

## BROWN MEN'S RUGBY WELL REPRESENTED AT 2025 NCR ALL STAR TOURNAMENT

Over the weekend of January 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, Brown Men's Rugby head coach David Laflamme once again led the northeast regional all star teams, the New England Independents, into the National Collegiate Rugby All Stars tournament. The Independents are the academy team for our local professional rugby team, Major League Rugby's back-to-back league champions, the New England Free Jacks. The NCR All Stars tournament brings in regional select teams from all over the country to compete for supremacy. The Independents Red side has won 2 out of the last 3 tournaments, in 2022 and 2023, and were runners-up in 2024.

Boasting an abundance of rugby talent in the region, the Independents field 3 teams in the tournament; Red, White, and Blue. This year Brown sent 7 players to compete with the Red and White teams.

### **Independents White:**

Toby Achleitner '26 (wing)

Brayden Wallace '28 (prop)

The Independents White team battled to a 1-2 record in pool play, defeating the Mid-Atlantic Sharks by one score in match 3 to qualify for the tournament quarterfinal. In the tournament playoff, the White team drew their brethren on Independents Reds and were eliminated, losing 38-7.

### **Independents Red:**

Erik Estienne '28 (hooker) scored 1 try in match 1

Isaac Frost '25 (flyhalf) scored 1 conversion in QF

Asa Rosenmeier '27 (prop) selected for NCR All-Tournament Team

St John Smith '28 (flanker)

Tony Zhao '26 (lock)

The Independents Red team had a strong start, going 2-1 in pool play, losing only to the defending champion Midwest Barbarians in round 3, 20-10. In the tournament semifinal the Reds pulled off a late comeback to defeat the Great Lakes Thunderbirds 18-14 and advance to the tournament final where they would again face the reigning champion Midwest Barbarians. Avenging their sole loss in pool play, the Reds pulled off the upset and beat the Barbarians 17-7 to claim their 3<sup>rd</sup> NCR All Star title in the last 4 years.

Coach Laflamme remarked on All Star weekend, *"It was an excellent experience for the boys to be able to participate in an event like this and be exposed to a strong level of competition. This was my 3<sup>rd</sup> year being involved in this event. NCR does an excellent job in hosting the event. Special thanks to the New England Free Jacks organization for being so supportive of allowing local players to challenge themselves in a more competitive environment. With how well both Brown and Dartmouth have been doing in recent years, it's great that many of our players are offered an opportunity to participate. I look forward to who might be able to go next year and represent Brown and the Ivies."*