



## CONSTITUTION OF THE MINNESOTA RUGBY FOOTBALL

**Preamble:** The Minnesota Rugby Football Union is the governing body for the sport of rugby union in the State of Minnesota, and is recognized by regional and national governing bodies including USA Rugby and the Midwest Rugby Union as the Local Area Union that organizes and administers the sport of club and collegiate rugby in Minnesota and member regions outside of the state. The elected Officers of the Minnesota Rugby Union shall represent its members before other administrative bodies on a regional, national and international level, and will administer competition between regional bodies and visiting organizations as appropriate. The Minnesota Rugby Football Union has exclusive jurisdiction over its members in matters pertaining to the management and administration of rugby in Minnesota.

### **Article I - NAME**

1. The name of the organization shall be the Minnesota Rugby Football Union, hereafter called the Union.

### **Article II - PURPOSE**

1. The Union will work to promote and expand the sport of rugby union in Minnesota and surrounding areas, as well as foster the development of our member teams and player athletes in order to reach their highest potential. The Union will continuously encourage the integrity of the game of rugby and its values of fellowship, sportsmanship, diversity, inclusion, and discipline - with the goal of fostering a lifelong commitment to the sport among our members both on and off the pitch.

### **Article III - MEMBERSHIP**

1. All clubs in the state of Minnesota, and at the discretion of the membership, certain clubs outside of the state, will be eligible for membership.
  - a. A club is defined as any group of at least 8 eligible players that have organized for the purposes of playing rugby.
2. All clubs, individual members, and temporary member organizations belonging to the Union shall be bound by the by-laws and constitution of the Union.
3. The Union may grant individual or “at-large” memberships to clubs for a specified period of time to foster competition and growth of the game of rugby in the region. Individual memberships will be considered partial/non-voting members regarding matters of the Union, however they may apply for full membership at any time through majority vote of the Union membership. At no time can individual memberships be greater than 1/4 of the total number of member Union clubs.
4. The Union may grant temporary membership to clubs, which form for a limited period of time (such as tournaments, sevens teams, or select-side competition). At the time of application to the Union, the temporary club must define the length of their membership,

nature of their participation and when approved, a length of time will be specified by the Union Executive Committee. Temporary memberships will be considered partial/non-voting members regarding matters of the Union, however they may apply for full membership at any time through majority vote of the Union membership.

5. Revocation of membership, for cause, may only be accomplished by 2/3 vote of union members via a general meeting with at least 3/4 of voting member organizations present.
6. Non-Discrimination Statement: This organization shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, disability, or status as a veteran.

## **Article IV - ORGANIZATION**

### **Section 1: Union Structure**

#### **1. SENIOR CLUBS**

- a. The Union shall oversee and advocate for all senior clubs competing in divisions whose competitive leagues are administered by the Midwest Territory Union, USA Rugby, or other pertinent regional and national governing bodies.
- b. The Union shall organize and administer local competitive leagues for all member clubs to ensure eligibility and development for advancement into the postseason/greater regional or national competitive pathways.

#### **2. COLLEGIATE CLUBS**

- a. The Union shall organize the Northern Lights Collegiate Conference, consisting of both men's and women's regional collegiate teams playing competitively amongst each other, in order to encourage the introduction, teaching, promotion, and understanding of the sport of rugby union throughout the Conference, and to undertake other activities incidental or conducive to the furtherance of The Union's purpose.
  - i. Collegiate member clubs participating in alternative competitive pathways are not required to participate in the Northern Lights Collegiate Conference, however they will retain full membership rights as members of the Union.
- b. The Union and Northern Lights Collegiate Conference will have concurrent jurisdiction over its members in all matters pertaining to the administration of rugby activities to include, but not restricted to; competitions, discipline, player & team eligibility, all-star or select side teams and related matters.

