

**2005 GRU AGM
Meeting Minutes
January 30, 2005 12:00pm EST**

Meeting Called to Order – 12:17pm

Roll Call:

In Attendance: Atlanta Bucks RFC, Atlanta Harlequins WRFC, Atlanta Old White RFC, Atlanta Renegades RFC, Auburn U RFC, Clemson U RFC (via phone), Clemson U WRFC, Columbus/Fort Benning RFC, Georgia Southern U WRFC, Georgia Tech RFC, Greenville RFC (via phone), High Country RFC, Jacksonville State RFC, Montgomery RFC, Savannah RFC (via proxy), UGA RFC

Absent: Atlanta Heat WRFC, Emory U RFC (accident), Georgia Southern U RFC (email notification), Hilton Head RFC, Life RFC (email notification), Macon RFC, UGA WRFC (accident), SERRS

Not in Good Standing: Atlanta Heat WRFC, Auburn U RFC, Jacksonville State U RFC, UGA RFC

Approval of Previous Minutes: as read by Carly Harrington at 12:28pm, Columbus, Montgomery

Auburn U RFC arrives at 12:29pm

President's Report: Danita Knox

Thank you to Dominic Duffy for providing AnswerThink's office space for the meeting and to past executive officers and committee chairpersons.

Review of South AGM – South officers remain the same as in 2004, but USA Rugby has eliminated special interest board members to streamline operations, so each territory gets 3 reps (Knox, Gardner, Smolka).

USA Rugby has launched online CIPP registration – it is immediate and required by all players.

Changes by USA Rugby may affect International Player status for some clubs (3 year resident applications, etc.) Send information to Secretary, Carly Harrington, if players on your club are affected.

Dominic Duffy (Atlanta Old White) questioned the South policy on promotion/relegation of DI/DII/DIII clubs. **ACTION:** Danita Knox will request a written policy from the South to distribute to clubs.

Status of GRU – 2004 had mixed results – intended to grow the sport, have larger group activities, the HS initiative. There were no member programs and we need to target hosting these events in the future – allow clubs to get value for what they pay in dues with coaching advancement, etc. Growth will happen with HS Rugby.

Referee Notification is the responsibility of the club to SERRS – must send in schedule and contact ref by Wednesday prior to the game.

Georgia Games – Attempted to use to promote sport – Eric Pfeifer huge supporter – conflicts with Patrick Culley benefit. Date for 2005 is 7/17/05.

No GRU 7s in 2004, is the body interested in anything other than collegiate competitions? There won't be anything scheduled without the desire of the general body.

Jacksonville State U RFC arrives at 12:35pm

Treasurer's Report: Gary Kent at 12:49pm

GRU operated within the budget for 2004 with funds used as allocated and requested funding using those funds that were not used as allocated.

Outstanding dues payable: Atlanta Heat WRFC, Auburn U RFC, Jacksonville State U RFC, UGA RFC. Will send accounting to Auburn. UGA has turned in required paperwork. Heat will do what they can, but have been unable to satisfy their obligation. Jax State brought \$300 check to meeting and the body will decide how to handle going forward.

No outstanding debts.

Explained to Pete Embs (Atlanta Renegades) that retained earnings could be used by special request and that \$1025 in fines were for non-attendance and U of A failure to participate in matrix from the South.

Concern about the status of clubs - dues from Greenville and Montgomery declined significantly from 2003.

South Directors did not attend meetings, so those expenses were not incurred.

Discussion of NC ref shortage. Dominic Duffy (Atlanta Old White) asked for GRU to host courses to certify retiring, etc. players.

Discipline Report: Dan MacDougald at 1:08pm

Hilton Head - Mike Sherry - 2 weeks

Kelly Parsons - 4 weeks

Atlanta Renegades - Tony Brooks - referred to disciplinary committee to be held on Wednesday, February 2, 2005. Current members are Doug Stoltz and Doug Porter. Charge is only continued abuse of ref.

