

Stamford Academy Spartan Rugby

By: Kyle Carey

When we think of spring sports at Stamford High, we often think of lacrosse, baseball, softball, tennis, or track. We never really think of any other spring team as being part of the Black Knight family. However, a little-known group at Stamford High looks to change all that. Clad in green, holding peculiar shaped balls, and sporting shorts that reveal their abnormally large thighs, you are bound to have seen (and should certainly remember seeing) one of these athletes walk the hall. They are Stamford Spartan's Rugby team, a group that is looking to show that they are the best around.

Most people have heard of rugby, but few know what it is, let alone how it is played. Rugby draws from both soccer and football, taking tackling and the brutal qualities of the latter and combining it with the elegance, use of feet and the constant pace featured in soccer. The goal of rugby, as in most sports, is to score more points than your opponent.

Rugby offers three ways to score a point. The first is a try worth five points. It involves touching the ball to the ground past an opponent's goal line similar to a touchdown. Forward movement towards the goal line is achieved by kicking, backwards or lateral passing or running with the ball. The second option is a goal, which is worth three points and comes from set kick through a pair of uprights. This form of scoring usually occurs after a penalty. The final way to score is a field goal, which is worth two points. Scoring one simply involves a drop kick through the uprights.

Games typically last 80 minutes and feature limited subbing. Rugby requires great stamina and endurance to play. Score lines range anywhere from the single digits to as much as thirty points. It is an extremely fast-paced, high action sport.

Rugby has its origins in England. Beginning as a sport commonly played by the UK's upper class, it has since spread across Europe and the English-speaking world. Although the Brits pioneered it, the

people of New Zealand have since hijacked it from them, and become the world's best team. It has become an increasingly popular sport in the United States, and nowhere is this more clear than in the case of the Spartans' team. Almost all of the team (if not the entire team) has picked up the sport in the past few years.

Despite the loss of several key players, the rugby



Courtesy of: Adam Satz

team has the talent to achieve success this season. Since its inception three years ago, the team has drawn from Stamford Academy, Stamford High and Westhill, though the bulk of the squad is made up of Black Knights. Our classmates play a wide variety of positions on the field. For the forwards we have Amitan Rubin as the Hooker; small, sturdy and quick, he is key to the scrum (a reset of the ball that occurs after a forward pass or out-of-bounds ball). Amitan is accompanied on either side by props Will Carroll and Marc Johnson, whose imposing size and strength proves invaluable to scrums. Rounding out the forwards is Adam Satz, who demonstrates great ball handling skills and has an uncanny ability to break through defenses. Stamford is represented in the backs by centers Alex Littlehailes and Alex

Alexis whose jobs are to distribute the ball out to the wings. Also worth mentioning are Simon Walker and Ben Rathman, both of whom will undoubtedly be team leaders and make an influence as seasoned players. As of now, their positions are still undecided, but we will definitely see them on the pitch.

Leading the team is a set of five experienced coaches. Duo "Big" Mike Schacter and Frank Gianchetta, former Greenwich high players, make up slightly less than half the coaching staff. Michael Hanley, Jeremy Kosbob, and Joe Sullivan join them to complete the group. Kosbob brings an up-to-date vision of the game, as he plays for semi-pro team the New York Knights.

The coaches work the team extremely hard preparing them for the upcoming season in the Connecticut Rugby Union League. Despite having to go up against seemingly unbeatable teams (like reigning D2 champs Darien), the Spartans remain optimistic. Adam Satz put it best by saying that "this year we expect to be able to achieve success on all fronts because of the great dedication we have put in."

The team also hopes that all their hard work will lead to some recognition from their classmates. So if you're free, make sure to go to one of their games. Even if you don't know rugby very well, you'll surely find some enjoyment in the big brutes tackling each other for an hour and a half. I know the rugby team surely would appreciate the support of the student body, and they promise not to disappoint.

The sky is the limit for the Spartans. They have the coaches, the will and the raw skill to take on anyone that dares to challenge them. It took 300 Spartans to drive back the Persians at Thermopylae, it will only take fifteen to wipe the floor with every team in Connecticut.

