



# **Governance Handbook**

Revised 11.12.13



**USA RUGBY PURPOSE:**  
**To Inspire the Rugby World,**  
**the American Way**

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## Introduction

A Game which started out as a simple pastime has been transformed into a global network around which vast stadia have been built, an intricate administrative structure created and complex strategies devised.

Rugby is valued as a sport for men and women, boys and girls. It builds teamwork, understanding, co-operation and respect for fellow athletes. Its cornerstones are, as they always have been: the pleasure of participating; the courage and skill with the Game demands; the love of a team sport that enriches the lives of all involved; and the lifelong friendships forged through a shared interest in the Game.

It is because of, not despite, Rugby's intensely physical and athletic characteristics that such camaraderie exists before and after matches. The long standing tradition of players from competing teams enjoying each other's company away from the pitch and in a social context, remains at the very core of the Game.

Rugby has fully embraced the professional era, but has retained the ethos and traditions of the recreational Game. In an age in which many traditional sporting qualities are being diluted or even challenged, Rugby is rightly proud of its ability to retain high standards of sportsmanship, ethical behavior and fair play. It is hoped that this Charter will help reinforce those cherished values.

## USA Rugby

Founded in 1975, USA Rugby has approximately 97,000 members and is responsible for the development of the boys, girls, high school, collegiate and club rugby programs, and ultimately all of the national teams representing the U.S. in international competitions.

The current structure of USA Rugby comprises seven Territorial Unions (TUs) and 34 Local Area Unions (LAUs) that compete for Regional and National Championships.

USA Rugby's national headquarters is located in Boulder, Colorado, and is run by full-time staff under the direction of current CEO and President of Rugby Operations, Nigel Melville.

## **'SPIRIT OF THE GAME'**

Rugby owes much of its appeal to its traditions which dictate that the game is played both to the letter and within the spirit of the Laws. It is the responsibility of coaches, captains, players, referees, administrators and fans to create an environment where the highest possible standards are promoted and maintained at all times on and off the field of play.

It is through discipline, control and mutual respect that the Game flourishes and, in the context of a game as physically challenging as Rugby, these are the qualities which forge the fellowship and sense of fair play so essential to the Game's ongoing success and survival.

These traditional values remain as important to Rugby's future as they have been throughout its long and distinguished past. The principles of Rugby are the fundamental elements upon which the Game is based and they enable participants to immediately identify the Game's character and what makes it distinctive as a sport.

## **Diversity – 'A Game For All'**

USA Rugby is proud to serve a diverse membership of players, coaches, officials and fans and is committed to creating and promoting a culture of inclusion and mutual respect, regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religious beliefs, sex, age, gender identity, disability or sexual orientation.

We celebrate the differences that make our members unique and special and do not tolerate discrimination, bullying or exclusion in any form.

USA Rugby expects its leadership, coaches, officials, teams, players, administrators and fans to promote a culture of acceptance and support through their actions and through the recruitment of members without regard to sex, race, physical disability, or sexual orientation.

Through our commitment to diversity and mutual respect, we believe that the sport of rugby will continue to grow and become a powerful voice of change in the world of sport.

## Information

**United States of America Rugby Football Union Ltd.  
dba USA Rugby**

2500 Arapahoe Ave., Ste. 200  
Boulder, CO 80302  
303-539-0300 | 303-539-0311 fax

**Nigel Melville – CEO & President of Rugby Operations**

**Member of:**

**International Rugby Board (iRB)**

[www.irb.com](http://www.irb.com)

Huguenot House  
35-35 St. Stephens Green  
Dublin 2, Ireland

**United States Olympic Committee (USOC)**

[www.teamusa.org](http://www.teamusa.org)

1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

**North America Caribbean Rugby Association (NACRA)**

[www.nacrugby.com](http://www.nacrugby.com)

P.O. Box 4441  
Road Town  
Tortola, British Virgin Islands  
VG1110



## Message from the Chairman of the Board

Greetings,

On behalf of USA Rugby, I'd like to welcome you and express my gratitude for your commitment to the sport we love, rugby. We are making progress in our mission of 'Inspiring America to fall in Love with Rugby'. As the National Governing body for the sport in the United States we are charged with raising awareness and growing the game on all levels and your work within the governance of USA Rugby is a critical driver to that end.

