

# Brown Men's Rugby

## Weekly Match Report

Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>  
Frostbite 7's  
Hempfield High School  
Landisville, PA

Brown ventured down to the Keystone state to participate in an early spring 7's event dubbed as the "Frostbite 7's". Originally, the plan was to put our top side into the Premier Division and our second competitive side into the Open Division. Due to a lopsided number of Premier teams, Brown agreed to have both teams compete in the Premier Division against American International College (AIC), Kutztown, Lehigh and Nazareth.

Day 1

**Brown's Top Competitive** side kicked off the day with a game against Kutztown. Kutztown, who competes under Rugby East, has been a powerful team in 15's team for years however they also produce some great 7's. At last year's National Championships (the CRC's), Kutztown knocked off Dartmouth to take home the crown. Despite being an early season game, it was obvious that the Golden Bears were working hard to continue on last year's success. Kutztown scored and converted first to go up 7-0 early on. Brown responded with a converted try of their own. Dylan Lewis '24 knifed through the defense and Raphael Lansonneur '25 slotted the conversion to level the score. Soon after, the lone senior on the team (Junior Gafa '23) would receive a yellow card for a high tackle. With only six guys to defend the width of 70 meters, Kutztown's patience paid off as they were able to touch down a second try as the half expired. Their conversion attempt was no good however they were now five points better than Brown.

In the second half, Kutztown once again scored to provide a bit of a cushion but Antonio Esteves worked hard to win those five points back with a try of his own. Still down 5 points, Brown didn't let up. They controlled possession and worked their way up the field. As time was waning, captain Oliver Corbett found a seam and burst through to level the score. An unlucky kick didn't find its way through the uprights as the game ended 17-17. Brown had escaped a poor start and salvaged a respectable tie against the National Champions.

Next up was **Brown's Second Competitive** group. Unlike the previous game for their teammates, this group faced an untested opponent from Bethlehem PA... the Lehigh University Mountain Hawks. Lehigh, who competes in division 2 of the Mid-Atlantic Rugby Conference was hungry to run with the big boys of division 1. Unfortunately, as one would guess when a Hawk meets a Bear in the wild, the Bear wins. Tries by Alex Halpin 'MS (2), Aaron Mertz '25 (2), Garrett Mann '26, and Keigo Hachisuka '24, and conversions by Jimmy Phelan '26 (2) and Alex Halpin 'MS, all contributed to the 38-point battering.

As if the previous loss of natural selection wasn't enough, the Mountain Hawks flew away only to fly straight into another Bear... the alpha Bear of **Brown's Top Competitive** side. Junior Gafa '23 scored the first two tries... both converted by Dylan Lewis '24. Omar Al-Jendari '24 notched his first try of the day then Antonio Esteves '25 ended the first half foray (Lewis converting the last try). After a short break, Cameron McAlpine '26 scored (Lansonneur '25 converted), Santiago Cortabarría '15 scored (converted by Lansonneur '25) and finally Henrique Gabriel '26 dotted one down. The final of this match was 45-0.

The fourth match of the day for Brown (second for the **Second Competitive** group) was against the D1 varsity program Nazareth College. The Golden Flyers scored within the first 2 minutes of the match. Several scoreless minutes would pass before the Bears got on the board, stealing a scrum near expiration and cutting the deficit to 2 points. The second half was all Bears as the defensive pressure ramped up to stifle Naz as the B's added 2 more tries

and 1 conversion to secure a 10-pt victory. Tries were scored by Alex Halpin'24 and Keigo Hachisuka'24. Jimmy Phelan'26 hit the lone conversion to give the team it's second win with a score of 17-7.

