

RUGBY PA

GROWING THE GAME, DEVELOPING THE FUTURE.



DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

About Rugby PA

Who We Are

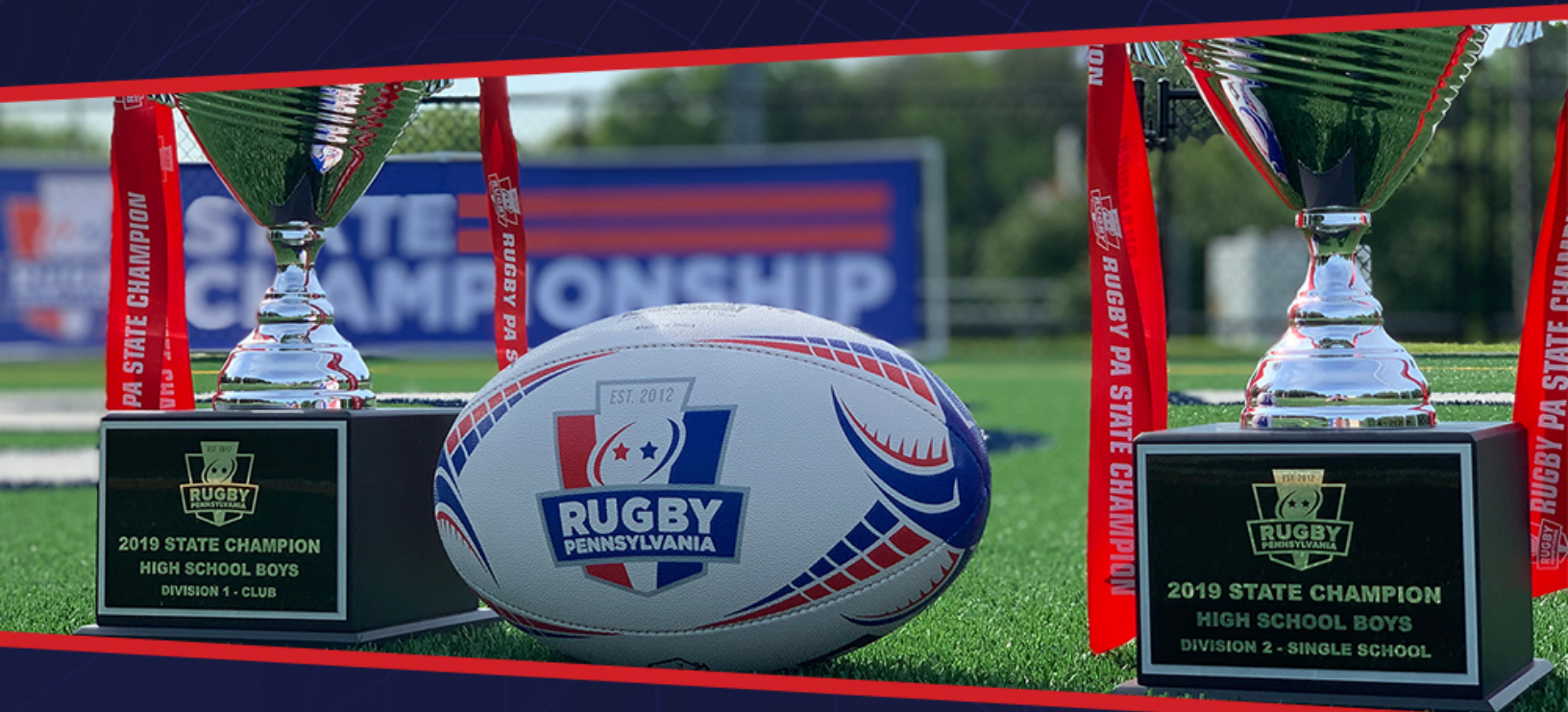
RugbyPA was formed in 2012 to manage, promote, and administer high school and youth rugby in Pennsylvania. Since its founding, RugbyPA has grown into one of the largest statewide rugby associations in the country. With more than 2200 registered players in its ranks in 2019, rugby is one of the fastest growing scholastic-aged sports statewide.

