



# PLANNING THE FUTURE OF CARLETON RUGBY 2019



"The Hill of Three Oaks", by Ashley "Shaw" Adams

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For over 50 years, the Carleton College Rugby Football Club has thrived under student leadership, retaining high standards of sportsmanship, ethical behavior and fair play. The club's charter was built on a platform of teamwork, understanding, co-operation, bringing honor to Carleton and respect for fellow participants. Both men's and women's teams have enjoyed significant participation numbers and competitive success, including a Division III national title and multiple tournament and regional championships. Alumni of the program have gone on to play and coach for nationally-ranked clubs, regional select sides, and World Cup teams.

As proven at last year's well-attended rugby reunion, which drew attendance from across the U.S. and international locations as far as Thailand and the Philippines, many alumni hold up rugby as a foundational part of their Carleton experience. In rugby, everyone is welcome and given an opportunity to learn and play the game, or simply enjoy the fellowship. As a result, the Carleton rugby community enjoys a tightly held bond and shares strong camaraderie that reaches far beyond the field.

Rugby as a sport is growing fast and furiously in the U.S., yet the Carleton teams have floundered a bit over the past few years, struggling with lower participation and changing league structures. Too often, students seeking a high quality rugby experience recently have not been fully supported by club structures providing challenge, skill development, and inclusion.

Cooperatively with current student players, a group of alumni have come together to create the following strategic plan, pledging ongoing support and involvement to strengthen the foundation of the rugby program and develop a significant competitive advantage for Carleton moving forward.

Fundamental to this plan is the formation of an active, alumni organization called Friends of Carleton Rugby and the creation of a Director of Rugby position, whose responsibilities will include further developing and implementing this plan alongside student leadership, coaches, and other stakeholders in the college community. These pillars of the plan will ensure a continual funding mechanism, institutional leadership, and alumni involvement, making the rugby experience at Carleton meaningful, both on and off the pitch.

The plan also hopes to leverage Carleton facilities and build Carleton into a rugby hub for the Midwest by hosting various rugby clinics, courses, camps, and tournaments with emphasis on development of youth, high school, and college rugby in Minnesota and throughout the Midwest.

This document provides a set of guidelines and suggestions for achieving the strategic goals aligned with the stated mission and vision. Though key stakeholders were consulted for critical input, the contents reflect the consensus of the alumni strategic planning committee and have not been fully vetted for feasibility. Implementation of any portion of this plan will require extensive collaboration with stakeholders and will be subject to the policies and priorities of the college. In partnership with the college and current players, we look to use the principles identified in the strategic plan as best practices to help build the Carleton Rugby program of the future.

## MISSION AND VISION

- Develop Carleton rugby as the premier small college program in the Midwest -- “where smart people play good rugby”
- Provide meaningful opportunities for leadership and life skills development
- Establish Carleton as a hub for rugby development in Minnesota, especially for youth and high school (clinics, tournaments, camps)
- Leverage the shared experience of rugby to enrich bonds between alumni and bonds between current students and alumni

## ANALYSIS OF CURRENT STATUS

- As a student-run enterprise, the vitality of rugby at Carleton has fluctuated with quality and commitment of student leadership and lacks institutional memory and guidance
- Current student leadership is dedicated to improving rugby at Carleton but the status quo (resources, expertise, and institutional support) is insufficient for rugby to make meaningful progress towards excellence.
- The men’s and women’s clubs are not able to attract and retain enough players to ensure effective trainings and fulfill competitive playing schedules
- Support for the clubs from the college and other “friends of Carleton rugby” is insufficient for planning and executing schedules with optimal competition and preparation.
- After several seasons of declining standard of play, this past fall saw marked improvement in skills, performance and spirit, due in large part to an influx of experienced alumni and club coaches

## STRATEGIC GOALS

- Ensure rugby at Carleton thrives as a competitive, inclusive club sport dedicated to excellence, fun, lasting relationships, and core rugby values of integrity, passion, solidarity, discipline, and respect on and off the pitch
- Secure adequate resources -- financial, logistical, advisory -- on a sustainable basis
- Ensure opportunities to develop leadership and life skills through service to the club and community

### T1: PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

To be successful on the pitch, the teams must have sufficient quantity of players able to perform at a high standard. In addition to standard training sessions, there are ample opportunities to pursue meaningful programmatic development for new and experienced players.

