

SUBWAY

Profiles

Walker Cagle

No Helmet, No Pads, No Fear; Rugby Is In This Renegade's Blood

The sheen of sweat and the rosy tint of exertion still lingered on Texas State senior Walker Cagle's face just minutes after a Renegade rugby practice that concluded in the chilly dark.

Cagle's blond hair poked out from underneath a maroon beanie hat, and he was clad in shorts and his dad's former rugby jersey that hung loosely off his slight frame as he discussed his foray into the compact sport.

He joined an Austin area rugby team about nine years ago as a freshman. After he graduated high school, Cagle said although he knew no one at Texas State, he knew the university had a rugby team. He had attended a Texas State Renegade's game with his twin brother when they were high school seniors while visiting a friend who attended the university.

Now president of the Texas State Renegades, Cagle and the 44 other players have earned the club team state and national recognition, despite not being associated with the university's athletic department.

"We would love for that, but it's kinda hard for them to accept it and us as well," Cagle said.

Blame it on the team's rebellious spirit. The mascot for the Texas State Renegades is not a bobcat, and the team's official colors are maroon and gray.

When the Texas State Renegade Rugby was founded in 1983, Cagle said Texas State would not even have the team associate themselves with the university, hence the name.

Some of the team's alumni, colloquially known as "Old Greys," have continued to push Texas State boundaries.

Scot Courtney, Hays County lawyer and Texas State Renegade's alumnus, trademarked the "TXST" logo, said Cagle, and was in a legal battle with Texas State over its use in university athletic department events and marketing because the team's Old Grey Foundation owns the rights.

Money made from the logo's use goes into the foundation for team travel expenses and alumni events, Cagle said.

Some Old Greys remain actively involved with the team and attend the annual alumni match, the first game of the year, on Texas State's West Campus Fields.

Cagle said although next semester is his last on the team, he plans to continue to play rugby, a sport that, despite causing a few bruised ribs and a sprained wrist, is in his blood.

His dad played rugby in college and taught the sport to a high school All American team in the early 1990s, passing down advice to his children to avoid injuries while tackling – it's all about placing the facial cheek to the buttock cheek when wrapping around the other player's waist.

Cagle said his dad was also adamant that anyone, regardless of shape and size, can play rugby.

"It's usually that kind of big, burly guy; that tall, beefy guy, and stuff like that," said Cagle, who hasn't let his size get in the way of him playing fly-half, similar to a football quarterback, and scrum-half, similar to a basketball point guard, for the Texas State Renegades.

Even Cagle's twin brother played rugby at Stephen F. Austin University and their older brother played the sport in high school too.

When Cagle was in fifth grade, he remembered attending a rugby match between South Africa and the U.S. in Houston. He said he received a souvenir mini-rugby ball and used it to play football on the playground.

"My big thing is, everyone that starts playing, not everybody, but most people immediately fall in love with it just because, you know, you realize you're not made of glass, and it's fun to go out there and make it out of a game alive, hopefully, and have a beer with your friends afterward."