**Brown's Second Competitive** group was up again next, this time facing Kutztown. Glimpses of solid play gave way to moments of letdown allowing the Golden Bears to three quick tries. The second half for Brown proved to be much better as Brown scored 12 points through tries from Toby Alchleitner '26 and Oliver Bieling '25. Keigo added a conversion but unfortunately, this group fell short losing Kutztown 35-12

The final match of Day 1 for the Bears saw **Brown's Top Competitive** side face off against their Liberty Conference Final opponent AIC. With a slightly different mix of players, AIC failed to put much of anything together and were subsequently unable to match Brown's organization and skill. First-half tries by Cameron McAlpine '26, Antonio Esteves '25, Raphael Lansonneur '25 and Ollie Corbett '26 (all four converted by Lansonneur '25) saw Brown take a 28-0 lead into the half. The second half didn't go much better for the Yellow Jackets as Lansonneur '25 scored his second followed by Junior Gafa '23 with two of his own. Lansonneur was 100% on his conversion rate to notch another win for the good guys. Final score... 42-0

This concluded Day 1. Seeding would be finalized in the morning of Day 2 after each team was able to play their 4<sup>th</sup> match of the tournament. It was looking like both sides would have a shot at one of the top 4 spots with strong performances by Brown in all their games.

Day 2

**Brown's Second Competitive** and **Brown's Top Competitive** both kicked off at the same time vs AIC and Nazareth respectively.

**Brown's Second Competitive** put in a dominant performance against a battered AIC. Toby Achleitner '26 and Kenyon Graham '25 each put over tries (Kenon converting his own as well). Dylan Maloney '25, sporting a new shiner from the previous day's games, scored a couple of his own. However, it was Jimmy Phelan who stole the show with two tries of his own, three conversions and one penalty kick for a solo 19 points. When the Final whistle blew, Brown had scored 41 points and conceded none.

On the adjacent field, **Brown's Top Competitive** took on fellow Liberty Conference opponent Nazareth College. No flying was to be had by this group from Rochester. First half scoring by JT Dyer '25, Santiago Cortabarría '25 and Cameron McAlpine (2 of 3 converted by Lansonneur '25) gave Brown the 19-0 Halftime lead. Three more second half tries by Santiago once again, Junior Gafa '23 and Raphael Lansonneur '25 (2 more of 3 converted by Lansonneur) put Brown 38 points the better of their opponent.

With pool play concluded, seeding would now determine the top four. The top seed would face off against the #4 ranked team and #2 would play #3. There was a slight chance that Brown would face Brown in this next round but, as the chips fell, the seeding went as follows:

- #1 **Brown's Top Competitive** group
- #2 Kutztown
- #3 **Brown's Second Competitive** group
- #4 Nazareth

Kutztown, now a few games into the tournament, were just too much for Brown's second group as the **Second Competitive** group fell to the Golden Bears 38-0. Despite the loss, huge credit to this group for stepping up into the Premier Division. Had these guys played in the Open Division, there's no doubt that they would have been in the final vs fellow New Englanders Babson College (who won their division on Saturday).

**Brown's Top Competitive** team was set to play a rematch with Nazareth. As both teams were warming up next to each other, the Nazareth coach requested that Nazareth forfeit the match. She had been approached by the AIC coach who suggested that they play each other instead. Brown was prepared to go through with the game unfortunately Nazareth would not take the field. This was disappointing for the team but they quickly changed focus on the next challenge... Kutztown.

The stage was now set for the rematch that kicked off Brown's campaign on this weekend. The Brown Bears would square off against the Golden Bears who were certainly not pleased with the tie they produced on Day 1. The Brown players knew that for the next 14 minutes, they had to be on their game. From the opening whistle, Brown went to work. Kutztown had a different type of team than Brown. They possessed a solid combination of both size and speed. Their strength, look for opportunities and strike with no warning. Brown, on the other hand, had demonstrated that their defense was one of their biggest assets. Additionally, they could move the ball. The ability to pass, 1 through 7 forces teams to have to defend everyone and not try and tie up just one skilled opponent.

