

EASTERN RUGBY UNION OF AMERICA, INC.

Nov 10, 1986

Mr. & Mrs. Pete Sweet
5800 Dwyer St.
Richmond, Virginia 23231

Dear Chris and Pete,

Enclosed are the results of my rainy weekend efforts to dig up data on the history of the Richmond RFC. Its a long, slow process and progress in the future is going to be even more painful.

The enclosure come from my file on the RRFC. I have found the reason for the temporary gap referred to on the last page of the enclosures.

While in Richmond I kept one file entitle Richmond RFC and put everything pertaining to the Club in it. I had another series of annual files putting in them all the news clips, programs, photos, newsletters etc each year. Beginning about 1972 I started putting the RRFC data in these files. In addition as I tapered off my work as an administrator of RRFC there was less and less correspondence to go into the RRFC file and finally for reasons I dont know there was far less newspaper coverage in Richmond of the activities of the Rugby clubs in the city.

Early this morning it took a very long time to dig through the annual clippings files for 1971, 1972 and 1973. Mostly what I found were Terry Curtler's newsletters of the Virginia Rugby Association. Very little by way of news clips, game schedules or season results, RRFC newsletters, photos or programs. If you have read Terry's newsletters you know they are slow reading.

A note in the RRFC file says Tom Rose reports the great scrap book he was keeping had disappeared. However, he and Terry may well have files you can review. Why not ask them for help.

I'll do the best I can as time permits but I suggest you both come up here and stay with Sandy and me for a week and we can get the whole job done. That's not said in jest.

All the best,

Edmund W. Lee
Honorary Life President
Historian Archivist
USARFU & ERU

RICHMOND RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

1969

The year 1969 was an outstanding year for the Richmond Rugby Football Club. It was marked by the tour of the Richmond Rugby Club of Surrey England. The host Richmond Club went all out to make the visit by the Club from its Sister City in England welcome Mayor Easley issued a Proclamation of Welcome, the guests were met at the Richmond airport by a brass band and beauty queens, lunch and a fashion show were provided by Miller and Rhoads, guests were accommodated in the homes of the host club members, several parties were given and to make the guests visit complete the final score of the game was Richmond (Surrey) 27 Richmond (Va) 3. Richmond B salvaged a victory over Richmond (Surrey) B 26 to 6. Overly enthusiastic members of the host club invited spectators in the stadium to attend the post game party. This presented a bit of difficulty as by the time the teams had showered and dressed and travelled to the party and Ed and Sandy Lee's home there was little of the roast pig left.

In one of its most successful seasons Richmond won its own Richmond Invitational Tournament, (later named the Porter Cup Tournament) the Carling Cup for the best team in the South and the new NAIO Tournament in Norfolk sponsored by the Naval Base in Norfolk and featuring teams from several British and Canadian ships in the harbor following NAIO naval exercises.

Richmond continued its policy of inviting Northern teams to visit during college Spring recess and hosted Penn State, Fordham and Williams College, defeating all three guests.

The Spring record was won 17 lost 3 for the A team and won 7 lost 2 for the B team. The Fall records were 7 won and 4 lost for the A team and 6 won with 4 lost for the B team

1970

Following the peak year of 1969 our year of 1970 was a bit of a let down. Several older players retired or were unavailable for some games. A recruiting drive while good was not as successful as desired. The A team wound up the Spring season with a 6-6-0 record. There is no record of the B team fall results except that it beat James River A team 44-0. In the Fall the A team record was 4-5-1. The B team's Spring results were 5-3-0. This is the first record of a game against James River RFC.

The Richmond RFC Ladies Auxiliary carried on its widely admired program of providing chicken and biscuit dinner for post game parties to be sure our guests were well fed before departing for their homes.

An Alumni Game (a more dignified title than Old Boys) was played as part of the Richmond Invitational Tournament and was won by the Alumni 8 to 8 against the Richmond RFC B team. Washington RFC beat Duke University in the finals of the Invitational while Richmond and University of Virginia battled to a 3-3 tie. It was decided to name the Tournament to Robert F. Porter Tournament in honor of the Founder of the Richmond Rugby Football Club

RICHMOND RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

1971

Records concerning the Richmond RFC in the historical files of the Eastern Rugby Union begin to become rather small at this time. This is a result of a lack of record keeping rather than a decline in the fortunes of the RRFC which continued to thrive and to be a leader in the development of Rugby South of the Mason-Dixon Line.

The Spring schedule called for 16 games in addition to the Porter Cup and the Duke University 7s. Richmond had been participating in the Duke 7s since at least 1968. The schedule also carried a game with the touring team Hendon RFC of the Borough of Hendon, England.

The Porter Cup was played in the preliminary rounds at John Marshall High School but the finals were as usual in the City Stadium. The annual Alumni game was also played in the Stadium. Washington RFC won for the second year in a row defeating Richmond 16-0. Other teams in the Tournament were Richmond B, Richmond Old Boys, South Carolina, University of Virginia Duke and Philadelphia First Troop.

Hendon won against Richmond in the City Stadium 17-3. The Richmond RFC's A team Spring record was 9-5-2. There is no record of the B team or of the Fall schedule for either team.

Application was made to become a member of the Potomac Rugby Union but there is no record of action being taken. It was about this time that a movement developed to create a Virginia-Carolina Rugby Association to administer Rugby in the Virginia-North Carolina area since there were frequent games among the teams in these 2 states. The first efforts were directed to coordination of playing schedules, assignment of referees, cooperation with respect to tours by clubs from England and other parts of the USA, uniform interpretation of the Laws of the Game, staging of coaching and refereeing clinics. It turned out to be just the Va Rugby Ass'n
1972

James River RFC first appears as a regular schedule game on the 1972 Spring schedule. No teams from north of the Mason-Dixon are shown on this schedule. We have no record of the Fall schedule much less the results of the Spring and Fall schedules.

RICHMOND RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

1973

Once again the files are quite meagre. They show Richmond defeated the Bank of England 22-6. In a 6 team Porter Cup round robin the placements were Norfolk, Richmond, George Washington, Atlanta, Blackthorn and James River. At the time of the tournament Richmond had a 12-2 season record in the Spring. It was fielding 3 teams regularly. It had a 15 games Fall schedule

There is a great gap in my Richmond RFC files beginning in 1974 - Candy and I moved from Richmond to Sherburne on 4th of July weekend 1974 - to April 19, 1979. Practically nothing however in 1979 and thereafter primarily RRFC newsletters. Of course I have no way of knowing how complete they are as they were produced rather intermittently depending on the disposition of the editor of the moment and the availability of news. I presume you have these available locally.

Good luck on your project


Edmund W. Lee