High Country RFC arrives at 1:11pm

High School Rugby Update: Dan MacDougald at 1:11pm

Oconee HS, Lassiter HS, Pope HS, Atlanta International School (maybe), Augusta (U-19 city side). High school club belongs to the HS, not the men's club that assists.

1st game is scheduled March 4 and season will go through mid-May for a State Champion. Will rearrange competition to include whatever teams are playing. Friday night games with free referees (per G. Payne).

Following the Bryant Model as the USA Rugby Foundation will consider grant applications for various amounts if you follow it. Same as Tennessee - it uses the Athletic Director and coaching staff to help begin the program. Tennessee has experienced rapid growth - 400-500 playing in Knoxville area.

Expects participation to double each year so the problem may soon be who runs it - GRU or HS Association.

Problems recruiting coaches. 1/23/05 - coaching clinic hosted by Jason Weeks and Paule Barford (5 attendees) for \$25. Did not provide USA Rugby certification, but GRU certification and Positive Coaching Alliance (www.positivecoach.org), which we are insisting all HS coaches receive.

Solicited assistance – information to be posted on GRU website - To join HS discussion group: <http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/gahsrugby/>

Potential project for retained earnings – not jerseys – maybe sending people to clinics & seminars are better expenditures.

Secretary departed at 1:25pm

USA Rugby is out of money, but ahs partnered with Positive Coaching Alliance (see above.)

Jim Gaines (Clemson) suggested GRU name change to help HS clubs be aligned with states.

All-Star Report:

Collegiates (Vince Atkinson - via phone) - GRU had strong showing, good representatives from many colleges and several players on preliminary list for the South. South taking team to NashBash.

GRU won LAU tourney.

Women (Danita Knox) – U-23 (1-1) had 25 women at camp with 8 players invited to South U-23. Won over North Carolina and lost to Florida in finals.

Dominic Duffy (Atlanta Old White) inquired if there will be men’s GRU competition and Kent responded that the South is looking to restructure as the LAU format is not working.

South 7s has lost a seed because Charlotte moved to MARFU – Getting high-level players to participate is still an issue

Referee’s Report: Graeme Payne (via email)

1. Referee numbers have not increased significantly. We currently have approximately 30 full-time referees covering the three union area (GRU, Palmetto and NC). We have approximately 13 part-time refs who help cover games.
2. We generally cover most games but there are some games that go uncovered due to unavailability of refs. We welcome anyone interested in refereeing to contact one of the SERRS officers – list posted on USA Rugby South website.
3. We will continue to run referee clinics. Hope to have a schedule published soon for next six months. Will include a course in Atlanta. We would encourage all clubs to have at least one certified Level 1 referee and 2-4 certified TJs. Note that some unions make this a requirement. We will publish information about upcoming clinics via email and websites.
4. Tournaments – we will soon be publishing revised guidelines regarding tournament coverage.
5. Referee development – new guidelines from USA Rugby Referee Association requires that referees can only be promoted to levels above C1 based on assessments from Division 1 games of 80 minutes in length. This reduces the value of tournaments for exchanges and assessment purposes. We encourage tournament organizers to help us by considering full-length games in tournaments where Division 1 teams will play.
6. Referee abuse – throughout the South there is growing concern about referee abuse especially from the sidelines. A clear statement regarding this will likely be sent out but all clubs are asked to ensure appropriate behavior from the sideline.
7. Contacting the referee – there were several instances in the Fall where the referee was not contacted when a cancellation occurred and traveled. SERRS policy requires that the referee be paid in such circumstances. If a club is found to consistently offend on this requirement, referee services may be withdrawn for a period of time.
8. Finally, please remind all clubs that sideline ropes and goal pad posts are a USA Rugby requirement and games will not commence without them.

Youth Report:

Admittance of New Clubs: Statesboro, Valdosta

Valdosta Cannibals applied for associate membership. Currently have 23 young people on roster with ½ with 3-4 years of experience and other ½ new.

Traveled to attend meeting in person.

