



USA RUGBY

***Start Up Manual:
A Guide in Starting Youth Rugby Programs***

***A Guide for Starting Educational, Community and
Independent/Private Based Programs***



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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Rugby is a fast paced, fun, safe and exciting sport. Legendary founder of the sport, William Webb Ellis, was a student at England's Rugby School. He created the game when breaking the rules of soccer by picking up the ball and running with it. Rugby's ultimate prize, The World Cup trophy, now bears his name. In fact, Rugby was an Olympic sport from 1900 to 1924, and the United States won the gold medal twice, in Antwerp (1920) and Paris (1924).

Today, rugby is played in more than 90 countries, making it one of the most popular sports in the world and the Rugby World Cup is the third most watched sporting event in the world. Rugby in the USA has been growing steadily and there are now over 60,000 registered players in America.

USA Rugby is the National Governing Body for rugby in America. USA Rugby is a member of the International Rugby Board and the United States Olympic Committee. The organization is charged with the development of the game at all levels as well as fielding national representative sides.

This manual is designed by USA Rugby as a starting point for a rugby enthusiast interested in creating a youth or high school rugby program. Most information needed to start your program is here in the manual. More information is available at the USA Rugby website; www.usarugby.org

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Chapter 2

THIS IS USA RUGBY

USA Rugby is the national governing body for the sport of rugby in the United States and serves as the sport's official representative to the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and the International Rugby Board (iRB). Its mission is to achieve and maintain high levels of quality in all aspects of rugby, while its vision is to develop America into a world rugby power on and off the field. USA Rugby strives to accomplish these goals by providing competitive and educational opportunities to players, coaches, referees and administrators.

Founded in 1975, USA Rugby is composed of 37 Local Area Unions (LAUs), which are grouped into seven geographical Territorial Unions (TUs). These local bodies represent the backbone of USA Rugby. More than 60,000 players belong to more than 2,100 youth, collegiate and senior-level rugby clubs in all 50 states. Headquartered in Boulder, Colo., USA Rugby organizes and conducts a host of competitions, clinics and training camps to aid its athletes, coaches

and referees in becoming more accomplished at all levels of the game.

National Teams

As the National Governing Body for the sport, USA Rugby fields both men's and women's national teams, to play against countries such as New Zealand, England, Australia, Ireland and Canada to name a few. The USA Women's National Team won the first Women's World Cup, the team has also finished second twice.

USA Rugby also has several national developmental programs for both males and females of various ages.

The men's program consists of:

- USA Falcons (North American Four team)
- USA Hawks (North American Four team)

- All-Americans (selected from the best collegiat players in the USA)
- Under-19 National Team (competes annually in the iRB/FIRAER Junior World Championships)
- Under-17 National Team

The women's program consists of:

- Under-23 National Team (serves as a direct feeder to the senior Women's National Team)
- Under-19 National Team

Additionally USA Rugby has a military team, called Combined Services. This team is a collection of players from the four branches of the military. This team tours internationally every other year with trips to South Africa and Australia to name a few.

National Championships

USA Rugby currently conducts 15 national championship series events each year. They are: men's Division I, Division II and Division III club championships; women's club championship; men's and women's Division I and Division II collegiate championships; boys' high school championship; men's military championship; men's and women's all-star 15s championships; men's collegiate all-star championship; men's club 7s championship; and men's all-star 7s championship.

Coach Development Program

Considerable effort has been directed in the past couple of years to the technical development of rugby in the United States. In the past Territorial Unions would run coaching courses and there were a number of national coaching conventions. USA Rugby has centralized the coach development process and offers a series of certifications. USA Rugby endorses a player-centered approach to coaching rugby. This approach emphasizes decision-making by players on the field, something American players struggle with because of their late introduction to the game. Certifications are aligned with the IRB coach development course and include Positive Coaching Alliance and National Center for Sports Safety Certifications.

To meet demands for the growing coaching workshops, USA Rugby established a pool of course leaders and over 500 coaches are certified each year. Any organization can host a workshop and there are 3 "seasons" for workshop delivery. The CDP also has formed the Coach Development Portal (subscription required) that provides articles, videos and online courses. You can get this information at www.usarugby.org/cdp

Referee Training Program

USA Rugby has developed a decentralized referee training program, with IRB certified trainers around the country able to offer referee clinics in their local area. The recruitment and development of referees are vital to the development and growth of the game, and every club should encourage members to pick up the whistle. Generally a new club will work through the local referee's society to schedule referees for their games. You can get more information at www.usarugby.org.

Youth and High School Development

USA Rugby is committed to the development of the game at youth and high school levels. The strategic objective for USA Rugby is to have high school rugby as a recognized varsity sport with the state athletic associations. Therefore USA Rugby's goal is to develop state-based administrative organizations for high school and youth rugby. The Regional Rugby Growth Model is a collection of best practices that will help grow and develop the game at youth and high school level. USA Rugby is looking for regions that have the energy and potential to implement this model with USA Rugby's support. More information can be found at <http://www.usarugby.org/youth/adminModel.html>



Chapter 3

USA RUGBY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Regional Rugby Growth Model (RRGM)

The strategic direction of USA Rugby with regard to high schools rugby is to align with High School State Athletic Associations and single school teams and move away from community based U-19 teams. The RRGM provides the administrative support that rugby needs to grow the numbers of players and teams in order to reach the capacity required for consideration by State High School Athletic Associations, as well as the support to develop youth programs that feed into the high schools.

Rugby in the USA is mainly a club based endeavor. Even those teams that are recognized by a school typically receive little support and have to administer themselves. This traditional model in the USA is largely dependent on one or two dedicated volunteers. These volunteers tend to be hard working passionate rugby people. However, if they can no longer provide service to a team because of work or a change in their

life situation, the team often falls by the wayside until a new coach/administrator can be identified.

The RRGM addresses the challenge of forming and sustaining teams and leagues. By centralizing operations within a board and eventually an executive director, a league can provide resources to teams so that coaches can focus on coaching their team. In the present system, within most leagues, there is no template to start a team. Someone wanting to start a team has to figure out how to register the team, schedule games and referees, where to buy jerseys, secure practice and game fields as well as other administrative issues. The RRGM puts a board and eventually a part-time paid administrator in place to remove these obstacles so that a coach can concentrate on improving the team's performance.

Through a series of processes, USA Rugby will work with local rugby communities to apply best practices and develop an organizational structure that will

enhance the growth of the game. Experts that have practical experience will work to implement appropriate approaches to manage the growth of rugby effectively.

USA Rugby is committed to applying the RRGGM to multiple regions of the country. Each partnership has a common goal of creating an organization with sound administrative and business plans that provide resources, services and support to existing teams and removes obstacles in starting new programs. The RRGGM itself is a collection of best practices that apply to forming a state-based youth organization. You can find an application for the RRGGM at <http://www.usarugby.org/youth/adminmodel.html>

Best practices include the following elements:

- Strategic Planning – Bringing the rugby people together to develop a shared vision of how the growth of the game should be organized and managed improves buy-in from the local community, as well as providing a unique local solution.
- Organization – Creating an umbrella organizational structure to provide leadership and guidelines that include; a mission statement, slogan and board of directors. Creating a league structure that provides resources to start teams, standardizes league policies & procedures, and establishes eligibility guidelines and recruits and trains coaches and referees. Creating the appropriate organizational structure that might include; creating a non-profit corporation including 501(c)(3) status, by-laws, creating and registering a logo.
- Financial Management – Creating an image with centralized business operations that might include; equipment, fees, coaches, referees and tournaments. The model seeks revenue leading to self-sufficiency and professional staffing.

The consultative process provides direction and will be altered to fit and work with existing structures already in place around the country.

