



# MORRIS - COAL CITY RUGBY FC, ENUGU

Rugby Nigeria concept of Operation for Enugu  
State youth rugby camp









## BACKGROUND- Principal Actors



**JAMES (JIM) BLOTTMAN**  
Program Director



**MIKE FLANAGAN**  
Coach



**Fr. Felix Ugwuozor**  
Founder, OneHopeChildren  
Foundation

# **BACKGROUND**

## **Program Director**



**JAMES (JIM) BLOTTMAN**

**Rugby Experience 1984 to Present**  
**Kansas City Blue RFC**  
**Kaneohe Marine RFC**  
**Hawaii Harlequins RFC**  
**All-Marine Rugby**  
**U.S. Military Armed Forces Select**  
**Marine Old Breed Rugby**  
**Morris RFC**  
**Bergen youth rugby volunteer coach**



# BACKGROUND

Jim has been involved with rugby since the mid-80's, stepping away from the game in 1993 to raise a family, and run his business, but coming back to the game he loves in 2014. Jim is passionate about the game both on and off the pitch. He is one of the leaders with Old Breed Rugby, which is dedicated to the remembrance of fallen Marine Corps rugby players, which Jim has been a proud leader and team member since 2014.

Professionally, Jim is an entrepreneur, and owns two IT Staffing businesses, SoHo Dragon, Inc. and Excien, Inc., which operate in the United States, and have locations internationally, employing over 250 people. Jim is also a husband, father of three beautiful girls, and two stepsons. Jim lives in New Jersey USA and is member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church. In addition, Jim holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Chaminade University of Hawaii and is a proud United States Marine veteran who supports various U.S. Military veteran's initiatives



**JAMES (JIM) BLOTTMAN**



## BACKGROUND COACH

Mike Flanagan began his rugby career at Towson University in 1978, which led him down the path to becoming a hall-of-fame coach. As a player, he also appeared in matches for the Chesapeake Rugby Club and the Baltimore Area Selects. He began his coaching tenure in 1982 for the Towson State Women's Rugby team, with other coaching stints at Loyola College and the United States Naval Academy. His accolades at Loyola College include Potomac Rugby Union Championships in 1988 and 1990.

During his 27-year career at the United States Naval Academy, he led the midshipmen to over 450 victories with a remarkable 80% winning percentage. Between 1991 to 2017, he coached Navy to 17 National Collegiate and Varsity Cup semi-final appearances and developed over 47 AllAmericans. In 1994, Navy reached the national championship title game. He also coached the team to consecutive Potomac Rugby Union Championship titles from 1991 to 2000.

Mike Flanagan's legacy goes well beyond the 450+ wins and dominance on the field. It is all about the attributes of character, hard work, teamwork, commitment, selfless service, and family that he instilled in all his players



**MIKE FLANAGAN -Coach Mike**





# BACKGROUND

MIKE FLANAGAN -Coach Mike

These qualities aren't measured with tries scored or meters gained, but are evident when you look at the number of USA Collegiate rugby alumni who went on to assume CEO of Fortune 500 Companies, Command squadrons, establish global non-profits, lead ships, assume positions within government at both state and national levels, command battalions, lead Air wings, take Marine Expeditionary Units to war, selected to Flag Officer, etc. Each year, on average, two rugby players select Navy Seals, there isn't another sports team at the Naval Academy that make that claim. The list goes on and the thrust is clear, Coach Mike Flanagan's impact to USA Rugby, today's youth, and tomorrow's leaders is substantial and is clearly worthy of national recognition," said nominator, Rob Sinram. Flanagan's coaching accolades also include serving as the head coach for the Potomac Rugby Union Collegiate Selects from 1988 to 1995, Mid-American Rugby Football Union Collegiate Selects from 1996 to 2004, AllAmerican Forwards coach from 1993 to 2000, a seat on the All-American selection panel from 2000 to 2007 and the All-Marine Rugby Head Coach from 2000 to 2001. Mike was highly involved at the administrative level, serving as a founding member of the Varsity cup and the CRC Sevens which elevated the play of collegiate rugby on a national scale. He also was responsible for spearheading the development of the Prusmack Rugby Center at the United States Naval Academy.

