

Queen's Rugby Football Club: A Profile

Situated in the beautifully historic Kingston, Ontario, Queen's University is a facility known nationally and internationally for its medical sciences and high performing academics.

Predating Canada by 26 years, Queen's University was founded in 1841, beginning with 13 students and two professors. Since its inception, the institution has grown to fill its many buildings with over 20,000 students and nearly 2,500 professors.

As the well-known tricolours of Queen's blue, gold and red are seen around campus, it is also donned on the field of sports. Amongst the varied domain of athletics, Queen's Rugby Football Club (QRFC) holds an exceptional history with six men's sides and one women's side.

Since 1986, six years after the club was formed, Queen's has reached the Ontario University Athletics (OUA) Championship game 15 times and has won 11 championship titles. This past season was no different as the Gael's capped off a perfect season at 10-0.

"Our team's success comes from a combination of dedicated coaching and a strong pool of developing rugby players," says Ryan Krayne, 1st XV Captain and



Photo by José Romelo Lagman

fourth year commerce student. "Our success also comes from the general commitment we get from our entire club throughout the season."

Switching roles between second and back row, Krayne is also the Gaels team kicker, leading OUA scoring with 99 points in eight games. Completing his final year as captain, Krayne was also OUA MVP and the OUA all-star.

"It really has been a steady rise in improvement throughout my four years here, and I think that it has transitioned into on-field success as we have been in the gold medal match up for three years in a row," continues Krayne. "The work

and experience that both [Coach] Pete and [Assistant Coach] Luke have had in the Canada National program staff has really expanded their knowledge in both the knowledge of the game and also how they perform as coaches."

With more than 150 players this season, the coaching staff of QRFC has remained steady and thorough, maintaining a strict discipline and work ethic that is passed on to the players.

Calum Ramsay, a fifth year applied science student and scrum half states, "Each coach has set responsibilities and their dedication to ensuring that they carry out their role to the best of their ability is admirable, be it something personalized like staying after training to work on individual skills, or something much larger in scale like the team strategy for the upcoming match."

First year arts and science student Liam "Iceman" Underwood believes that the level of commitment and training of the club is a key factor. "We get tons of guys out to practice every night and we all drive each other to become better."

Ramsay agrees, "There is so much competition between players for a higher spot on the depth chart that you must either

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improve your play continuously or lose your spot.”

Much of the magic occurs on the rugby-only pitch Kingston Field, located in the centre of the campus. A stand out amongst developing players, the men’s rugby program at Queen’s has seen further success at the provincial, national and international levels.

As flyhalf and OUA all-star, Underwood was recently picked for the Canada U20 team for the world trophy in Moscow this May.

However, the completion of this season leaves a mark in the ranks. Underwood and fellow teammates remain undeterred. “It always tough when you lose older guys like the Richardson twins and Captain Ryan Kruyne because they are the core of the team, but because our club has so much depth we have a lot of great players moving in to fill their spots.”

Ramsay affirms that while the graduation of senior players is always a change, it would not become a negative impact on the team. “The tight-knitted nature of the QRFC has helped younger players understand the dedication and commitment that must be demonstrated in order to wear the tricolour.”

The development of players is propelled by the resources around them. Through their years in the club and university, it allows each player to become stronger and smarter, states Kruyne. “These two factors make for a deadly combination that has helped us tremendously through the past few seasons, and will continue to do so into the future.”

Confident in both teammates and coaches, Ramsay asserts, “When the opportunity arises next year to represent Queen’s in OUA competition, you can rest assured that the competition for each roster spot will be just as intense as this season past.”

- Cassandra Chin

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