

Brass spittoon awaits ruggers at end of Phyrst Cup rainbow

Despite what you may have been led to believe by any bumper stickers you may have seen, rugby players do not eat their dead. They do, however, play a basic and exciting game that must be seen to be appreciated.

Tomorrow morning at 11:30 the Penn State Rugby club and the defending champion Cleveland Blues will kick off the annual Phyrst Cup tournament at the Penn State pitch next to parking lot 83 near East Halls.

posting a 6-5 slate against tough competition this spring. The team has been plagued by injuries all spring, but, with the possible exception of Mike Hendrickson who suffered a severe ankle sprain last week, Penn State will put its top 15 players on the field.

It is a team that Mather described earlier in the season as "A team with personality." It is made up of the kind of people who dress up like the Seven Dwarfs on Halloween and who go up to New York to celebrate St. Patty's Day and who play a brand of rugby that is at times a street brawl and at other times poetry in motion.

Timmy McCarthy, one of the best scrum halves in the East, anchors the backs. Team captain Terry Ryland and his twin brother Louie provide excitement with their brand of hustling rugby. Ken Holt brings his indomitable English spirit to the backfield. Rounding out the backs are Bruce Hale and Jim Dolphin. Dolphin's breakaway speed belies the fact that he and a serious knee injury only last fall.

Chris Mather brings a devastating weapon to the fullback position — his foot. Mather's kicking ability has been seemingly unlimited as he has continually hit on penalty kicks and conversions from every conceivable angle all year.

The unsung pack is anchored by hooker Gary Greenberg and the infamous Don "Kicker" Reidell. Until he got a new jersey a couple of weeks ago, "Kicker's" old jersey was on the verge of being declared officially obscene. Also on the first line is Kim Neilson, another transplanted Englishman.

The second line features John Longfellow and Ken Kempton both of whom specialize in line-outs. On the third line (the loose forwards) Ed Montgomery and Ed Bradley combine speed and an ability to be in the right place at the right time. Last but not least is Fraser "Scotty" Grigor whose spirited play on the field is matched only by his Irish Setter, Shamus, rooting (some people call it howling) for him on the sideline.

The team is also blessed with a lot of depth. "We may change our personnel according to the type of team we play," Ryland said.

The coaches of the team are John Lasko (back) and Paul Abbot and Robert Hunter (forwards).

Hunter, a math professor and the team's faculty advisor, is an interesting character himself. Although no youngster, Hunter still plays on the club's B team. His knowledge of the game has earned him the respect of club members evidenced by the fact that he is on the selection committee that chooses the A team each week.

All in all, it makes for a fun weekend. There is rarely a dull moment in a rugby game. Hard-core rugby fans can be almost as interesting as the games themselves. Sitting on a blanket on a sunny day watching a rugby tournament is an experience all by itself.



Tom McNichol

The object of their quest is an old and battered brass spittoon that sits in a corner of the Phyrst bar, the tournament sponsors, almost lost among the bottles that surround it. It is not the most typical trophy ever offered to a champion but it is symbolic of the type of person who plays rugby. It is old and battered but it is also strong and well made. You could probably put a dent in it but, no matter how hard you try, you probably couldn't break it.

Once again, the Phyrst Cup has attracted a top class field. Two teams will be here from Canada — the Toronto Rugby Football Club and the Toronto Nomads. The season has just begun in Canada and these teams may be a little rusty but rugby is a popular sport there and they should be quality teams. In addition, the Fort Wayne (Ind.) rugby club and an improved Pitt Law Club will be here.

Penn State's two other opponents besides the defending champion Cleveland Blues team in the round robin tournament will be the South Jersey club and the Richmond rugby club. South Jersey is a good, well-balanced team with only one loss and Richmond will be looking for a measure of revenge after finishing a close second to Penn State in the 1974 tournament.

"I think we have the toughest schedule in the tournament," team captain Terry Ryland said.