- Basic Level --
  - Establish “onboarding” program for new recruits -- emphasize World Rugby core values, build skills and basic knowledge of rugby laws, positions, units, attack/defense structures and game plans
  - Film analysis of matches
- Intermediate Level --
  - Offseason training -- secure regular indoor (“bubble”) practices until weather permits outdoor sessions. Ideally, Carleton would build a bubble on campus
- Advanced Level --
  - Clinics and Coursework -- conduct clinics on campus and alongside local clubs with expert coaches and provide support for players to enroll in USA Rugby courses for referees, coaching. Provide resources for team, individual players and leadership to attend rugby clinics hosted by men’s and women’s clubs.
  - Domestic Rugby Externships -- support opportunities for Carleton players to join other clubs during school breaks.
- Ideal --
  - International Rugby Externships -- support players to spend at least one of their summer breaks playing in the southern hemisphere or high-performance academy
  - Performance data analysis -- equip players with GPS sensors to monitor load, speed, distance, etc. and adjust S&C for optimal performance and minimize injury
  - Practice film analysis

### T2: COACHING

Though the expectation is that rugby at Carleton will remain a student-led enterprise as long as it retains its status as a club sport, the role of the coach is integral in ensuring the success of the team and the club. For the teams and clubs to grow and improve requires consistency and accessibility of coaches -- on campus beyond training/matches, with a presence stretching over several years.

- Attract and retain qualified coaches with ability to teach and lead Carleton student-athletes, serve as advocates, and exemplify the core values of rugby
- Basic Level -- one part-time Level 200 coach per team (status quo)
- Intermediate Level -- two part-time coaches (forwards and backs), including at least one Level 200 per team (Middlebury)
- Advanced Level -- one full-time coach and one part-time coach (forwards and backs), including at least one Level 300 with a Director of Rugby (who also serves as one of the two head coaches) overseeing men’s and women’s programs (Stanford)
- Ideal -- two full-time coaches per team, at least one Level 300 and at least one S&C and dedicated Director of Rugby with sponsored professional development in off season (Dartmouth)

### **T3: COMPETITION**

The best way to improve as a team and as individual players is through regular and rigorous competition. Acknowledging demographic and environmental constraints, Carleton rugby must travel to ensure the optimal number of matches against the most appropriate opposition.

- Basic Level
  - Local -- Carleton should play all MIAC and other small schools in MN
- Intermediate Level
  - Participate in regional tournaments offering suitable competition
  - Arrange mini-tournaments or home/away fixtures with regional liberal arts schools
- Advanced Level
  - Participate in national tournaments offering suitable competition
  - Arrange mini-tournaments or home/away fixtures with national liberal arts schools
  - Domestic Tours -- ideally during spring break
- Ideal
  - International Tours -- European tours ideally in week following Thanksgiving or Southern tours (NZ/Australia/Argentina/South Africa) during spring break

### **T4: PLAYER SUPPORT**

Rugby is a demanding, full contact sport that requires proper technique and strength and conditioning -- both to enhance performance on the field and to minimize the risk of injury. Carleton rugby players should receive the most current, empirical-based best practices for injury prevention and recovery, nutrition, stretching and warm ups.

- Concussion Evaluation policies and procedures -- must be transparent, consistent, and efficient to overcome strong perception that current policies reflect anti-rugby bias
- Basic level
  - Medical Support -- at every practice and home match to provide timely treatment and first-hand initiation of concussion protocols
- Intermediate level
  - Trainers/Physios -- available before/after every practice/match for taping, stretching, treatment, etc.
  - Strength and Conditioning -- subcontracted for first 1-2 weeks of every season to design player-specific programs and to ensure new and returning players adhere to best practices for injury prevention
- Advanced level -- Full-time dedicated trainer + subcontractor S&C
- Ideal -- Full-time dedicated Trainer and S&C

### **T5: PLAYING EQUIPMENT**

Compared with most team sports, rugby requires very little in terms of equipment. Nonetheless, competitive programs make use of a number of tools to teach proper technique for enhanced performance and reduced risk of injury.

- Basic level -- balls, game jerseys, equipment storage
- Intermediate level -- tackle bags, practice jerseys, dedicated/locked equipment storage
- Advanced level -- scrum machine, equipment storage shed at field
- Ideal -- lights, permanent clubhouse with changing rooms, showers, classrooms, kitchen and equipment storage

### C1: CULTURE

It is imperative that Carleton rugby embodies the core values of rugby and of the college, setting an example of excellence that will attract players and win enduring support from the administration, alumni, and others in the broader rugby community. There is a saying that the match on Saturday is won in training on Thursday. But everything required for a successful training on Thursday encompasses a wide array of factors.

