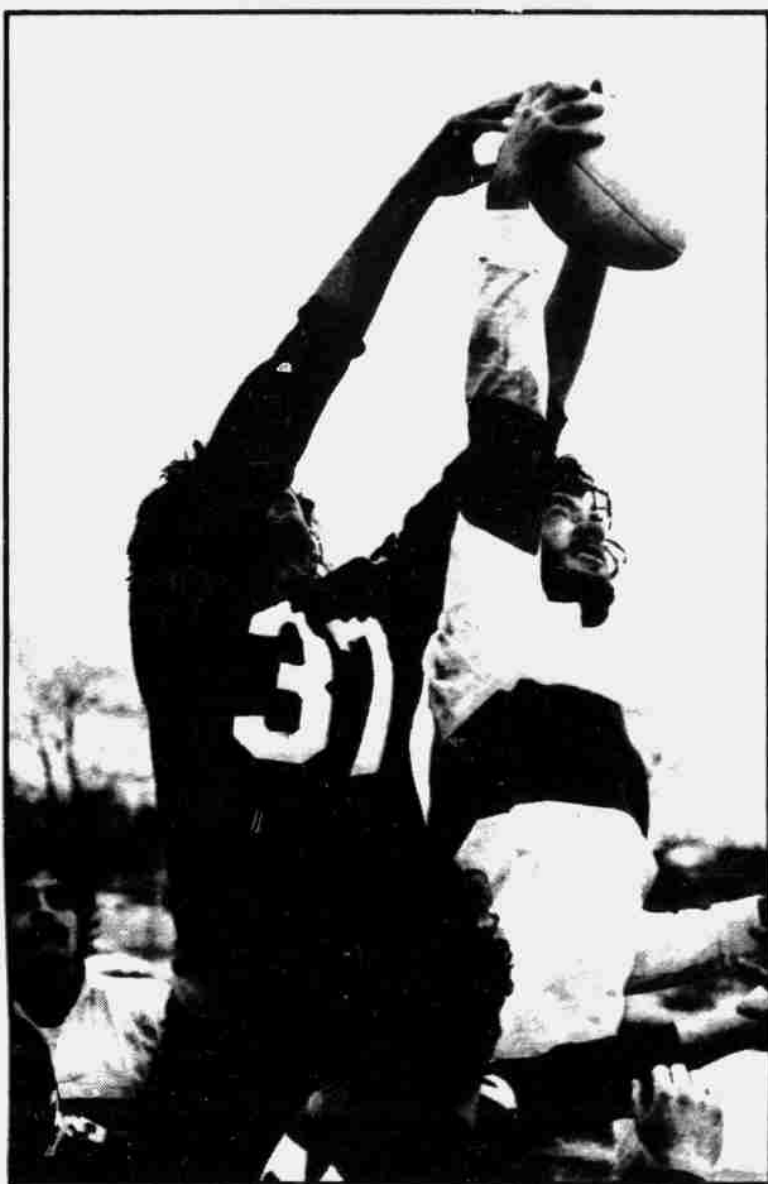




Daily Nebraskan photo



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Rugby fever just 'gets in the blood'

By Kathy Chenault

There is a "fever" on the UNL campus that has been contracted by 35 students who actively participate in a sport which evolved from soccer rule infractions.

In 1823 a frustrated English schoolboy picked up a soccer ball and ran with it, thus originating the game of rugby.

According to UNL Rugby Club President Stan Stutheit, catching the rugby fever can turn into an individual epidemic for rugby players.

"Rugby gets in your bloods," said Stutheit, a senior from Syracuse. "Once you start playing, you just keep going for it."

Stutheit said he and most of the other rugby players had no previous experience with the sport prior to coming to UNL.

Helps 'keep in shape'

"Playing rugby gives us (club members) a chance to stay athletically active and to keep in shape," Stutheit said.

Rugby is actually a cross between football and soccer. Play is continuous without times out or substitutions. Interference or forward passing are not allowed, while kicking, dribbling, lateral passing and tackling are featured.

Rugby was first introduced on the college level by

Cambridge University students in 1839 and by the 1860s it had developed into a distinct type of football.

The original laws of the game were drawn up in 1871 when 21 amateur clubs established the Rugby Football Union.

Rugby found its way to the United States around 1875 and has experienced most of its popularity in America on the coasts.

Historically, rugby has never been immensely popular in North America but in 1920 and 1924, teams representing the United States won rugby championships at the Olympic Games.

Sports popularity grown

Greg Miller, match secretary for the UNL club, doesn't foresee recognition for rugby as a varsity sport through the Athletic Department as a possibility, although the sport has grown in popularity on the campus in the five years he has been involved.

