



Rugby Illinois Summer Annual General Meeting

July 29, 2017 AthletiCo Corporate Offices, Oak Brook, IL

8:30 - 8:50 am - Coffee/Bagels & Club Check-In. Review Reports, Minutes.

8:50 am - Remote connection available via FreeConferenceCall.com

Dial In: (641) 715-0632 Access Code: 743798

Online Meeting Link: <https://join.freeconferencecall.com/aschwaab>

Online Meeting ID: aschwaab

12:05 - 1:00 pm - Adjourn meeting to Division / Tier breakout sessions

MINUTES

- **9:10 am** – Call to order with quorum of 29 clubs present:
- **Winter 2016 Meeting Minutes.**
 - Motion to approve December 2016 Minutes made and seconded. Motion carries without discussion or correction.
- **Officers Reports** as well as Division Reports and Discipline Report are copied at the end of this document or linked herein if a spreadsheet.
 - President, John Walker
 - VP Development, David Hall
 - VP Marketing, Stephanie Esposito
 - VP Competition , Marques Plummer
 - Treasurer, David Hall
 - **Financial Report**
 - Compliance Officer, Mary Ann Daniluk
 - Secretary , Anne Schwaab
 - Match Official Coordinator Report, Sean Bracken
- **Youth Development Officer Report**, Andy Rose
- **Referee Society Reports**
 - 5 minutes LincolnLand Ref Society Report

The pre and post match protocol is fine. If there is a potential for a volatile situation at the post-match meeting, the referee would be better served letting the coaches talk to their teams; and then hold the post match meeting.

The proposed 15s rules changes continue the effort toward safety and continuity. I think that the two referee entities need to cooperate and make sure that the rules are consistently interpreted.

Lincolnland Referees will continue charging a flat \$75 / match. Lincolnland will continue to guarantee Saturday coverage, if booked in advance.

- 5 minutes CARFU Ref Society Report

Dave Carter (CARFU) in attendance. Less than 15 reports were submitted all season.

Feedback is utilized so please continue to submit these after matches. Expansive law changes are coming in the fall, affecting offsides, tackle, and many other changes so make sure to review these and know what to expect.

Question was raised regarding the consistency of standard used on tackles? Response: Above the armpit is high for everyone youth to professional.

Dave encouraged stewardship and each club to provide opportunities such as refs attending practices and hosting a webinar or training. These are all possibilities to increase understanding between refs, coaches, players, parents.

- **Old Business**

- Volunteer Policy feedback re local / minor events and championship / major events. If an event is bid out, that club or venue provides volunteers, and works with EC and CC to ensure a quality event. Rugby Illinois will donate \$ 1000 per event day so that clubs are not providing volunteers. For smaller events that are not bid out, participating clubs must provide # required by the event, allocating among participants.
- Pre/post-match protocol: Giving information from coaches to refs. Ground rules should be covered between coaches and refs including ref standards for calls, size of field, boot check. Immediately after game, coaches meet. No calls should be discussed. Confirm scores and cards and names. Consensus is it works. We will continue with this policy.
- Winter 2016 meeting proposal for Summer 2017 bylaws amendments will be addressed under New Business and proposed restructuring. (No amendments proposed for vote)

- **Special Initiatives**

- Academies (J.Walker)

Last year during development travels it became clear that USAR was not going to endorse 3d parties at that time. The EC Formed a subcommittee to discuss and draft some required criteria that would be expected of any academy before Rugby Illinois will work together with them and advertise any of their offered trainings. We developed our own agreement that outlined how we wanted to incorporate such a relationship into our structure. All academies who want to promote their opportunities through Rugby Illinois to our members will sign the same basic agreement, paying \$300 to register with Rugby Illinois and have some skin in the game, leaving the opportunity for us to amend the agreement and provide for specific camps, etc. If academy says they are high performance we require 300 level coaching certification. We conduct our own diligence on the organization before we will do business with them.

