

**Georgia Rugby Union**  
**AGM Minutes**  
**January 15, 2000**

9:08am Meeting called to order by GRU President Brad Baker. Treasurer, Gary Kent took roll call, and determined that a quorum was present. Secretary Tim Burke read the minutes from the '99 AGM, the minutes from the previous meeting were approved as read without additions or deletions.

Opening Remarks.

GRU President Brad Baker commented about the general poor standing of Rugby South in relation to the rest of the country as far as the ITT's. Baker made a point of the need for a stronger Rugby South, and GRU. Baker mentioned the poor contributions by GRU clubs to the ITT's and the need for more positive commitments by GRU clubs.

Treasurers Report.

GRU treasurer Gary Kent described a windfall for the GRU, as of this meeting; the GRU has over sixteen thousand dollars in the bank. Kent also explained that this money belonged to all in the GRU and that there are funds available for events etc., which promote the GRU.

Kent further explained that Golden Isles is back in good standing with the GRU with exception. More on this Golden Isles issue will be discussed later in these minutes.

Kent expressed that he felt either the GRU is losing some players, or some members of clubs are not CIPP registered. Kent explained some discrepancies in the number of CIPP registered players on rosters from last year. Kent mentioned that nationwide the number of CIPP registered players is up, over thirty one thousand, not including colleges. This subject will be further evaluated.

A detailed financial statement was distributed to all in attendance at this meeting. Treasurer's report was approved without additions or deletions.

President's Report.

President Brad Baker talked briefly about the Rugby South Meeting that was held in Destin Florida. He touched briefly on the topic of realignment of the men's divisions and about the college sides rejoining their LAU's. Baker stressed that ultimately the realignment would improve competition and exposure for all clubs, even though the travel aspect has met with some opposition. Baker explained that division one clubs are now division two, and division two are now three. There are only two division one clubs in the GRU, Life College and the Atlanta Renegades.

There is no current league structure for women's clubs.

Restructuring for college clubs is being taken on by Dan McDougal from Georgia Tech. McDougal will be handling all matters of collegiate play, scheduling, discipline, select sides.

### Collegiate Report.

Newly appointed collegiate coordinator, Dan McDougal reported that he has been getting some help for his large task from the Citadel group. McDougal said that the collegiate tournament, LAU all-star weekend would always be held the week before thanksgiving, due to the academic calendar.

McDougal's goal is to improve select side play. He is also working on making a men's division one collegiate schedule work for all concerned.

McDougal has enlisted the help of Brian Gale from the Citadel to be the coordinator of men's collegiate division two.

McDougal announced that he is looking for a volunteer for a women's collegiate coordinator. President Baker also stressed the importance of this position.

### Committee Reports.

#### I. Coaching Coordinator.

Jason Weeks was absent from this meeting. Baker explained that he would most likely step down.

Baker talked about the need and importance for each club to have a certified and accredited coach. This will ultimately improve the quality of rugby in the south. He also mentioned that there is a rule, which is widely being ignored, that all college clubs have an accredited coach on staff. There is a need for more coaches on all levels of GRU rugby.

There is an application for holding a coaching clinic on the Rugby South website. There is a lot involved however, such as classrooms, pitches, etc.

## II. Disciplinary Committee.

Acting committee chair, Brad Baker, mentioned that four disciplinary incidents were reported. One club had a repeat offense in which this repeat problem has been worked out with this club.

Baker told the group that there is a need for a disciplinary committee chairperson. Baker explained the duties of this person, and how they would work closely with Paul Gouthier, from Rugby South. The chairperson should utilize two other representatives to review each presented case.

Gary Kent explained the procedures for reporting any disciplinary problems or issues. Kent also explained the guidelines for judgment to be handed down by the disciplinary committee.

## III. Referee Society.

Mike Cobb talked about the referee society sponsored “Conference on the Game”, to be held July 21<sup>st</sup> thru July 24<sup>th</sup> in Atlanta. Cobb explained that this conference was mainly for coaches and referees, but that all were welcome.

Cobb then talked about those clubs in arrears to SERRS, which include Golden Isles, Jacksonville State, and USC-Women.

Cobb touched briefly on the referee shortage. There are 70 clubs that SERRS serves with 31 referees. Cobb explained that there are about 6 referees per weekend that are unavailable. Cobb suggested that one member of each club become a certified referee to address the shortage. He also talked about the possibility of scheduling collegiate matches during the week, on Wednesday nights, Friday nights, or on Sundays; because of this shortage. Cobb said that money is not an issue with attracting and or keeping referees; the largest complaint was abuse by players and coaches.

Cobb asked all women’s club representatives in attendance to submit names for potential women referees.

## Elections.

Elections for officers of the GRU for 2000 were held next.

