

OLD BOY QUARTERLY



The Old Boy Quarterly

is targeted to the alumni rugby players of the Kansas Jayhawks Rugby Football Club.

The coming issues will both chronicle interesting parts of the club's 50 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 <http://www.kurugby.org/>

The club also has actively managed information on Facebook.

We are seeking to expand this publication's distribution. If you are aware of KJRFC alumni who would like to be added to the distribution, please forward this e-mailed newsletter to them.

SUMMARY OF FALL 2011

BY RICK RENFRO

The **Brazil Tour** was a huge success for the team. We took 25 players, all from the KJRFC and spent two weeks in Brazil with Sami Arap. We played 4 games and were competitive in all of them. We made many new friends and experiences that will last a lifetime. Sami took very good care of us and wishes all his North American friends all the best. The touring party had 7 club side players and 18 college players most sophomores, which bodes well for the future.

We upped the competitiveness on our schedule for the fall season and it has been

very good for the program. **The Varsity team moved to the first division in merit table play.** The first half of the season saw a mixture of club and varsity players in games against Northland 56-15 win and 33-3 loss to the KC Blues in a better game than the score indicated with 11 varsity players playing. **We went to Aspen** and lost to Aspen 10-9 in a game we should have won, then fell to Glendale Raptors (last year's Super League champions) 25-7, and finally a loss to Utah Ute's (a big powerful team in the third game of day). We were able to play 14 college players.

The Varsity lost the first match of the season to CMSU in the last minutes 23-19. They then played Lindenwood from St Louis. A new team with varsity status, \$110,000 budget, and 12 foreigners. We lost the match but never gave up and learned a lot about fitness and experience.

The Varsity team was 3-3 with big merit table wins over Truman 62-5, K-State 38-3, and OU 45-5. We lost to Arkansas 23-13 and could have won the game. We played better every game and continued to improve each week. (See **Fall** on page 2)

STARTING A CLUB FROM SCRATCH

INTERVIEW WITH CLUB FOUNDER, GEORGE BUNTING

The Kansas Jayhawks Rugby Football Club will celebrate its 50th anniversary in the fall of 2014. In this first of a retrospective series about the club's history, the logical place to begin is with an interview with the club's founder, **George Bunting**. Most Jayhawk rugby players know that George Bunting started the team, but know little else about the man and about the initial start up of the club.

Bunting was interviewed at his home in Midland, Texas

in early December 2011. He is 69 years old and semi-retired. In his entrepreneurial career, he has worked on Wall Street and owned a number of companies. He remains in the oil business and currently owns companies that sell aircraft parts and energy equipment for the wind power industry. At the start of the interview, he warned that the questions were about things he had not thought about in years. He said "Memory Lane" is a one-way street, marked "Do Not Enter". He would do his best.

Before coming to KU Law School, Bunting played rugby while an undergraduate at Dartmouth. He played for 3 years, starting in 1961. That is the first place he saw a rugby game. The 6 foot 3 inch, 235 lbs Bunting was interested in all sports. He had played on the varsity squash team and was in pretty good shape. "Dartmouth was a wonderful school because they would let you try anything. I rowed crew for a while, played lacrosse, and threw the javelin.

(See **Bunting** on Page 3)

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Featured In the next Issue:

The 1960's

SUMMARY OF FALL 2011

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On October 15, 2011:

**KJRFC Varsity Side
defeated Truman State
62-5 in Merit Table**

and

**KJRFC Club Side
defeated Kansas City
Rugby Club 47-0.**

In the coming spring we play MU and OSU in merit table games to determine who will represent HOA College Division 1 in Westerns. We think we have a good shot at winning. We were able to develop a squad of 25 players that started in at least one of the MT games, and we have a 10-15 JV squad that played in 5 games this season. We are losing 2 players for the spring, but we are sure we will pick up another 10. The winning and synergy are building momentum. We had 6 players that joined us mid way through the season because the word is out that we are playing a great game of

rugby.

The club side had a great fall going 5-4, losing close games in Aspen and playing the KC Blues in a very competitive match. We whipped up on KCRFC 47-0, and Wichita 38-33 with only 13 players after two of our boys were red carded.

We have 44 CIPP registered college players and 22 club players. We have 30 -40 for practice and 5 coaches (Doug McCauley has joined the staff). **The fields at Westwick are fantastic and having lights is huge.** We have 3 or 4 very, very good players on the

club and 8-12 very good players on the varsity. We are playing JV matches which provide opportunities for the new players and keeps them around.

It was great to see some of the old boys out to watch a game. We were able to visit with **Steve Lange, Bryan Hunter, Steve Swallow, Dan Katz, Louie Riederer, Don Harris, Larry Clarke, Matt O'Donnell and Derek Mannel.** I know we enjoyed showing off to you guys.

UPCOMING CLUB EVENTS

The **spring 2012 schedule will be in the next quarterly newsletter.** Past players are encouraged to attend games at home and on the road.

