Rugby: A Legacy of Brotherhood

Ever since its founding in 1981, the JBU Rugby football club has been combining “the hard hitting game of rugby with Christ-like attitudes and actions” (JBU Rugby Mission Statement). The club was formed by a student at JBU, Tim Thomas, and a teacher at Siloam Springs junior high, Rob Albertson. In the early years of the club most of the members were missionary kids from Africa who brought their love of the game to school with them. Since then, the game has caught on with American students as well.

The club not only focuses on perfecting their game but also bringing glory and honor to Jesus Christ. The players finish every practice and match with a unified prayer and singing of the “Doxology.” They aim to be witnesses on and off the field while integrating their passion, strength, camaraderie and faith. Their exemplary behavior has been noticed not only by JBU students, faculty and staff but also by members of rival, secular schools. In October of 2004 JBU received an email from Dennis W., a professor at a university in Texas and a rugby player who competed in a different division at the tournament. The following is an excerpt of what he said.

This past weekend the JBU Rugby team took part in the Cowtown Rugby Tournament in Fort Worth, TX. I had the opportunity to watch a portion of three of their matches [...] It was clear that the JBU Rugby team carried themselves differently than any other collegiate teams that attended this event. In a sport that is rough, passionate and intense in its design, it is also often a culture of vulgarity, retaliation and post-game gluttonous behavior.

Despite the youth of JBU’s players, the passion of the sport of rugby and the culture of a rugby tournament, your young men represented themselves with dignity, honor and respect, while at the same time matching their opponent’s passion on the field. Clearly these young men are different!!! Players showed what are often uncommon courtesies such as helping up an opponent, genuine concern for someone suffering from an injury, or simply referring to someone older as “Sir.” [...] Thank you for allowing the Lord to work through you and congratulations John Brown University for generating such God-honoring young men.

With the greatest sincerity and respect of the Lord Jesus,
Dennis W.

Milestones

September 20, 1976
JBU’s Department of Music was selected by the Rockefeller Foundation to receive a 100 record collection of American Music. The department “Was chosen because of [their] commitment to musical education and scholarship...”

September 16, 1983
Summer improvements to J. Alvin included the addition of two new phone extensions, bringing the total to five lines at the front desk. These extensions could then be directed into each of the individual suites.

September 11, 1987
SGA began a new event called “Something New” which happened 2-3 times a semester. The event featured a slideshow of recent campus activities and was an opportunity to share memories with campus.
ECHOES OF THE PAST

Excerpt from the 30 of August 2001 Threefold

Rugby players earn respect by changing their focus to Christ
By: Jeff LeMaster

There’s something happening to the JBU rugby club. It started several years ago, and the new season holds the promise of it getting even stronger.

This change is not defined by improved statistics or a long win streak, although the team has maintained a consistent dominance of the Ozark union for the past several years.

The progression is one of the players’ attitudes. Team captain Aaron Passmore said that when he first came to JBU three years ago, many of the rugby players had reputations for being rude and obnoxious. “They [the rugby players] were feared on campus,” Passmore said. “They pushed a lot of limits.”

Passmore, along with many other JBU ruggers, have worked hard to improve that reputation in the last three years. Many rugby players are now serving the JBU community as resident assistants, Passion group leaders and in various other ways.

Senior Nathan Pahl believes the change in the team’s reputation can be attributed to a change of focus. “In the last few years, rugby has became more of a ministry to the players,” Pahl said. “We try to remem-

ber on the field that we are representing our club, JBU, and Christ...I feel like we’ve earned the respect of the teams we’ve played.”

Winning matches is directly correlated to the players’ attitudes, Passmore said. “Our goal is to be of integrity...if we can do that, we believe that we will have success on the pitch.”

Success on the pitch was not lacking last season. The JBU ruggers carried a record of 12-2 while finishing first in their union and placing third in the national western conference finals. […]

Excerpt from “Can a Christian Go To War?”

On my desk is a letter from a good layman who says that on Memorial Day his minister stood in his pulpit to declare that no man could wear the uniform of a soldier and be a Christian. When that foolish, misguided unpatriotic preacher made that declaration he repudiated the Bible, Christ, God, and every patriotic citizen the nation has ever known, and practically spit his contempt on the blood that was shed to buy for him the liberties that made it possible for him to stand in the pulpit to make such a silly, foolish statement. Facts are, these men do not think. They belong to that vast multitude of whom I wrote in my last message, who go with the tide – if it is war, they are for war; if it is peace, they are for peace!

In my last talk on this serious question of war (and believe me, there are studies), I found that Jesus of Nazareth not alone crowned a Roman captain who, to the Jew, represented a government that had plundered him and enslaved him, with the declaration, “This man has a faith greater than I have found amongst mine own people,” but He practically said in so many words, “This man will sit down with Abraham in the Kingdom.” It was beneath the Cross where our Lord was dying—dying to redeem a world—that a Roman captain cried, “This is the son of God,” and gave vent in praises to God to the emotions that swept his soul! It was in the home of a Roman captain, Cornelius, that God opened the door to the Gentile world and poured out the Spirit of God as on the day of Pentecost. ...Christ not alone recognized the man who was wearing a uniform indicative of service to world government, but in every instance it was an officer representing an authority and a power that God’s favored people looked upon with resentment and hate.

Excerpt from “Can a Christian Go To War?”