"His impact is exceptionally far-reaching, his commitment unparalleled, and his conviction aligns with some of the most patriotic, selfless, stewards of our nation's young history. USA Rugby's recognition of his efforts, his superhuman stature in the rugby world, and his inspirational leadership would reflect superbly on what we value as a country and what we look for in the institution — USA Rugby — that represents the sport which we all know, love, and have come to depend on as a source of strength throughout our lives. It has been said that coaches are measured by the legacy they leave, and it is unequivocally clear that Mike Flanagan has not just left a legacy, but his impact on generations of players, leaders, and the sport is clear and mighty," added Sinram.







**Fr Felix Ugwuozor**

**A Catholic Priest  
Founder of OneHopeChildren  
Foundation (OHC)**

## **BACKGROUND**

### **The OneHopeChildren Foundation**

The OHC was founded 18 years by Fr Felix with the vision to provide each child with the chance to a basic education and to nurture their hopes and their dreams through innovative programs such as rugby. The foundation has over 200 children in its scholarship program who are in various schools across the country. The age range of the school children in the program is Primary, Secondary and University levels. The Rugby program of OneHopeChildren will include teens and youth 12-18 years of age drawn largely from Catholic- Public schools in Enugu State.





## Rugby Nigeria Concept of Operation for Youth Rugby Camp

The goal is to introduce rugby to the youth of Enugu, Nigeria, through OneHopeChildren Foundation (OHCF), founded by Fr. Felix, and build a sustainable rugby program. Rugby offers teens a chance to expand their horizons, teaching life-long values and providing hope for a brighter future. It has the power to change lives, as it did mine, and I wish to share this passion with young people in Nigeria as part of my mission to give back through my Catholic faith. The camp will ignite interest in rugby and identify local leaders, particularly through Catholic schools, who will continue the sport. With just a few players, a ball, and a pitch, we can create a lasting rugby community in Enugu, just as it's done globally.



# Why Nigeria?

Jim Blottman is a parishioner at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Ridgewood, NJ, where Fr. Felix serves as a parochial vicar annually in the months of summer with his home bishop's permission. Jim and Fr Felix met each other last year and started a conversation around rugby, which eventually led to brainstorming on how rugby would help OneHopeChildren, and its overall mission of delivering a better world for African children. Fr. Felix and Jim believe that bringing rugby to teens and youth living in Enugu often called the giant and the most populous African nation, Nigeria is blessed.

Enugu, which is our target area is located in the South East of Nigeria with the population of more than 4.6 million people. The region is mainly Christian and is rich in natural resources, mining, food processing and manufacturing. The politics in the South of Nigeria is relatively stable, and because the Church is aligned with the organization, there is built-in stability which provides the infrastructure and the building blocks needed to create a rugby program from the ground up.



Introduction to Jim and Fr.  
Felix's Connection



Overview of Nigeria



Focus on Enugu, Nigeria





## Introduction to Rugby

The initial program will be a 5-8 day rugby camp designed for boys from the age of 12-18 years old where myself, coach Mike and other available coach will teach them the basics of rugby through a combination of skills, fitness, familiarization with the game, basic position play, rules for the game, rugby values and ethos. We are assuming that the none of the boys have any rugby experience, and we will start from scratch, which is not uncommon, especially coming from the U.S. where other sports are the focus of athletes. Rugby is an outlier sport in the U.S. especially with teens who play basketball, soccer, baseball, and football. To take a group of young people who do not know the game and teach them the basics is fully possibly and will be done by the end of this camp.





# Core Values and Ethos

There are many different aspects to rugby as mentioned, and the boys will learn the basics of the game at the end of the eight days. We also want them to walk away with more than just learning the game, but what the game is all about on and off the pitch. At the camp we will always put a focus on our core values, our ethos, and our mindset which will make these boys better men, better people, and successful in life, giving more than they take. All these values coincidentally tie back into Christianity's core values as well, and would make rugby a perfect game for young people to learn about themselves, others, and tying into faith regardless of religion, creed or race. All of this while enjoying the sport.

## Teamwork

Working together as a team, both on and off the field.

## Respect

Welcoming all team members and treating each other with respect.

## Enjoyment

Finding joy in the game and the environment it creates.

