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# Lamorinda rugby player heading to Cal



Photos provided

## By Jon Kingdon

With the success of the Lamorinda Rugby Club, it should come as no surprise that a number of their players are going to play rugby in college. Miles Beaubelle, one of those players and a recent Miramonte graduate, will be playing for the University of California after being recruited by their legendary, longtime (37 years) head rugby coach, Jack Clark.

Though only 5'10", Beaubelle played basketball at Miramonte through his sophomore year, "which I enjoyed and created a lot of friendships." It was then that Beaubelle focused all of his energy on rugby: "My Dad had a friend who had seen me play football in middle school and she thought I would be interested in playing rugby and there was a concern about concussions when playing football. I had a lot of friends on the rugby team but I didn't know what I was getting into. Still, I was intrigued by the sport when I first started playing, though it did take a while to understand the rules."

With two of his coaches at Lamorinda Rugby having played rugby at Cal, Mateaki Tiki and Gary Hein, it is no surprise that Clark was aware of Beaubelle. "He's pretty athletic with his basketball

and has good speed. I was able to watch him play on the wing and this year he played in the center, which helped him as well with the ball in his hand with passing and catching. He has really improved his instincts and has a lot of raw potential and we're really looking forward to having him join us."

It's said that success breeds confidence. Were that the case, Beaubelle and all of the other first year players on the JV team were certainly entitled to be arrogant. In his first year playing rugby, the team was undefeated and won the NorCal Championship for their grade level.

Soccer has been described as a gentleman's game played by hooligans and rugby is a hooligan's game played by gentlemen, which appealed to Beaubelle: "When we joined the varsity the next season, we brought a family mentality, playing for ourselves as a group and not for the individual. As a junior on the varsity, we finished 13th in the nation and last season we finished sixth in the nation."

Tiki, Lamorinda Rugby's head coach, believes that Beaubelle has a real upside: "Miles has a lot of room to learn the little skills of the game. Still he is very advanced in terms on knowing where to be. He has the strength and speed to play on the next level. (Assistant

Coach) Gary Hein added a lot to Miles game.

Hein, who played rugby for Cal, Oxford and the U.S. National Team, saw something special in Beaubelle from the beginning: "Miles is a great kid who comes from a great family. He was always one of the best athletes in the area. Right from the beginning, it was evident that he was going to be a good player. His first two steps are fantastic and he has the top end speed to get through gaps very quickly and outrun people down the field. He's smart and coachable and was able to pick up the nuances of the game. It all came to him pretty naturally."

Baubelle appreciated what Tiki and Hein brought to the team: "Coach Tiki brought the family mentality to us. Our whole thing was family and being one. He had a fun side and made the game more enjoyable. Gary took me under his wing and helped me throughout the whole process. He showed me how to play and what to do on the field, in practice, and in how I should carry myself. It has all made me a better player, teammate and person."

Tiki and Hein both recommended him to Clark: "Miles has the strength and speed to play at Cal," says Tiki. "He's going to learn a great deal with Coach Clark." Hein concurs with Tiki's optimism on Beaubelle's future: "As he

adds weight and strength at Cal and maintains his burst, he will be really good on the wing and difficult to tackle. Having only played three years so far, the more he plays, the better he will be. Our senior group were great leaders that all worked together very well and Miles in the middle of the discussions and always had good input."

It will be a big challenge for Beaubelle as it is for all college freshmen, says Clark: "It's a big adjustment just going to college the first year and being a student-athlete. There are a lot of good players on our team and the competition for playing time is pretty significant along with the sheer volume of work that he and everyone else has to put in. Still, there is a lot of support and a lot of people that help the freshmen get acclimated."

Cal was Beaubelle's first choice from the beginning: "I followed Cal Rugby and it was at the top of my list though I also considered UCLA and Arizona. When I met with Coach Clark, I was sold in how they work and how their program was all about the integrity behind it. They are a top ranked team so it doesn't get any better than that. For me, it's the same game but it will be faster with bigger

people and I will be 19 competing against 22-year-olds. I know Cal has high standards academically and I will have to focus on that a lot and have the right mentality to work hard."

Beaubelle left for California feeling prepared and confident from having graduated from Miramonte: "It's a great school and I got a great education there. My favorite course was Law and Society which I took for two years that was taught by Michael Rose."

There are a number of other Lamorinda rugby players that will be playing in college – Alex Cortessis (Acalanes) and Zack Barker (Miramonte) will be playing at Arizona. Jeremy Gunderson (Campolindo) will be playing at Oregon. Chris Rogers (Acalanes) was going out for the football team at Cal and may also play rugby.

Clark appreciates the talent he is able to acquire from the East Bay: "We have historically had a lot of success with players from Lamorinda, though not quite as many recently. It does help to have so many Cal guys like Monteagi and Gary coaching at the Lamorinda Rugby Club.

In forecasting Beaubelle's future, Hein puts it succinctly, "He'll be a good Golden Bear."



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