We encourage clubs to use our partners. Question raised: What about the high cost? Can't the clubs publicize events they set up paying another coach to come and teach for more like \$20? Response: We are considering that and working on solutions to make high performance more affordable wherever possible because this will be an issue for some clubs. Some academies do offer scholarships for participants. To use CARFU assets at your disposal to host your own events - is acceptable.

Then, USAR subsequently partnered with Atavus.

- 10 Minutes - Report on Aurora program model (J.Kean) See Slideshow presentation https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1CwSndz1hzpw3i91SAMLfTjkuvtPM6ZU8zW7U4S24fF0/edit#slide=id.g240b62e638_0_333

Another idea - go to areas with weak football program who would be willing to take advice and give a hand or open up to the rugby initiative. This is a small piece of getting rugby throughout the program. Could start with Football programs needing help or wrestling coaches who make great rugby players and wouldn't conflict with the season (winter wrestling).

You can get free balls if there is opportunity through USAR or World Rugby or USAR Foundation.

Suggest having interested players where there isn't a team - signup as at large players so they can attend festivals. If you identify a kid who wants to play, we have to figure out a way to make it happen.

This concept can also help clubs who need to access pool for D3 to get 15 players required for insurance.

In working with the football program, if they are threatened by Fall rugby, maybe strike a deal to only offer your rugby program in the spring. Result is football players come to rugby in the spring and are better footballers in the Fall.

We are making progress on funding available for getting programs going. Including logistics for contributions matching.

- 25 minutes - Concussions
 - 10:30 am Concussion Identification and Management Presentation by Dr. Nicole Reim . Presentation will be shared online.
 - King Devick test doesn't have great research behind it. There are sideline tests out there that are not useful without a recent baseline test. Even doing a brief sideline eval should be enough to help you determine whether to pull them from the match for medical evaluation.
 - Key to medical provider is SUSPECTED head trauma. That player is off the field and done for the day. Refer to medical professional.
 - John Walker: World Rugby protocol is more strict than IHSA. Watch for upcoming news on IHSA being investigated for their concussion practices. It will not be flattering. A lot of people are unclear re what should be happening on the field. Look for email coming from JW that includes the World Rugby module and FAIR. Become familiar and complete it now.
 - World Rugby and IHSA Guidelines and proposed requirements for Rugby IL including training for coaches (Information provided by J.Honcharuk)
 - Rugby IL is investigating adoption of Mobile Injury Reporting used by NorCal <http://www.injurefree.com/how-it-works/>
 - See bullet points on slides regarding Group and Individual Exemptions - How to stay compliant with IL SOS and IRS Rules (A.Schwaab)

- New Business
 - November 2018 International Plans in Chicago and Fundraising. Not NZ or England. There is a tremendous network of people with rugby in their background who have left the game and we need to plug those individuals into our events committee. Another new committee called finance and sponsorship will tap into that network. Giving people a reason to bring their business to get involved and support Rugby IL. We have submitted our interest in being the 2nd test market along with NorCal. We are competing with Houston.
 - Initiative for Restructure of Rugby Illinois
 - Why? USAR says they don't have money for us when we ask. They "perceive" that Illinois is not successful. They give us money and don't see the rewards. They look at rugby nationally and see other SROs restructuring and doing things more efficiently
 - How - Bylaws amendments and moving our structure from membership managed to Manager managed and putting in a separate Board of Directors who will have ultimate oversight over the organization and our initiatives, finances and mission. Daily tasks will still be completed by officers on the executive committee and teams will retain control over their programs.
 - Discussion
 - Don't raise fees to fund these paid positions. It will have a negative effect on the growth. Would see growth and then stagnation.
 - ED must have goals and metrics to accomplish goals in order to get paid.
 - Must have the sponsorship and fundraising to support the positions.
 - Must have positive light in community such as outreach events.
 - Part of Directors role has to be to raise money.
 - Concern is that membership has to still elect the board of directors. Anne's suggestion is to accomplish this through a board advisory committee that generates a slate of qualified director candidates from which the membership can elect. After that, board elects officers and hires the ED and directs him or her.
 - Be realistic about the funding. If we have to raise dues \$10 then it has to happen at some point. We have not raised dues in many years.
 - One aspect of compensation should be the ED ability to raise funds. As a percentage of compensation.
 - Coaches want to retain control over the day to day in their clubs and have a hand in determining the shape of their season that is important to making their club happy.
 - Dues - you would be shocked at how many kids already cannot pay \$125 in dues. Inner city kids need balance in the dues structure. The demographic of some programs requires pushing fundraising. In school sports were free and now kids have to fundraise for dues. That is a struggle. It will be tough for coaches to get parents on board with an

