



Mount Pearl Sports Hall of Fame Inductee

David Penney

Athlete 2008



When David Penney was a young teenager, he was first and foremost a basketball player. A Dogs Ruby Coach had spotted Rodney Snow and was of the opinion that he might make a fair rugby player. Rod approached his friend Dave and said “You look big and ugly enough to make it as a rugby player”. Before long, both boys were playing junior and senior rugby for the Green and Black team. At that time (1985), both the Dogs and the Swilers were St. John’s clubs. Evidently, Rod was right about Dave’s rugby skills; In 1986 Dave was selected to play for the NL U-19 provincial rugby team. It took a number of years but in 1989 David’s coach, Neil Browne, convinced David that his talent was stupendous and could really flourish with the guidance of a coach named Pat Pafrey. From then on, Dave’s career skyrocketed.

In 1986 and 1987, David was selected for both the basketball and rugby provincial teams. In 1986 the NL U-19 rugby team Dave played for claimed the silver medal at the national championships. Indeed, in 1989 he was selected by NL’s Canada Games Rugby team. From 1989 to 1995 Dave played with the Swiler’s Rugby Club winning the Goodyear Cup every year he played for them. He was also selected as a U-21, U-23 and Senior player for Rugby Canada’s national teams. David’s

greatness was recognized further when he received a scholarship to study at Oxford University from 1995 to 1997. During that period, he was selected by the Oxford rugby team to play against Western Samoa and the South Africa “A” team. At Oxford, Dave was undoubtedly a pack leader. He later played with the Henley team and the Blackheath team. On the Blackheath team, Dave was named Captain and was named Player of the Year. In 1995, he signed a professional contract with the English Club Northampton, but due to quota restrictions on the number of foreign players Dave was not to play for them. In 1999 however, he was selected to play for Canada’s Rugby World Cup team and from 1995 to 1999 played in numerous Rugby Canada International test matches.

Dave has also played on team “The Rock” from 1998 to 2006 in the Rugby Canada Super League, a national rugby competition. Tom Jacobs states that during the 2005 and 2006 games that “The Rock” team played against Saskatchewan, Dave and his teammate (fellow Hall of Fame member Rodney Snow) were undoubtedly the two toughest men out on the field: “The Prairie boys will not soon forget them”.

In addition, Dave played with the Swiler’s Club in the Aliant Cup League from 2004 to 2007. Today Dave continues to play as a Swiler senior player whenever he gets the chance to be on the Avalon Peninsula.

The Mount Pearl Sport Alliance recognizes Dave Penney’s outstanding athleticism with his induction to the Mount Pearl Sports Hall of Fame.
