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Belmont Abbey College Joins Rugby East for Fall 2024

The Rugby East Conference is proud to announce the addition of the [Belmont Abbey College Crusaders](#) to our competition, effective August 1, 2024.

"We are very excited to welcome Belmont Abbey to the Rugby East", said Scott Zavrel, Rugby East Conference Commissioner. "The Crusaders are an ascending program, who already exist within our geographic footprint, and are making great strides towards becoming a powerhouse in the region. We are looking forward to our new partnership and to seeing the Crusaders achieve great things on and off the fields of play."

Belmont Abbey added rugby as a full varsity program in 2019, and they have continued to steadily develop over the past four years. The Crusaders captured both the 2022 and 2023 Southern Collegiate Rugby Conference Championships and advanced into National Collegiate Rugby's (NCR) Division 1 XVs playoffs. The Crusaders also experienced success playing 7's; including a 4th place finish in the Men's Premier bracket at 2023 NCR Collegiate Rugby 7's Championship.

Asked about joining the Rugby East Conference, Head Coach of the Crusaders, **Nick Whitrow**, said, *"This is exciting for our program on multiple fronts. The prospect of facing top-tier teams regularly is a thrilling challenge that motivates our students to push their boundaries and strive for excellence and virtue. Additionally, the increased visibility and recognition that comes with being part of Rugby East will help showcase the talent and dedication of our students, fostering a sense of pride and camaraderie within our program."*

Coach Whitrow continued to say, *"The Rugby East is a power conference that every week provides top level competition. This exposure to strong competition will undoubtedly contribute to the growth and development of our students, enhancing their skills and elevating the overall performance of our program."*

With the addition of Belmont Abbey, the Rugby East now has 12 programs; each affiliated with their respective institutions' Athletics departments. The Crusaders will compete within the South Division along with Life University, University of Mary Washington, Mount St. Mary's University, Queens University Charlotte, and Southern Virginia University. The North Division will continue to consist of Army West Point, Kutztown University, U.S. Naval Academy, Notre Dame College (OH), Penn State University, and St. Bonaventure University.

About Belmont Abbey College

Founded in 1876, Belmont Abbey College is a private, Catholic baccalaureate and liberal arts institution that educates students in the liberal arts and sciences so that in all things, God may be glorified. The college welcomes a diverse body of students and provides them with an education that will enable them to lead lives of integrity, to succeed professionally, to become responsible citizens, and to be a blessing to themselves and to others. The college is conveniently located just 10 miles west of Charlotte, N.C., and is currently home to more than 1500 students. For more information, visit <https://belmontabbeycollege.edu/>.

About Rugby East

The Rugby East Conference has long enjoyed the reputation as one of the strongest and most competitive men's intercollegiate rugby conferences in the United States. The Rugby East is currently comprised of member institutions located in 7 states, including: Army West Point, Kutztown University, Life University, University of Mary Washington, Mount St. Mary's University, U.S. Naval Academy, Notre Dame College (OH), Penn State University, Queens University Charlotte, Southern Virginia University and St. Bonaventure University.

For more information, visit www.RugbyEast.org and follow **@RugbyEast** on Facebook (facebook.com/RugbyEast) and Instagram (instagram.com/RugbyEast).