- Accountability -- establish values (at a minimum core World Rugby values of Integrity, Passion, Solidarity, Discipline, Respect), principles, and expectations of club in constitution with transparent policies and procedures mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement
- Leadership -- as a student-led organization, the club provides ample opportunity for developing leadership skills in a number of roles -- each with specific skill sets and responsibilities to be set out in writing, with transparent policies and mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement. Roles should include opportunities for underclassmen to develop leadership skills. Standard rugby club roles include President, Captains, Treasurer, Recruitment, Communications/Web Master, Match Secretary, Equipment managers.
- Recruitment
  - Attract Prospective Carleton students with rugby backgrounds
    - Help admissions target rugby schools with high academic standards
    - Marketing rugby at Carleton -- website, Facebook, Twitter,
    - Rugby players serve as admissions reps to host prospectives
    - Host clinics and tournaments for MN/Midwest high schools
    - Host development camp for MN/Midwest high school players
    - Recruit/support exchange students with rugby backgrounds
  - Attract Current Carleton students -- on campus recruiting of freshmen, new students, varsity athletes in off-season
- Traditions --
  - Initiation ceremony -- to indicate value of membership
  - Caps/Pins -- recognition of significant milestones (10/25/50 games played)
  - Banquets -- end of fall and spring seasons with awards
  - Awards -- traditional awards of most valuable forward/back, best new player, best club member/inspirational. Ideally, awards could be endowed to enable symbolic cash prize
  - Alumni games -- held annually in spring with social to follow
  - Test matches -- road trips to regionally held test matches (Chicago), team social viewing of World Cup, Six Nations, etc.
  - The Maize and Blue -- recognition of graduating seniors who have made significant contributions on and off the pitch, nominations by club members, with final selection by current leadership with input from coaches, alumni (Middlebury)
  - Home matches -- should provide visiting opposition with water, ice, and post-game bbq/meal
- Service -- as good ambassadors of the game, Carleton rugby should dedicate time for consistently serving needs of the local community. (e.g. elderly homes or food banks, youth coaching clinics, youth flag/touch tournaments, playground monitors)

## **C2: SUPPORT -- EXTERNAL**

As evident in the June 2018 reunion, the shared experience of playing rugby at Carleton engenders strong bonds between alumni spanning decades and a deep sense of responsibility and joy in giving back to maximize the experience for current students. Support for the clubs provides a valuable opportunity to strengthen the alumni community and its links to the college.

- Establish a voluntary “Friends of Carleton Rugby” organization with structures (including Board) for integrating alumni, parents, and current student leadership in setting and funding strategic priorities and implementing logistical requirements.
- Establish a “Carleton Rugby Parents Association” to support team during matches and tours, host visiting players and teams, and support Carleton players on domestic rugby externships during school breaks.
- Establish active alumni “Carleton Rugby Community” for efficient support of off-campus and post-graduate needs of rugby players (career opportunities, mentoring, housing, graduate school info, how to join rugby club info, etc.).

## **C3: BUDGET**

The budget process for the clubs should be transparent, professional, consistent, and proactive, with estimated annual budgets for the coming year prepared in spring. All donations coming through external sources are to be divided equally between men’s and women’s clubs.

- Players’ Dues -- players contributing directly to fiscal health of the club sends critical signal to other stakeholders
- PEAR Funding -- clubs must take full advantage of funding sources available to club sports on a consistent annual basis
- Friends of Carleton Rugby -- initiate and build an endowment that can ensure coverage of annual operating costs not covered by players’ dues and PEAR funding. Possible avenues for supporting the endowment include:
  - With You Club -- secure annual commitments for annual rugby-specific gifts with recognition in semi-annual Friends of Carleton Rugby newsletter (Maize = <\$101, Blue = \$101-250, Silver = \$251-500, Gold = \$501-1000, Platinum = >\$1000)
  - Sponsor a Player -- a nominal per season sponsorship level to be donated by external sources (alumni, parents)
  - Fundraising campaigns to support special events like overseas tours or externships
- Fundraising services -- teams provide labor locally with “wages” going to clubs. (e.g. Carleton baseball ran clock at high school hockey games to fund spring break trips)
- Merchandise -- online sales of jerseys, hats, scarves, mugs, artwork

#### **C4: RUGBY HUB**

Carleton's extraordinary facilities and easy access provide opportunities to host a range of rugby-related events that will integrate Carleton within the broader rugby community and significantly build the "brand" of Carleton rugby

- USA Rugby courses and clinics -- for coaches, referees, strength and conditioning, periodically throughout the year
- High school/College clinics and development camps
- High school/College tournaments -- Hosting tournaments would serve to raise the profile of Carleton in rugby community and generate revenue to support the clubs. Scheduling would be contingent on availability of fields and other on-campus resources

#### **C5: SUPPORT – INTERNAL**

While student-led organizations provide valuable opportunities to develop skills of leadership, negotiation, budgeting, and logistics, they can suffer from lack of institutional memory, strategic thinking, and development of lasting relationships with critical stakeholders in the college administration and the broader rugby community.