Player Development

There are several items that USA Rugby is emphasizing in its Youth and High School Development Program. They are sportsmen on and off the field, and adaptability of the participant to make decisions, and, in turn, grow in this sport that is player dominant. In addition, USA Rugby wants the young athlete to enjoy their participation in a positive and safe manner. All of this can be summed up in the term “player-centered.” Everything a coach, referee or administrator does should be focused on the needs of the players.

In the development of the sport among today’s younger athletes, USA Rugby encourages its program organizers to set up plans where participants will enjoy the game, will be encouraged to develop their decision making skills and will respect players, referees, coaches, and spectators. In addition, a young athlete is encouraged to learn communication skills and develop a camaraderie with the opposition players as well as the referees. USA Rugby is not discouraging a winning attitude. What USA Rugby is encouraging is a balanced attitude where players can develop their mental and emotional aspects as well as their physical aspects of rugby.

Youth rugby within itself is a broad spectrum, however many common factors can apply to all levels of the sport. The following are factors that can be applied to all levels of youth rugby.

Youth and High School Rugby Defined

The maximum age to be considered in the youth bracket is age 19 or those that would be eligible to compete in a USA Rugby High School National Championship. The minimum age in youth rugby is age seven. In some cases, rugby may be taught in physical education courses with children aged seven. Thus for formal program purposes, age seven seems to be the adequate age for proper attention and skill retention.

YOUTH RUGBY DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

Rugby is an exciting, free flowing game designed for players of all shapes, sizes and athletic abilities. It involves skills such as running, passing, catching, kicking, decision-making and supporting teammates. It also involves contact elements such as tackling, rucking, mauling, scrummaging and line-out play that are the unique to the game. USA Rugby has a

Development Path that introduces all of these skills to boys and girls progressively as their exposure and experience levels increase. The Path starts with an introductory version and steadily adds new elements until players are fully prepared for the adult game. At all stages the emphasis of the players, the coaches and the officials is on safety and fun.

THE DEVELOPMENT PATH

The Development Path has four stages that take boys and girls through the most direct preparation for the adult game. The Path is the primary method of youth rugby development in the USA, and is used when player numbers permit, and appropriately qualified coaching is available for all players. The stages are Mini-tag Rugby, Mini Rugby, Midi Rugby and Under-19 Rugby.

Mini-tag Rugby is for boys and girls that are new to the game. They may be as young as six, but may be older. The emphasis is on players having fun while running with the ball, evading opponents, supporting the ball-carrier, passing, tagging the ball-carrier, and scoring points. It is a seven-a-side game in which there are no tackles, no rucks, no mauls, no scrums, no line-outs and no kicking. The tackle is replaced by a tag, in which the ball-carrier is touched by an opponent, with two hands between waist and knee (or, as a local option, a flag is removed from a belt at the ball-carrier's waist). The game allows the players to learn the basic ball-handling and movement skills of the game in the absence of the contact elements.

After some experience players can move onto **Mini Rugby**. Players may be as young as eight, but more likely to be about eleven. Experience, rather than age, is probably the more important determinant of when players are ready for Mini Rugby. The game remains seven-a-side, but players are now introduced to some basic contact elements. The tag is no longer used, and, through proper coaching, boys and girls are taught to tackle safely. They are also taught to participate safely in contact elements such as rucks, mauls, scrums and line-outs. Rucks and mauls have limits on how aggressive the players may be, and the scrums and line-outs are initially uncontested.

With further experience players can move onto **Midi Rugby**. Players may be as young as ten, but more likely to be about thirteen. The game is twelve-a-

side. Five-player, multi-row, contested scrums have strict limits on movement. Line-outs are contested, with limits on supporting team-mates that jump for the ball. Restart kicks and kicks at goal are introduced, as is open field kicking from hand.

With even more experience players can move onto **Under-19 Rugby**. It is the game that is normally played by high school age players, though some younger high school players may continue with Midi Rugby. The game is fifteen-a-side, with eight forwards and seven backs. It is fully representative of the adult game, though some safety restrictions for young players remain at scrums.

NON-CONTACT ALTERNATIVE

The Development Path is intended as the primary method of youth rugby development in the USA, and is used when player numbers permit, and appropriately qualified coaching is available for all players. However, the Path has tackling and other contests for the ball that demand a highly competent, properly qualified level of coaching to teach the contact elements of the game safely. If an adequate level of coaching is not available, or if recruiting enough players for the contact game proves too difficult, or if players would prefer a low-contact version of the game then an alternative Non-contact Path is available.


The Non-contact Path serves as a sound way to teach most of the ball handling, movement, tactics and strategy elements of the game. The Path is similar to the Development Path in that the elements of the game are introduced progressively as players' knowledge, skills, physiques and experience increase. The principal differences from the Development Path are that the game remains seven-a-side, and all of the contact elements are replaced by non-contact equivalents.

Mini-tag Rugby is identical to the first stage of the Development Path. It is a seven-a-side game in which there are no tackles, no rucks, no mauls, no scrums, no line-outs and no kicking.

Next comes the **Intermediate** non-contact stage. It retains both the seven-a-side format and the tag as a replacement for the tackle. Players are introduced to rucks and scrums, both in uncontested form, and to some open field and other kicking.

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A SIMPLE LOOK AT THE EAGLE FLIGHT PLAN		# OF PLAYERS	CONTACT	SCRUMS & LINEOUTS	KICKING
	MICRO (6&UP)	7 A SIDE	NO	NO	NO
	MINI (8&UP)	7 A SIDE	INTRO	INTRO	NO
	MIDI (10&UP)	12 A SIDE	LIMITED	CONTESTED W/ LIMITS	INTRO
	UNDER 19	15 A SIDE	FULL	FULL	YES



Chapter 4

STARTING A YOUTH PROGRAM

So you want to start a youth or high school rugby program? Congratulations! The following are items to consider when embarking on this journey:

Start Up Costs

Starting a youth rugby program involves minimal costs. Items a new program should consider purchasing:

- Rugby balls (necessary)
- Cones (necessary)
- Ball bag (necessary)
- Medical kit (necessary)
- Jerseys (necessary)
- Tackle/rucking pads (optional but nice to have)
- Goal post pads (necessary but not needed (right away))

- Field paint (necessary but not needed right away)
- Field flags (necessary but not needed right away)
- Scrum machine (optional)

Coaches should contact their Local Area Union (LAU) or regional organization (if one exists) to see what kind of financial assistance is available. Local senior clubs may be able to provide sponsorship including donating balls and cones or lending goal post pads and flags. At the very minimum, coaches will need balls, cones, ball bag, and a fully stocked medical kit to get started. Jerseys will be necessary when games start.

Other potential costs that may come up for high school programs may include:

- Field rental

- EMT/trainer fees
- Referee fees
- Tournament entry fees
- Team functions (dinners, end of season banquet, etc.)
- Medical kits re-stocking
- Transportation to and from games
- Team water bottles

Overall, the start up costs are minimal. As a program grows, additional costs will most likely be incurred. Coaches can look to the community, high school sports boosters, local rugby clubs, and internal fund-raising efforts to support their growing team.

Season of Play

Rugby is unique in that it can be played in any season. Currently, there is no official season of play designated for youth or high school rugby. However, to keep in line with the national championships, official high school seasons tend to run during the late winter and through the spring season.

Coaches should also consider when other school sports are in season. For example, a fall rugby season will coincide with football and field hockey, thus forcing potential players to choose between sports. Coaches should work with their local high schools to find out when the official fall, winter, and spring seasons begin and end. The timing of these seasons will influence recruiting efforts, attendance at practice and games, and overall enthusiasm from players. Also, if rugby is being considered as a potential club or varsity sport addition to a high school, coaches will be asked to coincide with one of the seasons.