Black Knight Baseball Preview

By: Michael Savona

The spring has arrived! And with it comes the year we hope to have more team chemistry and improve. Last year, the Knights ran with an 8-12 season. For some, Coach Kelly, he's still looking for major adjustments. Kelly about the previous season, "and our defense was strength and our defense will be better." Kelly indirectly speaks of pitcher Louis Lopez who is equipped with Nick Palumbo at centerfield and Travis major improvements in their defensive line-up. The team as a whole has been in the weight room and pushing us to our best so that we can improve our game," Teams that they will be looking out for are Greenwich, show them support at some of the games and promise us



Photo Credit: Michael Savona

new edition of our Black Knight Baseball team. "This off of last year," said Captain Doug Knopf. that kind of season may be considered good, but for "Our pitching wasn't as good as we anticipated," said not always on key. This year I foresee pitching as our

expected to turn out big for the team. Kelly has also been Docimo at shortstop. Both of these players will show

practicing their game in the off-season. "Kels has been said junior Justin Smith, "and it will show." Staples, and St. Josephs. The Black Knights trust us to a great season.

Manning Chooses Denver

By: Justin Smith

The great Indianapolis Colts quarterback is no longer the face of the franchise. After the Colts earned the first overall pick in the 2012 NFL Draft, the team decided it'd be best to part ways with the quarterback who was out for the 2011 season. Manning had multiple suitors while testing the free-agent market including Miami, New York (Jets), San Francisco, Tennessee, and of course Denver. Executive John Elway was one of the main men in the Denver office to persuade Manning to choose Denver. Tim Tebow was the Broncos quarterback in 2011 and became a fan favorite in the mile-high city. The Broncos have not yet released Tebow but, they will likely part ways in order for Tebow to get a shot with another team. Although Manning is an aging quarterback, he is the type of player that can turn a franchise into a serious title contender.



Photo Courtesy of: CBS

Soccer is Better Than Football

By: Ron Andre

“Soccer is better than football.”
 “No, football is better than soccer.”
 This is a common argument amongst high school athletes. I would argue that the better sport is the sport that is manlier, more athletic, has better-looking players, is more popular, and has more fans. I think both sports are good sports and they both are very different, but some characteristics can be compared. I’ll just give a couple of reasons why I think soccer (whose original name is football) is better. I mean, I really don’t get why they call football “football,” because soccer is actually played with feet and “football” is played with hands. Maybe during the early days, football wasn't doing so great and they needed an easy way of tricking people to come play it.

Soccer is also a world sport; maybe it’s not as popular as football in the United States, but what about the rest of the world? When the World Cup is on, the world stops - even people who don’t have a clue about the game cheer their countries on, because soccer is not about money - it’s about pride. There are no lockouts in soccer. In Europe, soccer is like a religion. The world plays soccer, but only Americans play football. According to a Fox Sports blog, compared to soccer, football game atmospheres are tame! Soccer has

sections of fans called “hooligans.” These groups of like-minded ladies and gentlemen cheer their team on with outrageous enthusiasm. Often times they will have cannons, smoke flares,



Photo Credit: Tsering Yangzon

and drums. But the one thing that soccer fans do that really differentiates them from other fans is sing their team's chants.

Soccer players are also more attractive; it’s a fact. Look at Heather Mitts. And one of the reasons people watched the last season of Dancing with the Stars was because of U.S Women soccer goalkeeper Hope Solo. During the Super Bowl, two seconds after a David Beckham ad appeared my entire news feed was covered with "OMG Beckham is so sexy," and every

time a girl sees a picture of Cristiano Ronaldo, it’s like everything else they think of goes through a sewer.

On a soccer team, every player has to be in top condition; just one out-of-shape player can affect the whole team, as the players play for ninety minutes or longer without a break. They are also sprinting about eighty percent of the time depending on the pressure or the speed of the other team, whereas football games last for 60 minutes and the individual players only play half of the time (since the offenses and defenses have to change out, a play in football lasts about 10 seconds and they get at least 30 seconds to rest).

Catching a ball with your hands is natural because we use our hands to do almost everything; I mean, do you ever see a baby support a baby bottle with its foot? Unless you live in some magical land, I don’t think so. It takes way more skills and practice to play soccer; the younger you start playing, the better you will be at it because it takes years of practice for you to become natural. You can easily switch from soccer to football and get into the NFL, because all you need for half of the positions in football is speed, the ability to think quickly and a bit of

strength - basically, what soccer players do while they sleep.

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