Furman Magazine

Volume 60 Issue 1 *Spring* 2017

Article 19

4-1-2017

A Season to Remember

Furman University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine

Recommended Citation

 $\label{lem:continuous} \begin{tabular}{ll} University, Furman (2017) "A Season to Remember," Furman Magazine: Vol. 60: Iss. 1, Article 19. Available at: http://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol60/iss1/19. Available at: http://scholarexchange.furman-magazine/vol60/iss1/19. Available at: http://scholarexchange.f$

This Article is made available online by Journals, part of the Furman University Scholar Exchange (FUSE). It has been accepted for inclusion in Furman Magazine by an authorized FUSE administrator. For terms of use, please refer to the FUSE Institutional Repository Guidelines. For more information, please contact scholarexchange@furman.edu.



Notes from the Field



PATRICK MUSAU '17, an eight-man from Kenya, serves as the Furman captain.

THE BOYS IN PURPLE CLOSED THE SEASON WITH A 13-1 RECORD, THE BEST RUN SINCE 2004-05. The Paladins finished runner-up in 2007 and 2008. In 2010, Furman moved up to Division 2 but was a minnow in a bass pond. Of the 124 D2 programs, only Middlebury College has a smaller enrollment than Furman.

Since that time, the Paladins have elbowed their way to the top. The team finished ranked sixth in 2014 and narrowly missed the playoffs in 2015. On the road to the 2016 championship game, the Paladins captured the Southern Rugby Conference Title and defeated Sacred Heart University 68-31 and North Carolina State 41-19 to win USA Rugby's South Regional.

Those victories set up a dream scenario for the Paladins. Furman, which hosted the Division 2 Final Four 2013-15, was selected this past August to host the event once more. The Paladins would have home field advantage.

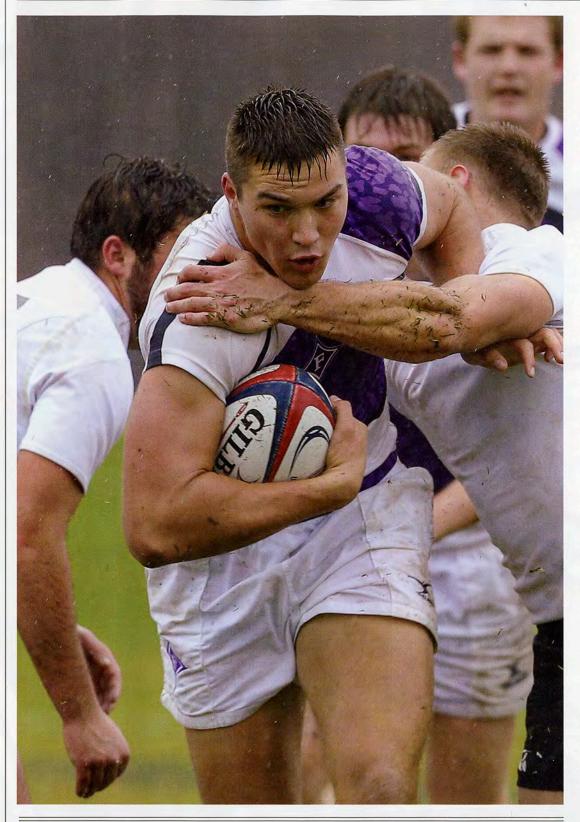
In the semifinals, Furman faced a daunting task. The Paladins had to take on three-time defending champion Minnesota–Duluth. The last time the Penguins were on the losing end of a match was spring 2013. When junior Matty Newman slotted a 50-meter drop kick in the opening two minutes of play to put the Dins up 3-0, the wildly partisan crowd was euphoric.

Duluth fought back and constructed a 12-3 lead late in the first half before Furman's Adam Miller, Jeffrey Rein and Newman each scored a try to construct a 29-12 lead. But Duluth would not go away. The Penguins nibbled away at the Paladin lead. With 12 minutes remaining, Furman clung to a 32-29 lead.

In the final moments, Duluth pressed. But the Paladins' defense held.

The next day, Furman played threeyear runner-up University of Wiscon-

Notes from the Field



THOMAS TRANKLE, a sophomore from Pretoria, South Africa, surges ahead against Whitewater.

sin-Whitewater. The wet, cold conditions did not suit Furman's fast-paced offense. During the first half, both teams slugged their way to a 7-3 score with Whitewater holding a slim edge.

Near the game's midway mark, the Warhawks found the try zone twice, but Furman continued to fight and sliced Whitewater's lead to 22-13 when Furman prop Jeff Tonge bullied in a try from the one-meter line with 15 minutes remaining. With the Furman fans screaming, the Paladins pressed and nearly scored twice. But the physicality of a close win the day before was taking its toll when a Whitewater flanker nabbed a bobbled ball and raced to the try zone with four minutes remaining to seal the victory 29-13.

The boys in purple closed the season with a 13-1 record, the best run since 2004-05, when the program notched 21 consecutive wins. The team is coached by John Roberts, who cofounded the team with Marc Roberts '99 (no relation). Now coaching his 19th year, Roberts has amassed a record of 178-61-2.

It was not the only fall accomplishment for the program. In October, the team announced that it had formed a Furman Rugby Alumni Board. The eight-member board, headed by Trent Emeneker '02 and Chris Helps '01, will work to deepen connections with rugby alumni, mentor current players, help recruit student athletes and raise funds for the program.