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### The Rise of the Rams

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# The Fordham University Rugby Team Seeks Redemption

## Synopsis

The Fordham University Rugby Football Club (F.U.R.F.C) has been on a five-year conference losing streak. Since the fall of 2011, the Rams have slowly eroded. Despite consistent donations from alumni and an ever-growing roster, the team's steep decline resulted in the dismissal of four head coaches.

The losing was due to many snowballing factors. For instance, the coaching staffs' inability to get its footing and poor senior leadership led to sub-par recruiting and a party atmosphere. Ultimately, this took away from the dedication to the sport.

However, the rising senior class, which is extensive, expects the fall 2016 season to be their turnaround. Despite only knowing how to lose, these players are willing to fight for each other and attempt one last shot at redemption. Led by their senior captain, A.J. Shoemaker, they unite over their love for one another, which is emphasized by their willing to commit to a spiraling program.

The new head coach, Sean McCarthy, also appears to be the shot of adrenaline that the Rams desperately need. Part foul-mouth football coach and part-philosophizing sensei, his 'no-holds-barred' attitude and reintroduction of Christian values have put the program back on the right course. But can they win?

With the season set to begin, the team suffers a tragedy: the loss of rising senior Elliott Copeland. His sudden, tragic death rocks the program. Do they crumble behind all this adversity – underachieving, the underdog label, the ever-looming graduation and the passing of a teammate? Or do they use this to catapult themselves back to the top of the Empire Rugby Conference?

"The Rise of the Rams" is the age-old tale of redemption told through a semi-unusual lens: aka rugby.

## Audience Outreach and Engagement

Fortunately, this is the best time to make a sports documentary. There are plenty of markets to sell it to. Unfortunately, there is an over-saturation of sports documentaries. What sets "The Rise of the Rams" apart is the fact that this is about rugby: a sport that is getting some spotlight thanks to the 2016 Summer Olympics.

So first, I would attempt to go after the niche market: aka rugby fans. I would send messages to various rugby media websites, hoping to get some free promotion on their page. For instance, Rugby Dump is a place to watch big hits, great tries and other highlights. They also have over 396,000 followers from around the world: so if they truly liked my trailer that would go a long way for promotion.

On top of this, there are various teams and organizations throughout New York that could promote the film. The Empire Rugby Conference, which is the conference that the Rams play in, covers a lot of the northeast: they would likely help out because it raises awareness for the league — my success would ideally be their success. Also, there are men's teams throughout the same area that would be happy to promote and even view the finished product.

Finally, the team itself is extremely excited for the documentary. So we have a potential market of nearly 100 players that would be happy to share and view the experience — and of course, these 100 players also have family members that are very involved in the program.

But it is also important to target non-sports fans because this tale of religion, brotherhood, loss and redemption has themes that all can relate to. As most know, faith-based films are on the rise: with several doing great at the box office. While religion is not the only thing this film is about, it certainly fits the mold to attract that type of audience. Therefore, I would reach out to various church groups — both Catholic, which is my background, and Jesuit. A small church connection in New York could go a big way across the country.