



CAROLINA



RUGBY



University of South Carolina
Men's Rugby Football Club (Est. 1967)
www.uscrugby.org

Head Coach Geoff Mason
Club President Anthony Hughes
sorugby@mailbox.sc.edu

University of South Carolina surges to #22 in ARN Top 25

Article by Erik Geib
20 October 2009

Columbia, SC – American Rugby News (ARN), the nation's leading collegiate rugby news agency, has ranked the University of South Carolina 22nd overall in its most recent [Down Under Endeavours Top 25](#) (October 20th, 2009). The ranking is USC's first appearance in the poll since February, when a loss to Arkansas State knocked the Gamecocks out of the #25 spot they'd held since November 2008.

Founded in 1967, the Men's Rugby Club is the oldest sports club on the campus of the University of South Carolina. The club is an elite member of USA Rugby South's premier Division I competition – an honor bestowed upon only 8 other USA Rugby South clubs (#9 Arkansas State, #23 Florida, Tennessee, North Carolina, Clemson, Georgia, and 2010 newcomers Florida State and South Florida) – and is the only club in the South to field 3 fully competitive sides in league play. With an open membership of over 75 members, the club is the [third largest rugby club in the United States](#) as of September 27th, 2009.

South Carolina Men's Rugby was a national powerhouse from its inception until the mid-1990s, and the club is proud of its return to national prominence. In 1984, the club was selected #1 in a national pre-season poll (by a now dormant ranking publication), a reflection of the club's regular past dominance over both senior men's and men's collegiate rugby sides. The team's greatness is reflected well in its alumni, as former USC ruggers have gone on to serve on the USA Rugby Board of Directors (Jeff Smolka), played on the USA Rugby Men's Senior National Team (Phillip Rockefeller, '89), established National Division III powerhouse Furman Men's Rugby (John Roberts, '90) and men's senior powerhouse Atlanta Old White (Rick LeBel), founded the South Carolina High School Rugby League (Jeff Smolka), as well as many other accomplishments, including serving as the popular broadcasting voice of USC sporting events (Brad Muller, '92).

The club's current coach, Geoff Mason, is the only former professional coaching in collegiate South competition, and has been a large part of the club's renaissance since 2003. A success on the field, Mason played in the New South Wales Rugby League competition for Sydney University, Newtown and Penrith in the 1970's as a prop and second row and represented Newcastle against New Zealand in 1978. From there, he emigrated to the US in 1980 and was Player/Coach at USC from 1981-1985. He also played for Olde Grey 1986-1990 where he represented Combined South and East in the National All-Star Championships. Afterwards, he coached USC from 1992-1994 where the club reached the South Final Four. Since Coach Mason's return to USC in the spring of 2004, USC has risen to new heights and returned to national prominence. Taking over a previously under-achieving Division II team, Coach Mason quickly helped the team reach the USA Rugby South Division II playoffs in 2005, 2006, and 2007. Building on this success, coupled with increased performance on the organization level, the club moved to the South's prestigious Division I competition - an honor bestowed upon only 9 collegiate clubs in USA Rugby South, where the club's A and B-side teams both placed 4th of 7 in their first year of Division I play (spring 2008). In the spring of 2009, the club's A-side finished 5th of 7, but its B-side rose to 3rd, and USC became the first club in the South to place a C-side into full league play (Division III - Palmetto League).

This week's ranking is a reflection of Carolina's 4-0 record in full regulation play. The club also put together a motley side of mostly B & C-side players at the [2009 Palmetto Collegiate Cup](#), winning that competition despite the tournament coinciding with USC's Fall Break.

Next weekend Men's Rugby at the University of South Carolina travels to Birmingham, AL for the fourth consecutive [SEC Championship Rugby Tournament](#), a tournament that was recently revived in 2006. Last year the club's A-side finished 4th, losing to Division 1 rival Florida in the Plate Final. In the Second Division, USC B finished 1-1, but was denied the opportunity to defend its 2007 Plate Championship, as the tournament eliminated the Second Division 3rd-place game.