## Discipline

1. Playing selflessly and understanding each player's role.

## Sportsmanship

1. Taking pride in the team and relying on one another.



## Proposed Sessions and Daily Schedule

In my past, I have been through these types of camps, but I never have coached an entire camp. I don't even coach at the youth level, but I did a few years ago, and I am not too concerned about that. I have had good coaches in my past, I know the game, and I know what needs to be done to teach people the game. I have a team sports background and also served in the U.S. Marine Corps, where team is drilled into all Marines. This will be a learning experience on my behalf too, where I will be flexible to any challenges we will face such as weather, age of teens, language issues, limited resources, or any other distractions to success. The name of the game here will be adaptability by me as a coach, with any assistants I may have, and a willingness to learn by our players. I envision a camp that will be approximately four to six hours a day breaking it into two different sessions, morning and afternoon. We will learn, work hard and have some fun. Ideally, and based on weather, there will be a morning program from 8am – 11am and an afternoon run from noon to 2pm. Each day would begin with classroom exercise and videos so they can watch the game and start to understand it. It is important to get them excited through team building and verbal teaching sessions which are a critical part of the curriculum, especially for new players. Seeing the videos and watching match play will be important for them to familiarize themselves with a game they may know nothing about. If they do know the game, then it makes our job as coaches that much easier.





# Proposed Sessions and Daily Schedule

After watching videos and teaching sessions, we will break into warm-ups, stretching and basic Sessions and daily schedule fitness drills, designed for rugby. It will be important for the boys to realize that rugby is a physically demanding game, and fitness is part of it if they expect to do well on the pitch. We will do fitness every day, but I will not push them as hard as a regular club team might do. They are kids, and this is a camp. Making them miserable, which happens during intense sessions, is not what we will do in camp. That is for competitive teams. This is an introductory camp, and we want them to walk away with basics and create passion for the game. It will be a great opportunity and experience for them. One aspect of fitness that I would like them to walk away with is how to work out, and what to do. In the future, if they want to play rugby, they will use these exercises and drills. Most drills and exercises are high intensity and directly translate into performance on the pitch. The exercise aspects will also teach them how to tolerate physical pain, and mentally push themselves. Good life lessons, and good for their overall health as well. Rugby players, without a doubt, regardless of size or shape, are normally very fit and disciplined people. Looking at a big person, one may think that the person is slow or out of shape, and in rugby they quickly find out the person is quite fit and an amazing athlete. Rugby fitness is a whole other level of fitness, and we will put a good amount of time in learning that and what to do. After stretching and fitness we will always work on ball handling, proper passing, catching, and running. We will teach the players where to position themselves and how to look at the field, so they start to understand spacing right from the start. Much of this will come naturally for most players, but some of it is hard to understand, especially for new players. Much of rugby is also repetitive in nature. We will always focus on the fundamentals like how to catch a pass, position oneself against an opponent on offense or defense. We will break at 11am for hydration and a lite lunch and then, the afternoon session will run from 12:00 to 2pm.





## Proposed Sessions and Daily Schedule

We will run additional drills, position play, and work on our fitness, finishing off the day with some touch or flag play where the players can start to get a feel for what it is like in a game situation and actual play. Touch will normally run for about an hour to ninety minutes depending on the number of players. We will use touch scrimmages to bring the basics all into play. There will be no tackling in any play until we have gone through proper tackling techniques and evaluating the size of the kids with the age range, who is capable of tackling. We must be aware too, that an 17 or 18 year old male can have a huge physical advantage over a nondeveloped 12 year old. We won't let anyone get hurt if at all possible. What is great about rugby is that many times the smaller players are the most dominant players on the pitch. The truth always comes out on the pitch. Much like life is. Kicking is also a huge part of the game, and we will include that as we go. Kicking the ball at a beginner's camp will not be the primary focus, but a secondary that we will talk about, but won't do much of. That is not to say we won't kick though. Assuming that these kids are soccer enthusiasts, I think much of the kicking will come naturally. From an instructional standpoint, we will always be positive, helpful, and teach the boys to play hard, fair, and be open to suggestions. We will listen to them too, incorporating our core values into everything that we do on and off the pitch. Going after every ball will be a theme that they will always hear, but to always be under control and to think about what they are going to do. One does not have to freak out on the field and let their emotions control them. Normally, the best players are calm, cool and collected, which creates confidence and a higher level of play. From a game play technical perspective, the goal will be for the players to walk away with a fundamental understanding of the game after eight days. We will want them to be able to walk on to a rugby pitch and to be able to play or watch the game with little confusion, know how to pass, run, play defense and perform at their position wherever they are on the field.





# Camp Basics and agenda



## Skill Development

Passing, catching, running, form focused basic tackling, defense strategy, and play phases. Drills and exercises for all areas.