USA Rugby has made real progress since its formation in 1975 due to the efforts of deeply passionate Americans. This energy is helped when all elements of the Administration pull together towards a shared dream.

At the heart of USA Rugby are many dedicated people focused on promoting the sport and serving our members to the best of their ability. Your talents are essential to the success of the USA Rugby governing board. We need to work closely together to achieve our mutually agreed upon goals. We value and encourage your active participation on our committees to further our collective mission.

As a Board, Congress, or Committee member we value your expertise and leadership. Please, do not wait to "jump in" — we welcome your input and feedback.

Because USA Rugby is a somewhat complex animal, we have put together a *Governance Handbook* to answer the most frequently asked questions. Other questions you may have are welcomed by phone, e-mail or in person.

Again, welcome to the organization and to your governance role within USA Rugby. I hope you find your experience rewarding and fun. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

Kevin Roberts



## The Role of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is charged with making and administration of policies that are consistent with the goals and objectives stated within the Bylaws and Strategic Plan. This includes the approval of membership dues, the raising of funds, oversight of the operations, and administration of the business plan, operations plan, and budgets of the organization.

In addition, the Board of Directors is responsible for the development and appointment of committees, sub-committees, and advisory groups to assist them in implementing the strategic and operational plans. They ensure that the corporation's financial statements are true, fair, and compliant with the law and they oversee the annual independent financial audit.

The Board of Directors consists of six Independent Directors, two International Athlete representatives and a representative of USA Rugby's Congress. They meet four times each year.

## The Role of the Congress Rep to the Board of Directors

The Congress Representative to the Board of Directors is tasked with being the voice of the Congress and representing the members to the Board of Directors.

### Board of Directors

**Kevin Roberts** – Chairman

**Bob Latham** – Vice-Chairman

**Beth Black** – International Athlete

**Brian McClenahan** – International Athlete

**Gary Heavner** – Congress Representative

**Chad Keck** - Director

**Pete Seccia** - Director

**Rob King** - Director

**Will Chang** - Director

*For more information about these Board Members, please visit the Board of Directors page of our website at <http://usarugby.org/board-of-directors>.*

## **The Role of the Congress**

The Congress is charged with being the representative voice of the membership across the United States. Likewise, they review all periodic reports and actions taken by the Board of Directors and report back to the membership. All changes to the dues structure, as proposed by the Board of Directors, must first be approved by the Congress. In addition, the Congress is responsible for electing the Directors who serve on the Board and must approve amendments to the corporate Bylaws.

The Congress consists of twenty-seven members – three representatives from each of the Territorial Unions (TUs) and six International Athletes. The Congress meets once each year.

## **The Role of the International Athletes on the Congress**

The purpose of the International Athlete on the Congress is to provide for athlete voice and vote in USA Rugby by ensuring that active participants at the International and Olympic level serve policy and make decisions within USA Rugby in accordance with the provisions of the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act.