## Section 2: Union Executive Committee

1. **President** (*Elected in even-numbered years*): The President will serve as the chief executive officer of The Union and exercise general supervision of its officers and members acting in any official capacity for The Union. The President will chair all general meetings of The Union and of the executive committee. The President has sole responsibility to ensure representation of The Union's interests to pertinent regional and national governing bodies regarding issues related to The Union and its membership.
2. **Vice-President** (*Elected in odd-numbered years*): The Vice-President will serve as the chief operating officer of The Union and will chair any executive committee meetings the President cannot attend. This officer will oversee the administration of the Union's internal events and projects, and will serve as the representative of Senior Club members with the executive committee and with pertinent governing bodies as appropriate.
3. **Secretary** (*Elected in odd-numbered years*): The Secretary will be responsible for the correspondence of the Union. The secretary will record and maintain the minutes of all general and executive committee meetings, which will be made available to membership. The secretary shall also ensure the general playing schedule is available for all member clubs, and manage The Union website and social media platforms to ensure clear communication and transparency to Union membership.
4. **Treasurer** (*Elected in even-numbered years*): The Treasurer will administer the financial affairs of the Union and the Northern Lights Collegiate Conference, and will prepare reports for the executive committee and on an annual basis to the membership. The treasurer shall maintain records in such a manner that they can be audited by an external entity.
5. **Technical Director** (*Elected in odd-numbered years*): The Technical Director shall develop programs to foster the development of our member teams and player athletes in order to reach their highest potential, including but not limited to the formation of select-side and all-star teams and organizing coaching and player clinics. The technical director will develop and maintain a roster of all club coaches to maintain regular contact and ensure requisite certifications are met for competitive/sanctioned play.
6. **Disciplinarian** (*Elected in even-numbered years*): The Disciplinarian will be responsible for the disciplinary policies of The Union and the Northern Lights Collegiate Conference for administering these policies and procedures. The disciplinarian will respond to all requests for disciplinary action in a timely manner.
7. **Men's Collegiate Commissioner** (*Elected in odd-numbered years*): The Men's Collegiate Conference Commissioner will be responsible for developing, administering and maintaining the league schedule for all collegiate men's clubs

in the Northern Lights Collegiate Conference. The Men's Collegiate Conference Commissioner is also responsible for communicating with the collegiate member clubs and acts as a representative to college programs and administrators.

8. **Women's Collegiate Commissioner** (*Elected in even-numbered years*): The Women's Collegiate Conference Commissioner will be responsible for developing, administering and maintaining the league schedule for all collegiate women's clubs in the Northern Lights Collegiate Conference. The Women's Collegiate Conference Commissioner is also responsible for communicating with the collegiate member clubs and acts as a representative to college programs and administrators.
9. **Collegiate Representatives** (*Elected every year*): A men's and a women's collegiate representatives will be elected by the membership for the purpose of providing direct feedback on collegiate issues discussed at executive committee meetings. These representatives must be active student members of a collegiate member organization.

### **Section 3: Other Representatives**

1. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Representative**: This individual is a representative appointed by simple majority vote of The Union executive committee to advise Union leadership when developing, implementing and tracking ongoing strategic initiatives related to enriching diversity, equity, and inclusion among the Union and its members. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Representative will work directly with the Union Disciplinarian to ensure disciplinary concerns are addressed in an unbiased way, and to advise appropriate action in the case of biased or discriminatory actions by any Union members or organizations. The DE&I Representative is welcome to attend Board of Director meetings in *an advisory, non-voting capacity*.
2. **Health and Safety Representative**: This individual is a representative appointed by simple majority vote of The Union executive committee to advise Union leadership when developing, implementing and tracking ongoing strategic initiatives related to player safety. The Health and Safety (H&S) Representative will work directly with the Union Technical Director to research and disseminate safety best practices to Union members. This representative should have a background in healthcare, such as physician, advanced practice provider, nurse, or athletic trainer. The H&S Representative is welcome to attend Board of Director meetings in *an advisory, non-voting capacity*.
3. **Guest Representatives**: These individuals are representatives appointed by partner organizations, such as the Minnesota Referee Society and Minnesota Youth Rugby, and are welcome to attend Board of Director meetings in *an advisory, non-voting capacity*.

#### **Section 4: Elections and Appointments**

1. Officers of the executive committee shall be elected in the designated year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Union by simple majority of Union membership. The term of office shall be two years unless otherwise designated in Article IV, Section 2.
  - a. In the event that no single candidate achieves a simple majority for election, the two candidates with the highest number of votes shall then participate in an immediate runoff election until a simple majority is obtained.
2. No person shall hold more than one office.
3. Officers are eligible for re-election without limitations of terms served.
4. Should any elected office become vacant, the president shall appoint a replacement to finish the term. If the presidency becomes vacant, the vice-president will become president.
  - a. Such action must be confirmed by a 2/3 vote of the remaining executive committee officers.
  - b. Should no appointment be made, there will be an election to fill the office at the time of the next meeting of the general Union membership.
5. An officer may be removed from office by a 2/3 vote of the executive committee, or by 2/3 vote of union members via a special meeting with at least 3/4 of member organizations present. An election will be held immediately to fill such a vacancy.

