

american football hits stirling

As some of you may know, the Stirling 69ers American Football Club has reformed and played its first ever match at the Gannochy against the East Kilbride Pirates, one of the Scottish American Football Association's newest teams.

Contrary to ill-informed rumours, the game was evenly matched and just as enjoyable (for the players anyway) as any game shown on t.v.

The 69ers scored first with a well executed running play which resulted in one of our better running backs, James, scoring a touch down after an unprecedented run of some 50 yards. Mark Hargreaves also deserves a mention for unrivalled courage on the line—in the face of an extremely large, ugly and unfriendly opponent.

After the initial score, the Pirates seemed to have it all their own way, gaining 24 points before the 69ers scored again. The final result was 24-12 to the Pirates.

In my opinion this result was due to the inexperience of the 69ers and the fact that the Pirates all resembled 7-ft primates. The fact that the Pirates were wearing some padding and were partially kitted, whereas we had no protection at all, did not seem to make any difference. Injuries were in fact only inflicted on the opposition and were few and far between.

We hope to play at least two other university teams this semester, and hope that we receive the same support from the university that we had for the last match.

Both the Sports Union and the Gannochy staff have been most helpful to the Club, and we'd like to extend our thanks to Kate Tait, from the DPR, and Greg Small, President of the Sports Union.

Look out for notices concerning future games and come along. Our game is easily one of the best spectator sports on campus.

If you'd like to play, come along on Wednesdays or Sundays at 1.00.

CHRIS ROTHWELL.

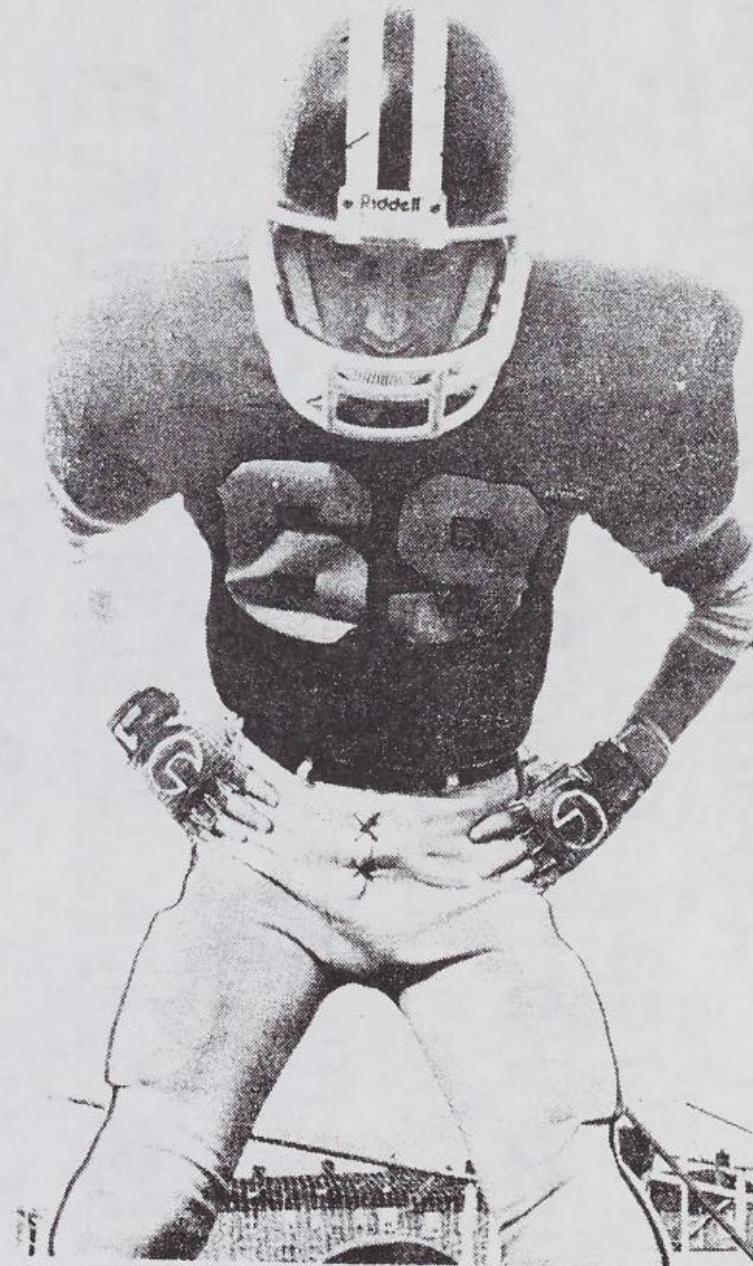
Stirling University 69ers are therefore a going concern at last. But what of the real thing, the multi-million dollar game on the other side of the Atlantic? From our American correspondent

Gridiron football is not for just anybody. It is for the big, the bad and the ugly; for anyone willing to wear tight-fitting trousers, oversized shoulder pads and a face-guarded combat helmet; for those men who especially enjoy getting slapped on the bum by other men. But, all jokes aside, the American footballer is a very fit, fast and strong individual. He must attend weeks of painful training sessions and advance through the numerous player cuts before he even receives a chance to perform in a pre-season game

However, not everyone in the professional football team is a muscle-bound superman. The exception is the kicker, who may be as fat or as skinny, as tall or as short, as fast or as slow as he pleases. He does not even have to speak the language. All that he has to be able to do is to kick the ball -- long and straight. This is obvious in the fact that the NFL record for the longest field goal is held by a man who had no arms and only half of his right-foot. He was, unbelievably, right-footed.

An American football team actually embodies two smaller sub-teams; the

SPORT FOR ALL.



The above are just basic constituent and terminology making up a football team. There has been no mention of the various formations and the countless number of plays which may be used during a game. Any description of such things would be a) far too complicated, and b) nearly impossible. Basically what a team wants to do is to get the football into the 'end-zone' or kick it through the two posts. In this way, points, games, leagues and lucrative advertising contracts are won and lost.

I was going to examine the similarities between American football and British rugby, but I was unable to find any. At this point our football appears to be more similar to your football. About the only thing that American football and rugby have in common is the field or pitch on which the two sports are played (though ours are more colourful).

After the first experience of a live rugby match, an American must admit two things. Firstly, that rugby is a simpler game; there are not as many positions, plays or formations as in Grid Football, and secondly that the average rugby player is more talented in athletic terms than his American opposite. This is especially true, as, due to the nature of the game, each member of a rugby team seems to do much the same job as the next, having to be equally adept at running, kicking and passing.

Rugby is definitely a rougher sport, the players unfortunately do not get helmets, pads or multi-million dollar performance based contracts. They simply get a pair of shorts, a tee-shirt, a cold wind around the knees and a team of assorted, psychopathic opponents. America wishes them well.

MATT ARPIN.