## Congress

### International 7s Athletes:

**Blaine Scully**

**Irene Gardner**

**James Gillenwater**

### International 15s Athletes:

**Jen Sinkler**

**Kim Magrini**

**Will Johnson**

### Territorial Union Representatives:

**Adrian Gannon**

**Bill Sexton**

**Dana Bateman**

**Danita Knox**

**David McPhail**

**David Pelton**

**Frank Merrill**

**Gary Lobaugh**

**Geno Mazza**

**George Durocher**

**Jeremiah Johnson**

**Jerry Gallion**

**John Coppinger**

**Kjrsten Abel-Ruch**

**Marni Vath**

**Martin Gardner**

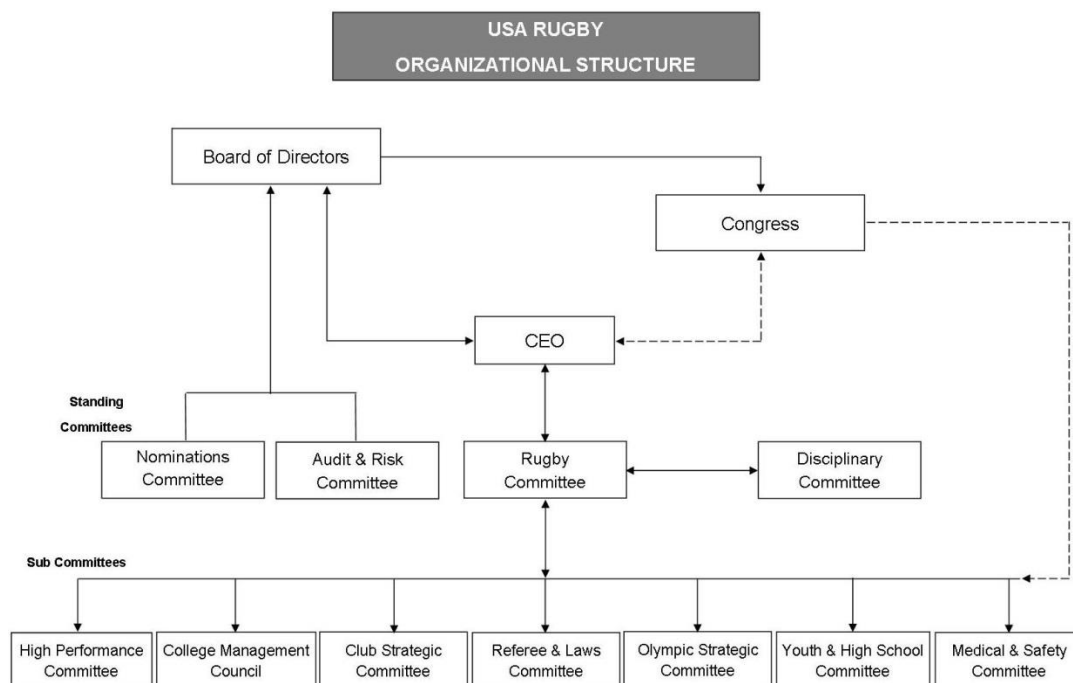
**Neil Foley**

**Renee Ovrut**

**Steve Vent**

## Committees

All members of the Board of Directors and Congress are asked to sit on at least one committee. For a current list of committees and their members, please visit the Committee section of our website at <http://usarugby.org/committees>.



## Nominations Committee: Terms of Reference

The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least three (3) and no more than (5) members, including at least one Director and one Qualified Athlete. The Chairman of the Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Congress for a term of two (2) years. The other members of the Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Board for terms of two (2) years. Paid employees of the Corporation are prohibited from serving on the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for the recruitment and nomination of the At-Large Directors. Pursuant to its nominating duties as set for in section 5.4 of the USA Rugby Bylaws, at least forty-five (45) days prior to the Annual Congress or other meeting of the Congress called for the purpose of electing Directors, the Nominating Committee shall nominate one person for each vacant or expiring At-Large Director position. The Nominating Committee shall cause to be prepared and distributed appropriate ballots for all elections of At-Large Directors, which ballots shall provide sufficient information about each candidate to enable Congress to make informed decisions.

## Audit & Risk Committee: Terms of Reference

The Audit Committee shall consist of at least four (4) members, including at least once Congress Member and one Qualified Athlete. The Audit Committee shall (a) develop annual budgeting guidelines and procedures, (b) provide recommendations to the Board regarding appropriate financial reporting systems for the Corporation and its membership and (c) provide recommendations to the Board on the appropriate allocation of resources to meet the Corporation's strategic objectives. The Audit Committee shall oversee the integrity of the Corporation's financial statements and the Corporation's compliance with legal and regulatory requirements and ethical standards. It shall also solicit, appoint, oversee, and determine the compensation of the Corporation's auditors. A copy of each final audit report shall be made available to each member of the Board and the Congress within thirty (30) days of its receipt by the Audit Committee.