increase. Especially for city teams.

Clubs can do the fundraising work also and not put it all on the players.

Have to address what makes us liquid now but also longevity of funding.

21 individuals identified at the moment who could serve on the BOD.

Please give input to the EC while we frame these amendments. Watch your emails for proposals from EC and invitations to have conference call discussions.

It is projected that if the membership is generally in agreement that we could put together proposed bylaws amendments in a month or two.

Kurt WEaver will visit IL in a couple of weeks to address with EC and CC strategy for restructuring. We have told Kurt that it won't work for us if USAR is going to come in and put their people in place or tell us how to operate. They can be of assistance to us however and in return they will be more receptive to our requests for assistance if we prove our growth.

- Activating new Events Committee to plan :
 - CARFU / RI event
 - Fall Combine - ADvancement day will be next year with more time to plan. If you are not going away to college right away out of high school, you have clubs here for you. Grow the pathway
- Submit interest for participation on new committees
 - Board Advisory Committee to identify candidates for Board of Directors
 - Events committee
- Rookie Rugby Instructor training for parents, coaches and players to be conducting in conjunction with the Fall rugby program (D.Hall)
- Website Feedback (T.Fouts) - None for Todd.
- **Elections. Candidates for the below positions were nominated in advance of the meeting in accordance with Rugby Illinois Elections Procedure and seconded at the meeting in person. Verbal Ayes and Nays were used for offices having only one nominee. For offices with more than one nominee, show of hands was used for tallying votes in favor of each candidate, counted by both the Secretary and President for accuracy.**

Executive Committee results:

President - John Walker (incumbent, unopposed)

VP Competition - Marques Plummer (inc., unopposed)

VP Marketing - Stephanie Esposito (inc., unopposed)

VP Development - David Hall (inc., unopposed)

Treasurer - John McGurk (unopposed, replacing David Hall)

Secretary - Anne Schwaab (inc., unopposed)

Compliance Officer - Mary Ann Daniluk (inc., unopposed)

Competition Committee results:

Division 1 Coordinator (HS Boys) - Vinnie LaPianna (inc., unopposed)

Division 2 (HS Boys) - Mike Size (inc., unopposed)

Division 3 (HS Boys) - Todd Fouts (inc.) prevailed over Ricardo Santillan

MS Coordinator - John Chevalier (inc.), prevailed over Tom Kean

Girls Division Coordinator - Amy McCormick (inc., unopposed)

Disciplinarian - Paschal O' Riley (unopposed)

Other Positions :

Match Official Coordinator - This is not a position created by the bylaws, but was filled (on approval of membership in July 2016) in an effort to bridge the relationship between Rugby Illinois and our referee societies. Neither the membership nor the EC elected to add on this position *permanently* to the competitions committee going forward. We are grateful to Sean Bracken for accepting the role for fall of 2016 - summer of 2017 and for his dedication and hard work volunteering in this position. The EC will evaluate whether this coordinator position will remain filled in the coming year.

7s Coordinator - (not on Competitions Committee. Will be filled by Exec Committee).

Nominees: Sean Bracken, Rockey Del

Fall Ball Coordinator - (not on Competitions Committee. Filled by Exec Committee)

Nominees: MS only Tom Kean, Paul Bergman - HSboys, Amy Girls Fall. EC to consider co-chair position.

