

Maryland Exiles Spring 2016 Recap

Maryland Exiles – Once again, the Maryland Exiles are the Maryland State High School Rugby Champions. In fact, this is the 7th year in a row. This was significant as we lost 27 players from last season who had varsity playing experience including many who were regular “starters”. In this year’s final only 5 players were on the 25 player roster from last year’s final. Very well done as the club came together to avenge a regular season loss to West Carroll to win 19-0.

VARSIITY/1st Team

First a shout out to some players who are graduating this year:

1. **Aiden Perrenoud**, Rockville High School; team captain scored 104 points the past two seasons. Plans to attend West Virginia University and play rugby there.
2. **Charlie Siarkas**, Sherwood High School; selected to attend high school all-American camp in 2014. Came back from knee injury to start in state final. Plans to attend West Virginia Wesleyan University studying computer science & computer science and play football
3. **Alexandre Rogy**, Lycee Rochambeau; tackling machine launched from the flanker position. Plans to attend Lycee Laroche foucault in Paris and play rugby for ACBB in Boulogne, France.
4. **Seamus McDonald**, Sherwood High School; wing extraordinaire & ironman who was 1 of 3 players to play in all 17 varsity matches. Plans to attend community college in California and play rugby there.
5. **Charlie Heim**, Walter Johnson High School; Steady Charlie held down the tighthead prop position for most of the season as a first year player. He plans to attend Towson University and play rugby there.
6. **Mitch Fenton**, Whitman High School, all-metro wrestler with a rugby pedigree. First year with the Exiles and got to mix it up at hooker and flanker. Plans to attend New York’s Binghamton University and considering both wrestling and/or rugby.
7. **Leo Simon**, Richard Montgomery High School; another 1st year Exile who played flanker and center. Always itching to get in the action. He plans to attend University of Maryland and play rugby there.
8. **Rodloy Pierre**, Sherwood High School; a 1st year rucker and half of our Haitian contingent. Played second row and managed to score a try to help win a match. He plans to attend Montgomery College and study web design & game programming.
9. **Andronel Jacques**, Sherwood High School; the other half of the Haitian contingent and also a 1st year rucker. Played center, wing & fullback. He also plans to attend Montgomery College.

You will be missed, Godspeed in all of your future endeavors.

While winning the Club Rugby state championship and being ranked 47th in the country among high school club teams by the Goff Rugby Report is a significant achievement; there is room for improvement evidenced by our varsity’s overall 11-5-1 record.

Our leading scorer was inside center/flyhalf **Nathaniel Turak** with 83 points from his toe & 4 tries. But loosehead prop **Adam Tounkara** had 55 points, scrum half/fly half **Pierre Marcandella** 45 points and back row **Aiden Perrenoud** 40 points. Our wing/fullback group of **Seamus McDonald**, **Nicholas Bernhardt-Lanier**, **Noah Lucas**, **Siya Dalton** & **Elijah Bruce** combined for another 75 points. The 2016 version of the Exiles was a well-balanced team that could score from anywhere on the field and from

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every position. This was demonstrated by 25 different players scoring points during the varsity season. 42 different players played in at least one varsity match this year.

The opposition: Playing strong teams is the only way to test the quality of Maryland Exiles rugby. Within the Rugby Maryland Club league only West Carroll (#52 in nation) and North Bay provide much competition. Arundel, Frederick & Baltimore Poly have generally been considered “easy” wins and do little to improve our game. This year, West Carroll defeated our team in the regular season and exposed some weaknesses especially in team play. We got to play Fort Hunt twice which is the #4 ranked club rugby team in the nation and Virginia State club champions. Early in the season we managed to win a friendly though neither team had many of their eventual regular players on the field. Fort Hunt avenged that loss with a win in the Maryland International Rugby festival. We also beat Gregory the Great in an early season friendly which ended up #58 in the nation and was a Pennsylvania single school state semifinalist that was undefeated in league play at 6-0. At the Cherry Blossom Tournament; we tied Connecticut single school semifinalist Ridgefield and beat Canadian Saint Patrick’s High School before losing two consecutive matches to MIAA Champions Loyola-Blakefield (7-2 overall) and MIAA runner-up Archbishop Spalding (6-3 overall) – 2 strong varsity rugby programs. At the Maryland International Rugby Festival, we defeated a weak Virginia Beach side; lost to Fort Hunt before defeating MIAA state semifinalist Mount Saint Josephs. Another test was a loss to Gonzaga Black (their second varsity team) which had a record of 12-6 against a mix of varsity teams and second teams during Gonzaga’s Spain tour. While we may not be ready for Gonzaga Purple yet (won National Invitational Tournament 3 years in a row, ranked #1 in nation 2014-2016 and was 27-1 this year) the improved level of competition this year proved the exiles may be ready to jump from its small pond into a larger pool.

The first team fixtures and results follow:

Date	Opponent	Score/Result	Notes
21 February 2016	Eleanor Roosevelt	38-5 W	Friendly
21 February 2016	Fort Hunt	22-10 W	Friendly
28 February 2016	Gregory the Great	27-14 W	Friendly
13 March 2016	Baltimore Poly	48-10 W	League Match
2 April 2016	Ridgefield HS (Conn)	0-0 D	Cherry Blossom Pool
2 April 2016	Saint Patrick’s HS (Ontario)	27-14 W	Cherry Blossom Pool
3 April 2016	Loyola-Blakefield	10-22 L	Cherry Blossom Pool
3 April 2016	Archbishop Spalding	5-22 L	Cherry Blossom Plate
10 April 2016	Gonzaga Black	10-38 L	Friendly
12 April 2016	Frederick	70-7 W	League Match
15 April 2016	West Carroll	24-27 L	League Match
17 April 2016	North Bay	36-12 W	League Match
23 April 2016	Virginia Beach	25-12 W	Maryland Festival
23 April 2016	Fort Hunt	17-26 L	Maryland Festival
24 April 2016	Mount Saint Joes	34-12 W	Maryland Festival
8 May 2016	North Bay	35-14 W	Maryland Club Semifinal
15 May 2016	West Carroll	19-0 W	Maryland Club Championship