## Rugby Committee: Terms of Reference

The role of the Rugby Committee is to consider and make policy recommendations to the President of Rugby Operations with regard to:

- **The Laws of the Game**
- **Risk Management** (Health, Safety, etc.)
- **Discipline**
- **The Development of the Game**
  - Youth
  - High School
  - Collegiate
  - Club
  - High Performance
  - Match Officials
- **Competition structures**
  - National Championships
  - Eligibility
  - High Performance
- **Any other matters pertinent to the development of the Game in USA**

The Rugby Committee (RC) will normally appraise recommendations from established committees and ensure that due diligence has been performed, that there are no procedural omissions, that best practices have been applied, and that the decisions and policies of the established committees are not in conflict with each other, prior to sending to the President of Rugby Operations for disposition and/or enforcement.

The Rugby Committee is composed of a Chair, to be nominated by the CEO and affirmed by USA Rugby BOD; Referee Committee Chair or delegated representative, a current Coach, Youth representative, Woman's representative, a representative of the Competitions and a representative of the Eligibility committee, one other representative appointed by the Chair, and a sufficient number of Qualified Athletes as stipulated by the USA Rugby bylaws. The President of Rugby Operations and/or that person's nominee shall be an ex-officio member of the Rugby Committee and will provide the secretariat.

## **Disciplinary Committee: Terms of Reference**

The role of the Disciplinary Committee is to consider and make policy recommendations to the USA Rugby Board of Directors on Disciplinary issues, undertake a formal annual review and revision of disciplinary regulations and procedures and advise appeals committee on specific matters.

The committee submits their findings in an annual report to the USA Rugby Board of Directors.

## **High Performance Committee: Terms of Reference**

To review and give feedback to the President of Rugby Operations on all USA Rugby High Performance activities:

- IRB High Performance Plan
- USOC Performance partnership Agreement
- Men’s and Women’s Development Pathways (Sevens and Fifteens)
- Medical Services
- Player Welfare
- Anti-doping policies and procedures
- Discipline
- International Playing Programs

The Group shall be composed of a Chair who shall be nominated by the USA Rugby Board of Directors, a Men and Women’s International Athlete from both the Fifteens and Sevens games and other high performance specialists elected by the group.

The President of Rugby Operations and/or that person’s nominee shall be an ex-officio member of the High Performance Advisory Group and will provide the secretariat. The Chairman will invite members of the USA Rugby High Performance department to participate in meetings when required. The group will meet on a monthly basis.

## **College Management Council: Terms of Reference**

The College Management Council has been created to serve the following purposes:

- Set and implement USA Rugby college operating policy.
- Consider, rule on and guide implementation of recommendations from college committees.
- Make policy recommendations to the Rugby Committee or immediate supervisory body related to college rugby.
- Provide guidance to, and oversight of, college committees.
- Review appeals by member institutions of decisions made within the college rugby structure.
- Delegate the resolution of college rugby issues to the college rugby substructure where appropriate.

- Review and rule on college discipline issues.
- Supervise compliance with USA Rugby college operating policy.

The Council shall be composed of a Chair who shall be a member of the Board of Directors of USA Rugby. The remainder of the Council shall consist of one men's game and one women's game representative from each of the four college regions (East, Central, South and West) and one male and one female international athlete representative.

The Chairs of the Eligibility, Men's and Women's Competition and Women's Strategic committees will serve as ex-officio members of the Council.

The Council has the power to establish additional committees and/or advisory groups to assist in the development and administration of college rugby.

The Council has the power to adjust Terms of Reference and/or disband committees at its discretion. Meetings: Monthly conference call (at a minimum).

