

# The history of Rugby Fives...

The word 'Fives' was first used to describe English handball in the 17th Century.

Some say that the name derives from the five fingers of the hand...

...others find it significant that the scores were kept in tallies of five points...

...and there is an unlikely theory that early Fives involved teams of five players.



Early Fives was played against the walls around School House

In the middle of the 19th Century, the informal handball and bat games played by schoolboys began to be officially recognised in the construction of specialised courts at a number of Public Schools.



The Butterfield courts at Rugby School

There were no standard dimensions of a Fives court, but those at two of the most famous establishments - Rugby School with four walls and no hazards, and Eton College with three walls, a buttress and a step - came to be regarded as archetypes, and were widely imitated by other schools. The very simplicity of the Rugby court, and the fact that it lent itself to both singles and doubles, made it the more popular choice.

When the Rugby Fives Association was founded in the 1920s, it established court dimensions and rules and, together with the Jesters Club, started national competitions for adults and schoolboys, which led to a boom in the 1930s. After the war, and into the 60s, the game again saw a strong revival, with a huge increase in the number of school and club matches, regional championships and tournaments.

Today there are approximately 35 schools and 30 clubs actively playing Rugby Fives, with almost all courts at schools or universities, and each season, the RFA organises over 40 nation-wide competitions.

Traditionally a male pursuit, Rugby Fives is now played by both boys and girls at schools such as Oundle, Marlborough, Blundell's and Alleyn's as well as at Durham University.



**Rugby School lost its last Fives Courts in 1989. We do hope that in 2009, 20 years on, we will see the return of Rugby Fives to the school which gave this wonderful game its name.**

The unbeaten Fives team of 1968.

### We are very grateful to our early Fives supporters

Peter Berners-Price	St 56 - 61	Ian Jackson	B 76 - 80
Martin Berthoud	Sh 44 - 49	Adrian Ridgwick	W 64 - 69
Michael Cleaver	St 62 - 68	David Skinner	K 55 - 60
Andrew Cowie	M 63 - 68	Paddy Skinner	K 55 - 60
Hugh Evans	T 76 - 81	James Stott	M 67- 71
John Evans	Hm K 73 - 81	Hew Strachan	K 63 - 67
Sue Evans	C 79 - 81	Tony Tiffin	Hm S 82 - 92
Fiona Hughes-D'Aeth	D 80 - 82	David Urquhart	K 65 - 70
Jonathan Hughes-D'Aeth	Hm M 90 - 95	Dick Warner	W 64 - 69
John Inglis	Hm C 69 - 83	Alastair Mackenzie	RFA
Rustom Irani	T 75 - 80	David Barnes	RFA

**We already have 50 donations mainly in response to the appeal of Dick Warner's Crick run.**

**For more information regarding donations and tax efficient giving please contact:**

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Rugby School Charity Registration No: 528752



Rugby School

Rugby School



**Help us  
bring  
Rugby Fives  
back  
to Rugby**

## A great game...

*'Rugby introduced me to Fives, a game which continued to give me pleasure, recreation and exercise until late middle age. That is one of its attractions - it is not just a young man's game. I have played it with those much more youthful (including my offspring of both sexes) and much more skillful than me, without the one-sidedness that can prevail in certain ball games. Its rallies are more sustained than in squash; its physical demands are greater as it is less possible simply to dominate from the centre of the court; and the masochistic impact on the hands is grossly exaggerated!'*



**Hew Strachan** (K 63-67)

*'I very much enjoyed playing Fives at Rugby, and was always proud that it had started there and carried Rugby's name. It is a wonderful game and also extremely good exercise. It has been sad that boys and girls at the School over the past 20 years have been denied a similar introduction to the game. Now, subject to the goodwill of Rugbeians and others associated with the game of Rugby Fives, there is a real chance to put that right, and I applaud it wholeheartedly.'*



**Tom King** (Sh 47-51)

*'Rugby Fives is a wonderful court game, which offers all young people, both boys and girls, the opportunity to develop skill and endurance on a simple court. I still play it fairly regularly and enjoy the exercise, the competition, and the atmosphere. It is a brilliant game for all sorts and shapes of players, especially those who may not be stars in the major school sports. Rugby Fives is named after the School which now, tragically, has no courts. Tonbridge has seven courts, and Oundle, where the cadre of able young players is burgeoning, has just rebuilt four courts - we must now make this happen for Rugby!'*



**Dick Warner** (W 64-69)

## A great opportunity...

**Rugbeians have been presented with a great opportunity to reintroduce the game of 'Rugby Fives' to the School. For those of us who enjoyed so many invigorating moments on the Fives Courts, long since part of the admittedly very impressive Design and Technology Centre, this is an opportunity we must not miss.**

The School, fully supported by the Governing Body, has agreed to set aside an area adjoining the Sports Centre which will enable us to build two courts, supported by the excellent facilities of the Centre itself.

There are many Old Rugbeians who have mourned the passing of a long-standing School tradition. Now is the time to reinstate that tradition, which will enable Rugbeians of future generations to enjoy the game as much as we did.

### Become a 'Rugby Fiver'

**All we need now is money - £200,000 to be precise! Please will you help us to raise this sum and become a 'Rugby Fiver'?**

While all donations are important, we are particularly asking Rugbeians who would like to join in this venture to contribute in one of the following ways...

- By becoming a 'Patron' through a one-off donation of £55,555
- By becoming a 'Lead Sponsor' through a one-off donation of £5,555
- By becoming a 'Sponsor' through a one-off donation of £555
- By becoming a 'Player' through pledging £55 monthly for up to 6 months

Donations and pledges may benefit from Gift Aid, and in fact, with contributions that have already been promised, the sum we are actually seeking is nearer £120,000. That really is achievable, but we have to do so within the next six months, so your early response to this appeal would be very much appreciated.



## A great solution...

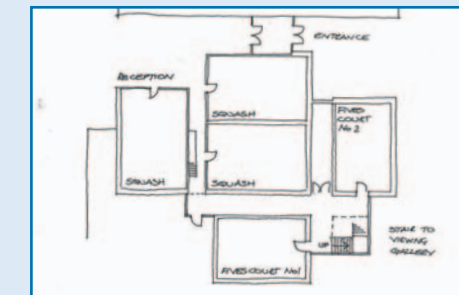
**The two new Rugby Fives courts will be built onto the front end of the School Sports Centre. There will be spectator galleries for both courts, and the glass atrium effect of the entrance stairwell will also give fine views over the Caldecott's sports area.**

The proximity to the Sports Centre means that players will have the use of changing rooms, the cafe for refreshments and safe storage of equipment right next door!

Positioning the new Fives courts alongside the existing Squash courts will create a specific 'court games' area which we hope will help to introduce both games to new boys and girls in their early years at the School.



*View from Caldecott's*



*"Since I came to the School nearly seven years ago, I have often been 'encouraged' to take steps to return the game of Rugby Fives to Rugby! I am delighted that we are now in a position to do so.*

*The School will support the build programme by providing all planning and project management services through our Estates Department.*

*We will take on the ongoing maintenance of the courts, and already have a member of staff who will promote and coach boys and girls in the art of playing, and enjoying, the game of Rugby Fives in the future.*

*Thank you for your support."*

**Patrick Derham** Head Master