Fall Ball MS Coordinator - (not on Competitions Committee. Filled by Exec Committee)

Nominees: none in advance

- **Frosh Soph Coordinator nominees: Leo Sheridan**
- **11:55 Announcements from Membership (10 minutes)**
 - For both boys and girls players unaffiliated with a team who need a team assignment, have these kids reach out to Paul Bergman in the Fall for Boys HS and Amy for girls HS to join club trainings and participate in matches.
 - Nolan Day - is coaching U23s and interested in resuming involvement with Rugby Illinois
 - L200 coaching clinic is scheduled for August 11 in the city
 - Heather Harley
- Adjourned at 1:13 pm for Division Breakouts

REPORTS

Presidents Report

July 29, 2017

Summer AGM

This meeting will mark the completion of 1 year I have presided over Rugby Illinois. The year has been a great learning experience, with both positives and negatives . Overall, I can honestly say I'm glad I am involved in this organization, and think that building, improving and expanding on the work already done with our league is a wonderful thing.

Below is a summary of what I have been involved with in the last year. I will only list the items, with little detail, as much of this will be covered in other reports and discussion throughout the upcoming AGM. Any and all listed I would be happy to discuss and elaborate on.

My report for the AGM will be comments regarding big picture view of RI for the last year and moving forward. I will take brief questions at the end of comments.

Travel

- Baltimore NDS
- San Diego RBEA

Initiatives-

- RI & CARFU – bringing closer together
- RI & CARF RS - improving the relationship
- Academy/ Partner Policy
- Volunteer Policy for events
- Establishment of Community Fund
- Hiring of RI YDO
- Austin Project
- North Chicago Project
- Bernie's Book Bank Drive
- Advancement Day (next year)
- Medical reporting initiative (Injure Free) and Concussion policy rollout (ASAP)
- Restructure plan for RI (Board of Directos & Executive Director)
- New Committees (Events, Championships, Finance & Sponsorship, HP)

VP RUGBY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Andy provided services that warranted payment of \$2,500 for his efforts in June. Andy visited ten schools to conduct Rookie Rugby instruction, met with the British School in Chicago regarding forming a rugby team, conducted Hurricane and Tornado training sessions, helped at the MS State Championships, visited with one adult club regarding helping with the British School program and visited two youth rugby clubs to engage with them regarding developing youth rugby in their communities. Visited the two Academy camps. Andy organized a successful Olympic Day event on June 23 at the Austin neighborhood summer program parade. Two Olympians attended the event. Also an Olympic Day event was held on June 24 at the Elgin Sevens Tournament.

DRAFT for approval at December 2, 2017 Winter AGM

Rugby instruction was provided by andy and volunteer coaches at Game On Sports for Girls summer camps in Chicago and Lake Forest.

SCHOOL OUTREACH PROGRAM

Since the May Executive Committee meeting RIL has visited a further ten schools to introduce Rookie Rugby to approximately 500 students. In the last eighteen months RIL have provided Rookie Rugby instruction to over 17,500 students through school visits, an average of 1,000 students per month.

WEST AURORA SCHOOL DISTRICT 129 RUGBY INITIATIVE

Janet Kean is continuing with the introduction of Middle School and High School rugby in the 129 School District. Andy Rose held a successful youth camp with over 100 kids who received instruction in safe tackle, ABCs rucking, defensive tracking and hand catch. West Aurora High School is planning on fielding a team in the Spring 2018 season

AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD RUGBY INITIATIVE

Rookie Rugby instruction has commenced in the Austin Neighborhood under the direction of Andy Rose assisted by John Walker and will continue through July and August. Andy is working with the Condors to help with this program

RECRUITMENT OF A RUGBY COACH FOR NOTRE DAME ACADEMY

Rugby Illinois have been helping the school recruit a full time rugby coach. Hopefully this coach will be available to conduct outreach rugby visits in the Champaign area for Rugby Illinois.