Each team will play three games over the two days which means that games will be played from 11:30 to 3:30 each day. A team gets two points for a win, one for a tie, and none for a loss. The team with the most points wins and in case of a tie a team's defensive total is subtracted from its offensive total to get a winner. Penn State beat Richmond in this way two years ago.

Despite what you may have heard about the drinking prowess of rugby players, most of the drinking will be saved for after the games. The games are made up of two 25-minute non-stop halves. The game will stop for an injury but only as long as it takes for a player to either stand up and play again or get taken to the sidelines. A touchdown, or try, is worth four points with the conversion worth two more. Penalty kicks and drop kicks, which may come at any time, are worth three points.

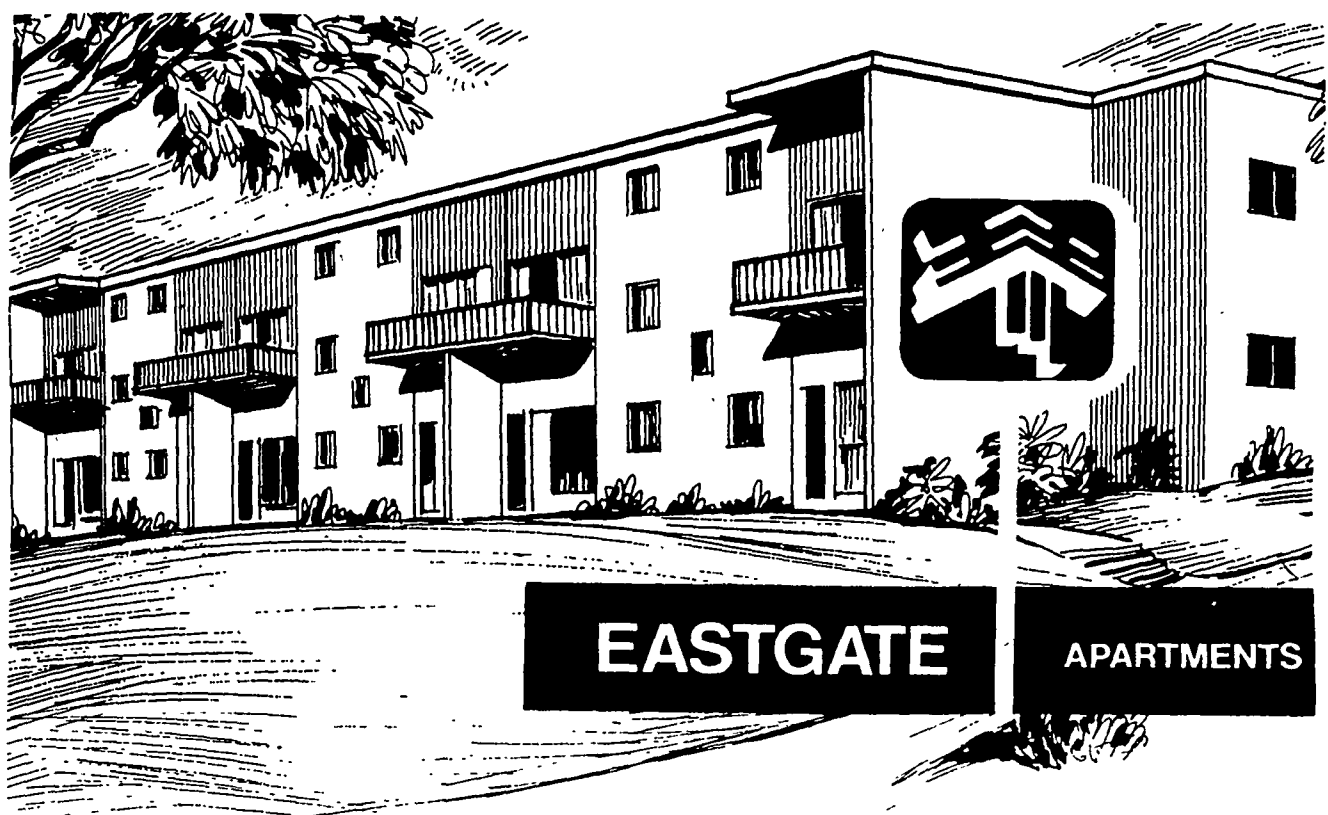
The action on the field often varies from a lot of passing and running to a lot of kicking, depending on what a team does best.

