

Brown Men's Rugby

Weekly Match Report

Saturday April 8th, 2023

Brown 7's

Brown University

Providence, RI

In the 5th and final home 7s event of the spring season, Brown returned to Marvel field to host Vassar College (Poughkeepsie, NY) in a short schedule friendly series. The Vassar men's team traveled with the Vassar varsity women's rugby team who matched up with the Brown women in the Brown football stadium following the men's matches on Marvel. It was a clear sunny day with mild wind and temps in the upper-40's and the players were thrilled to be back on the natural surface at Marvel.

A-side Roster: Junior Gafa '23, Alex Halpin G'24, Garrett Mann '26, Aaron Mertzell '25, Craig Michalowski '26, Josh Ofili '23, Gene Oh '24

B-side Roster: Tobias Achleitner '26, Mohammed-Quazim Ahmed '24, Kenyon Graham '25, James Horkan '25, Shaan Lalvani '23, Vinh Legros '26, Hugo Mullen '26, Emilio Peveri '26, Carlos Ponce de Leon Mendez '26, Ari Rangarajan '25, Tim Reiad '25, Panos Syrgkanis '23

Brown fielded an A-side and a B-side for the event to matchup against their Vassar counterparts. The rosters consisted of a few players that have had time with the club's top 7s team, experienced players, and some very inexperienced players including a few players getting their first taste of rugby ever; Josh Ofili, Carlos Ponce de Leon Mendez, and Ari Rangarajan – special recognition is warranted for these new players who were enthusiastic and performed bravely. The speedy Ofili even scored his first try on his first day of rugby on a long breakaway around the edge. Ponce de Leon was a standout for his strong carries and being very difficult to tackle. While Rangarajan was a pest on defense making many tackles and being disruptive in the contact area.

The B-side was up first and set the tone for the day by capitalizing off Vassar's sloppy play on their opening possession to force a turnover and score first in under 45 seconds of play. The B's were buzzing and their energy on defense translated to turnover after turnover and Vassar barely had possession throughout the match. In the end the score was 29-0 with tries from Legros (2), Achleitner (2), and Graham as well as 2 conversions from Horkan.

The A-side brought more of the same defensive intensity but with a roster that hasn't played together much, the attacking continuity took some time to develop. After a halftime breather and chat the Bears expressed the attacking principles of play more effectively and came away with their own shutout, 27-0 over the Vassar A's. Senior Junior Gafa was a force all around the pitch scoring 2 tries and adding a conversion. Mann, Halpin, and Ofili all contributed tries of their own as well.

The B-side rematch would see the Bears post the highest scoring output and largest point differential on the day, routing their opponents 36-5, despite giving up the first try of the match early on. In this one, the pivotal combination of Achleitner (2 tries) and Horkan (1 try, 2 conversions) accounted for over half

the Bears scoring and both terrorized their counterparts defensively. Tries came also from Graham and Ahmed, who scored for the first time.

The last match of the day, a rematch of the team's A-sides and a 29-0 Brown victory, was largely the Aaron Mertzels show. The sophomore went what the players call "sicko mode" scoring 3 tries in about 8 minutes of play. Mertzels replacement, freshmen Achleitner, was not to be outshined though and in what might have been the highlight of the day, he immediately took a restart kick on his own, sideline to sideline, all the way back through a stupefied Vassar defense for his team leading 5th try of the day. Halpin and Michalowski brought their own goodies to the party and also kept the scoreboard ticking.

In total, over 4 matches, Brown scored 121 points and conceded only 5.

Next week, Brown will be competing in the Saratoga Collegiate Cup 7s tournament in Saratoga, NY.