

**2006 GRU AGM
Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2006 12:00pm EST**

Meeting Called to Order – 12:15pm

Roll Call:

In Attendance: Atlanta Bucks RFC, Atlanta Harlequins WRFC, Atlanta Old White RFC, Atlanta Renegades RFC, Clemson U WRFC, Columbus/Fort Benning RFC, Georgia Southern U RFC, Georgia Southern U WRFC, Georgia Tech RFC, Jacksonville State RFC, Kennesaw State U RFC, Life RFC, UGA RFC, UGA WRFC, Valdosta RFC

Absent: Auburn U RFC, Clemson U RFC, Emory U RFC, High Country RFC, Hilton Head RFC, Macon RFC, Montgomery RFC, Savannah RFC, SERRS

Not in Good Standing: Auburn U RFC, Emory U RFC

Approval of Previous Minutes: as read by Carly Harrington at 12:21pm, Georgia Tech, Columbus

Guest Speaker: Eric Pfeifer – The Georgia Games: at 12:35pm

Georgia Games is a yearly sports festival with 2,000 volunteers, 46 sports, 10,000 athletes at 50-60 venues over 2 weekends in July. Applied as a 7s qualifier for 2006, but was not approved.

Eric has a great deal of rugby experience as a player, coach, referee and administrator; he is Executive Director of the Georgia Games and Director of the Georgia Sports Foundation.

Based on his roles, he can help in the following ways:

- o Include Rugby in the Games
- o Provide connections to High Schools, Parks/Rec, Physical Education
- o Sends out physical fitness & amateur athletics oriented eNewsletter to 10-15,000 addresses
- o PR department to help promote rugby in the Games

Body agreed that there would be local participation if the event was held as a 10s tournament on Saturday, 7/15 at a metro Atlanta venue with the inclusion of colleges and High Schools. Mike Ryan (OW RFC) will coordinate Games in 2006.

President's Report: Danita Knox at 12:54pm

Packet provided to all attendees with the following information:

Eligibility Changes – 5 non-citizens on the roster and on the field for 2006 for Club & Super League teams.

USA Rugby Dues Increase – 1st in 8 years. Document explains why (youth rugby, NCAA sport for women, National team funding, game development) and why not.

2006 Event Calendar – Championship events in the South are beneficial for teams moving on as they reduce travel costs.

South Code of Conduct

Promotion/Relegation

Referee Fees – SERRS is reevaluating the amounts for referee reimbursement. These have not been finalized so at this time we continue to use the rates applicable at the end of last season and published in the weekly schedule reminders sent by John Meyers. It is unlikely we will have a new structure in place until the Fall season.

Playoff Requirements

Match Roster – Required for every GRU match to be submitted to Game Commissioner and is available for download on the South website (<http://www.usarugbysouth.com>). Different form for Colleges and Clubs.

List of GRU member clubs

2005 Championships

Congratulations to Old White, DII 2nd place National and South 7s Champion; Atlanta Harlequins, 2nd year at Final Four and Clemson U at DII Nationals.

2006 Changes

South has received a second seed for women's collegiate DI based on the continuing performance of Clemson and Florida State and a South Final Four championship is budgeted.

Thank you to Dan MacDougald for his work with High School rugby in Georgia.

Still believe that there are opportunities for success and room for improvement for the GRU and thank you to the body for letting me server for the last 2 years.

Treasurer's Report: Gary Kent at 1:23pm

GRU operated within the budget for 2005 with funds used as allocated with an increase in Senior Club dues making up for the loss of revenue from unpaid collegiate dues for Emory and Auburn.

Budgeted monies were not spent in many areas – Collegiate Men's All-Stars (they over-spent) and Championships, South meetings and SERRS.

No outstanding debts.

Outstanding dues payable: Auburn U RFC, Emory U RFC, Jacksonville State U RFC. As recommended by the Treasurer, the body unanimously voted to place both Auburn and Emory Not In Good Standing and Gary will notify the clubs. A motion was made by Georgia Tech to forgive Jax State's past debt due to their payment of 2005 dues and payments of portions of past debt, seconded by Old White and passed unanimously by the body.

Statements for 2006 dues will go out to clubs on 1/23.

Discipline Report: Gary Kent at 1:35pm

One incident for 2005 – Old White player – Dan Baerwalde – 4 week suspension.

NEW USA Rugby guidelines state that the Union is no longer able to impose sanctions in excess of USA Rugby guidelines essentially from the USOC so that every member is afforded the same discipline process.

GRU and South will soon implement required tracking of yellow cards.

Gary will distribute an electronic copy of the current GRU handbook (not including the modified disciplinary regulations.)

