

Clemson Rugby Foundation

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Clemson University Rugby announces hiring of head coach

Clemson, SC – The Clemson University Rugby Football Club has hired Justin Hickey to be the head coach of the Club today, CURFC President Spencer Hutchinson announced. Hickey joins the CURFC from the Grand Rapids Rugby Club and formerly of the Davenport University varsity rugby program.

"We are pleased to announce Justin as the head coach of the Tigers today," Hutchinson said upon making the announcement. "He has excelled at a high level in each location he has coached and we are excited he has chosen to bring his experience and skill to Clemson. Justin is a perfect fit as we strive to build upon the positive rugby experience for students at Clemson University."

Hickey, a native of Holland, Michigan, has spent the previous rugby season with the Davenport University varsity rugby program, where the team earned an 11-3 record. He also managed the USA Rugby High School All-Americans in 2009 during their competitive season, including a successful tour of Canada, and is the current Team Manager for the USA Rugby Under-20s program.



Justin Hickey

"I am honored to be selected as the next men's rugby coach at Clemson University," said Hickey. "I am excited to lead the team here at Clemson and look forward to working with the players and the campus community to build on the past successes of the team and together elevate the program to new heights."

During his time with Davenport University, Hickey helped in the development of the fledgling college Division 3 program through the transition to varsity status and promotion to Division 1. Prior to his time with DU and USA Rugby, he was an assistant coach with the Michigan Collegiate All Stars and Grand Rapids Catholic Central High School programs. He has also been a selector and manager for the Midwest Thunderbirds Collegiate and Men's 7s programs respectively.

As a player, Hickey earned several honors and selections. He is a former Michigan College All Star team captain as well as the captain of his Central Michigan University club. He led the Michigan College All Star team to a Midwest Championship in 2003 and went on to play with teams in the USA Rugby Super League, Division 1 and England National Division 2 competitions. Hickey has also represented the Midwest in the National All Star Championships at the Collegiate, Senior, and 7s competitions.

A 2003 graduate in Business Administration from Central Michigan University, Hickey went on to obtain his Masters in Education and School Counseling from Grand Valley State University. He also served as a founding member of the West Michigan Sports Commission in 2007 and currently sits on the Board of Directors.

The Clemson Tigers look forward to their new coach having a strong start in the preparation for the inaugural Atlantic Coast Rugby League's season to begin in the spring. Coach Hickey will have a lot of work in front of him as he looks to improve the Clemson Rugby team on and off the field. However, he has the support of the current team, the campus, and the Clemson Rugby Foundation, which bolsters the actions of the team through Alumni support.