

The 1st Annual Cape Fear Seven-player-a-side Rugby Tournament was held on July 4th weekend, 1975. The Cape Fear RFC, barely a season old, hosted the tournament that would celebrate the 4th of July, the Carolina coast and this beautiful game of rugby.

The original tournament saw 16 teams compete in single elimination, with the champion needing to win twice on Saturday and twice again on Sunday. The University of Virginia won that first Fear tournament by defeating Norfolk Old Blue in a very physical format that set a foreshadowing precedent for this tourney. Fear 7s continued in a 16-team format until 1980, when the tourney field was increased and round-robin play began. Virginia sides have dominated Cape Fear. In the early years Roanoke displayed near perfect rugby with flawless possession tactics to win 3 fear 7s titles in 4 years, retiring the original trophy in 1980. Then came the Duck Brothers of the Northern Virginia RFC, vying to win an unprecedented 3 straight titles before being upset in 1984.

Cape Fear 7s has showcased sides from England, Wales, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago and from both coasts of the United States, to name a few. In 1984 Bristol England RFC, led by fly half Steward Barnes, took the tournament championship off shore for the first time with the Duck Brothers reclaiming it in 1985. 1986 saw the London Harlequins, led by England's 7s coach, Les Cusworth, to take the Fear 7s championship back to England. However the Duck Brothers brought it stateside again in 1987 where it remained until Bedford, England took the title back across the Atlantic in 1991.

Hello, Northern Virginia. 1995 to 2002 perennial Fear 7s powerhouse, NOVA, won the mens open championship 7 out of 8 years, with unprecedented 6 straight titles. In 2003 the Charlotte Olde Originals kept the Cape Fear 7s trophy in North Carolina for the first time in tournament history by defeating a gutsy Washington Widgets side. 2004 saw the trophy go back to Virginia after the 03 runner up, Washington, defeated a strong OMBAC side in one of the closest finals in tournament history. OMBAC came back to Fear from San Diego to defeat NOVA in the mens final to take the Fear 7s trophy to the west coast of the United States for the very first time.

The past few of years have seen the boys from Ohio (1823) dominate the top bracket at Fear. You would think they take personally that first in flight thing. The advent of Pro Rugby is a welcome development in the US, but it might stretch the Scioto Valley men a little thin. Its unfortunate because this year they have a chance at paying for their trip. Two years ago an early season hurricane almost wiped us out and caused several elite team cancellations. It didnt stop Brian Stollmeyer and his Trinidad and Tobago men from coming and reaching the Elite Final, only to be bested by 1823. The NOVA Women have earned a free entry to

Fear7s for several years. Last year our Raleigh Venom gave them a run in the Finals. Nova Piranhas are seeking an unprecedented 9th straight Elite Women's Championship. The stakes have risen, this year, and so has the competition.