Field Availability

Securing a field for practice and games is often times the most difficult piece of starting a rugby program. Coaches should look into obtaining fields with a high school, the local parks and recreation organization, a local rugby club, or a sporting complex. In most cases, the appropriate permits will be needed to use the fields.

When looking at potential fields, coaches should consider the following:

- Is the field big enough?
- Can it be used as a practice field and a game field?
- Is it lined or do coaches have to line it?
- Is it free of hazards such as holes, barriers, etc.?
- Is it in a safe area?
- Are there lights?
- Is there parking?
- Are there other groups using it at the same time?
- Are there goal posts?
- Can coaches reserve specific times or does the team just show up?
- Are teams allowed to practice on the field in the rain or in muddy conditions?

Remember, coaches and teams are representing the entire sport of rugby to other organizations including other youth sports. Field space is often a contested issue among youth sports so it is important to solidify field times/reservations and to keep a copy of the schedule on hand. It may also be helpful to introduce yourself to the other youth coaches. As a group with a common goal—to provide youth with an opportunity to participate in sports—you'll be better able to come to an agreeable solution on field space.

Equipment

Rugby requires minimal equipment. To start, each player must have:

- A mouth guard
- Cleats (soccer cleats are fine; cleats with a toe cleat are not fine—the toe cleat must be shaved off and smooth)

As players advance and become more familiar with the game, they may want to invest in:

- A scrum cap
- Shoulder pads

To get a team started, the team must have:

- Balls
- Ball bag
- Cones
- Fully stocked medical kit

As the team advances, they may want to invest in:

- Tackle/rucking pads
- Scrum machine
- Team water bottles
- Pinnies
- Jerseys (necessary for games)
- Tackle suits
- Equipment for a field (field paint, lining machine, flags, goal post pads)

Recruiting

“If you build it, they will come.” Well, not necessarily. Now that a coach has decided to start a youth rugby program, she’ll need players. The key is to get the word out and get potential players excited. The following are some ideas for getting the word out about a new program:

High school recruiting: Contact the local high schools’ athletic directors and/or principals and ask permission to set up an informational table and hand out flyers about the team during lunch. Information should include a summary of what rugby is, practice schedule, game schedule (if known), dues, dates/times of a pre-season meeting, and the coach’s contact information. Walk around, hand out flyers, drum up interest, and be enthusiastic! If you already have some committed players, ask them to help you. They can hand out flyers, wear their team gear, etc. There is no better advertisement.

If lunchtime does not work, ask permission to schedule an after school meeting. You can also see if the school will post or announce the meetings or information about the team in the daily announcements or bulletin.

Local gym recruiting: Hang out where all the tough kids hang out—at the local gym. Post flyers on the bulletin board and in the locker rooms. Kids that are working out in a gym may be looking for something else to do.

Community center recruiting: A community center is a great place to do some recruiting. Kids may be looking for something to do. Schedule a meeting, talk to the youth organizer, hand out flyers, and get rugby at the front of everyone’s minds.

Website: With today’s technology, creating a team website is very helpful. Coaches can use a website to provide information, as a means of contact, and for advertising. Once coaches establish a team, parents in particular will be very thankful about a regularly updated website with practice and game schedules.

Player Dues

Player dues should be considered for any rugby team. Dues cover the expenses of the after-game socials, tournament entry fees, referee fees, field rentals, field paint, additional equipment, jerseys, and team social events including team dinners. Dues should also cover the fees required for USA Rugby and local registration. Coaches should work out the dollar figures that will cover these expenses. It is easiest to collect this money up front from players versus asking them to give a couple of dollars periodically throughout the season.

If a player cannot pay the team dues, the team should try to offer a scholarship or a payment plan. For example, kids respond better when they are accountable for something. Instead of offering a free ride, ask them to pay half, a quarter, or even ten dollars of the dues. That way, they at least feel like they contributed. Coaches should never turn away a player if she can’t pay the team dues.

School/Community Support

Coaches should work hard to get school and community support. The following are ideas for how to gain support:

- Set up a meeting with the athletic director and/or principal of the school and give an informational presentation about rugby and the team

- Keep the schools informed about upcoming games, fundraisers, results, and notable student performances
- Approach the school about obtaining club status
- Volunteer at charitable events or fundraisers for community causes
- Start a relationship with the local media by calling in scores, contacting the paper's high school sports reporters, and submitting game reports and pictures
- Work with the team to put on a demonstration event or an introductory rugby clinic for younger kids
- Meet with other youth coaches to work out practice times and field sharing
- Maintain a disciplined team who are well behaved...people will notice!

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement can make or break a team. It is too difficult to coach, maintain all the necessary forms, organize the after-game socials, and organize car pools. Coaches should ask for parent volunteers to help out. Here are some roles that parent volunteers can take on:

Secretary: This parent is responsible for collecting, organizing, collating, and copying all of the forms that the players need before they can play. This parent can create a simple spreadsheet to note the forms that have been turned in. They can also be the keeper of the player dues.

Social Coordinator: This parent can coordinate volunteers to provide after game food. Once the coach knows the game schedules, she can turn it over to the social coordinator who can then obtain volunteers. These volunteers are responsible for set up, food/drinks, and clean up. They will be reimbursed from the team account.

Travel Coordinator: This parent can coordinate car-pools, accommodations, and plane travel to games or tournaments.

Fundraising Coordinator: The team will incur expenses along the way. Having a team account with money in it will be important. A parent volunteer who will take on the fundraising effort is very important. This parent will be responsible for fundraising ideas, implementation, collecting forms, and generating excitement about the fundraisers. Fundraising ideas may be a silent auction, garage sales, Christmas ornament sales, candle, cookie, flower sales, soliciting local businesses for support and sponsorship, etc.

Practice Helper: Parents can volunteer to set up cones or be an extra body at practices. It is up to the coach to ensure that the parent follows directions and doesn't interfere with the practices. Coaches may appreciate having an extra set of hands and eyes.

Culture Keeper: This parent is responsible for maintaining the ethos of the game on the sidelines. If another parent gets overly excited, the culture keeper should remind him/her about the type of behavior that the coach and players expect.

Media Relations: This parent can take notes and pictures at the game, write up a story, and submit it to the local newspapers. At the very least, this parent can call in the scores.

Forms and Required Paperwork

Now the team is assembled, the parent volunteers are beginning to fall in place, and it's time to start practice. But, wait! Aren't there certain forms and paperwork that players and parents need to review, sign, and submit before they can start practice? YES! The following is a list of forms and paperwork (check out www.usarugby.org for forms):

Medical release waiver: This form gives the coach the ability to have a player treated at a hospital if the player's parents/guardians are not present.

Liability: This form outlines the risks associated with rugby and releases responsibility of the coach and facilities should an injury or incident occur.

Physical form: This form should be completed and signed by a licensed doctor. The form should indicate any physical conditions and medications that players have. The form should also clear players to participate in rugby.

Photocopy of insurance card: Coaches should have this on hand in the event that a player needs to be treated at a hospital. It is mandatory that all players carry insurance. This copy serves as proof of insurance. At some games and tournaments, teams will be asked to produce all players' insurance.

The parent volunteer who is the secretary should:

- Collect all forms, paperwork, and dues
- Photocopy everything
- Provide a copy to the coaches (a copy for each coach) to keep in their binders
- Keep a copy for their records

Coaches should have a pre-season informational/organizational/sign-up meeting. Coaches can advertise the date and time of this meeting on the team website, through the school announcements or bulletins, and on the informational flyers.

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Chapter 5

DEVELOPING YOUR ORGANIZATION

High school vs. U19 vs. Community Based

A High School Rugby Program

Starting a high school rugby program is a lot of work but the end goal is attainable. When thinking about starting a high school program, coaches will need to meet with and gain permission from the school athletic director and/or principal. The coach should request a meeting, come prepared with a presentation on the game, statistics for the growing sport, and why kids will benefit. Common questions that may come up will probably relate to safety, season of play, the overall community view of rugby, and inevitably, field time and space.