## **Men's College Competition Committee: Terms of Reference**

The Men's College Competition Committee has been created to serve the following purposes:

- Support/advise the College Management Council with regards to men's college competition issues.
- Supervise all aspects of men's Division I, II and III college postseason competition (CPL excluded).
- Consult with USA Rugby Director of Championships on playoff site selection for men's college championships.
- Make recommendations to the Management Council for the execution of men's college championships.
- Assist the College Management Council in the execution of USA Rugby college operating policies.

Committee shall be composed of a Chair as well as six additional members.



The Chair has the authority – with prior approval from the College Management Council – to establish advisory groups to assist the committees in their work.

The committee reports to and serves at the will of the College Management Council. Meetings: Conference calls as required.

### **Women’s College Competition Committee: Terms of Reference**

The Women’s College Competition Committee has been created to serve the following purposes:

- Support/advise the College Management Council with regards to women’s college competition issues.
- Supervise all aspects women’s Division I, II and III college postseason competition.
- Consult with USA Rugby Director of Championships on playoff site selection for women’s college championships.
- Make recommendations to the Management Council for the execution of women’s college championships.
- Assist the College Management Council in the execution of USA Rugby college operating policies.

Committee shall be composed of a Chair as well as six additional members.

The Chair has the authority – with prior approval from the College Management Council – to establish advisory groups to assist the committees in their work.

The committee reports to and serves at the will of the College Management Council. Meetings: Conference calls as required.

### **College Eligibility Committee: Terms of Reference**

The College Eligibility Committee has been created to serve the following purposes:

- Support/advise the College Management Council with regards to college eligibility issues.
- Review and rule on all eligibility waiver requests submitted by college members (teams and individuals).
- Assist the College Management Council in the execution of USA Rugby college operating policies.

The committee shall be composed of a Chairman as well as three representatives of the men's college game and three representatives of the women's college game.

The Chair has the authority – with prior approval from the College Management Council – to establish advisory groups to assist the committee in its work.

The committee reports to and serves at the will of the College Management Council. Meetings: Conference calls as required.

## **Women's College Strategic Committee: Terms of Reference**

The Women's College Strategic Committee has been created to serve the following purposes:

- Support/advise the College Management Council with regards to the restructuring of women's intercollegiate rugby.
- Drive USA Rugby's efforts with regards to the NCAA Emerging Sports Initiative.
- Make recommendations to the College Management Council with regards to the direction of women's intercollegiate rugby.
- Act on recommendations from the College Management Council.
- Assist the College Management Council in the execution of USA Rugby intercollegiate operating policies.

The committee shall be composed of a minimum of seven members who are involved with women's college rugby. The Committee Chair will be selected from the current members of the committee.

The Chair has the authority – with prior approval from the College Management Council – to empanel additional committee members and/or establish advisory groups to assist the committee in its work.

The committee reports to and serves at the will of the College Management Council. Meetings: Conference calls as required.

## **Club Strategic Committee: Terms of Reference**

To support/advise the CEO in the creation and delivery of a strategy for the development of Men's and Women's Club rugby.

To consider and make policy recommendations to the Rugby Committee of USA Rugby with regards to Club Rugby:

- The Laws of the Game
- Health and Safety
- Medical Welfare
- Discipline
- Program and Infrastructure Development
- High Performance
- Competition structures
  - National Championships
  - Eligibility
- Refereeing and coaching development and policies
- Any other matters pertinent to the development / management of Men's and Women's Club Rugby

The Committee shall be composed of a Chair who shall be approved by the Board of Directors of USA Rugby, he/she will select committee members who will represent all areas of the Club game. The Chair has the authority to co-opt experts to the Committee on a temporary basis to assist in matters such as Health and Safety, Medical matters and/or other areas where expertise is required.

The committee must include 20% international athlete representation as stated in the USA Rugby bylaws.

The President of Rugby Operations and/or that person's nominee shall be an ex-officio member of the Committee and will provide the secretariat.

The Committee has the power to establish Sub-Committees, Advisory Groups and Discussion Panels to assist in the development of the Club game.