Brown controlled possession from the very start. At one point, it looked as if they were going to score but a penalty turned over possession to Kutztown. Slowly the Golden Bears worked their way from deep in their own half up just over the halfway line. Then, a mistake by Kutztown was the opportunity Brown had been waiting for. Possession was again in the hands of the Brown Bears as they moved the ball wide, eventually allowing Oliver Corbett '25 to work his way into the try zone. Lansonneur converted to put Brown on the board and 7 points up. The ensuing kickoff was deemed to not have gone 10 meters (questionable call here) which allowed Kutztown a free kick at midfield. Slightly confused by the referee's call, and not focused on Kutztown, they took the free kick at the 50 and immediately took the space. Nothing special and no passes... just one player taking advantage of the situation. The result was 7 points to KU and the ending to half one. The second half was as dramatic as the first with 5 solid minutes of back and forth play. Eventually, sophomore JT Dyer was given a wide pass with a glimmer of room on the outside. The defense, realizing they had to cover, raced toward the corner. Like a plane approaching the end of the runway, there was no room to go but up. And up is what JT did, diving through the air to touch the ball down in the in-goal area. The referee, who had to come from about 30 meters away looked around as if he wasn't exactly sure what had just happened. He looked up the sideline to try and lock eyes on the touch judge only to realize that he was standing where a touch judge should... in line with the play. A quick confirmation led to a whistle and hand signal that the try had been awarded. The Kutztown fans were not happy with the call. Regardless, Brown was now in the lead.

The last two minutes were tense and physical. Both teams were working hard to either maintain possession or get it from the opposition. Two or so reset scrums, and a few tense minutes, finally saw the referee signal for full time for the half and the end of the game.

The B's weekend ended in a rematch with reigning champs Kutztown who were efficient on defense and dangerous in attack. The B's struggled to maintain possession and win territory on either side of the ball, while the Kutztown ball carriers asserted their will with each possession. The 38-0 match final was a difficult ending to an otherwise impressive and positive weekend for the Brown B-side who finished 3<sup>rd</sup> out of the 6 teams in the division. **Brown's Top Competitive** side had won it.

This certainly sets the stage three weekends from now as both Brown and Kutztown will meet up in Bermuda for the next competitive fixture for Brown's top side.

#### **Brown's Top Competitive Group**

1. Joe Al-Hasso '25
2. Omar Al-Jendari '24
3. Oliver Corbett '24
4. Santiago Cortabarría '25
5. JT Dyer '24
6. Antonio Esteves '24
7. Junior Gafa '23
8. Henrique Gabriel '26
9. Raphael Lansonneur '25
10. Dylan Lewis '24
11. Cameron McAlpine '26
12. Kaspar Pitblado '26

Coach Dave Laflamme

#### **Brown's Second Competitive Group**

1. Toby Achleitner '26
2. Ollie Bieling '25
3. Antonio Cortabarría '25
4. Jack Elliott '25
5. Kenyon Graham '25
6. Keigo Hachisuka '24
7. Alex Halpin GS
8. Dylan Maloney '25
9. Garrett Mann '26
10. Aaron Mertzell '25
11. Jimmy Phelan '26
12. Tony Zhao '26

Coach Ryan Grant



Also on Sunday, Brown had a home event for the development players. Bentley, Stonehill and Wheaton made the trip down from Massachusetts to provide opposition to the development group including several player brand new to the sport. While this group did not end up as well as the other two traveling sides, it was a opportunity to get outside and have a run.

Brown's first game was against Stonehill. Stonehill, with a more experienced side, put 29 unanswered points on the home team.

Next up Wheaton. This was a more closely contested match up with Paul Muser '24 scoring the only points in the Bear's 7-5 loss.

In Brown's third game, the home side squared off against another more experienced Bentley team. Muser again was the lone try scorer however those points would not be enough to overcome the 31 points scored by the visitors

Bentley then went on to beat Stonehill 29-5 and Brown notched their first win beating Wheaton 19-17.

Thanks to Development Coach Declan Boland and Volunteer Coach Luc Nahrgang for running this event back home.

1. Batisse Manhardt '26
2. Emmanuel Ojeda '25
3. Gene Oh '24
4. Hugo Mullen '26
5. Tim Reiad '25
6. Mark Appleman '23
7. Julian Hooten '24
8. Paul Muser '24
9. Vinh Legros '26
10. Richard Dong '23
11. Milos O'Donahue '26