Attaining varsity status for rugby is still an enigma in most states. Varsity status may not be a viable option—be prepared for that response. However, attaining club status is very doable. Most schools

require that a staff member, who works in the school, sponsors the club. Once this sponsor is on board, coaches can begin to get the wheels in motion for a team.

The following are things to consider when starting a high school rugby program:

- Are there other high school programs in the area/state?
- Does the high school administration approve of such a program?
- What kind of school support will the team receive? (i.e. fields, trainers, booster money, etc.).
- Is there a qualified coach?
- Does the team need a sponsor who is a school faculty member?
- Is there interest for both a boys and girls team?

- Will rugby be a varsity or club sport?
- What are the academic and age eligibility requirements?

A U19 rugby program

An Under-19 rugby program is similar in structure to a high school rugby program. There are a few major differences:

- Players will be allowed to play for an additional year based on their under-19 age status.
- This is not a high school sponsored sport. Academic eligibility is not required, school financial support will not be feasible, and fields may be harder to obtain.

A U-19 program has many benefits that include allowing more players to play due to the increased age limit. Another element to consider is that of the current USA Rugby National Team structure which encompasses both Under 19 boys and girls team. With this slight distinction, coaches are able to provide their players with more opportunities to national level play and exposure.

A Community Based Rugby Program

A community based rugby program is a great way to introduce rugby to kids of all ages. Community and neighborhood centers always have an abundance of kids around that are looking for something to do. Rugby could be the answer! To start a community based rugby program, consider the following steps:

- Schedule a meeting with the community center activities director. Prepare a presentation on rugby, how it will benefit the kids, and a plan for introducing the game and running a program.
- Outline the time, field space, equipment, and personnel necessary to put on a program.
- Provide evidence of other community based rugby programs that have been successful.
- Offer flexible timing including summer, spring, and fall programs.

- Outline the coaches' qualifications.
- Invite the activities director to a local high school or U19 game.
- Provide testimonials from parents and players about the value and benefits of rugby.

In general, community based rugby programs may attract the younger kids such as under-8s, under-10s, under 12s, etc. These programs would be all non-contact. In accordance with the nation's fight against obesity and inactivity, a huge selling point of a community based rugby program is the aerobic and physical activity that the kids will receive. With this kind of physical and mental stimulation, kids of all ages will greatly benefit and rugby will be one of the champions of a fit lifestyle.

Getting Rugby into the PE Curriculum

Regardless of your program structure, getting rugby into the PE curriculum in your area is a major boost. It will introduce rugby to many more kids and adds legitimacy to the sport. USA Rugby has developed a PE curriculum that is available to schools throughout the country. The curriculum can be delivered at the Elementary, Middle or High School level and is available online for free at <http://usarugby.org/youth/index.html>. Additionally, starting in 2007 USA Rugby's certified course leaders will offer professional development workshops for physical educators looking to learn more about the sport. For additional information, please contact mark.griffin@usarugby.org.

The Importance of Physical Education

Physical Education is about body mechanics, maintenance, and techniques for improving ability and conditioning of the body. Furthermore, physical education teaches students how to utilize their bodies for a variety of physical activities. Students learn the health-related benefits of regular physical activity and the skills to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The discipline also provides learning experiences to meet the developmental needs of students. Highly-effective physical education teachers develop students' confidence, independence, self-control, and resilience; moreover, they foster positive social skills; set and strive for personal excellence, achievable goals; learn to assume leadership; cooperate with others; accept responsibility.

ity for their own behavior; and, ultimately, improve their academic performance.

National Education Standards

The USA Rugby Physical Education Curriculum meets National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE, 2004) standards and numerous variations of those standards, to enable physical educators to effectively deliver an engaging flag rugby curriculum to their students.

Non Contact / Flag Rugby & Physical Education

Above all Flag Rugby is fun! Additionally, this non contact version of rugby can be played safely in PE classes, after school programs or recreationally at the weekends. As a continuous team-invasion game, flag rugby gives all players the opportunity to run, catch, pass and score, regardless of their position, gender, size, shape or ability. Further, the game provides significant benefits to aerobic conditioning while enhancing individual athletic skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM GUIDE

WWW.USARUGBY.ORG

303.539.0300



**PHYSICAL EDUCATION
CURRICULUM GUIDE**
DESIGNED BY MEDIATORCH.NET

USA RUGBY



Chapter 6

MEDICAL, SAFETY, DISCIPLINE

“Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.”

A coach's first and foremost responsibility is the health and well-being of her players. Before starting a team or beginning a season, coaches should be organized and prepared. The proper forms, facilities, and assistance will make the season and the team operate more smoothly.

Medical Considerations Sports Physicals

As with any sport, all youth who plan to participate in rugby should receive medical clearance from a licensed doctor before beginning practice. An official medical (physical) form should note any conditions that coaches should be aware. It is vitally important for coaches to keep a copy of the physical forms, review them, and be familiar with any conditions that their players may have. If coaches have questions or concerns about any noted medical conditions such as asthma or diabetes, they should contact the player and the parents to find out more details. Many, if not all high schools require students to obtain

physicals for school entrance and for participation in school sports. Coaches can check with the athletic department to see if there is a specific physical form their players should bring to the doctors office. Coaches can also ask the athletic department to provide them with copies of the physical forms they have on file. If players have a current physical form on file with the school, they do not need to obtain another physical.

CPR

It is strongly recommended that all coaches be certified in CPR. Coaches can locate CPR classes through the Red Cross at <http://www.redcross.org/services/hss/>.

Medical Personnel

In the ideal world, every rugby team would have a licensed doctor, trainer, or EMT to take care of any injuries. This is not always the case. However, coaches should investigate opportunities to have such professionals present. Is there a parent who is a doctor or

medical professional? Is there a local doctor or physical therapy clinic that is willing to donate their time? At the very least, coaches must have immediate access to a phone to contact emergency medical assistance.

It is sometimes possible to create partnerships with local orthopedic clinics to provide medical support. In return the clinic will get referrals from your team for any injuries that occur.

Medical Kits

Every coach should be prepared to handle emergency situations during practice or at games. It is essential that coaches have at least one fully stocked first aid kit on hand whenever athletes are playing. The medical kit should be checked and restocked on a regular basis. The National Center for Sports Safety (www.sportsafety.org) has compiled a list of items that should be included in every coach's first aid kit:

- Non-powdered barrier gloves
- Resuscitation mask/face shield
- Instant ice cold pack
- Elastic fabric flexible bandages standard size
- Strip bandages (band-aids)
- Triangular bandage for sling
- 2" x 2" sterile gauze pads
- 2" king roller gauze
- 3" x 3" sterile gauze pads
- Telfa non stick pads
- Large patch bandage
- Eye patch kit (eye patch and clear tape)
- Adhesive tape
- Alcohol swabs
- Disinfectant pads
- Iodine-povidone prep. pads
- Insect sting swabs
- Antiseptic pads
- Hydrocortisone cream
- Q-tip swabs
- Sun block (30) SPF
- Insect repellent
- Splint
- Tape cutter
- Scissors
- Tape

Emergency Plans

Every coach should have emergency plans. These plans include the following:

- Address, directions, and location of nearest exits for their practice field

- Address, directions, and location of nearest exits for their home game field
- Address, directions, and location of nearest exits for their away game fields
- Location of closest hospital to all venues
- Chain of command (who calls 9-1-1, who stays with injured person, who remains with team, who contacts parents/guardians, who handles the media)

Coaches should carry a charged cell phone at all times or have quick access to a phone.