President – Brad Baker, unopposed

Vice –Pres- Randy Joseph, unopposed

Treasurer- Gary Kent, unopposed

Secretary – Tim Burke, unopposed.

Member-at-large member Regina Etheridge did not want to run for reelection. Baker explained the duties of the Member-at-large position. After some discussions from the floor about the position, the importance of it, and the need for a women's voice on the executive committee; Leah Barnes and Gene Higgins were both nominated for the MOL position. After closed testimonials, and discussion, Leah Barnes was elected.

10:55am – 11:20am BREAK

#### New Business.

There are petitions from four new clubs to join the GRU, Augusta Women, Macon Men, UGA Women, and Golden Tornado Women. There were no discussions or votes against admitting these clubs to the GRU.

#### By-Law Changes.

Kent reviewed and explained the new categories of union members. He also discussed that if a club decided to resign from the union that it was still liable for dues and other financial obligations to the union.

Kent stressed that the reason for by-law changes is to prevent the Board of Directors from acting on a whim. Kent made a motion to delete section 5.01 from the by-laws being that this section is redundant.

McDougal commented from the floor, about the possibility of changing the name of the GRU due to the number of clubs in the union from outside the state of Georgia. Brief discussion followed and a motion was tabled until next AGM, to get more input from these clubs outside the state.

#### 2000 Budget.

Kent explained that the budget under consideration for 2000 nets to a negative three thousand dollars. This negative amount is due to the surplus from '99 and due to the all-star situation that did not materialize. Kent gave a detailed handout on the proposed budget.

The collegiate budget and financial situation is less clear. Kent asked for input for what the college club needs are, and what funds are available from the schools. He is looking for what figure is comfortable collegiate clubs to pay to the union.

There was some discussion by the entire group relating to the costs versus the income at collegiate level. There was some open comparison of the colleges as far as what each school receives from the university, and what the players themselves have to pay. There were also some views expressed regarding the need to develop college rugby and how this could be done. It was suggested that senior men's clubs in the GRU should help finance collegiate clubs to aid with development.

Kent explained, that the GRU spends \$659.00 for collegiate sides; including all-star expenses and Rugby South dues. A motion was made by Baker that all GRU Collegiate sides should pay dues of \$700.00 per year to the GRU. This motion was seconded by Gene Higgins, and was unanimously passed.

Discussion now shifted to dues structure for men's clubs. There were some discussions regarding reducing men's dues to \$20.00 per player, down from \$25.00 per player. After a floor survey, Baker made a motion of \$100.00 per men's club and \$25.00 per player in the GRU, with minimum total dues by a club being \$400.00. Gene Higgins seconded this motion. This motion passed with Greenville and Macon opposing.

A second follow up motion was made to put an extra \$5.00 towards a developmental or endowment fund, to promote the GRU through GRU sanctioned events. Requests for funding from this fund cannot be used for relief of dues by member clubs. Brad Baker made this motion, seconded by Gene Higgins. This motion passed, Gary Kent opposed.

Gary Kent explained the proposal to spend \$500.00 to host the opening reception in Atlanta at The Conference of the Game, to be held in July.

The GRU Budget was unanimously approved, with the above-described additions.

### Suspended Clubs

Golden Isles is currently in good standing as of this meeting, however they are in arrears for older dues. Gary Kent discussed options of possible sanctions against the clubs past due in their fees owed.

Brad Baker made a motion that minimum dues payable to the GRU are set at \$500.00 for senior men clubs, and that senior associate member clubs have minimum dues of \$300.00. This motion passed.

Next there was some discussions regarding clubs delinquent to SERRS and what implications this would have. Brad Baker stated that to play rugby in the GRU, clubs must be in good standing in both the GRU and SERRS.

A motion was now made to suspend Golden Isles, if they do not honor their past due commitment to the referee's society within 60 days (by March 15). This motion passed, without any opposition.

### Referee Abuse

G. Kent spoke about general behavior of some involved in rugby and their actions towards referees. Kent encouraged more reporting of abuse incidents, to increase the penalties and sanctions for such actions.

### Fall Competition

President Baker stated that The GRU would like to propose a fall tournament at the Polo Grounds in Atlanta, involving men's, women's, and collegiate clubs. Baker feels that this tournament would give exposure to potential select-side players. The spring season is already set as the Rugby South matrix schedule.

### New Business (addition)

A reminder that USA Rugby has specific protocol for players touring and or moving to another country and to contact Ray Davis from Rugby South for more information. A club must be "sanctioned" to be officially on tour and if a club is hosting a foreign side.

In closing Brad Baker thanked all in attendance and asked everyone to get a volunteer from his or her clubs to attend a referee's clinic.

ADJOURNMENT.