What We Are

RugbyPA is the statewide athletic organization affiliated with the United States Rugby Union (USA Rugby) and is operated exclusively to administer and foster the growth of scholastic and youth rugby and to educate the public and players in the sport of rugby union.



RUGBY™
STATE YOUTH RUGBY ORGANIZATION



Our Goal

Rugby PA's mission is to create an inclusive community that develops the character of its youth through the sport of rugby.

Our goal is to provide every student the opportunity to play rugby in Pennsylvania.



Why Rugby

- Inclusive and Empowering Community
- Physical, Mental, and Emotional Health benefits
- Title IX Compliance
- Scholarship and Career Opportunities
- Education for Injury Prevention
- Low Cost Investment



Inclusive Community

Promotes Gender Equality

Rugby is one of the only sports where the rules and regulations for men and women are exactly the same. Young girls are taught that they can do everything the boys can do, encouraging self confidence and breaking gender norms.

All Body Types Valued

In rugby all body types are needed and appreciated which helps foster body positivity for all of its players. There are positions for big, small, tall, short, fast, and strong individuals. Rugby offers inclusivity unlike any other sport. Any body can play rugby.

Low Cost for Players

To play rugby an individual needs a pair of cleats and a mouthguard, making it an accessible sport for low income students.



Physical, Mental, and Emotional Health Benefits

Physical Health Benefits

- Builds Strength
- Decreases Negative Health Risks
- Cardiovascular Fitness and Endurance
- Speed and Agility
- Ball handling and Kicking Skills

Mental & Emotional Health Benefits

- Reduces Stress
- Builds Confidence
- Sense of Belonging
- Strong Support System
- Community



Case Study: Play Rugby USA



- 88% improved physical fitness
- 82% of students report that their academic performance improved as a result of playing rugby
- 100% high school seniors graduated on time and enrolled in college
- 100% graduated with reduced risky behavior and improved workforce readiness
- 86% of students report that rugby is helping them develop into a person with more good qualities
- 81% of students are further along a pathway to happy, healthy lives and made significant gains in their positive youth development score which is linked to long term thriving



Title IX Compliance

In grades 3rd through 12th across the United States, there are 4 million less girls participating in sports than boys.

Schools are providing 1.3 million fewer chances for girls to play sports in high school as compared to boys. While more than half of the students at NCAA schools are women, they receive only 44% of the athletic participation opportunities.



Starting a girls rugby program would help to bridge the gap between girls and boys participation opportunities in sports and allow more girls to experience the everyday benefits of being an athlete and a part of a team.

By introducing rugby as a school sport, you would be opening the door for many girls who may not already be participating in sports. A rugby team can be as few as 12 girls, and as many a 30+.



Case Study: West Ada School District

2011 Title IX Investigation by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights based off of an anonymous complaint



Schools can satisfy Title IX in one of three ways:

- The percentage of male and female athletes are substantially proportionate to their population in the school. For example, if a school is 60 percent female, 60 percent of its athletes should be female.
- Show a history and continuing practice of expanding participation opportunities for the underrepresented gender.
- Show it is meeting the interests of the underrepresented gender

Solution

Started Girls Rugby 7s programs at 5 district High Schools to create more opportunities for girls' athletic participation.



Education for Injury Prevention

Focus on player safety through:

- Tackling form
- Ball carrier form
- Rules and regulations
- Continuous research and trials
- Coaching Courses



Reducing risk of head injury in rugby



A. EVIDENCE BASED APPROACH

Research from 1,500 matches determined:

- 76% of concussions occur in the tackle
- 72% of concussions in the tackle occur to the tackler
- The risk of head injury is 4.2x more likely with a high tackle



EXPERTS DETERMINED

- Need to change player behaviour
- Lower the height of the tackler

B. PHASE 1

Change behaviour by increasing sanctions for illegal tackles

RESULTS:

- 64% increase in high tackle penalty sanctions

PHASE 2

High Tackle Warning (HTW) trial at World Rugby U20 Championship 2018

Post game identification of upright tackles that resulted in a clear and obvious head contact received a HTW
Two high tackle warnings = one match suspension