High School Rugby Update: Dan MacDougald at 1:46pm

Oconee HS, Lassiter HS, Pope HS, competed for 2005 and Augusta (U-19 city side) joined for the HS Championships, which Lassiter HS won.

For 2006, 8 teams are expected to participate: Buford (Buford HS & Mill Creek), Alpharetta (Milton, Chattahoochee and Centennial), Oconee, Pope (2 teams), Lassiter, Campbell of Smyrna, Sequoia, Grayson. August is running a city league of 2 to 3 teams and other groups that were unable to get organized in advance will scrimmage and play friendlies. Dan expects growth to continue to double for the next few years.

Season runs from Feb 11th to Georgia HS Championships on 4/21 and 22 with winner going to South HS Championship on 4/29 and 30 tentatively in Columbus, GA.

Forming non-profit Georgia HS Rugby Association with Gary Kent and Gareth Morgan on the Board to establish guidelines – eligibility, coaching, etc. Budgeting \$10 per player to fund the competition.

HS (along with colleges) would prefer USA Rugby to move to a fiscal rather than a calendar CIPP year.

Coaches are the limiting factor to the number of participants. With the Bryant Model (which assumes active or passive resistance and can be found on South and TN HS rugby website), 1 coach and 1 student can start a team.

Need to setup a website for HS rugby – request help from clubs.

Solicited assistance – post this link on Club websites - To join HS discussion group: <http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/gahsrugby/>

Refer anyone who wants to start a team to Dan.

Peter (Renegades coach) suggested several Safety Factors to assist in development:

- o Rugby smart course for players – overview of safety in rugby
- o Scrum Factory training for players
- o L1 IRB coaching course – Peter volunteered to run for HS coaches for cost of materials (would not include USA Rugby cost of certification)
- o Have hookers set mark for all scrums by touching elbows in crouch position to eliminate injuries from collapsed scrums

All-Star Report: Danita Knox at 2:00pm

No men’s LAU program but did have Women’s U-23 and Men’s and Women’s Collegiate.

Number of women’s’ colleges needs to increase to grow women’s program.

GRU Men won South Collegiate All-Stars and GRU Collegiate Women participated. GRU Collegiate women have new coach, Linda Abaray

Women (Danita Knox) – GRU squad had players representing Clemson, UGA, Atlanta Harlequins, and some from Palmetto to fill out squad. GRU U-23 Women went 1 - 1 on the weekend with a loss to NC in the first game and a win over Midsouth in the Consolation game.

Referee’s Report: Graeme Payne (via email) at 2:03

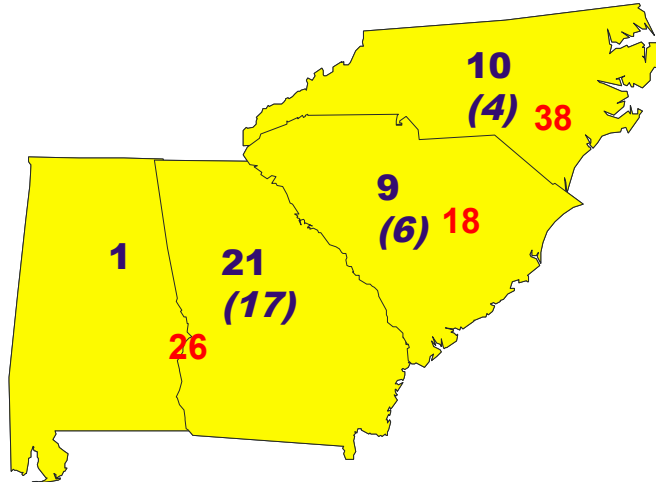
Referee Coverage

1. SERRS provides referees to three LAUs – Georgia, Palmetto and North Carolina. Our full-time referee numbers have held relatively constant despite growth in teams throughout this region. A full-time referee is a referee who has no restrictions on his/her availability and referees throughout the season. We also use a number of part-time referees to provide coverage. A part-time referee is defined as someone who has restricted availability (i.e., only available for local assignment or High School only) or who referees 2 matches or less a season. The following table shows growth in teams compared to full-time referee numbers:

	Full-time referees*	% Change	Registered Clubs (excluding HS)	% Change
2001	30		71	
2005	28	-7%	82	15%

2. The following chart shows the distribution of referees and teams in SERRS coverage area. SERRS has relatively decent coverage in the GRU. However we are very short of referees in other LAUs (especially North Carolina).