#### **Section 5: Governing Rules**

1. The Union executive committee shall utilize Robert's Rules of Order in all executive committee meetings.
2. Each executive committee member shall have one vote.
  - a. The president shall only cast a deciding vote in the case of an equal number of votes on a matter before the committee.
  - b. For a binding vote to be taken, a quorum of at least 2/3 of elected members are required to cast a vote at any meeting, however board members unable to attend may cast a vote by proxy if needed.
3. All meetings of the Union executive committee are open to any members with prior notification and a specific rationale/agenda (such as observer or to address a specific concern).
  - a. A good faith effort will be made to notify members of all executive committee meetings, as well as upon request.

## **Article V - MEETINGS**

1. The Union will hold at least one annual general meeting (AGM) of the entire membership each year.
2. The Secretary, at the President's request, may call an extraordinary meeting.
3. Union Members shall receive notification at least 21 days in advance of any general meeting in the absence of extenuating circumstances.
4. At the general meeting of the membership, a quorum will consist of a majority of the elected officers of the Union and delegates from a majority of the member clubs.
5. Each member club shall have one vote.
  - a. A member club is defined as an organization which pays full union dues (excluding individual player fees) annually to be a member of the Union.
  - b. Each member club is allowed to have one member speak for and vote on behalf of the member club.
  - c. In the event a member club is unable to attend a Union meeting, they may appoint a proxy to speak and vote on their behalf.
    - i. This proxy must be identified to the secretary by the member club in advance of any membership meeting.
6. All matters, except those concerning the constitution shall be decided by a simple majority. In the case of a tie, the president shall cast the deciding vote.

## **Article VI - DUES AND FEES**

1. MN Union dues shall be voted on each year at the annual general meeting of the membership. The budget will define the payments to be made by member clubs to support Union administration, activities, and community growth of rugby in Minnesota.
2. Clubs may also be responsible for the payment of annual dues to the pertinent regional and national governing bodies of which they are members.
3. Referee Society fees are separate from Union membership and dues, and are not requisite to membership in good-standing with the Union.
  - a) *If a club is in bad-standing with a Referee Society due to non-payment of fees, that Referee Society may take administrative action per their policies, as well as withhold assignment of future referees from their Society until such a time that fees have been paid.*

## **Article VII - AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

1. The constitution may be amended by 2/3 majority vote of Union members at a general meeting of membership.
2. Members will be notified in writing of any proposed alterations to the constitution at least 21 days in advance of the scheduled meeting where such alteration will be considered.



## BYLAWS OF THE MINNESOTA RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

The by-laws will serve as a guide for officers and members on how the Union will conduct its affairs. By-laws can be adopted and modified by a simple majority of the members at a general meeting where a quorum is present.

### **Article I - COMMITTEE PROCEDURES**

1. The Union can form standing, temporary, and sub-committees as appropriate. Each committee will have at least two members from amongst the executive committee or general membership of the Union.
2. Unless indicated below, membership on a standing committee requires approval of the executive committee.
3. Each committee will prepare plans as applicable as well as a yearly budget for their activities as appropriate. These committees shall keep minutes, correspondence, and files of their activities and provide to the secretary for publication in a timely manner.
4. Committees may create sub-committees to assist them in specified portions of their duties.

### **Article II - COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

The following are the standing committees of the Union:

1. **Finance Committee:** This committee will be chaired by Union Treasurer and the Vice-President, who will work collaboratively to prepare the budget for the Union. The finance committee will monitor the enrollment of clubs and individuals in the payment of dues.
2. **Select-Side Committees:** This committee will be Chaired by the Technical Director. There will be a committee for each Minnesota select-side team. The representative select-side committees for club teams shall include an appropriate club liaison chosen by the Technical Director to represent club rugby. The representative select-side committees for collegiate teams shall include the appropriate Collegiate Commissioner. The committees shall select coaches and/or team managers who will oversee the administration of each select-side program.
3. **Disciplinary Committee:** This committee shall be Chaired by the Disciplinarian and include the DE&I Representative as appropriate. This committee will develop and administer the disciplinary policies covering actions on the field and off the field actions which could bring disrepute to the game of rugby or the Union, as well as ensure member clubs honor fixtures scheduled. The Union will adhere to the disciplinary policies of the pertinent regional and national governing bodies. All member clubs shall receive copies of the Union's disciplinary policies and procedures at the annual general meeting of the membership.

4. **Communication and Publicity:** The Secretary will Chair the communications and publicity committee and will develop a publicity plan for the Union.
5. **Strategic Planning:** This committee will be Chaired by the President and will monitor and report on the strategic planning activities of the larger rugby community for the benefit of the Union members.

