



Clutch Play

“HIT, TWO, THREE” ISN’T A CHANT MOST Washingtonians would recognize, but on the Old Glory DC practice field, it signals one of rugby’s most physically demanding moments: the scrum. In this photo, flanker **Cory Daniel**—pictured in the bottom left corner—hypes up his teammates seconds before impact, as eight players prepare to lock together and drive against the opposing side for possession of the ball.

“It’s a big moment in the game,” says Daniel, who, in addition to playing for DC’s Major League Rugby squad, is on the US men’s national rugby team. During a scrum, which is somewhat similar to a jump ball in basketball, players push with as much force as possible, channeling their weight through the “props,” the teammates positioned at the front of the formation, in an effort to overpower the other side and regain control of the ball.

More than 200 supporters attended this preseason open practice, held in March at George Mason Stadium, including youth rugby players and the team’s families. Daniel describes practices as “pretty tough,” especially for forwards, who begin the day with specialized scrum and other sessions before returning later for full-team practice.

To Daniel, the scrum is about being present in the moment. When the time comes, “I don’t worry about what happened before,” he says. “I kind of reset and focus on the next job.”

—TRISTAN ESPINOZA

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