FUTURE EVENTS

Planning for the Rookie Rugby Instructor courses in the Fall and the Rookie Rugby instruction presentation at the PE Teachers' Convention in November are ongoing.

VP Marketing

This year for marketing we switched e-mail platforms, which is a lower cost to Rugby Illinois, has some easier design options, trying to keep it consistent with coming out the first Wednesday of the Month. We have added in promotion of rugby academy camps, and increased website articles and facebook output. As we work with academies in the future our goal is to encourage them to have information and registration links out ASAP.

This year had some coaches and parents really involved in sharing pictures, events, and stories about great players. Would like to see a bit more participation from the coaches, like man of the match reports, or any kids you know are making an impact in their community or outstanding students.

With branding, the goal is to get the Tornadoes to be seen as a high performance group. We also want to get the boys, girls, middle school, and Rugby Illinois logo consistent and in the same color scheme.

Will be putting out and promoting good sideline behavior more to help parents understand the culture of rugby.

High School State Championships at Morton and 7s at Blaze.

15s over all seemed to be well received, lots of compliments on the facility, proximity of the fields to one another. Turf feedback was that championship games would be preferred on grass, however with the stadium there it was a great way to keep parents and player around to watch the games. Again, thank you to everyone who helped my the day possible. For Middle School, in future reference, in respect to concession sales as a promise of hosting, we'd like to encourage teams to patronize and not have a full blown party on the side lines. Apologies for lack of communication that a school is a dog free facility.

For 7s we would love to have more teams participate in Championships, and understand summer is a time when families travel. If you are combining with other teams please let me know so I can help promote that.

Any extra trophies, medals etc, can be order through Crown Trophies, see me for information.

Working on a document to make the process smooth flowing and well outlined for the following year.

Please share upcoming fundraisers so we can let local teams know how to support one another.

GROUP PHOTO

VP Competition Report

Summer AGM

July 29, 2017

With the completion of the 2016-17 season we have had a great amount of accomplishments. We also have found somethings that could use a bit of change all for the improvement of Rugby Illinois. It was a pleasure getting to know and interacting with the body as a whole.

Competition overview

121 total teams competed this year

59 Varsity (boys,girls)

11 JV

12 F/S

19 U14

18 U12

4 RR

With the initiatives being worked on there are potentially hundreds of kids set to add to the numbers.

High Performance

The high performance teams (Tornadoes M/F, Hurricanes) traveled to Wisconsin, Indiana, North Carolina and Georgia. All teams had some accomplishments.

Rugby Illinois has partnered with some high performance specialist(Tiger, Atavus,HP Coaching NZ) in order to offer that extra bit of training and development to our players and coaches. So far we've had a couple of camps. This is still new but we're very positive on what will come of this.

Referees- We had a great year with the CARFU-RS. It's a solid relation that both of our organizations look forward to continued growth.

Disciplinary Issues

Games- 122- yellow cards

10- red cards

Coaches- 3 suspensions

Serious Incidents

Mouth guard thrown at a referee

Individuals entering the field of play to verbally assault referees during games

A team feeling that they were racially targeted

A parent almost being removed by police from the championship for behavior

Players yelling vulgar comments to female referees

General parent/coach/player behavior

RUGBY ILLINOIS 2017 SUMMER MEETING

TREASURER'S REPORT

Income and expenses have tracked well with the Budget established by the Rugby Illinois Executive Committee for our fiscal year of September 1 to August 31. The 2016/17 Budget projected an income of \$6,205. It is now anticipated that Rugby Illinois will have income of \$16,256 for 2016/17.

USA Rugby automatically draws funds from RIL bank account to collect payment for the USA Rugby dues that we collect on their behalf. There may be some USA Rugby dues still to be paid.

The budget developed for 2017/18 includes fully funding the Youth Development Manager position with no financial assistance from USA Rugby. As a result, the budget indicates a loss of approximately \$30,000 for 2017/18. Rugby Illinois has sufficient cash reserves to cover this loss.

