Loyalist Rugby Club-Black History Month

In recognition of Black History Month, the club would like to recognize all the great people who have played rugby for the club—most notably the Dymond family who for 5 decades have played an integral role within the club on and off the field and all the other people and families who have played and given back to the club and the game we love.

When the Loyalist formed circa 1961 out of former Fredericton High School and UNB players, they would play teams out of CFB Gagetown. It would not be till 10 years later when the first black person put on the Loyalist jersey and stepped onto the pitch to represent the club: Lloyd Payne. He played for some years, and in the following decades, many others would wear the jersey with pride and represent the club with distinction.

The storied Dymond family first started playing rugby in the late 60s with Terry Dymond at Fredericton HS and Robert (Bobby) Dymond started with the Loyalists early 70s. They would be the first generation of Dymonds in the club. Both experienced their share of racism on and off the rugby pitch as they were the first black people to play for the Loyalists and helped pave the way through the way that they played the game and the type of characters they were off the pitch as well: hard nosed, tough, no nonsense and genuine. To paraphrase Carrie Dymond’s description, “on the pitch, for those 80 minutes as everyone was battling it out, there was no race, no colour of skin. A white man would put his head in between a black man’s hips to form a scrum, a white man would help a black man up and vice versa after a stoppage in play and after the final whistle, the boys would go to the Riverview arms as a brotherhood, have a few too many pints and talk about their war stories on the day, who did what to whom… At this moment everyone was equal. People began to realize everyone had to have each other backs to win a game of rugby…” especially old school rugby. And everyone wanted Terry and Bobby to have their backs because they were two of the toughest and most loyal players to ever don the Loyalist jersey. “The Dymond Boys from Springhill” gained the respect, love and admiration of anyone they played against or with, and this would set the atmosphere of the club for 5 decades and beyond.

Terry passed away after a heart attack in 1982 at a Loyalist practice and was buried in his Loyalist jersey at St. Peter’s Anglican Church (beside Hartt Island on the Old TransCanada), which was the first church where blacks and whites were buried in the same cemetery. During the funeral police had to help with traffic on the TransCanada for the funeral because there wasn’t enough room. This is an example of the love and admiration people held for Terry and the type of person he was. The MVP Forward trophy is named after him in his honour. Just around this unfortunate time, a group of men of the Loyalist team put 1000 dollars each to buy the land where the clubhouse stands today. Bobby Dymond was one of those members. Along with money, he put a lot of sweat equity into the club by doing all the framing and other work to provide a home for rugby to foster and grow in the capital region. You can still see Bobby on game day, stopping by, grabbing an Alpine and enjoying a game of rugby and the fruits of his and others’ labour.

During the second generation, the clubhouse was introduced to Calvin Nash in 1979 and his brother Dale in 1980 who first played rugby for Minto High School before moving to Fredericton to attend school. Calvin would become an integral part of the club in the 80s, 90s, and early 2000s winning "Loyalest Loyalist", which is the most prestigious award at the club for any club member. He has won it the most out of anyone as well and has gone down in Loyalist history as one of the greats on and off the field. His brother Dale also played and would help keep rugby going in Minto for many years. Gavin Williams also put the jersey and served with great distinction on the pitch for many years around this time along with Jim Carty who played a few years in the early 80s.

Before the clubhouse was built, the Loyalist Rugby Club formed a women’s side in 1982 which also played out of the racetrack at the exhibition grounds. At this time, the club would see the first senior black women put on the Loyalist jersey: Rose Soutour and Tanya Hogan, respectively. They would play for many years following their first year for the Loyalists and help coach around the Fredericton area.

The 3rd generation Loyalists saw a familiar last name in that of the Dymonds who grew up along side other familiar names such as the MacAfees, the Paceys, and Reeves; Kimmie, Carrie, and Robbie played in the first ever mini-rugby program in 1979 and have all contributed immensely on and off the pitch for the club as 2nd generation Dymonds; Robbie played for 20 plus years; Kimmie has played and coached at the club for 40 years this year and was the first black woman to be president of a rugby club in Canada. Carrie has been a main stay as bar manger for 2 decades. Robbie said that during his experience playing rugby for the club and in New Brunswick, he didn’t experience any racism on rugby pitch and neither did his sister Kimmie; she says, “not that I know of… or at least to my face.” During this time, other people would come to play at the club with Marty Williams coming from Nova Scotia for a stint in the late 80s and early 90s.

4th generation would see the Walcott family becoming a great part of the club with Ian and Marissa having stellar careers starting in the mid 90s till today and now are helping with their kids in the flag and mini-rugby programs, namely Able, Liam and Ryan, respectively to the 5thth generation and 2nd generation Walcotts at the club. Third generation Dymond kids are also participating in flag rugby on Saturday mornings, fostering a new generation of Dymond ruggers. The club would also see Ayoka Bubar, Rachell Barrett, Samantha “Booker” Plante, Elizabeth Ochaya and Jen Day Stonehouse all represent the club and jersey with distinction on and off the pitch for the women’s side for many years.

Currently, the 5th and current generation of Loyalists have seen many new and young faces come out and play for the club: Reno Laurent, Jay Thomas, Geoffrey Mtamakaya, Ifedayo Adjebite, Faith Adjebite, Yazmin Imough, Dibaba Ekangyela, Justin McCarthy, and Jonathan Thevelma along with Lev Dickeson for the U14 group. All have made a great impact on and/or off the pitch. Many have represented New Brunswick at the age grade Spruce levels, all have played at the club at one time or another. Ifeydayo coaches at FHS, and Jonothan Thevelma helped start the brand-new Ecole De Sainte-Anne HS team, which sees more students playing rugby in the Capital region.

On behalf of the club and recognition of Black History month, we thank all our past (Loyalist Legends) and current members who have helped shaped and run the club on and off the pitch in so many ways, by putting on the jersey with pride and honour, giving back to the club, and helping to grow the sport in the Capital region, New Brunswick and beyond.