## Product Development

Campers will have the chance to explore specific positions and determine the best fit for them, while learning key aspects of the game such as scrummaging, rucking, mauling, and line-outs.

## Teamwork & Strategy

Teamwork and strategy. Communication, cooperation, team building activity, basic offense and defense. Again, Scrummaging, rucking, mauling, line-outs will all be incorporated into these parts of the game

## Fitness

Campers will be put through basic rugby fitness every day: stretching, running sprints, and high intensity workouts. There will be focused fitness sessions each day.

## Gameplay and Scrummaging

Campers will have the chance to explore specific positions and determine the best fit for them, while learning key aspects of the game such as scrummaging, rucking, mauling, and line-outs.

## Safety

Injuries are possible in rugby, ranging from minor abrasions to more serious injuries. While unlikely, it's crucial to have a plan in place, including access to a nearby medical facility or trained personnel like a doctor, nurse, or medic, to ensure proper care for any injuries. Our responsibility is to ensure every player receives the appropriate treatment if needed.

## Safety on the Field of play

As an introductory camp, full tackling will be limited, with running touch or flag being the preferred option. A scrumimage may be considered at the end, and a simulated match or 7's vs 15's run-through could be arranged. 7's rugby is easier to manage due to its shorter game length, fewer players, and simpler scrummaging.



# Strategic Direction

The objective of the camp is twofold:

- Teach the campers the basics of the game through a week long camp
- Establish a sustainable program at the school

Teaching the campers the basics of rugby over 5-8 days is a achievable goal. Establishing a sustainable program at OHCF is more challenging, but we will find solutions. There is currently no youth league in Enugu, but we will connect with teams and coaches, as rugby can be found worldwide. We will build relationships in Enugu and with Nigerian or African rugby organizations to support our efforts. Rugby's universal nature transcends race, country, religion, and creed, bringing people together.

Some basic research on rugby in Nigeria does find that there are players there at all levels and active play that is going on within the age groups we are working with. Through social media searches I found active leagues at all levels of age up to the national representation side that plays in the international leagues, which is quite exciting. We would need to make contact with these organizations and others prior to our trip so we can meet with them, or get help with coaching while I am there.



# Rugby Nigeria



## National Youth Games

The President of Nigeria Rugby Football Federation, NRFF Dr. Ademola Are has disclosed that Rugby can be one of the biggest sports in Nigeria.

The assertion was made at the conclusion of the rugby event at the seventh edition of the National Youth Games in Asaba, Delta State. September 2023





# Other Considerations

Children and youth love “swag”. T-shirts, hats, uniforms, warm up gear, etc. We will need to plan on having that. This will help build our “brand and identity”, to help build pride in our team and make the camp a place they talk about. People are tribal in nature and having that identity is needed to have a successful to have a rugby program that will carry on or that will endure for a long time



## Our Club Logo

Do we use one already in place or create a new one? A t-shirt for attending the camp



## Possible coach

Mike Flanagan ( Coach Mike)



## Alignment with Morris Rugby

Get a bilateral program going where Nigerian players could come over here and play.

## Concerns, Questions and Issues To Be Discussed



- Who are my coaches?
- How much will this cost?
- Where will we stay?
- How long should the camp be?
- Can Morris be a sister club?
- What is the best time of year to go?
- What are the age groups and sex of the kids
- How many kids do we have?
- What schools are we drawing the kids from?
- What can we do for fun outside of the camp?
- Team building exercises
- Fitness – Put this into every day of the training
- Proper hydration, food
- Are the kids staying overnight?
- What time will start every day
- Can I get a training program
- How do we establish a schedule upon our departure?
- Is success just introducing the kids to the game at this point?

- Do we incorporate tackling and lineouts
- How do we avoid bad habits?
- How do we get someone to coach when we leave?
- Where is the pitch, what is the condition, goal posts
- Do I need to coach back here or go to a training camp for coaches
- How do we establish the culture?
- Pictures and PR
- How do we tie in OLMC?
- Equipment we would need
- Balls, jerseys, shorts, socks, bags, mouth guards, tape, cleats/boots, kicking tees, tackling dummies, cones, and
- Bags – Just for older boys
- Where is our pitch? Goal posts
- Security situation needs to be considered especially for visiting coaches who have not been exposed to this environment. James Blottman understands how to operate in challenging situations. Other U.S. coaches may not.
- Visa requirements





## CONTACT US

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