Injury and Incident Reports

It is a good idea to keep copious injury or incident records for players. With the prevalence of law suits, documenting an injury—whether a sprained ankle or a concussion—will help coaches remember what and how the injury or incident occurred. A simple spreadsheet noting players name, date, injury, how did it occur, action taken, and additional notes is suitable.

How do I organize all of this information?

This is a good question. On top of taking attendance, planning and running practice, and often times taking on the role as a parent or mentor, coaches have to be organized in the event of an emergency. Because of this, it is strongly recommended that coaches put together a binder that contains all of the necessary paperwork. This binder should accompany coaches to any team function including practices, games, or social events. The contents of the binder should include:

- Physical forms
- Liability/medical release waiver forms
- Injury/incident reports
- CIPP registration numbers
- Emergency contact information for players
- Emergency plans for fields
- Insurance card
- Copy of ID

This binder is also a great place to keep doctors notes, attendance sheets, and practice plans.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Rugby is a contact sport and serious attention should be aimed at safety. The following are safety issues to consider when preparing to or coaching a rugby team.

Supervision

Coaching duties plus some...

Coaching is a full time job when the players are present. The players demand your undivided attention and depend on your knowledge and competency as a rugby coach. However, with youth, coaching and supervision does not stop once they leave the practice or game field. As soon as a player shows up at practice or a game, coaches should consider themselves responsible for their players. For example, if players ask to go to the bathroom, coaches need to make sure the players return or ask that they take a buddy with them. If, after practice, players are waiting for a ride home, coaches should wait until everyone is gone. Coaches should consider players as their own kids and are therefore ultimately responsible for their well-being before, during, and after practices or games.

Coaching Contact Situations

Coaching rugby entails an interesting challenge...how does a coach introduce a non-traditional game to players plus instruct them on best safety practices? Herein lies the challenge with coaching rugby in the United States. Safety should be the number one concern for coaches. As a contact sport, it's paramount that coaches are versed in the best practice safety techniques for coaching the tackle, scrums, rucks, mauls, and lineouts. If coaches are not versed in how to introduce and coach one or all of these occurrences, they are not fit to coach—it is a safety risk.

Coach Education and Certification Opportunities

USA Rugby encourages coaches of all levels to complete the Coach Development Program. This coach education program will certify coaches and consists of online modules and face-to-face workshops based on the audience coaches work with. If coaches are working with players new to the game, they should complete the educational requirements for Introducing Rugby. If coaches are working with players who are

more advanced and have more experience, they should complete the requirements for Developing Rugby Skills. In addition, to the online modules and face-to-face workshops, coaches will be required to complete additional online modules from the National Center for Sports Safety and the Positive Coaching Alliance.

Other Coach Education Opportunities

Coaches are encouraged to seek out their local club teams for assistance. They can observe practices, ask for volunteers to come out and coach, watch games, or just pick the brains of those who may be more experienced. The more exposure a coach has to the game, the more ideas and competent she can feel.

Equipment

Coaches should advise players of the proper equipment needed to practice and play. The equipment includes:

- Mouth guards
- Cleats (without a toe cleat—football and softball cleats will not work)
- Body armor – optional (scrum caps and shoulder pads)
- Sturdy shorts and jerseys

It is also important to remind all players to remove body jewelry and any and all piercings. This is non-negotiable.

Coaches are responsible for furnishing the balls, cones, rucking and tackle bags, and scrum machines. Scrum machines, in particular, should be regularly maintained with no sharp or hard edges.

Facilities

Securing an appropriate, safe facility for rugby practices and games can be somewhat challenging, but necessary. A plush, grass field is ideal. Turf will work as well. When looking into fields, coaches should consider the following:

- Is the field big enough for the team? You may not need or have access to a full field but will your patch of grass suffice? Is there a little league team that is using your practice field as their outfield?

- Are there hazards on the field such as holes, stakes, drains, manhole covers, glass, etc?
- Is there parking?
- Is there easy access for emergency vehicles?
- Are there goal posts?
- Does the field have lights?
- Do you have permission to use this field?

Weather conditions

Coaches must be conscious of the impending weather.

Hot weather

If the weather is hot and humid, coaches must consider the following:

- Practice early in the morning or later in the evening
- Have ample fluids on hand for players
- Build in ample water breaks for players
- Allow players to break in a shaded area
- Be aware of the signs of heat stroke and take them seriously
- Ground conditions—is the ground extremely hard?

Cold weather

If the weather is cold, coaches must consider the following:

- Ground conditions—is the ground extremely hard or frozen?
- Proper warm up, activity during practice, and cool down
- Be aware of signs of hypothermia and extreme cold conditions
- Allow players to wear proper clothing to keep them warm

Thunderstorms

If thunderstorms threaten, coaches must consider the following:

- Consider postponing activities early to avoid being caught in a dangerous situation.
- Watch and listen for clues of impending danger. Look for darkening skies, flashes of lightning, sounds of thunder, or increasing wind, which may be signs of a developing or approaching thunderstorm.
- If coaches hear thunder, suspend the practice or game immediately and instruct everyone to get to a safe place. Substantial buildings provide the best protection. Once inside, stay off corded phones and away from any wiring or plumbing. Avoid sheds, small or open shelters, dugouts, bleachers, or grandstands. If a sturdy building is not nearby, a hard-topped metal vehicle with the windows closed will offer good protection.
- Do not resume practices or games until 30 minutes have passed since the last thunder was heard.

DISCIPLINE

Rugby is a special sport in the sense that it is very ethos driven. What does this mean? The ethos of rugby is based on sportsmanship, camaraderie, and creating a distinct, unique culture. Discipline, both on and off the field, should reflect the ethos of the game.

Code of Conduct

With youth programs, it is important to get to explain the ethos of rugby up front with players and parents. Coaches should define the behavior they expect of both players and parents. Each player and parent should review and sign a code of conduct outlining acceptable behavior, unacceptable behavior and corresponding repercussions. This reinforces from the start the importance of integrity and fair play. If coaches are not provided with a code of conduct from their youth organization, they should work to come up with one on their own. The following outline some general guidelines for how to handle discipline situations with both players and parents.

Fighting or Foul play

Fighting or foul play should not be tolerated. While rugby is a contact sport, coaches should instill in players correct techniques and mindsets towards tackling, getting tackled, scrummaging, etc. Players should be prepared for contact situations. The best way to get players accustomed to the physicality of the game is to use game situations in practices. This way, players will get used to the contact, the laws, and what's acceptable and what's not. It is in practice that coaches set the tone for the team.

If fighting or foul play does occur, coaches should implement a repercussion swiftly. This will show other players that this sort of behavior is unacceptable. For example, if a punch is thrown, the coach may take the player out of the game immediately and address the offensive action with the player. After the game, the coach and the player may approach the other team's coach and player and apologize. The coach could suspend the offending player for a game, assign jersey washing duty for the next three games, etc.

Foul Language

Too many times, spectators hear foul language from players on the field. Foul language should not be tolerated—at practice or in games. The coach sets the tone for this by not using foul language. Many times, referees will tell players that they will be penalized for foul language. Coaches should take the same stance and have a no tolerance policy for foul language.

Laws of the Game

Rugby does not have rules. Rugby has laws. The referee upholds these laws. Coaches should instruct players that back talk and chatter to the referee will not be tolerated. Coaches can set the tone of this during practices. There are laws, the referee (or coach) upholds the laws, and the players should play within the laws.

Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco

As with any youth sport or function, drugs, alcohol, and tobacco are not acceptable for rugby. School policies, along with coach's policies, and the organizational code of conduct should address the repercussions.

