walls. The building had exhausted its construction budget so nothing was being planned to finish the rooms.

An older alum stepped up and gave the KRF \$8,000 to get a contractor hired to complete those tasks before the tournament. Any unspent funds left over are to make other capital improvements.

## The donor used “pre-tax funds” to make the donation.

Typically, donations to a 501©(3) charity like KRF are made with funds that were previously taxed, such as from your ordinary income or from your credit card.

## What’s the difference?

If you are doing it “after tax”, you need to pay taxes and then make a gift. Lets say you have a big IRA and you want to give a round number like \$10,000. You would need to withdraw a larger amount (based on your taxes), such as \$12,000. Then pay \$2,000 in taxes. Then make the remainder \$10,000 donation.

If you are making the donation with “pre-tax” funds, you would only withdraw the \$10,000 as a gift. So using “pre-tax” funds saves on the tax costs, helps preserve your IRA balance, and keeps the withdrawal from pumping up your annual income, which could put you in a higher tax bracket.

You can do this if you are at least age 70 1/2. You instruct your IRA manager to write a check from your IRA account payable **directly** to the KRF. Your IRA manager mails that check directly to KRF. You never touch the funds, so its not income to you. You don’t get a “deduction” for the gift, because you never paid taxes on the funds.

## Here are some OTHER tax-reducing ideas:

1) Make a donation to KRF through a **Charitable Trust**. Taxpayers are allowed to donate a lump sum to a Charitable Trust and direct donations to specific organizations. Taxpayer claims the donation as an Itemized Deduction the year made to Charitable Trust. Typically the donations to a Charitable Trust are made in a year the Taxpayer is in a high bracket or to exceed Standard Deduction. Donations to charitable organizations through Trust can be made to charities over multiple years.

2) If you are a holder of specific stocks that have appreciated, you can make a direct gift of that stock to KRF and have KRF sell it. **You avoid the capital gain** since the KRF sells the stock at its higher, current value. You will get the charitable tax deduction based on its appreciated value while you only donated the stock at your original purchase value. — KRF has a zero-commission brokerage account to receive and sell your donated stock.

## DISCLAIMER

These are ideas for you to discuss with your tax advisor. You should rely on your tax advisor’s direction before embarking on these ideas, since donor issues and local tax rules can vary.

The KRF has a number of donors who are familiar with the above ideas and we are ready to discuss them with you if you are interested. \*\*\*\*

# RIP Reagan Malone

August 12, 1939 / November 25, 2023

FOUNDER of the Heart of America Referee Society



The November 2021 edition of this **Old Boy Quarterly** newsletter had a feature article **Rugby's Pioneers** that was about Reagan.

If you were playing rugby in this region more than 50 years ago, the "referee" for a match would be a current or past player that the home team rounded up. The spectrum of the quality of that referee's calling of a game would likely be quirky.

Then in 1973, **Reagan Malone** started the **Heart of America Referee Society** that worked to train aspiring referees. The society created a group of trained, experienced, impartial referees. **Malone realized that the sport of rugby in our region would never advance without quality referees.**

Reagan was a frequent visitor at Westwick and loved watching the Jayhawks play. He said that his favorite games to ref were those between the **Jayhawks** and the **KC Blues**, because he could just make the calls and both teams knew the laws of the game.

## Obituary

Reagan Eugene Malone, 84, Tonganoxie, KS, passed away Saturday November 25, 2023, at his home.

Celebration of life service will be 11 am December 7, 2023, at Risen Savior Lutheran Church, Basehor, KS. Burial will be in Risen Savior Cemetery.

Reagan was born August 12, 1939, in Everman, TX the son of Reagan and Myrel (Burnamen) Malone. He owned an equipment sales company, REM Sales and Engineering. He was united in marriage on December 20, 1969 in Kansas City, KS to Marlaine (Bruning) Malone. She survives of the home. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge AF&AM, Lawrence, KS,

and the Risen Savior Lutheran Church, Basehor. He loved God, Family, golfing, rugby and horses.

Survivors include, his wife, Marlaine, of the home; two daughters, Heather Martin, Louisburg, KS, Erin Malone, Tonganoxie, KS, two brothers, Dale Malone, and Wallace Malone, both of Fort Worth, TX; and two grandchildren Lilly and Elwood.

Memorial donations are suggested to Douglas County Hospice or Risen Savior Lutheran Church.



# RIP Jacques Fluker

Jayhawks' Hooker in early 1970's

**You never forgot “Fluker”.** He was a good player and an even better friend to teammates. If there was an “All Star Party Hall of Fame”, he would be on it for sure. He had a ***phenomenally*** broken nose that was missing so much structural cartilage (from sports **BEFORE** rugby), that he could and would put a coat hanger through it. (I said you could never forget Fluker!)

But this story would define him as just a “clown” and Jacques was not that. In recent years he used his knowledge of the internet to reclaim

various web “domains” that logically should have been the **KJRFC's** or which we once had and fumbled their renewal. He gave the ownership of those addresses to the club and had them structured so a visitor to one would get whisked to our club's official website. That's fundamental stuff in the digital age.

**Jacques Fluker** was a good friend to many who read this newsletter. I am truly sorry he won't be joining us for the upcoming 60th Anniversary and I am sorry if you never met him.



## Obituary

Jacques Lee Fluker, 72, died December 3, 2023 in the care of Harry Hynes Hospice at Ascencion Via Christi, Wichita.

Jacques was born on March 23, 1951 at Ft. Riley, Kansas to Monique Barbieux. He spent his early childhood in Paris, France. After returning to the US, he was welcomed by his adoptive father, James Sylvanis Fluker. Jacques graduated from Chapman High School and the University of Kansas. His life-long love of technology led him to a career at Southwestern Bell Telephone, AT&T, Pixius Communications and KWIKCOM Communications. Jacques enjoyed his days of playing rugby at KU, attending sporting events and working outside in the yard and garden, he loved sunny days on the back porch while brushing the dogs and drinking coffee. Jacques' civic contributions include the Valley Center Planning Commission, Valley Center Softball, Washburn University Softball, Newman University Softball and Junior Achievement.

Jacques was preceded in death by his mother, father, and his son Timothy. He is survived by his wife Jarene and daughter Joanne of Valley Center. Also surviving, son Damian, daughter Jacqueline, sister Therese (David) and many friends and family.

No services are pending. If you would like to memorialize Jacques, please make a donation to your local humane society.



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Hit "Donate".

It's a PayPal link directly to our charity account.