Junior Varsity/2nd Team

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Two years ago, the Exiles only had enough players to field one team. This year, we were able to field a JV team for the second year in a row. However, we were hampered by overall numbers available any given week and only played six games. We had to withdraw from the Maryland Rugby Festival since not enough players were available. Although the overall record was not great at 1-4-1; it is critically important to have a group of younger or inexperienced players learning the game if we want to have a strong program that has developing players ascending to the first team as they gain experience and skill. Our club has had to rely on too many first year players playing on the varsity due to lack of numbers. Ideally, the first side should have 30 experienced players and second side at least 25 younger or less experienced players on their respective rosters. One lesson we learned this year is that both the first and second teams should be scheduled to play at the same locations until we truly have enough players attending practices to support two independent teams. This will also give first team reserves additional playing time. As both head coach Jean-Louis Moures and club president Dan Soso stated during the membership meeting we need to recruit.

The second team fixtures and results follow:

Date	Opponent	Result	Notes
28 February 2016	Fort Hunt 2 nd XV	20-57 L	
10 April 2016	Gonzaga JV	5-24 L	
16 April 2016	Fort Hunt 2 nd XV	19-35 L	Jesuit Classic
16 April 2016	Great Falls JV	25-10 W	Jesuit Classic
17 April 2016	St Xavier (Ohio)	0-42 L	Jesuit Classic
8 May 2016	North Bay JV	10-10 D	

Middle School U15

The future of the exiles club resides with the middle school program as a feeder program for the Exile's high school teams. We started with just a few players this year but through some good recruiting finally had 18 players. All but one of our Middle schoolers were in the 8th grade so almost all will either be playing as Exiles high schooler's or are moving on to other teams next year so the team will have to be rebuilt. The team was able to play 6 matches plus 3 scrimmages so gained some important experience. Unfortunately, they did not play in the Fredrick Fast Track this year.

The Middle School fixtures and results follow:

Date	Opponent	Result	Notes
10 April 2016	Arden	64-0 W	
23 April 2016	Prince Williams	5-43 L	Maryland Festival
23 April 2016	Frederick	26-24 W	Maryland Festival
24 April 2016	West End	20-0 W	Maryland Festival
27 April 2016	Gonzaga Frosh B	7-19 L	
8 May 2016	Vienna	17-28 L	

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We will be saying thanks & farewell to some of the middle schoolers as they ascend to new rugby programs while we will also have some middle school players returning as 9th graders with the Exiles. That leaves Samoa **Joe Vitolio** as the lone middle schooler so we have to build a team around him for next year!

Walker Calderon	Gonzaga	Manel Judice	Exiles
Bau Molinari	Gonzaga	Jaako Vanska	Exiles
Ian McGunigal	Gonzaga	Sam Johnson	
Teddy Thomas	Gonzaga	Rhys King	Exiles
Johnny McAuliffe	Georgetown Prep	Luke McGrail	Gonzaga
Paul Bolek	Exiles	James Piercy	Saint Johns
Finn Pillar	Exiles	Dylan Sacks	Exiles
Charles Stover	Exiles	Morgan White	Exiles

Administratively, the Exiles took some important strides this year. First, it was incorporated as a non-profit charitable organization in Maryland and now has 501C3 status so contributors can make tax deductible donations. Secondly, we now have a website hosted by Pitchero to enhance our communications. We also lowered dues from \$200 per player to \$65 per player and opened up a team store for team gear. This has made paying dues much more affordable so that all non-FIS players must pay to play. This resulted in a net increase in revenues to the club despite the dues reduction since players can buy gear direct instead of it coming out of club treasury.

Next Year. At our May membership meeting, Dan Soso outlined some possible tour opportunities in his President's Message. The options included:

1. Virginia Beach – This could be done on a weekend in conjunction with the Montgomery County Public School's (MCPS) spring break (MCPS planning calendar has this break tentatively scheduled for 10-17 April 2017). 2-3 matches could be scheduled on a Saturday/Sunday.
2. France – A team could travel to France in July 2017. The cost would be \$2000 per player (airfare & lodging). A coach would have their expenses paid for. This would require separate fundraising if this is what the players wanted to do.
3. National Invitational Tournament (NIT) – we could travel to Charlotte, NC for the National Invitational tournament which was held May 20/21 this year. Dan advised that the club has to play a higher level of competition if we want to go to the NIT. He emphasized the need to recruit.

If parents & players want to opt for one of these objectives, we need to start planning no later than the Fall. Please think about it and decide if you want to commit to it as it will require fundraising and making sure we have enough players (23-25) to do it.

Finally, a reminder of opportunities to play rugby this summer:

- A. The Pittsburgh Regional Cup Tournament (RCT) is Charlotte, NC June 17-19. Anyone interested in being considered for selection to the High School All-American Camp or just playing with the Maryland selects should consider trying out. Scouts for the High School All American team will be there. Practices will be at Fairland Regional Park, Burtonsville on Greencastle Road and is run by Rugby Maryland. A separate note was sent out regarding this.

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- B. Maryland Exiles Summer Youth Rugby starts May 31st with practices at Timberlawn Park, 10800 Gloxnia Drive, Rockville on Tuesday's & Thursdays at 7PM.

Both of these programs are separate from our club and have their own fee structures.

Looking forward to next Season! We will be contacting everyone to announce the beginning of the Fall 7s season sometime in August.