

Dear Michigan Rugby Parents:

Welcome to Fall 2023 and University of Michigan Men's Rugby! I'm writing as a parent of two rugby players (Otto, junior in LS&A and George, LS&A class of 2023) to welcome new families to this community. I highly encourage all families to support the team by being active members of the community, attending games in person or watching games from the YouTube stream, and if possible, making a financial contribution to offset the costs of transportation and other items. The team is highly appreciative of support in whatever form you can provide. My wife Robin and I have watched both of our sons find their niche at Michigan playing rugby. Without previous rugby experience or even a basic understanding of the sport, they have embraced the game and have benefited from being part of a team with a commitment to a shared goal. George, now an alumnus, continues his rugby connection through his work with USA Rugby and will be attending the team's alumni weekend in two weeks. Otto returned to the team this fall after spending his summer playing for a local men's team in the DC area. Rugby truly has become a lifestyle in the best of ways.

If you are not already aware, the team plays in Division I as part of the Big Ten—the highest level of play for intercollegiate rugby. Notre Dame joined Big Ten Rugby last fall as the eighth team, joining Michigan, Michigan State, Purdue, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio State, and Wisconsin. Michigan's success and future is built upon a long Michigan rugby tradition (est. 1959) and also upon the players' continued hard work on and off the field. The team plays "15s" in the fall with one game on most Saturdays, and plays "7s" in the spring with several short games in each full-day tournament. I hope every parent takes the opportunity to see at least one game in person, meet the team, and speak to Coach Mentzer along with other coaches, students, parents, and fans who actively support the program. Robin and I will be in attendance at rugby parents' weekend on October 7th.

As always, the team's schedule is posted on mrugby.com. The team does a great job keeping this site current. It is a wealth of information about all aspects of the team.

I encourage everyone to actively engage with their son's commitment and participation with the Michigan Rugby program. While hardly a nascent program, our continued support (financial and otherwise) remains a critical component of their success. Please reach out to your son or Coach Mentzer to understand how you may be able to make the biggest impact. I look forward to meeting everyone in the coming months. Go Blue!

Sincerely,
Rob Janke
LSA, Class of 1986
Public Health, Class of 1989
Medicine, Class of 1993