Nominated – Columbus, Seconded – Montgomery, Passed by Acclimation

Statesboro Blues were not in attendance but Kent noted that they wanted to become members and requested body to allow the EC to decide on admittance. Old White, UGA.

Elections:

President – Danita Knox

Vice President – John Bellus

Treasurer – Gary Kent

Secretary – Carly Harrington

At Large – Doug Porter

Committee Chairs (DK announce positions that need filling):

GRU Game Commissioner

Discipline

Marketing/Communications (MARCUM) – Jim Gaines

High School Rugby – Dan MacDougald

Discussion Funding requests – EC looking for some direction from general body members on their preference for funding.

Dan MacDougald – Recommends supporting HS Rugby - 21 jerseys & 10 balls for 4 teams as a good investment

Unknown thinks that supporting Select Side players should be done by club

Youth Rugby – most members supported idea. Gary Kent noted that HS at this time is not really part of union. New territory for union.

All Star Sponsorship – Support Players (Bellus)

GRU should support programs that help support growth – Dominic Duffy

Member Programs – Steve Keller

Coaching & New Player Clinics

Money to Colleges - Clemson

Auburn – recruiting is a problem with no real coach

Send coaches to colleges to help Jax State and Auburn

Set up GRU coaching clinic to be held with All-Star Competitions, have coaches travel (GRU to cover expenses) to colleges to give camps & help on admin direction.

ACTION: Dominic & John – look up coaches, Danita to look into providing a coaching clinic geared towards helping GRU coaches get better – maybe in conjunction w/ GRU All Star or LAU Competition

2005 Budget Discussion – Gary Kent

Full Member Clubs (\$200 + \$25/head), Full Member Colleges (\$800/year), Associate Colleges (\$400/year), Associate Clubs (\$400/year)

Clubs in Arrears:

Heat (\$350) – Harlequins vouch for them.

Jacksonville State (in arrears for 2 years) – Proposal by Dan MacDougald that they pay 2005 dues & what GRU has paid to the South on their behalf (\$1000 policy). They stay current on their dues and get CIPPed.

Auburn (\$900 + \$800) – Ruggerfest, Car washes, alumni, suggest a home match fee, sponsors. Have a new coach and faculty advisor.

Discussion of Collegiate dues structure – Gene from Montgomery questioned whether collegiate dues were too high considering that at each AGM, some college was in financial trouble. Most thought that the problem was organizational & leadership rather than financial, Gary noted that the GRU hasn't gone up on dues in years.

Auburn Ruggerfest on again – April 23 & 24 – Collegiate only – this should help them get back on track financially

Jax State doesn't get \$ from school – new officers appealed for help. Gary noted that GRU Collegiate Director Nigel Platt had offered to help in the past with no response from Jax. State. Dominic provided his contact info and said that he would offer some fundraising ideas and some organizational input for all collegiate teams to use.

Motion to accept proposed budget- Harlequins, Renegades

Meeting Attendance Requirements – Danita noted that she's gotten several inquiries into changing the GRU policy. Gary Kent noted that it was not in the By Laws but voted on by the GB a few years ago to enforce attendance. The members present didn't have a problem with the policy and asked to table the point.

Old Business:

Logo presented by Jim Gaines last year. Since New Business topic (Union name change) would impact logo, Danita asked to table that discussion until new business was addressed.

New Business:

Union Name (Jim Gaines) -

Reasons needed are to be more representative of non-Georgia members, help define LAU for parents as HS Rugby is started. Parents understand State affiliation, but not GRU structure. Name change would minimize confusion.

Group – This should be discussed further, not done quickly in last 5 minutes of meeting. Some possible names were thrown out to incorporate 3 states – SouthAtlantic, Southeast TriState, SAG, AGS, SERU. Shouldn't be limited to state names as other states may come or go. **ACTION:** Jim Gaines to do more research and report back to group. Danita noted that members may be able to discuss and/or vote on remotely once details are gathered. DK to follow-up with Gaines.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10