- Club advisors -- Establish faculty members to serve as formal Faculty Advisors, acting as a resource for club leadership seeking counsel, guidance, institutional knowledge and as an advocate for rugby within the broader Carleton community to address any issues of budget, behavior, academics, etc.
- PEAR -- club leadership should engage fully with PEAR committees and structures for club sports, with full compliance with policies, leadership training, and procedures, including budget setting and financial support. PEAR should consistently perceive rugby as embodying the full spirit of athletics at Carleton
- Admissions
  - Club members serve as admissions representatives, host prospective students.
  - Rugby alumni serve as Alumni Admissions Representatives, especially in areas with strong high school rugby (DC, CA, NY/CT, CO/UT, PA)
  - Admissions department cognizant of "feeder schools" with strong rugby backgrounds (e.g. Gonzaga in Washington, DC)
  - Carleton Rugby online portal include "Recruits" section, link to Admissions.
  - Admissions department survey of prospective student interests includes specific "boxes" for club sports like ultimate and rugby
- Advancement -- Board of "Friends of Carleton Rugby" should be strategic and operational partner of Advancement, to plan and execute campaigns and special events like alumni matches, tours, and rugby reunions
- Medical -- must provide timely, consistent, unbiased diagnostics and treatment, including concussion protocol, with transparent policies and procedures allowing for external oversight and tracking



## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS, OPERATIONAL PLAN

The items listed below are not necessarily ordered according to priority within the timeframes. Moreover, since the recommendations have not been fully vetted by key stakeholders, it is expected the timeline and priorities will change and evolve over time to reflect institutional interests.

### **Near Term (Jan-June 2019)**

1. Distribute plan to rugby alumni for targeted CAI campaign
2. Establish a Friends of Carleton Rugby structure (Board, constitution, bylaws, election procedures) to plan establishment of endowment
3. Secure faculty advisors for men's and women's clubs
4. Launch professional-quality Carleton rugby portal with links to men's and women's programs (Stanford) and password-access to alumni network support (jobs, mentorship, etc)
5. Confirm receipt of all available PEAR funding
6. Secure funding for 2019 winter indoor/bubble workouts
7. Schedule and secure funding for 2019 spring tournaments
8. Build rugby budget for 2019-2020 including coaching stipends, player support, playing equipment, tournament fees/travel
9. Schedule Fall 2019 competition schedule
10. Establish admissions representatives with necessary training

### **Medium Term (June 2019-June 2020)**

1. Plan and secure funding for Ireland Tour for December 2020 [Estimated ~\$20-30k per club]
2. Secure funding for Coach/Director stipends for positions to begin 2020-2021 school year
3. Host at least one fixture vs. out-of-state liberal arts teams (Occidental, Claremont, Pomona, Colorado College, NESCAC)
4. Plan and launch Community Service initiatives
5. Host coaching/referee/S&C clinic in Jan-Feb 2020

### **Long Term (June 2020-beyond)**

1. Schedule at least one away fixture vs. out-of-state liberal arts teams (Occidental, Claremont, Pomona, Colorado College, NESCAC)
2. Host High School development camp
3. Host High School Tournament in 2021-2022 school year
4. Host coaching/referee/S&C clinics throughout year
5. Secure funding to sponsor first southern hemisphere rugby externships for June-July 2021

## FINANCIAL RESOURCE NEEDS

Line items are estimates and can be selected a-la-carte, instead of as a fixed part of a whole level.