EVERY SERRS REFEREE (INCLUDING PART-TIME) BY STATE

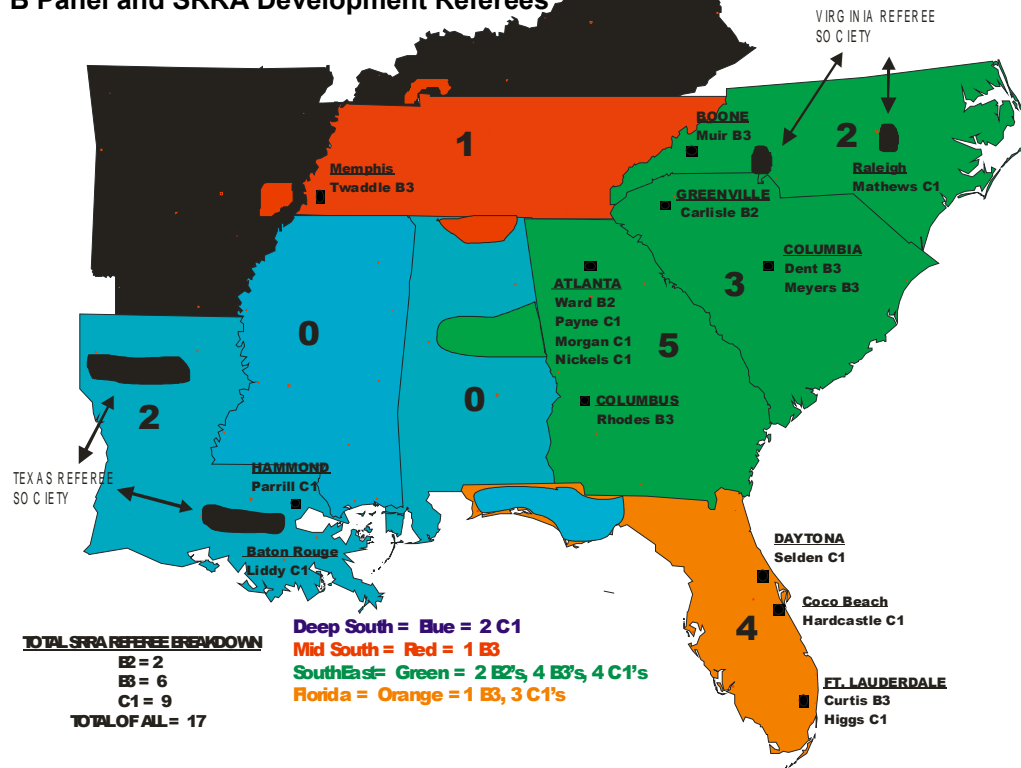


Total SERRS including part-time = 42
Total SERRS full-time referees = 28
Total Clubs (not including HS) = 82**

- With the growth of High School Rugby it is even more crucial we recruit, develop and retain more referees. We will be reaching out to clubs to identify potential referees. We will also be running more referee courses – one was held in Atlanta this weekend.

Referee Development

B Panel and SRRA Development Referees



- One measure of how we are developing our referees is the number of Territorial (B Panel) referees we have. We have more B Panel referees than ever and also a strong number of referees on the development panel for potential promotion to B panel. GRU has supported us in the development of these referees.

5. To be promoted to B Panel, the referee must receive evaluations outside of the territory. We rely on exchanges to obtain these evaluations. The evaluations must be Div 1 level and so we must use our limited Div 1 games for evaluating our own and outside territory senior referees. Div 1 clubs should expect to have at least half their games covered by outside referees.
6. We continue to provide as much coaching to our referees as we can given our dispersed geography. Hopefully clubs are seeing improvement in the quality of referees but this continues to be a challenge. We plan to implement a feedback mechanism for clubs to provide feedback to referees.
7. We will continue to run referee courses and TJ courses throughout the year. USA is now following the IRB standards for referee training and we have four certified IRB trainers in the SERRS area. We encourage each Club to have several certified TJs and at least one referee. We are also working with the HS organization to recruit and develop referees to cover the U19 games.

Referee Procedures

8. We also remind Clubs about the notification of referees (by email and phone) by Wednesday 10pm.
9. Game Day Procedures – as usual we would like to remind clubs of the game day procedures:
 - a. Goal pads and spectator ropes – this is a USA Rugby requirement and should be no surprise to clubs. Referees cannot referee a game without these protections in place.
 - b. CIPP – each club is being asked to provide a printout from the USA Rugby site on game day and provide assurance to the referee that all players are CIPP'ed. Referees will not be verifying CIPP compliance (as some referee societies do) but just wants validation that all players are CIPP'ed. In addition, for matrix matches the USA Rugby South team rosters are required to be provided to the referee who will sign them after the game and provide to the winning club to submit.

