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## RIT boots men's rugby team

### Five-year ban imposed in hazing; fate of women's team undecided

[Matthew Daneman](#)  
Staff writer

HENRIETTA — Rochester Institute of Technology has banned its men's rugby team for at least five years following an off-campus party last month that sent six students to the hospital with alcohol poisoning.

The women's rugby club faces its own campus hearing soon and also could face punishment.

"We're not going to tolerate this type of hazing," RIT spokesman Robert Finnerty said. "The punishment fits what happened."

Six members of the men's and women's rugby teams were taken to Strong Memorial Hospital after a party that was allegedly part of a rugby club initiation called "Rookie Day." The Monroe County Sheriff's Office said a party-goer called 911 when one of the players passed out and "turned blue." All six recovered, but some spent time in intensive care.

"Frankly we're lucky in this case someone called 911," said Nassau County psychologist Susan Lipkins, author of *Preventing Hazing*. "Kids die. (Hazing) is so much more common than people believe."

Eight other players on the two teams have been charged with hazing and unlawfully dealing with a child, both misdemeanors.

Those eight have been suspended. Finnerty declined to give any more details, citing federal privacy laws governing schools.

Hank Nuwer, an assistant professor of journalism at Indiana's Franklin College and a national expert on collegiate hazing, said RIT's response was particularly severe in light of instances around the nation in which schools have ignored hazing problems or tragedies. A five-year ban "gets all the current members out," he said.

The men's rugby team can apply for reinstatement in fall 2012, Finnerty said.

The rugby teams are club sports and fall under the same rules as RIT's 163 other clubs. Unlike clubs, members of RIT's 24 varsity teams face alcohol and drug testing, Finnerty said.

[MDANEMAN@DemocratandChronicle.com](mailto:MDANEMAN@DemocratandChronicle.com)

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