"Schools in this part of the country just don't support rugby like in other areas (of the country)," Miller said.

He added that functioning on club status does, however, have its advantages.

"On the one hand it would be nice to be funded like varsity sports," he said, "but if we were associated with the athletic department, we would have to drop out of the rugby union we belong to."

The Rugby Club finances equipment and travel expenses with various fund drive activities and club dues paid by members.

In their first action this season, the UNL club downed the rugby club from UNO. Last Saturday they dropped a decision to the Lincoln Rugby Club.

The next games for the UNL club will be this Saturday when they travel to Omaha for an invitational meet. They will compete against various city clubs and fellow Heart of America union teams.

sports

Open market causes price on players to skyrocket

Analysis by
L. Kent Wolgamott and Jeff Taebel

In the wake of baseball's adoption of a free agent policy two years ago, the market price of most players skyrocketed.

The primary reason for the skyrocketing salaries is that if a player is dissatisfied with his contract or with the situation on the team he plays for, he can wait until his contract expires and test his worth on the open market.

Unfortunately, some baseball owners, vis. Gene Autry of the California Angels, Brad Corbett of the Texas Rangers and the infamous George Steinbrenner of the New York Yankees, have been so free with their spending in attempting to buy a pennant for themselves, that they have priced many players off the market.

Only the well-to-do teams seem to be in on the bidding for high-priced superstars, some of whom indeed may be worth the money that they are paid.

However, in the process, many athletes, whose talents are questionable at best, have had their potential salaries elevated to the million dollar plus range, often on the basis of just one good season.

Kingman case

Consider the case of Chicago Cubs "slugger" Dave Kingman. Kingman was signed this year from the free agent draft in hopes that his home run hitting prowess would increase attendance at Wrigley Field as well as give the Cubs a much needed long ball threat.

Indeed, Kingman has produced home runs for the Cubs this season, 25 at this writing. However, he is batting a meager .249 with only 83 total hits.

Kingman is also one of the perennial league leaders in strikeouts, which usually outnumber his home runs three to one.

One of the most celebrated free agents of the first draft was the controversial slugger, Reggie Jackson.

Jackson erased the memories of a less than spectacular first season with the Yanks by his World Series performance.

However, this year, Jackson is batting .281 and is not leading the team in runs or RBI's. Although he is having a respectable season, it is not what one might expect from "the straw that stirs the drink."

baseball

Richie Zisk caused some bad feelings in Chicago by jumping the financially-troubled White Sox for the free spending Texas Rangers.

Zisk's season average of .252, 17 home runs and 65 RBI's are probably causing some hard feelings in Texas this year.

However, free agents aren't the only over priced, over-rated athletes in professional baseball.

Consider the case of Cincinnati ace Tom Seaver. The Reds gave the New York Mets an arm and a leg for Tom Terrific in hopes that his arm would prolong the dynasty of the Big Red Machine.

Seaver lived up to his reputation last season, although the Reds actually lost ground to the National League champion Dodgers after his acquisition.

This season has been a different story, with Seaver having a series of highs and lows. Despite the fact that he pitched a mid-season no hitter, he has been inconsistent in other starts with his record now 14-14 with 75 walks

given up, an unusually high number for a control pitcher.

Slow seasons

To be fair, not all big name free agents have fared so poorly.

Larry Hise, who sold his talents to the Milwaukee Brewers this season has been ripping apart American League pitching to the tune of a .290 average with 29 home runs and 99 RBI's.

Lyman Bostock, who was picked up by the Angels after a spectacular season with the Minnesota Twins last year, started so slowly this season that many fans wondered if he was worth the investment. However, Bostock attempted to have his salary held back for the first month of the season because he was so dissatisfied with his performance.

Bostock has now raised his average to .291 and has consistently turned in superb fielding efforts for the Angels.

Despite their problems this season, even the Texas Rangers strike gold occasionally, as in the case of Bobby Bonds.

Bonds' excellent all-around play has been a bright spot for Texas fans this season as he is batting .278 with 26 home runs, 79 RBI's and 34 stolen bases.

Pitcher Mike Torrez, left George Steinbrenner's fold for greener pastures in Boston where he is second on the team behind Dennis Eckersley in wins and strikeouts.

Rich Gossage, who was expropriated from the Pittsburgh Pirates to the Yankees, is leading the league in saves and trails only his teammate Ron Guidry in earned run average.

It would seem that free agency in baseball has become a high-priced gamble for team owners, who seem to realize that they are cutting their own throats while bringing mixed fortunes to their ball clubs.