### BASIC LEVEL

• Player Development:	\$500
• Coaching:	\$5,000
• Trainers/Physio:	\$2,000
• Medical:	\$2,000
• Strength + Conditioning:	\$500
• Equipment:	\$2,000
• Competition:	<u>\$6,000</u>

**ESTIMATED TOTAL PER YEAR (Men's + Women's): \$18,000**

### INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

• Player Development:	\$5,000
• Coaching:	\$20,000
• Trainers/Physio:	\$5,000
• Medical:	\$2,000
• Strength + Conditioning:	\$5,000
• Equipment:	\$5,000
• Competition:	<u>\$20,000</u>

**ESTIMATED TOTAL PER YEAR (Men's + Women's): \$62,000**

### ADVANCED LEVEL

• Player Development:	\$10,000
• Coaching:	\$80,000
• Trainers/Physio:	\$25,000
• Medical:	\$5,000
• Strength + Conditioning:	\$10,000
• Equipment:	\$20,000
• Competition:	<u>\$40,000</u>

**ESTIMATED TOTAL PER YEAR (Men's + Women's): \$190,000**

### IDEAL LEVEL

• Player Development:	\$20,000
• Coaching:	\$200,000
• Trainers/Physio:	\$50,000
• Medical:	\$5,000
• Strength + Conditioning:	\$25,000
• Equipment:	\$100,000
• Competition:	<u>\$100,000</u>

**ESTIMATED TOTAL PER YEAR (Men's + Women's): \$500,000**

### **Ashley "Shaw" Adams, '14**

Ashley did not know what "rugby" was until, after 18 years of playing high level soccer, she decided to try it out during her junior year at Carleton and hasn't stopped playing. After graduating Cum Laude with a Cinema and Media Studies major, she moved to Madison, WI with her husband (Andrew Adams, '13) and joined the Wisconsin Women's Rugby Football Club, where she went on to play in the 2015 and 2016 USA Rugby National Championships in Denver (winning the title in 2015). She has played for multiple successful select side teams, captained the WWRFC for the last few years, and still struggles to make a good grubber kick. Ashley is an artist, stylist, and stop motion animator for multiple companies (most notably American Girl).

### **Christine Dennis, '93**

Christine's rugby career spanned four years at Carleton, including a berth in the women's collegiate national championship; 6 years for the Twin Cities Amazons, each year qualifying among the top 8 teams in the nation; Midwest select side; and coaching for 2 years at Edina High School. Professionally, she spent 18 years as an advertising agency executive, and is currently the Vice President of Marketing and Audience Development at the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. She also serves as Board Chair of Public Art St. Paul.

### **Matt Fisher, '92**

Matt played four years at Carleton, and another seven after graduation for Washington RFC, St. Paul Pigs and Metropolis RFC. Matt was selected to the '94 Midwest select team and played in the '96 7's national tournament. Currently part of the alumni coaching team helping the Carleton men's side. Matt is an IT management and Cybersecurity consultant and serves as Treasurer on the Board for Women's Advocates.

### **Jamarr Johnson, '98**

Jamarr joined the Carleton rugby his freshman year, when the club was ranked #2 in the state of MN. He played all four years, served as president and team captain of the club, and played for the MN select side. After graduating, he went on to play for the St. Paul Pigs, Seattle RFC, and currently with the LA Royals, a touch rugby club that has won four out of the last six national titles. He is currently a Senior Auditor with the California State University system.

### **Mike Mullen, '90**

In his freshman year, Mike became hooked on rugby at the Faribault Boxspring tournament. At Carleton, he served as match secretary, president, and captain and played with the MN select side. After graduation, he joined the Worcester MA RFC, playing from 90-03 with a short break in 93-4 to play flyhalf for Peebles RFC in Scotland. At Worcester, he served the club as match secretary, treasurer, and player-coach. A 7's specialist, he captained Worcester in the '97 national championships, toured four times with the Atlantis club and was an alternate for the USA 7's team. He currently serves as Director of IT purchased services at Dentaquest.

### **Pete Sickle, '89**

Introduced to rugby in high school in L.A., injuries limited Pete to one season at Carleton. Pete later joined the St. Paul Pigs, went to New Zealand to play for Auckland University and Wakatipu in Queenstown, returned to the States and played for Santa Monica, Potomac Athletic Club (DC), Jackson Hole (WY), and captained the MBA World Cup champion Harvard Business School side and Israeli club champion Ra'anana. He coached Ra'anana and Middlebury College and serves as head coach of Harvard Business School and assistant coach at Dartmouth College. Pete works as Senior Director of Content and Business Development at DEEP.it.

### **Sara Tompkins Turpin, '01**

Sara tried rugby for the first time her first year at Carleton on the recommendation of her now husband, Mike Turpin, '99, who played all four years. Having played football on a boy's team until 8th grade, it seemed like a great fit. After playing four years at Carleton, Sara played another eight at fullback for the Twin Cities Amazons, where she competed in the national tournament every year, earned all tournament honors one year, and played on the Midwest Women's Select Side for 6 years, until her retirement. Sara and Mike remain very connected to the Carleton Rugby community, and look forward to the future of the club.