## **Article III - UNION POLICIES**

### **Section 1: Membership**

1. **Members in Good Standing.** In order to play other clubs in the Union or at the regional and international level, individual members and clubs must be in good standing with the Union. Clubs in good standing will be declared by the Union on a regular basis.
2. **Suspension of Good Standing.** For non-compliance with the laws of the game, eligibility rules, or the constitution or by-laws, membership in good standing of any individual member or club may be temporarily revoked by 2/3 vote of the executive committee at the recommendation of the Union disciplinarian. All adverse decisions may be appealed to the Union, MWRFU, USAR, or representative governing body.
  - a. Clubs which knowingly play other clubs that are not in good standing with the Union will be subject to disciplinary action.
  - b. Clubs which knowingly allow play of individual members that are not in good standing with the Union will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Section 2: Referees**

1. The Union requires that all matches are officiated by certified referees.

### **Section 3: Insurance**

1. The Union shall abide by all liability and health insurance requirements of the MWRFU, USAR or representative governing body.
2. The Union shall carry a Directors and Officers insurance plan to ensure protection of Executive Committee members and Union representatives from personal liability while performing duties and functions on behalf of the Union
3. All Union members will have health insurance and liability coverage to participate in matches played in Minnesota, and are required to maintain active registration with their respective regional or national governing body.

#### **Section 4: Northern Lights Collegiate Conference**

1. The Northern Lights Collegiate Conference champions will be determined by league play. The following are the general rules for these leagues.
  - a. The appropriate Collegiate Commissioner will be the director of the league and will rule on all league matters.
  - b. There shall be at least two divisions/tiers of regular season play for both men and women. Each team is required to play all of the teams in their division each season, unless season length or divisional size necessitate pool play. All games must be completed by the Minnesota Collegiate Championships.
  - c. Standings will be based on a point system, four (4) points for a win, two (2) for a tie, zero (0) points for a loss. A bonus point (1) will be awarded for scoring four or more tries, or for losing a match by seven points or less.
  - d. The Collegiate Commissioners shall be responsible for collecting and posting match results through communication with the assigned referee and participating teams.
    - i. In order to facilitate this, the winning team will report the score of the match to the appropriate Collegiate Commissioner within two days of the scheduled match.
    - ii. Scores that are not reported may be counted as a loss for both teams.
  - e. Collegiate eligibility rules will be enforced for all league matches.
    - i. The Union will generally follow the collegiate eligibility rules as prescribed by USAR or representative governing body. Deviations from these rules will only be allowed with the approval of the appropriate collegiate liaison after consultation with the executive committee.

#### **Section 5: Forfeiture Policy**

1. The non-offending team will be awarded a reported match score of 28-0.
2. The forfeiting team may be ineligible for local league or collegiate postseason play during the competitive season in which the forfeit occurred.
3. The forfeiting team may be required to resign home field advantage for the next season's competitive match against the non-offending team.

4. If a team forfeits two or more matches in a local league of collegiate season, they may be relegated to a lower competitive division/tier for the next season.
5. If a team forfeits a match within 5 days of a scheduled event they may be held liable, by the Union, for any non-refundable expenses incurred by the opposing/non-offending team or organization.

#### **Section 6: Match Cancellation Policy**

1. If a local league or competitive collegiate match is cancelled due to unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances such as inclement weather, both teams will attempt to reschedule the match for a later date during the current league season. If neither team is able to reschedule despite the *reasonable* good faith efforts of both parties, the teams may agree to accept a recorded match score of 0-0.
2. If attempts to reschedule the match are unsuccessful due to one team not acting in *reasonable* good faith, as determined by the Vice President or respective Collegiate Commissioner, the cancelled match will be considered a forfeiture with the offending team subject to the provisions of Article III, Section 5.

#### **Section 7: Tournament Policy**

1. Any team wishing to host more than two other clubs on the same date must apply to the Vice-President or representative Collegiate Commissioner to host such a tournament. Such application shall give the general description of the event. Clubs hosting without such approval may be subject to disciplinary action.

#### **Section 8: All-Minnesota Tournament**

1. The Union shall endeavor to organize and host an All-Minnesota Tournament in the fall or spring of each year. There shall be no other matches of Union collegiate teams on this weekend without permission of the representative Collegiate Commissioner or Executive Committee.

#### **Section 9: Tours**

1. The Vice-President must approve all incoming and outgoing tours. The Vice-President will then forward all such requests to the USAR or representative governing body for their approval as required.

#### **Section 10: Fields and Kits.**

1. The laws of the game regarding kit and field specifications as described in the IRB Rugby Referee and Laws Handbook will be followed in all matches.
2. All questions of appropriate field conditions, required safety equipment, and kit will be judged and ruled upon by the referee officiating the match.