No outstanding Invoices are pending, but:

- Expenditures for the Tornadoes - Boys program still need to be finalized.
- Funding for two RIL rugby referees to attend High Performance USA Rugby Referee Camp.

Income to be collected:

- Additional income from the Great Lakes Sevens Tournament which was a Tornado Boys fundraiser.
- Some Middle School clubs still have to pay their referee fees to Rugby Illinois

Bank balances as of July 27, 2017:

Savings Account - \$87,757.69

Checking Account - \$4,801.60

A detailed Income and Expense report has been provided, and I will be happy to answer any questions that members may have.

Respectfully submitted,

David J. Hall

Rugby Illinois Treasurer

[July 10 Financial Report](#)

[2016 - 2017 Financial Report](#)

[2018 Budget Proposal for December Meeting](#)

Compliance Report Summer AGM (July 2017)

2530 Total Player Registration

1. 1905 HS Players (1592 Males/313 Females)
2. 552 MS
 - a) 248 Jr (231 Males/17 Females)
 - b) 304 Sr (275 Males/30 Females)
3. 73 Rookie Rugby

385 Fall Registration - registered by mid October but may not have played fall ball

- 305 HS players
- 17 Rookie Rugby
- 63 MS

Month by Month Registrations

- 130 Aug 2016
- 242 Sept 2016
- 69 Oct 2016
- 49 Nov 2016
- 103 Dec 2016
- 382 January 2017
- 315 February 2017
- 902 March 2017 this is too high. The bulk of our registrations need happen ideally by January esp. High School
- 259 April 2017
- 40 May 2017
- 26 June 2017
- 13 July 2017

We will be changing our registration software from Sports Engine to Top Score. The website will now be different and the registration will be different. Due to this new software, we will now go back to the USA Rugby ids for the future events. We will officially be making this change in August right before the fall registration. More info to come.....

Secretary's Report

Citrix file share and calendar share are operational. I will begin the process of moving documents over from Google Drive to Citrix, which is HIPAA compliant in the event any medical records are eventually stored there, for securing important contracts and templates and for sharing files among the EC, CC and with coaches.

I am filing 990s for those on the group return unless the club was kicked off the group list for failure to file 990s for 3 consecutive prior years.

I recommend that all clubs join the group exemption or request c3 status on their own.

IRS has returned correspondence indicating what is required for the Central Organization of a group exemption but we never received a letter indicating that we were awarded the group status. I will follow up and keep everyone posted who wants to be included on the tax exemption.

On October 1 I will file a schedule of next year's clubs who have expressed interest and qualify to have tax exempt status under our group letter. Any clubs who want to be included for 2018 must register with Rugby Illinois in September and contact me for required documents to get your club added on to our exemption. I can step you through everything.

Division 2 Report

Division 2 had 15 clubs registered, 3 conferences with 5 teams. Each team had a total of 6 games, 4 conference games and 2 non-conference games- teams with a bye had one non-conference game. One team each week will have a bye due to conference numbers and not extending season to seven weeks.

Playoffs- Eight teams proceed, Top team in each conference and the next best five teams. 3rd and 4th place game would be played. Due to the conflict of byes, points were pro-rated by percentage of total possible points.

Regular season was extremely competitive as games being played last week of the season had playoff bracket implications. In a great matchup, Montini defeated the South Suburban Cobras 31-27 for the championship. West suburban Bulls took third place by defeating Lake Forest 57-17. Congrats to all teams!

To Discuss at AGM:

- A possible change to the conference structure. (usually depends on the number of teams)
 - Maybe the Division should only have two conferences or none at all and that teams play against six randomly drawn teams.
- More defined playoff seedings within the conferences.
 - The divisions needs to determine course of action for conference winners. Based on total points, only conference games points, or conference wins and losses. This will depend upon the division/conference structure.
- Playoff Games Being scheduled

- Each team should be scheduling their game within the week provided. No Team should be playing a championship match with a one day turnaround. I would like to put something within the D2 division guidelines.