Referee Abuse

10. Referee abuse –Unfortunately referee abuse incidents have increased over the last few years. USA Rugby South recently issued a Code of Conduct which all clubs are required to follow. Referees have been instructed to report instances of abuse by players, coaches and/or spectators.

Referee Reimbursement

11. Referee reimbursement – we are investigating moving to more a flat-rate reimbursement of referees rather than the grade-based reimbursement. Until we have worked through this with each Union Board we will continue with our current reimbursement structure for the Spring season.

Referee/Coaches Summit

12. Some folks have suggested a summit or meeting of referees and coaches at least once a year. We think this is a good idea and would like to support this type of meeting.

SERRS Officers

13. SERRS Officers for 2006:
 - a. President: Graeme Payne
 - b. Vice President: Ken Muir
 - c. Assignments: John Meyers
 - d. Treasurer: Scott Nickels

- e. Secretary: Ray Davis
- f. Referee Development Officer: Phil Dent

Suggestion by body - Coaches/Referees Summit/Conference at the same venue with courses for each group, breakout sessions and socializing to be held in August of 2006.

Admittance of New Clubs: Kennesaw State University at 2:27pm

Kennesaw State University (Golden Fighting Owls) applied for full membership in Collegiate DIII. They are coached by Randy Joseph and have been practicing with limited numbers and mostly new players since November of 2005. The club is already included in the matrix for 2006. New President of the university will determine the future of the club for funding purposes.

Nominated by Atlanta Harlequins, seconded by Georgia Tech and unanimously approved by the body.

Old Business: at 2:32pm

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

Members in attendance wrote personal preferences that were collected and discussed.

- o #1 choice - Coaching and Referee Development at HS, Collegiate and Club levels
- o Strategic Planning session for Union – Jeff Tanner (USA Rugby) will do a strategic meeting for expenses for the union
- o Develop Mission Statement for GRU

GRU Camps

Elections: at 3:11pm

President – Danita Knox

Vice President – Michael Groark

Treasurer – Gary Kent

Secretary – Carly Harrington

At Large – Brad Baker

Entire slate nominated by Atlanta Bucks, seconded by Life and unanimously approved by the body at 3:24pm.

BREAK – 3:27pm and RECONVENED at 3:40pm

Committees/Directors Needed: Danita Knox at 3:40pm

GRU Game Commissioner

Discipline Chair – Kendrick Blackstock

Marketing/Communications (MARCOM)

High School Rugby Director – Dan MacDougald

Web Master – UGA Women will contact a volunteer

Events Coordinator – Eddie Towson

Women's Director

Club Director

Collegiate Director

2006 Budget Discussion: Gary Kent at 3:47pm

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

Motion to accept proposed budget with the EC to allocate Requested Funding as it sees fit - Georgia Tech, Bucks at 3:54pm

New Business: at 3:57pm

Clemson U WRFC is looking for a new coach – they are a DI women’s team for a number of years near Greenville and Anderson, SC.

Auburn U RFC also needs a coach – they are in Auburn, AL.

Georgia Tech wants to start a women’s team

Meeting adjourned at 4:00pm – motioned Old White, seconded Bucks

Attendees:

Club	Name	Email	Phone
Old White	Mike Ryan	msaryan@earthlink.net	678-760-8224
GA Tech / HS	Dan MacDougald	danmacd@bellsouth.net	404-862-6580
Old White	Matt Holcomb	Mbholcomb7@hotmail.com	678-612-3072
Renegades	Mike Groark	Michael.groark@bartonmarlow.com	404-493-5966
UGA RFC	Doug Porter	doug@lynxdgs.com	706-742-2738
UGA WRFC	Maggie Hodges	ugawrfc@gmail.com	770-861-0021
Clemson W	Megan Doran	mkdoran@clemson.edu	864-723-4811
Life	Kendrick Blackstock	kablackstock@yahoo.com	770-698-5704
KSU	Warren Mullis	Wdm142005@hotmail.com	678-458-5075
KSU	Kate Allen	katelaa@aol.com	770-846-8813
KSU	Jon Gustin	gustinjg@yahoo.com	404-402-9879
JSU	Bradley Hurd	Wilsoncrp1@yahoo.com	256-225-1310
JSU	Jared Sorensen	Sorensen_jared@yahoo.com	256-452-1607
Bucks	Eddie Towson	blueyedcubat1@yahoo.com	404-310-2578
Ga Southern	Ashley Meyer	Runnash429@yahoo.com	912-531-2176
Columbus	Gary Kent	gkrugby@charter.net	706-324-4924