Parents and Spectators

Rugby is not a mainstream American sport. Because of this, most parents are not familiar with the laws of the game, the ethos, or the traditions. This is a great opportunity for coaches to demonstrate and outline acceptable parental sideline behavior. Sideline behavior by coaches, parents, and spectators should be respectful and positive. Screaming at the referee, encroaching on to the field of play, or antagonizing other people are not acceptable behaviors. It is up to coaches to address this type of behavior. The Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) offers coaches ideas on how to handle their sidelines. Assigning a parent as a "culture keeper" is one such idea. This parent would be responsible for maintaining a respectful spectator sideline in accordance with the ethos of the game. PCA resources can be found at www.positivecoach.org.





Chapter 7

MARKETING YOUR PROGRAM

Marketing A Youth Rugby Program

All of the planning, administration and hard work are futile unless there are kids to play the sport. Thus marketing the program is very vital to the overall aspects in starting and sustaining a youth rugby program. There are several easy and very inexpensive ways to publicize the introduction and development of a youth rugby program to a community. Lots of tools and templates can be found at www.usarugby.org/youth

Hotline

A regional telephone company can provide information on how to obtain and set up a simple voicemail system that can be used to help market a program, and to communicate with athletes and parents to get underway. The cost is usually about \$25.00 per month, with possible set-up fees. Setting up a mailbox system is easy. This is a "mailbox" system where callers may press a number for different types of information, including how to join, directions to practice, practice dates and times, and how to contact the coach or administrator.

Website

A simple website can be set up cheaply, and can be operated for less than \$10.00 per month. This is a very powerful tool for marketing a program. The site does not have to be elaborate. A site with basic contact information, a calendar of events, directions and a photo or two will suffice. If it is decided to have a website created, then include the web address on all printed material created for marketing the program. The use of community networks like myspace or facebook are also useful recruiting tools.

Press Release

Generally, a release should be very concise, and should follow the "who, what, where and when" format. Be sure to provide a name and contact information. Emphasize what the program offers. If this is a non-contact program for both girls and boys, make sure that is the main emphasis of the release. Include the website address and hotline number if they exist. Indicate exactly when the information should appear in the newspaper. Develop a list of the newspapers

that serve the community. Identify the person responsible for each newspaper's "Community Billboard" section. Obtain fax numbers and/or email addresses. Prepare the press release, and send it at least one month in advance of the time you want it to be published.

When the information is published, snip it out of the paper and keep it in a special folder or scrapbook for use later in presentations to parents or community organizations. Finally, be sure to call and thank the person who helped get the information published. This type of recognition should help lay the foundation for future publications.

Sports Feature

It is easy to get newspaper coverage if a simple "Press Kit" is developed. Send a copy of the press release to the Sports Editor at each newspaper. Include a letter explaining the goals in more detail. Include a copy of an article about rugby from another publication. Send an action photo or two. Provide a list of websites about rugby. If possible, send a short videotape depicting children playing rugby (even if it is homemade). Suggest in the letter that there is a support structure within rugby to assist in the preparation of a sports feature article about youth rugby. Most Sports Editors are on the lookout for "something different" to provide to their readers. If the Sports Editor at a particular paper is not interested, try sending the same info package to the Features Editor. If there is still not any coverage, call and ask for a brief meeting with the Editor.

Cable TV

Most cable television outlets offer a "Community Billboard" channel featuring community event announcements and nonprofit advertising. This form of advertising is usually free or at least very inexpensive. Identify all cable TV outlets serving a particular community, and contact each one. Typically, all that is needed is a form to fill out and specify when the advertisement should be run. It would be ideal to have the press release, sport feature and Community Billboard all be published at the same time. Follow the same "who, what, where and when" format used for the press release.

This is a viable option in accessing exposure on a grander scale. An idea that could apply is to show the video on public television and at the end of the video, have the television producer create a blue screen to place the local contact details.

School Posters and Fliers

Most school districts allow nonprofit sports organizations to display posters in schools. Additionally, some allow fliers to be inserted in the information packets that are periodically sent home to parents. Virtually all school districts require that such materials be approved in advance by the building principal or at the district level. Therefore, decide which schools in the community should be targeted for recruiting. The USA Rugby materials are professional in appearance and if any homemade materials are to be created, they should look as professional as possible. If this is the case, be sure to include all necessary contact information, and an action photo or graphic. Find out who is in charge of poster approval, and submit a poster along with a short letter of introduction. Remember, this is a bureaucratic process that may involve several administrators. Start the process several weeks in advance of the time so that enough lead-time exists to have the poster and/or fliers displayed. Follow up and thank the contact person after the project is completed.

Church and Community Bulletins

Most churches and civic associations (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, Rotary) publish newsletters that are mailed or handed out to members. Some will permit a small advertisement or announcement at little or no charge. Others may even allow to "piggyback" a flier along with their regular mailings. The local rugby club players or coaches may even be members of such organizations. They could serve as a key contact in gaining exposure.

Parents Support

Parental support is critical in the success of your program. Here are some ideas that will help you develop your parent network.

Initial Hurdle

In most cases, the initial group of athletes may have parents who either have played rugby or are at least familiar with the sport. More likely, the parents will know nothing about rugby. Worse yet, they may harbor the old "football without pads" perception.

The most difficult part of the job as a youth rugby organizer will be to dispel the myths about rugby, and convince parents that the game is safe for their children. To do this, emphasize that the youth rugby program has a three-step process to develop skills and techniques.

If it is a non-contact program, promote that the game is non-contact or touch rugby. Both boys and girls of all shapes and sizes can play this. It is no more dangerous than basketball or soccer, and much less dangerous than football, inline skating or skiing. In the non-contact game, have elements that include the parents in a clinic atmosphere. A Mother's Day or Father's Day event where parents and their children learn the game and then 'compete' in an informal non-contact scrimmage.

If this introduction is pursued, it is strongly recommended that "Exit" avenues for kids to play on a formal basis be established, prior to the introduction. This helps with sustainability and continued overall expansion of the sport.

Every single promotional item utilized, from the press release to the poster to the cable TV advertisement, should boldly emphasize what is being offered. Be fully prepared to discuss the "injury issue," and to clearly distinguish the non-contact game from traditional rugby as seen on Fox Sports World. Here is one way to describe the non-contact game to parents:

"Our brand of rugby is a lot like basketball, except the kids don't have to dribble, and to score they touch the ball to the ground instead of tossing it through a hoop. They also don't play on a hard surface that could hurt them if they fall down. We play on nice soft grass. Also, your child's size, strength and height are not important factors since this is two-hand touch rugby, and there is very little physical contact."

Going Forward - Expansion

Once a core groups of kids have been established to play, the next huge step is delegation. Reach out to parents and actively seek their help. Some of them may have experience in coaching or administering youth baseball, football or soccer. However, they may be hesitant to step forward since rugby is a "foreign"

sport that they know nothing about. Make it possible early on for them to see the game being played. Soon, it will not be foreign at all, and the parents will quickly realize how much their children are enjoying the game.

As soon as athletes and parents have been identified, set up a committee system. Chances are the organizer knows some of the parents from school, work, church or other sports. Find a Mom or Dad who will agree to take care of the team database. Reach out to someone else and ask him or her to help organize the "Sign Up" event. Find out which of the parents may be active in other youth sports associations, and ask them to help make contacts within that association. Identify parents who have enjoyed playing or coaching other sports, and inform them of the coaching clinics that will get them started.

Avoid "burnout." The kids are depending on volunteer work and the organizer can not "do it all," especially if the program grows to the point where there are several dozen athletes. The program has to have parental support, and it will not exist unless it is requested.