Some of us are going to the **Las Vegas Sevens Feb. 11th** would love to have more company. If interested see Rick Renfro at email rrenfro@sunflower.com

KJRFC vs MU Rugby Club in "Border War" March 10 in Kansas City.

- Club sides 1st
- Varsity sides 2nd (Merit Table match).
- Varsity's game has implications for representation in Western RFU finals. Exploring a stadium venue and night game.
- (Watch the club's website for details of where & when.)

Sámi Arap may bring over the **Brazil National team in April of 2012.** More details coming in the next edition of the Old Boy Quarterly

Annual Alumni Weekend - May 5.

More details coming in the next edition of the Old Boy Quarterly

Ed Mills, our fly half/architect is finished with the plans for the **changing rooms and clubhouse at the Westwick field.** The club hopes to break ground on it in the spring and be ready for fall 2012.

The **50th anniversary of the club is the fall of 2014.** Jimmy Bartle is working on a bunch of fun stuff. Tentative plans are to have the festivities cover **two long weekends in late September,** to offer past players a spectrum of activities. This is in contrast to trying to create a single event that would attempt to please everyone. More details will be announced as plans get firmed.

If you are interested in financially supporting the club, charitable gifts can be made to:

The Kansas Rugby Foundation, Inc.
PO Box 1074
Lawrence, KS, 66044

Save the Dates:

**Border War Game
KJRFC vs MU**

March 10, 2012

Double Header:

Club & MT Varsity Games
Place & Time in KC TBD

**Annual Alumni Weekend
May 5, 2012**

Watch website for
updates on these events
www.KURugby.org

INTERVIEW WITH CLUB FOUNDER, GEORGE BUNTING

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I started playing rugby more as a curiosity than anything. Once I gravitated to rugby, I fell in love with the sport.”

“Rugby is a great sport. Everyone gets to carry the ball. It’s very “democratic”. It has a social element to it. It’s not very hard to learn. You don’t have to be a terrific athlete; although that helps. Just about any size or build person can find a position. You can be slow or fast and still play. All of those things are reasons why rugby is so popular.”

When Bunting played, the Dartmouth club had already been around for years. It had done well nationally and taken a number of international tours. The club regularly traveled to California and played teams from Canada, too. The Dartmouth club was self-funded, but was a welcome part of the school’s club system. Bunting said Dartmouth still has one of the top rugby clubs in the country. They have their own club house and have brought a lot of positive recognition to the school. The Ivy League schools don’t play spring football and they allow their football players to play rugby in the spring.

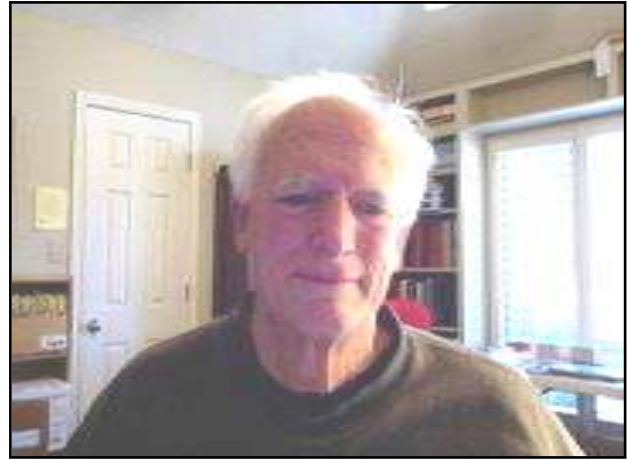
Bunting said he was an average athlete. He mostly played on the rugby club’s “B Team”. He added value with his ability to both place kick and drop kick. Although he normally played second row, he recalled one high point at Dartmouth, when a visiting team from Montreal came to play. They were short a player, so Dartmouth loaned him to the Canadi-

ans, who played him at wing. He really enjoyed that.

When he came to the University of Kansas as a law student in 1964, he learned that there wasn’t a rugby club. He went to the school newspaper and told them he was interested in starting a club. The paper ran an article about it. He reserved a meeting room at the KU Student Union. 13 interested players showed up. “Fortunately, 2 or 3 of those who turned up were foreign graduate student with considerable experience. A South African named **Wynaad Pienaar** ended up being the club’s first Captain.”

The KU Athletic Department supported the formation of the rugby club. The first jerseys were a set of old football practice jerseys the Athletic Department gave the club. The club was also given access to the intramural fields located near the current Watkins Memorial Hospital, a few hundred yards east of Allen Field House.

Bunting was one of the coaches. He said **“I learned more about the game by coaching it than I ever did as a player.** I had to look things up. This was particularly true of the backfield. As a second row, my experience was being down in a group of forwards and what went on in the backfield was a different world. The foreign players had a wealth of experience to share, so I let them coach all they wanted.” Because there were players who knew more about the sport than he did, his most important role on the club was as a President. “I wanted an organization



George Bunting

that would perpetuate itself, so I was encouraging the election of officers that would recycle the club and not be dependent on me.”

