



Dave Frederick photo

BACK DOOR MAN - The objective of a scrum is to get the ball back to the scrum half (No. 9). Wilmington is about to mount an offensive charge, but was unable to score.

Mules of summer rugby go hoof to hoof at Cape Park

By Dave Frederick

The mules of the Wilmington Rugby Club went hoof to hoof with the Washington Exiles for all but a few seconds of the Sunday morning game for third place in the A Division of the Atlantic Cup Rugby Tournament.

The seven backs of Wilmington were getting downright lonely in the first half, often screaming, "Get us the ball! We can't score if you don't get us the ball!"

Late in the second half, four "clockwork orange" shirts of the Wilmington backs had two black shirted defenders of the Exiles hung out to dry in the open field of green. The scoreless, defenseless struggle was in jeopardy of generating some offensive excitement.

Amidst the sea of Halloween colors, a young Exile, appropriately named Jason, picked off a long lateral and scooted 40 yards untouched, into the 'Trylight' zone for a five-point score. The

conversion kick from straight on was also good as the Exiles held on for a 7-0 victory.

"The game was a real neck and neck struggle," said 23-year-old Jason Maloni, whose theft and goal were the difference in the game. "I just decided to go for the ball and was lucky enough to pick it off."

Bobby O'Neill of Wilmington often evaluates his involvement in a game by the number of bruises on his upper arms.

"This game was mostly a struggle with the big guys up front," O'Neill said. "We had a few good rushes on goal but they made the big play and deserve to win. I've been in the hospital three times this year to get stitches in my face. The nurses all know me by my first name."

The first place trophy went the Northern Virginia Rugby Club (NOVA), who upset PAC 14-3 in the championship game.