Youth Sports Associations

Most established youth sports associations (e.g. Pop Warner football, youth soccer, Little League) send a newsletter or other mailings to their members. The same is often true of organizations such as the YMCA, Boy Scouts and Boys and Girls Clubs. Some of these organizations will permit "piggyback" mailings and/or announcements in the body of their newsletters. Administrators of these organizations will be much more receptive to this idea if it is explained that rugby is not "competing" with them for members and field space. The fact that rugby is an inexpensive program that involves a safe and fun environment for children should be stressed. These organizations are rarely willing to share their member database with "outsiders" for reasons of confidentiality. If they agree to allow a "piggyback" on a flier or advertising, then there is no real need for the database.

"Piggyback" Registrations

Each youth sports association in a community will hold at least one or two "Sign Up" sessions at some point during the year. Look for the press releases and advertisements announcing these events. Contact the person who is in charge of the event. Ask if they

allow for a set up table nearby. Bring a TV/VCR and show the USA Rugby Promotional Video. Have all of the promotional materials on hand to distribute. It also helps to have a tray of cookies or candy on the table. Again, there is a much better chance of success if the “host” organization is convinced that rugby is not “competing” for recruits or field space. Be prepared to make a case, and to explain exactly what is trying to be achieved. If the plan is for a “Sign Up” event for an independent program, invite the “host” organization to piggyback on that event. Some youth sports organizers will be resistant to this idea. Others may recognize this as a kindred spirit and welcome this with open arms. From a publicity standpoint, a piggyback registration opportunity is priceless, as the program gets the full benefit of the host’s publicity efforts. This also has the opportunity to capture a large captive audience of parents and children who are already athletically inclined and interested in finding fun things to do.

Your Own Registration Event

The publicity vehicles outlined above should all be geared toward promoting an independent program, “Sign Up for Rugby” event(s). Ideally, these should be staged two to three months before the start of the season. This gives enough time to get organized after the recruits have been identified, and provides sufficient time for a “pass on” of information from family to family. The very best form of publicity is “word of mouth.”

Athletes who have “signed up” for rugby will want to tell all their friends. It would be wise to provide extra informational materials for athletes to distribute to their friends, cousins, and neighbors. Give them sufficient time to do so. Operate the event in a library, pizza parlor, church or synagogue, VFW, or at the YMCA or Boys and Girls Club. There is usually no charge for this, but there is always a bureaucratic process to go through. So start making contacts a month or two before holding the event. Show a rugby video. Be sure to have CIPP registration forms, pens, the Promotional Kits and at least a tentative calendar of events. Be prepared to tell the parents what the cost will be, and what type of time and travel commitments may be involved. Provide a list of websites (including the programs web-site, if available) that parents can visit to learn more about rugby, beyond the Spectators Guide to Rugby found on USA Rugby’s website.

Recruiting Follow-Up

Follow up is very key to the overall progress of the program. Keep a database of names, addresses and phone numbers from the very beginning. This list is vital to keeping them organized as the season approaches. Enter contact information into the database each and every time a response comes in via the hotline, website or at a “Sign Up” event.

Find responsible parents who have some talent in this area, then delegate. Keep tight tabs on the progress of this event. Use the database to send out a mailer approximately one month before the first scheduled practice. Include directions, dates, times and contact information. Ask for parent volunteers for specific tasks and committee functions. If the budget allows, include extra promo fliers that can be passed on to other potential recruits. Often, parents like a list/roster of the players, a parent contact, and address and phone number. This may allow for car pools, socials, and the establishment of a parent network.





Chapter 8

CODE OF ETHICS

Coaches/Administrators Code of Ethics

USA Rugby has developed a Code of Ethics that strives to reverse any negative stereotype that rugby may have in America. USA Rugby expects each individual involved with rugby to obey and code himself or herself in accordance with the USA Rugby Code of Ethics

This Ethics Code is intended to provide standards of professional conduct that can be applied in conjunction with the United States Olympic Committee and USA Rugby. Whether or not a coach has violated the Ethics Code does not by itself determine whether he or she is legally liable in a court action, whether a contract is enforceable, or whether other legal consequences occur. These results are based on legal rather than ethical rules. However, compliance with or violation of the Ethics Code may be admissible as evidence in some legal proceedings, depending on the circumstances.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Principle A: Competence

Coaches strive to maintain high standards of excellence in their work. They recognize the boundaries of their particular competencies and the limitations of their expertise. They provide only those services and use only those techniques for which they are qualified by education, training, or experience. In those areas in which recognized professional standards do not yet exist, coaches exercise careful judgment and take appropriate precautions to protect the welfare of those with whom they work. They maintain knowledge of relevant scientific and professional information related to the services they render, and they recognize the need for ongoing education. Coaches make appropriate use of scientific, professional, technical, and administrative resources.

Principle B: Integrity

Coaches seek to promote integrity in the practice of coaching. Coaches are honest, fair and respectful of others. In describing or reporting their qualifications, services, products, or fees, they do not make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive. Coaches strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, needs, and limitations and the effect of these on their work. To the extent feasible, they attempt to clarify for relevant parties the roles they are performing and to function appropriately in accordance with those roles. Coaches avoid improper and potentially harmful dual relationships.

Principle C: Professional Responsibility

Coaches uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior and adapt their methods to the needs of different athletes. Coaches consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interest of their athletes or other recipients of their services. Coaches' moral standards and conduct are personal matters to the same degree as is true for any other person, except when coaches' conduct may compromise their professional responsibilities or reduce the public's trust in the coaching profession and coaches. Coaches are concerned about the ethical compliance of their colleagues' professional conduct. When appropriate, they consult with colleagues in order to prevent or avoid unethical conduct.

Principle D: Respect for Participants and Dignity

Coaches respect the fundamental rights, dignity and worth of all participants. Coaches are aware of cultural, individual and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language and socioeconomic status. Coaches try to eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

Principle E: Concern for Others' Welfare

Coaches seek to contribute to the welfare of those with whom they interact professionally. In their professional actions, coaches consider the welfare and rights of their athletes and other participants. When conflicts occur among coaches' obligations or con-

cerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts and to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm. Coaches are sensitive to differences in power between themselves and others, and they do not exploit or mislead other people during or after professional relationships.

Principle F: Responsible Coaching

Coaches are aware of their professional responsibilities to the community and the society in which they work and live. They apply and make public their knowledge of sport in order to contribute to human welfare. Coaches try to avoid misuse of their work. Coaches comply with the law and encourage the development of law and policies that serve the interest of sport. They are encouraged to contribute a portion of their professional time for little or no personal advantage.

Players Code of Ethics

- Play for 'enjoyment'
- Play hard but fair
- Play by the laws of the game
- Be committed to your team, attend all practices and matches
- Never argue with the referee's decisions.

Control your temper.

- Work equally hard for yourself and your team.
- Be a good sport. Applaud all good play whether by your team or by your opponent.
- Remember the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and play responsibly

Spectator/Parent Code of Ethics

- Applaud the performances of both teams
- Be positive with referees
- Acknowledge the efforts of referees
- Let children play their game, not your game
- Praise actual efforts not results
- Your role is to set an example for children

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Chapter 9

COACHING

As the number of youth rugby players continues to grow in the United States, so too does the need for qualified youth rugby coaches. Just as other youth sports have evolved, such as soccer, baseball, football and hockey, so too have the parents to serve as coaches, referees and volunteers. This may vary from coaching practices or matches, to refereeing matches, tournaments, or just flipping burgers at the year end cookout. Regardless of duty, there needs to be parental involvement. If the program is run professionally, with a clear vision, this will attract volunteers to “jump on board” and join the excitement.

RECRUITING COACHES

Beyond the rugby mom or dad to serve as coach or in an administrative role, there are other prime pockets from which potential youth coaches can be identified. First, identify the local teams/clubs in the community. USA Rugby has over 2,100 clubs throughout the US, thus there is bound to be some type of rugby activity in that area.