The club’s initial roster of 13 players ballooned to 35 or 40 by the time Bunting graduated from law school. People would see the team practicing on campus and come over to find out more about it. The school paper wrote a number of stories, as the paper followed the club. The word got out. Most of the initial players were graduate students who may have played sports as an undergrad (usually football) and were looking for some athletic activity. Then the club stated getting undergrads from fraternities etc. interested and the club started getting even more players. The whole thing just spread.

The club was formed in the same season as the Kansas City Rugby Football Club, whose founder, **Gerry Seymour** was a transplanted Brit. Seymour had lots of rugby contacts in the Midwest, so Seymour knew (See **Bunting** on Page 4)

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how to access clubs in St. Louis and colleges like Palmer Chiropractic College in Iowa. Bunting lined up the first season working with Seymour.

Bunting recalled the club's first game against Kansas City Rugby Club as being at UMKC in Kansas City. "We played on a football field that was hemmed in by a surrounding track. Curiously, it had a big manhole right in the middle of the field. I just recall that lots of scrum downs seemed to be called right over that inconveniently placed manhole. I think the match maybe ending in a 0-0 tie. It was a really ugly, ugly game. I don't know if the ball ever got to the backs. It was 30 people not really knowing what they were doing, but trying, you know?"

Bunting said the early KU club had a problem of execution. The players obviously wanted to get the ball out to the wing and try to get a mismatch of players, but his teammates had a great deal of trouble completing 3 or 4 passes without a knock on. They knew what they should be doing, but had trouble pulling it off.

The club had a couple of players who were former football players like **John Larocca** and **Pat Rapp** who were good athletes. Some other good players he recalls from that first season were **Doug Dusenbury** at fullback. "He had played football at K-State. He could kick a football like 80 yards and was a terrific tackler." There was also Bunting's best friend at law school, **Kit**

Cornett and a 6 foot 8 inch law student, he believes was named **Tom Russell**. He recalled a 6 foot 6 inch Welshman came out in the second season, named **Bill Pritchard** who was an excellent player. "Between Pritchard and our South African, Business School student, **Wynaan Pienaar**, we had two players who had played internationally. The mixture of experienced players and good athletes made the club pretty good."

After the team got established in its second season, Bunting bought the club a set of real rugby jerseys to help give the club an identity. Bunting said that it's different from what you have in Lawrence now, where new players come out to an existing club and interact with players who have been on the team for years. Back then, they were starting the club from scratch.

In the club's second year 1965, they scheduled games with Ivy League schools that Bunting knew from Dartmouth. He thinks they played Dartmouth, Princeton, Yale, and Holy Cross. "We lost all of those games, but had a great time. The hosting teams housed and fed our club. These Ivy League clubs had been around for years, they had traditions and lots of support. You could see that these clubs took the game seriously. It gave the sport legitimacy for the Kansas players. It exposed the Kansas club

to the upside of rugby. It was a good lesson."

Asked "**What was the best game he played at Kansas and why?**" he thought about it and said it was a good question. "It was probably a game they played against a St. Louis club on the return trip from the Ivy League Tour in the second year of the club. The Lawrence club had been on a team bus for six days and played four games. The players were sore and exhausted. The club lost in a close game that was maybe a score of 6-7, but the club played really well against a very good opponent. I was pleased by the way the club played after knowing the sport only for a short time. The team had come such a long way. It was good way to end the trip."

After graduating from KU Law School, Bunting went to New York to work on Wall Street as a security analyst. He played a little bit for what he recalls as the New York Rugby Club. As he became older, he realized he could contribute to the game as a referee. He returned to live in his home town, Kansas City around 1970 and joined the Referees Society for a few years. He refereed some games at the Heart of America Rugby Tournament that played every fall in Swope Park. Bunting then ended his rugby career doing a few coaching sessions with the St. Benedicts Rugby Club in Atchison, KS, when they were starting their club.

Asked about any perspective on the looming 50th anniversary of the club he founded. He mused that he was delighted that he and the club are both still alive. "The real credit to the rugby club is the people who came after me that kept it going." Although he has never visited the Westwick facilities, when he learned of it, he worried that it might lead to a distancing in the club's relationship from the university, since it would be away from campus and make it more difficult for the students to participate. Bunting believes the relationship with the university is a key component of the club's existence. "My fear has been that some sort of "bad event" might cause a problem between the club and the university. You don't want to be under the thumb of the university, depending on them for money for instance, but you want to remain a student activity. You need to have a good relationship with the university." Bunting sees one potential "issue to watch" is the interaction between players who are out of school with the student players. The older players are able to do different things than the undergraduates because of their age.

His interest in rugby has always been that it is a sport played for sport's sake. The game is controlled by the people who actually play it. From that angle, he believes that the Lawrence club's focus should be on the promotion of the varsity side, introducing the game to students, and making that a fun experience for the players. "If you do that, then everything will follow for a good club side."