

Cape Cod Football Rugby Club is ready to tackle a new season with its Falmouth Road Race, Inc. grant award to support the inclusion of their Women's Team

By Olivia dePunte

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Women are breaking into the “men’s club” of rugby, one of the only contact sports in which men and women compete equally across the board. Dan Schell, the treasurer of Cape Cod Rugby Football Club, explained, “They say that rugby is the most equitable sport because it’s the same ball, the same size field, the same rules – there’s really no difference between men’s and women’s rugby.”

The club welcomed its first female athlete a year ago. Since then, the numbers have only continued to grow. The club boasts around 50 men on their roster, and the women’s team is now up to 12 people – almost enough for a full side. Up until then, women have competed with men at matches and the practices are still largely co-ed.

The team is also expanding to a youth club, with around 10 players so far. “Until we reach a critical mass of people where we can self-sustain ourselves with our membership dues, we need some additional financial support,” said Schell. “The big component of the grant we applied for is making sure we have enough equipment to support the youth club and the women’s team.”

Everyone will now be well-equipped at their practices every Wednesday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Heritage Park and matches each weekend in the Fall – in their neck of the woods or as far as Burlington, Vermont. During the summer, they play “sevens” tournaments which have less people on the field for an even faster-paced game.

In a more typical match, “You end up with 30 people on the field running at each other and we’ve got a good crew of spectators that come out,” said Schell. “Rugby matches are traditionally followed by what’s called a ‘drink-up’ so we usually go to Dino’s Sports Bar down in Mashpee and the other team comes out as well and we have some food, drinks and celebrate the match.”

For Schell, the club is all about building community: “We’ve built a lot of momentum. We’ve got a lot of good, young players and a lot of knowledgeable, older players so we’re excited going into the year and to help out with the Road Race as well.”

The club has had a strong partnership with the Falmouth Road Race dating back almost to its start in 2010. Their athletes come out to the race to do security for the medical tent, putting their

defense skills to good use. They also volunteer with Falmouth in the Fall, and anywhere else they can lend a helping hand.

“The Road Race is always like the kick-off event for us because it starts the weekend before our season begins so it’s a great time to come together, volunteer, and then jump right into the competitive season for us.”

They are ready to jump, tackle, and score their way into the new season with the \$6,500 grant award to update their equipment and support the new women’s team. “We were really counting on this – we were ecstatic and have always appreciated our partnership with the Road Race and are excited to have that continue with the grant.

All of that funding is hopefully going to help us continue to grow, spread the word about the sport, build out that community we have, and be even more inclusive of the women’s and youth teams.”