PHASE 3

Lower legal tackle height trial

No tackling above the nipple line trialled at World Rugby U20 Trophy 2018

No tackling above the armpit line trialled at 2018-19 RFU Championship Cup

Football Teams Switch to Rugby-Style Tackles



Marshall University Study

Rugby style tackle decreases the force of impact and therefore could reduce the risk of concussion



Ohio State Football

Switched to coaching rugby style tackle in 2014, and went on to win two Big Ten titles, a national championship, and a defense ranked in the top 10 three times in four seasons



Georgia Southern Football

Football team reported fewer concussions after switching to rugby style tackling technique.

Opportunity for High School Athletes to see the same benefits with the introduction of a Rugby Program.

NCAA Emerging Sport For Women



- Women’s Rugby is one of 5 sports currently on the list of NCAA Emerging Sports for Women.
- Must achieve 40 varsity programs obtain full NCAA status.
- Currently there are 28 full varsity programs participating in three divisions of the National Intercollegiate Rugby Association (NIRA) competition.
- Programs can have over 60+ female students on their rosters and with scholarships opportunities.

CURRENT FULL VARSITY PROGRAMS



Scholarship and Career Opportunities

- Men's and Women's Collegiate Scholarships available at Universities across the country.
- Rugby scholarships and career opportunities abroad as the sport remains incredibly popular in countries such as England, Ireland, France, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.
- Reintroduced as an Olympic sport in the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.
- Professional opportunities domestically, with a fully professional league in the United States (Major League Rugby)



NATIONAL COLLEGIATE
RUGBY



Low Cost Investment

A Game For All

Unlike other team sports, the requirements to start a rugby program are very minimal. For a team, you simply need a uniform and rugby balls. For players, a mouth piece and cleats.

The inexpensive nature of rugby allows players from all backgrounds and circumstances to participate.



Start Up Costs

- Jerseys: $\$65 \times 12 = \$780 - 20\% = \$624$
- Shorts: $\$18 \times 12 = \$216 - 20\% = \$173$
- Balls: $\$18 \times 10 = \$180 - 20\% = \$144$
- Hit Shield $\$69 \times 4 = \$276 - 20\% = \$221$
- Team Registration = \$50
- Player Registration = $\$100 \times 12 = \1200

- Total = \$2412

(Discounts through Macron Rugby Partnership)

How To Introduce Rugby

Varsity Program

By introducing a varsity program at your school, you can provide students more participation opportunities for athletes of all shapes, sizes, and genders. Using the facilities and infrastructure already available at your school, this process can be made very simple. Creating a girls program can also help meet your Title IX requirements.

Club Team

By introducing a club team at your school, you can provide the same participation opportunities of a varsity program without the budgeting demands. A school club is treated the same as a varsity program in the eyes of Rugby PA. This also allows schools to develop a rugby participation base and team structure, make an easier transition to varsity status.

Physical Education

By introducing rugby as a sport offered in your physical education programs, you can begin to develop a rugby following. This will allow students to learn more about the game, and create interest in starting their own team. A flag rugby program also delivers physical education teachers new and fresh content for their students.



How to Start a Rugby Program

All the information needed to understand the requirements to starting a new program

Seasons

Fall | Sevens

The fall season consists of seven weeks of tournaments, hosted by clubs and colleges across the state. Teams play the 7 v 7 version of rugby, which is the same version of the game played in the Summer Olympics, known as "Sevens". The games are 14 minutes long and teams typically play 3-5 games per tournament. The season concludes with a Fall State Championship. The Fall season begins the second weekend of September and finishes the final weekend in October.

Spring | Fifteens

The spring season consists of eight weeks of matches against local competition. The teams will play the traditional 15 v 15 style of rugby, with matches lasting 70 minutes. The season concludes with playoffs and Spring State Championship for each division. The Spring season begins in mid-March and finishes in mid-May.

Spring 2024 | Scholastic Sevens

The proposed scholastic Sevens competition under the Emerging Sport classification with the PIAA will begin in the spring of 2024. The competition will run for 6 weeks, begin in March. Programs will be encouraged to practice on Mondays and Wednesdays, with round robin tournaments to take place on Fridays.