## **Referee & Laws Committee: Terms of Reference**

### 1.0 Name of the Organization

This organization has been established in accordance with the Bylaws of USA Rugby as an official sub-committee of the Rugby Committee of USA rugby and shall be known as the Referees and Laws (R&L) Committee.

### 2.0 Mission Statement

The Referee & Laws (R&L) Committee shall exercise strong leadership in conjunction with USA Rugby and is committed to guiding and facilitating the recruitment, retention and development of referees, referee coaches, and other match officials for all levels of rugby being played under the auspices of USA Rugby. By providing its membership opportunities to contribute and excel, the R&L Committee shall provide referees and other match officials that meet or exceed the requirements of USA Rugby.

### 3.0 Terms of Reference

To consider and make the policy recommendations to the Rugby Committee with regard to:

- The Laws of the Game
- Rulings on Law
- Match Official (Recruitment and Retention, Development, Training, Coaching, Performance Review)
- Recommend and review of budgets associated with match officials
- Create High Performance Pathways

### 4.0 General Committee

The General Committee of the R&L shall comprise the following members:

- (a) Chairman of the R&L Committee
- (b) Secretary of the R&L Committee
- (c) Director of the Referee Department of USA Rugby
- (d) Territorial Representatives (one per current Territory Referee Organization as defined by USA Rugby)
- (e) A current member of the National Panel of referees
- (f) One member from the "International Athlete" group

The Chair has the authority to co-opt experts to the Committee on a temporary basis to assist where particular expertise is required.

The Committee has the power to establish Operating Rules, Procedures, and Sub Committees or Advisory Groups or Panels or appoint officers to assist in the development of policy or to undertake specific tasks e.g. Performance Review, Coaching, Training, and Development.

## **Olympic Committee: Terms of Reference**

The Olympic Committee has been created to serve the following purposes:

To support/advise the CEO in his role representing USA Rugby as a full sport member of the United States Olympic Committee.

To support/advise the International Athlete(s) elected to serve on the United States Olympic Committee Athlete Advisory Council (AAC). In this regard, the Committee will establish mechanisms to identify qualified athletes who would be candidates for the male and female AAC representatives.

To advise and guide USA Rugby on all areas of Olympic participation and to develop relationships with Olympic organizations, including:

- United States Olympic Committee
- Pan American Sport Organization
- Paralympic Sport organizations

The Committee shall be composed of a Chair who shall be approved by the Board of Directors of USA Rugby. The Chair will select committee members

who will support our Olympic mission. The Chair has the authority to co-opt experts to the Committee on a temporary basis.

The committee must include 20% international athlete representation as stated in the USA Rugby bylaws.

The CEO will serve on this committee and provide secretarial support.

The Committee has the power to establish Sub-Committees, Advisory Groups and Discussion Panels to assist in the development of USA Rugby's participation as a full sport member of the USOC.

## Youth & High School Committee: Terms of Reference

The role of the Youth and High School Committee is to consider and make recommendations to the Rugby Committee with regard to:

- **Laws of the Game**
- **Risk Management** (Health, Safety, etc.)
- **Discipline**
- **Fundraising**
- **Development of the Game**
  - Youth
  - High School
  - State-Based Rugby Organizations (SBRO)
  - High Performance
- **Competition structures**
  - National Championships
  - Eligibility
  - High Performance
- **Any other matters pertinent to the development of the High School and Youth Game in the USA**

## Medical & Safety Committee: Terms of Reference

The Medical and Safety Committee was created by USA Rugby to act as a resource that keeps it aware of national and international sports medicine issues, particularly as it relates to rugby football and other Olympic Sports.

1. To provide USA Rugby and the members with the latest information, policies and position statements regarding healthcare.
2. To work in conjunction with the IRB to implement health, safety, and player welfare policies.
3. To work directly with the IRB, WADA, and USADA to be in compliance with Anti-Doping policies.
4. To review catastrophic injuries as determined by the Rugby Board.



# Bylaws





# Strategic Plan



# **Code of Conduct**



# **Conflict of Interest Policy**



**Whistleblower  
&  
Non-Retaliation  
Policy**