Michael Size
Division 2 Coordinator

2017 Rugby Illinois Discipline Report

This year discipline revolved as much around coaches as it did players which is an alarming trend. More coaches were involved in referee abuse and rules violations than ever before. This resulted in one year long coaching ban for rules violations/ falsifying rosters, a coach suspension for referee dissent, as well as game suspensions for team conduct. Several warnings were also given. As coaches, parents, and administrators we need to set the examples for the kids to follow, not disputing calls, etc. This is leading us down the path towards poor sportsmanship and dangerously aggressive play.

As for players... 156 yellow cards were issued mainly for high or dangerous tackles. A concern here is that there were multiple yellows given in same games for the same high tackle infractions. I suspect the new high tackle rule played a large part in this, however as coaches we need to ensure we are teaching proper technique below the shoulders.

There were 7 red cards issued with at least 4 days worth of suspension time given.

Red cards were down from 10 a year ago, but yellows went from 73 to 156!! The new tackle law and the elimination of the soft red may have led to the increase. At any rate, the high amount of yellow cards is a concern and should be addressed via tackling clinics and training.

V/R

Rob Copland
RIL Disciplinarian

2017 Rugby Illinois Sevens Report

This year boys high school sevens took a big step with implementation of a state qualifier series leading to a state final. Qualifiers took place in Elgin and Lemont (Great Lakes) and qualified 8 sides for the state final which lead to a South Side Irish Academy and Arlington Red final, the third time in three years. Arlington Red was the boys high school champs. Overall we had 14 teams compete in sevens this summer.

In addition to qualifiers, boundaries and player eligibility based on the Coach's Handbook was enforced-(2) waivers issued.

At least one team was disqualified by the competition committee from state play-Peoria Dubs as they were a motley side that was not registered as a team with USA Rugby or Rugby Illinois. They had no certified coach and used the All Reds information to enter a team into the Great Lakes Tourney.

Moving forward in Boys Sevens, it has become clear that there are (2) levels of play in RIL. The best teams, Arlington and South Side Irish Academy dominate play and have for the past 3 years. The other D1 clubs seem to compete with them, then there is everyone else in D2 and D3. The competition amongst those teams was even as proven in all three state tourneys. I would suggest that we consider a two tier system or cup/plate system for state as there is disparity in play between the top sides and everyone else. I would also suggest that the qualifiers be run and subsidized by RIL to keep costs down. Tourney costs this season ranged from \$75-\$240, and to play the (2) qualifiers and final cost teams \$465

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for the summer. State run qualifiers also would eliminate non eligible teams from competing as the state would not allow for motley made up sides as other tourneys have done. I would also suggest that the qualifiers could be set up regionally with a week night schedule of 3 or 4 team divisions so that weekends can remain free for other tourneys or family travel. Another option would be to end 15's earlier so we can get a solid month of sevens in before summer starts.

At the Middle School level we had 4 teams compete at the Senior Level and 4 at the Junior level. This is up from a couple of years ago when we had only (2) teams competing. There were MS competitions in at least (2) state tourneys and the need is there to keep growing and expanding MS sevens. Some confusion at the MS level existed over qualifiers. There was no qualification process for MS teams. All tourneys were open to all teams.

The disappointment this summer was loss of girls rugby. There were no teams that played in RIL this year. This is down from years past. I believe this may be a result of the girls tornado summer schedule. Looking ahead, sevens is the Olympic brand of rugby. I believe that sevens because of its Olympic status would be easier to sell to schools rather than 15s. It takes 12 players to make a 7s squad, 25 for 15s, and requires less funding which makes it more attractive foe school budgets. I realize that this goes against the grain of RIL which is more 15s oriented. 15s is great game, but 7s is an Olympic sport which leaves 15s in the same spot of football in some respects. Most High School sports are of the Olympic variety with exception of football, baseball, and softball. For these reasons, we might have better luck of becoming a school sport in IHSA-just something to think about.

V/R

R. Copland
Sevens Coordinator