Penn State has employed a strong running attack and the foot of Chris Mather, an exchange student from England, in

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Photo by Ed Palis

If Penn State's ruggers can control the line-outs as they did here, they may win the Phyrst Cup tourney this weekend

Fattened Ali predicts knockout

LANDOVER, Md. (AP) — Muhammad Ali, confident as always but bigger than ever, predicted yesterday he would knock out Jimmy Young but said he didn't know what round.

It might depend on how worried his manager, Herbert Muhammad, gets.

"He worries real bad," said Ali after weighing in at 230, the highest official weight of his career, for his scheduled 15-round title defense tonight at the Capital Centre.

Herbert Muhammad worried to the point that he left his seat during the Ali-Jean Pierre Coopman fight in Puerto Rico on Feb. 20 and went to the ring to tell Ali to stop playing. Coopman went out in the fifth round.

But Young, although a definite underdog, is considered a stiffer test for Ali than was Coopman.

"He can give me as much trouble as Ken Norton," said Ali. "He can box better. He's faster but I don't know if he can take it."

Then the champ told how he was going to win:

"I'll sweat him down, wear him down, talk to him. This is his first title fight. I'm a veteran of so many big fights."

Young then revealed his plans. "My idea is to box him, to keep him in the middle of the ring where I'm 100 per cent sure I can handle him," said Young, who at 27 is seven years younger than Ali. But he also will be 21 pounds lighter than Ali.

The champion, patting his belly, claimed the extra weight would weigh in his favor as the fight wore on and that because of his age and hectic schedule it wouldn't be wise to be too trim. Ali

already is signed to defend against European champion Richard Dunn in Munich, West Germany, May 25.

Young has been almost overlooked in the days leading up to the fight and then again at the weigh-in the Philadelphia was pushed into the background, not only by Ali but by Norton.

Norton, who is expected to fight Ali, in the fall, also is on the Capital Centre show which will be televised by ABC beginning at 9 p.m., EDT.

Norton weighed 224 for his scheduled 12-round fight against Ron Stander, who weighed 229.

Ali is getting \$1.6 million for his 18th title fight, and said his purses for the year would total about \$25 million.

He said he hopes to fight Norton in September in Turkey or the Sudan.

Problems for Messersmith in Atlanta

NEW YORK (AP) — Andy Messersmith, baseball's latest millionaire, is finding life among the Atlanta Braves trying.

"I'm very disappointed with the way things are going for me," said Messersmith, who has an 0-1 record and a 4.50 earned-run average to show for four appearances with the Braves.

"My control has been terrible. I just can't put the

ball where I want to. I guess I'm not doing much for the kind of money they're paying me."

The Braves, who landed Messersmith as a free agent after a lengthy and often bitter bidding war with several other clubs, are paying him an estimated \$1 million for the services of his right arm over three seasons. They haven't gotten much so far.

While the rest of the major leaguers were whipping themselves into shape in this year's abbreviated version of spring training, Messersmith was locked in negotiations. How much did that hurt him?

"It didn't help," he said. "But I've already used that as an excuse. That's about used up. I'll have to think of a new one now."

Atlanta Manager Dave Bristol says he's not disap-

pointed with Messersmith's showings to date.

"I don't worry about Andy," said Bristol. "He'll just keep getting better. He's showing improvement with every outing. You don't worry about a guy like him."

Messersmith's latest effort was a seven-inning stint against the Mets Wednesday, his longest outing of the year. He gave up six hits, struck out seven batters and lost 3-0.



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