1 (1) California (4th) [9]
2 (2) Utah (1st) [2]
3 (3) BYU (6th) [2]
4 (4) Navy (1st) [4]
5 (5) Dartmouth* (1st) [2]
6 (6) LSU* (1st) [4]
7 (7) Delaware* (1st) [4]
8 (8) Colorado* (1st) [4]
9 (9) Arkansas State* (1st) [4]
10 (10) Army* (1st) [4]
11 (11) Penn State (1st) [4]
12 (12) San Diego State (4th) [4]
13 (13) St Mary's (1st) [2]
14 (14) Arizona (1st) [4]
15 (15) Cal Poly (4th) [4]
16 (16) Northern (1st) [4]
17 (17) Central Washington (1st) [2]
18 (18) Bowling Green (1st) [2]
19 (19) Texas A&M (1st) [4]
20 (20) USC (1st) [2]
21 (21) Colorado State* (1st) [4]
22 (22) South Carolina (1st) [4]
23 (23) Florida (1st) [4]
24 (24) Syracuse (1st) [2]
25 (25) Harvard (1st) [2]

American Rugby News
National Collegiate Top 25 - 10/20/09

19	07
48	00
60	12

Carolina rolled past NC State and Lander



2009 Palmetto Collegiate Cup Champions
University of South Carolina B/C

**3RD LARGEST
-RUGBY CLUB-**

As of September 27th, 2009, USC is the 3rd largest rugby club in the U.S.A.

moved the Tigers up to #6 in the [American Rugby News Top 25](#). The Gamecocks will unfortunately be without backline player Richard Pyke (knee) and flanker Andrew McCauley (face) for the remainder of the season, as both players were injured in action against N.C. State.

USC finishes its Fall season at home on Saturday, November 7th at 1:00 pm against Appalachian State University. The B-side match will follow at 2:30 pm. Both matches will take place at USC's [STWFC Rugby Field](#), behind the Strom Thurmond Wellness and Fitness Center.

In the Spring of 2010, USC will begin play in the inaugural Carolinas Rugby League, a result of the South's reorganization of its collegiate competition. The Gamecocks are joined in the CRL by Division 1 foes Clemson University and the University of North Carolina, as well as D2 sides Appalachian State (#6 - [Rugbymag.com](#)), East Carolina (#22 - [Rugbymag.com](#)), North Carolina State, and Wake Forest. The Carolinas League represents a new opportunity for growth and cooperation in North and South Carolina, as the league will name its own All-Star Team, MVP, and crown its own champion. It will also send its top D1 and top two D2 sides into South playoff action, with USC aiming for the South Final Four on March 27th and 28th.

The Men's Rugby Club at the University of South Carolina is an open membership club that takes all interested athletes, regardless of experience level. Many USC ruggers have little to no experience prior to competing at the collegiate level but adapt quickly, as evidenced by club newcomer Calvin Storey's selection to the 2008 SEC Tournament All-Star Team (Nov. 8th, 2008) – Storey only began play with the club in the spring of 2008. The club regularly fields 3 full sides, and is a proud member of [USA Rugby](#), [USA Rugby South](#), and the [Palmetto Rugby Union](#). Additionally, the club is honored to compete in the [SEC Championship Rugby Tournament](#). Several club members are also annually selected to the Palmetto Rugby Union Collegiate All-Star team and compete in the USA Rugby South Local Area Union All-Star Tournament each November, where they are selected to tryout for the USA Rugby South Collegiate All-Star Team.

The club is always welcoming of new players, and interested athletes should visit the team's website at www.uscrugby.org for further contact information.

American Rugby News Down Under Endeavours Top 25:

- 1 (1) California (idle) [5]
- 2 (3) Utah (6-0) [5]
- 3 (4) BYU (idle) [5]
- 4 (5) Navy (6-0) [4]
- 5 (6) Dartmouth* (10-1) [2]
- 6 (7) LSU* (2-0) [4]
- 7 (9) Delaware* (5-0) [4]
- 8 (16) Colorado* (6-2) [4]
- 9 (2) Arkansas State* (2-1) [4]
- 10 (8) Army* (0-0-1) [2]
- 11 (11) Penn State (4-1) [4]
- 12 (12) San Diego State (idle) [4]
- 13 (13) St Mary's (idle) [5]
- 14 (14) Arizona (idle) [4]
- 15 (15) Cal Poly (idle) [4]
- 16 (10) Kutztown (5-2) [4]
- 17 (20) Central Washington (1-0) [3]
- 18 (21) Bowling Green (8-0) [2]
- 19 (18) Texas A&M (idle) [4]
- 20 (19) UC Davis (idle) [5]
- 21 (17) Colorado State* (4-4) [4]
- 22 (unranked) South Carolina (4-0) [3]
- 23 (22) Florida (3-0) [3]
- 24 (23) Syracuse (4-1) [2]
- 25 (24) Harvard (4-1) [2]

*denotes exhibition games

source: [American Rugby News](#)

For more information regarding Men's Rugby at the University of South Carolina, please contact [James Farrar](#) at 803-972-0401.

To see this article online, please visit http://www.uscrugby.org/news/2009/102009_arn.htm



USC was in good form vs. its Olde Boys



Mason Cup 7s was a smashing success



USC pounded D2 nationally-ranked ECU



The 'Cocks impressed in their fall debut