Competition

High School Girls

There are currently 16 High School Girls teams in Pennsylvania, with several more in the development stages. These girls compete in both the Fall and Spring Competitions. In the spring, teams are split into Division I and II based on participation numbers and level of competition. There are 7 Division I teams and 9 Division II teams.

High School Boys

There are currently 32 High School Boys teams in the state, with 18 of those being School clubs. Like the girls, the boys are split into two divisions based on level of competition. There are 10 Division I teams and 22 Division II teams.

Youth Rugby

Rugby PA also offers competitions for 5th - 9th Graders. These are split into two levels of competition, Youth (5th-7th) and Junior (8th-9th).

How to Start a Rugby Program

Compliance

Participation

Depending on the season, teams are required to have a certain level of participation. In the Fall Sevens, teams should have at least 12-15 players on a team. For the Spring Season, teams should have a minimum of 18-20 for Fifteens and 10-12 for Sevens.

Registrations

Teams must register each season with Rugby PA. The cost for the team registration is \$50 per season. Individual players must also register each season. The cost for a High School Player is \$100 in the fall and \$165 in the spring. These registration costs cover the player's USA Rugby Registration, the cost of referees, and the championship events.

Coaches

Each team must have a USA Rugby Level 1 Certified coach registered. These certifications course are offered every year by Rugby PA. Rugby PA also provides continuing education for all coaches and access to online coaching resources.

Requirements

Field

You will need to find a field for practice and games. Most schools will have access to these, but local clubs may need to contact local parks and rec for fields. A rugby field requires a space of at least 120 yards x 70 yards (High School Football field with soccer lines will work). Posts can be in ground or portable. Football field goal posts are acceptable.

Equipment

The equipment needs for a rugby team are very basic. Teams will need balls, cones, and uniforms. Players will need football/soccer cleats and a mouth piece. There are also other training tools like tackle bags and scrum sleds that may be used to teach particular facets of the game. Rhino Rugby offers all new Rugby PA teams 20% off for their first purchase of uniforms and equipment.

Referees

Rugby PA currently schedules and provides referees for all matches and tournaments. The costs are covered through team and player registrations.



2024 Proposed Schedule

In accordance with current PIAA regulations, Rugby will begin its season on March 4, 2024 as a spring sport. All school sponsored programs will compete over six weeks, including five match days against local school competition. Programs will be encouraged to practice on Mondays and Wednesdays, with round-robin match days to take place on Fridays.

Monday, March 4	First Practice
Wednesday, March 6	Practice
Friday, March 8	Practice
Monday, March 11	Practice
Wednesday, March 13	Practice
Friday, March 15	Match Day 1
Monday, March 18	Practice
Wednesday, March 20	Practice
Friday, March 22	Match Day 2
Monday, March 25	Practice
Wednesday, March 27	Practice
Friday, March 29	Match Day 3
Monday, April 1	Practice
Wednesday, April 3	Practice
Friday, April 5	Match Day 4
Monday, April 8	Practice
Wednesday, April 10	Practice
Friday, April 12	Match Day 5

Our Mission

Rugby PA currently has outlined objectives for the future that focus on creating new opportunities for students across the state. Our goal is for rugby to become a PIAA endorsed sport, offered in every school district. In order to achieve this, we must have 100 schools statewide with a rugby program. After meeting with representatives from the PIAA, we successfully campaigned for the creation of an Emerging Sport category. This will provide rugby a roadmap to becoming a fully sponsored PIAA sport.

To qualify for the new Emerging Sport classification, there must be 25 PIAA schools with either a club, varsity, or co-op team. This must be achieved for both boys and girls. We also hope to work with other scholastic athletic organizations like PAISAA, PJAA, and PCL to create rugby competitions within their membership.

We hope to use the sport of rugby as a pathway to new opportunities. With collegiate scholarships now being offered and rugby related careers emerging, the sport has begun to open doors that weren't previously available. Help us on our mission to grow the game, and develop the future.