Clubs

Players from clubs can serve as an excellent rugby resource, and this will be their time to give back to the sport they so love. Many times players, who are on the verge of retirement, seek other avenues to remain with the sport, and this is a perfect outlet. Typically, each club will have a president and a captain. Approach these individuals in a professional organized manner and present the program. If the program is well organized and presented professionally, the club may even want to adopt the program as their youth component. This is encouraged and appropriate.

Collegiate Players

Another avenue of recruitment is current collegiate rugby players. Collegiate rugby is the largest club sport in the United States. This is a prime recruiting tool for assistant coaches and referees. USA Rugby does not recommend collegiate rugby players to serve as head coaches, however they are valuable

assistant coaches. Additionally, if a youth program is in need for referees, a college player could make a couple of extra dollars by refereeing. This is the case in colleges with almost every youth sport, where college kids referee games for extra spending money. It should not be any different for rugby. Referee recruits should be referee to the local referee organization.

Physical Education Teachers

The goal of USA Rugby is to have rugby taught in physical education courses in America's schools. The program administrator should investigate if rugby is currently being taught in that particular school district. The number of schools that teach rugby is much higher than expected.

If that happens to be the case, it would be wise to inquire with that particular teacher and see if they would serve a role in the program. This has two positive consequences:

- The teacher will gain even further knowledge of the sport and may enhance their teaching with this broader background.
- If the teacher has a positive experience, they may want to share this with their peers, opening the door for rugby to go into other schools and tapping even more teachers to serve a role in the program.

Parents

Just like any other youth sport in the United States, one major recruiting ground for coaches is parents of youth players. Baseball, soccer and football have all filled their coaching ranks with player's parents. This form of participation has both positive and negative connotations.

The obvious plus in having mom and dad coach their children's teams is parental involvement and making the sport a family affair. The caution is to avoid the parents emotional need to see their kids succeed on the fields. Program administrators need to be very aware of this aspect and insure that if a parent does coach their children's team, that they have a complete understanding that youth rugby is for the kids, not the adults.

COACH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

USA Rugby has revamped the Coach Development Program (CDP) over the last year. The program includes a new format for the workshops, online modules, IRB equivalency and Positive Coaching Alliance and National Center for Sports Safety certifications. All of these have added credibility to the program. (FYI, if you hold a level 1, 2 or 3 from the old program, it is still valid, but will eventually expire in August 2008). While coaches are not required by USA Rugby to be certified, it is strongly encouraged. USA Rugby does require coaches of youth and high school programs to be registered and background checked. Your local administrative organization may require certification.

The CDP has adopted a player-centered approach to coaching rugby. Player-centered coaching is not a new approach, but it has not been widely practiced in the USA. It is something that has had more prominence in the international coaching community over the last few years and is now being adopted by the traditional rugby countries. It has been the basis of the French way of coaching for a long time. Wayne Smith, the All-Blacks assistant coach, is a strong proponent of the player-centered approach he learnt from the French. (you can read some excerpts of an interview with Wayne Smith and his approach at the CDP portal <http://usarugby.learn.com> – subscription required). A player-centered approach is vital in developing the American rugby player because it mitigates one of the biggest challenges our players have, lack of playing experience, by accelerating the players understanding of the game.

So what is player-centered? It is one end of a coaching style continuum the other end being coach-centered.

A good coach moves up and down this continuum dependent on the needs of his or her players. However, the coach should work towards becoming more player-centered with their team.

Being player centered requires three components:

- player leadership
- questioning
- games

Player leadership requires the coach to empower his team to make decisions both on and off the field. Questioning, often the most difficult of the three com-

ponents for the coach, means that the coach must guide players to the correct answer and not just tell them what to do. The final component, games, requires the coach to teach skills within the context a game, allowing the players to develop skills under pressure. Therefore the coach needs to be creative in making practices that include as many games as possible

USA Rugby CDP Certifications

The two certifications currently offered by USA Rugby include: Introducing Rugby and Developing Rugby Skills

Introducing Rugby: This workshop is designed for coaches who concentrate on introducing the game to new players. It is ideal for high school head coaches as well as college and club assistant coaches. Focusing on the fundamentals, this workshop will benefit coaches and players with limited rugby experience.

Developing Skills: The emphasis of this workshop is on practice planning, game sense, and skill development. This workshop is designed for coaches focused on working with experienced players that aspire to compete at a higher level. The course work is ideal for head coaches and those that are involved in club and all-star play.

Online Modules: USA Rugby has developed an online educational component of the CDP, the Coaches' Portal, that allows for a more hands-on application during the workshop. The online modules cover key subject matter that is reviewed in the face-to-face, interactive portion of the workshop. Coaches are encouraged to complete the online component prior to a workshop so they enter with adequate knowledge.

Workshops are offered through USA Rugby in partnership with local hosts and delivered by USA Rugby trained course leaders. Hosts can apply to hold a workshop in their area.

Non-Contact Rugby

In 2007 USA Rugby will be launching a non-contact rugby certification that will be offered locally. USA Rugby course leaders will be required to complete an online module and then will be able to offer non-

contact rugby workshops. The workshop is 6 hours in length and covers all areas of the non-contact continuum. It will also cover refereeing information. Coaches can attend and receive a certificate of attendance, or they can complete the online foundation modules after the event and receive a certification from USA Rugby.

Please keep referring to the USA Rugby CDP website for more information; www.usarugby.org/cdp



Chapter 10

REFEREES

Referee involvement in youth and high school rugby is best discussed in the context of the two codes of youth rugby: contact and non-contact.

NON-CONTACT

Training

Refereeing a non-contact game can be learned very easily and very quickly. Because it is a safe form of rugby, there are few worries about protecting players or difficulties that may arise due to the physical nature of the contact game. USA Rugby, as part of the Non-Contact Rugby coaching course that will be launched in early 2007, has put together a basic informational program which course leaders throughout the US can use to teach your officials all they need to know to referee the non-contact game. Check out www.usarugby.org/cdp for more information.

Recruiting

Start looking for referees at the local referee society. Referee society contact information can be obtained

from USA Rugby. However, you might also have success asking local players (club or college), high school players (men or women) or parents who may have played before or who have an interest in helping. As a last resort, coaches can referee the matches. Start your recruiting efforts early so you can identify potential referees and can set up a training program to get them up to speed long before the season or program starts. Some programs pay their referees a small amount. This may not seem like much of an initiative, but it can be an attractive recruiting tool for local high school players to referee the non-contact matches. Several methods of recruitment are available, but whatever method is used (emails, word of mouth, letters, presentations) it needs to target the desired audience. If you are targeting a group that has previously played rugby before, asking them in a manner that reinforces the enjoyment they will gain while they are enabling youth to learn and play should be a prominent theme.

The bottom line here is to treat them well! Make sure they know when and where their matches are well in advance of the games. Remind them about a week before and if they are certified and you are able to pay them a small amount for their time. It also helps if you take time before each game to remind the players about the proper respect they should have for the rugby referee.

Safety of the players is the primary concern for referees of the contact game, which for youth and high school is one filled with fit, energetic young men and women who may or may not know much about the mechanics and rules of game. If you couple that with the exuberance of adolescence, there is a potential for any game to quickly get out of control unless there is an even and firm hand behind the referee whistle. For these reasons, only certified rugby referees should be assigned to the contact matches. USA Rugby has available an iRB approved, a multi-level training program taught by certified instructors located in each Union. Contact your local referees society, or USA Rugby for more information on when this training takes place and how you might be assigned to a youth match.

All the comments in the non-contact section above apply. Additionally, local referees' societies usually do their own recruiting. However, they would certainly appreciate all the help you can give them. If you know or have in your program any previous or current players, encourage them to obtain a referee certification. An added benefit is the knowledge gained will immensely help your own team's training.

Contact USA Rugby, your LAU Referees' Society, your local organization or Youth Development Officer.

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