



**Minutes of the
Summer Annual General Meeting
of
Rugby Illinois**

July 25, 2020

Venue: Teleconference via Zoom

<https://condenast.zoom.us/j/7441>

943688 Password: 664867

Meeting ID: 744-194-3688

I. **The meeting was** called to order at 9:05am by Interim President, Paul Bergman, upon establishing a quorum of membership, with 34 out of 46 clubs in attendance and two proxies (Jack Sullivan as proxy for Jim Drousias of Marist and South Side Irish Academy).

A. Recap of Candidates running for office today:

- a. Executive Committee: Standing for re-election today are Paul Bergman (President), Anne Schwaab (Secretary), and Stewart (Treasurer). Tom Kean has served as VP Marketing and wishes to stand for election as VP Development to replace Mike McCarthy who has served and now resigned. We have a candidate for VP Marketing, Tony Boylan. We sent out his resume a few days ago. Marques Plummer has chosen to step down from Compliance after serving several years on the Executive Committee but will be around to help out if needed. Tim Walsh, former president of CARFU and a referee has agreed to serve as Compliance Officer.
- b. Competition Committee: Eric Bangeman is stepping down as VP Competition but would like to stay on as D1A Coordinator. Nick Larma (Elmhurst) has volunteered to stand for election as VP Competition. Mike Size has agreed to stay in place as Division 1AA Coordinator. Todd Fouts has agreed to stay in place as not only Small Clubs/D2 Coordinator but also to sit on the Middle School committee as Webmaster. John Chevalier is stepping down as MS Coordinator after serving. Amy McCormack wishes to stay in place as Girls Coordinator to our knowledge and Pascal O'Reilly has agreed to stay on as Disciplinarian. Thank you to our officers departing for all your time and hard work.
- c. We have not been able to find a candidate for MS Coordinator although there are other volunteers willing to sit on the MS committee. (Jennifer

Hart, Ryan Stoddard, Todd Fouts are interested and available to assist).

John Chevalier proposed that a committee will help get all duties accomplished. Having a Junior, Senior and Rookie Rugby Scheduler role on the committee will entail working with each club to understand their numbers and then attending the festivals to help out and answer questions. The MS Coordinator role has a voice on the Competitions Committee and will need to focus on two things: 1) how to spur growth beyond the festival format and 2) to get a girls division going. Chevy is available to share ideas on accomplishing those things and to support the group.

- d. Paul opened the floor for any additional nominations. No additional nominations were received and nominations were closed.

II. Officers Reports

A. **President**, Paul Bergman addressed the group and emphasized that it is the EC responsibility to ensure our organization is acting in the best interest of the health of all our members' families. Getting back to rugby, we will be very careful with how we move forward during Covid 19. Any club who wants to return to play must submit a RTP protocol to the EC for approval per USA Rugby. When a club submits a written plan, approval will be based on whether all RTP requirements from the Midwest Rugby Union are met. So far only the Lions have submitted a plan which is under review.

On Phil Olsen's (NewTrier) suggestion to create an academic recognition program, we recognized 51 HS players who received a certificate at one of 4 different levels and it was well received.

This year we lost a friend and true rugby leader, Steve Krause. His teammates from U of I have asked the EC to consider some fashion of a memorial and we are moving forward on those discussions. To memorialize him in a way he would have been proud of. Please feel free to email or call Paul at any time with concerns you would like to discuss.

In handling compliance via committee going forward, our approach will be persistent rather than punitive. Aaron Sweeney and Dave Rosenburg have agreed to join the Compliance Committee but more people are needed. We all need to do everything we can to be as low maintenance as possible: don't argue with referees, teach your players not to trash talk or invite confrontation. Our families need to understand that positive sportsmanship extends beyond the field of play and they will take their lead from the coaches behaviors. It's not about winning, it's about playing well. There were no questions from the floor.

B. VP Competition, Eric Bangeman (interim VP to fill vacancy following elections and then to step up again when Paul assumed the role of Interim President)

We had a good season of fall ball with 5 clubs participating over a 7 week period. Aside from some early friendlies, there was no rugby this Spring. The Competition Committee finished an overhaul of the coaches and parents handbook, incorporated law changes, removed redundancies, and fully aligned our book with World Rugby on game management. Adopted Field Safety policy that is incorporated into the handbook as section 6.4. Thank you to Nolan and Lou for all the years that they coached the tornadoes and to John McGurk for assuming the HS Tornadoes Head Coach role. Dylan Farmer will coach the MS select side and Sean Bracken will act as a selector for both HS and MS. There were no questions from the floor. Congratulations to Nick and John for leading undefeated teams on the Tornadoes program.

C. VP Development, Mike McCarthy was unable to report in person but submitted a written report.

D. VP Marketing, Tom Kean

Tom took over the vacancy in this role from Stephanie Esposito in mid-February and presented a graphic report on increasing interest in the non-rugby community using Facebook and targeting demographics by age range. Our total Facebook followers to date are 2,297. The IBJI Sponsorship came through and there are a number of things we need to do to maintain that relationship. You will see some media posts from them in the near future. Because of covid, we will have to hold back on any planned seminars for now. Tom has started to come up with some ideas to get more people engaged with online presentations, advertised over Facebook. We reached many people by promoting the spring webinars featuring talks by coaches like Blaine Scully, Rob Cain and notable players. There are a number of leads received from this and he is working his way through them. If they are in your particular area and if he can get names and email addresses he will and will try and transition those contacts to your club. There are some interesting leads there. Focus for the future - once we get the season back up and running, we are advertising to non rugby families to do a Try On Rugby. We did offer a full refund to families that our Treasurer will address and that speaks to the ethos of our sport.

Question - Any correlation on webinar attendance to the day and time? A lot of the timing was dictated by the presenters who were out of the country. It seemed to be more of the presenter than the time of day that impacted

attendance. Will try and get some more local people to present.

E. **Compliance Officer**, Marques Plummer is on the call and unable to report in person but submitted a written report. There were no significant compliance issues to report and you can reach out to Marques by email if you have any questions.

F. **Secretary**, Anne Schwaab

Has our eBallot ability up and running. With this year as a trial, we hope to be able to utilize the eBallot system for taking future action outside of a regular meeting. We can add this provision to our bylaws to permit electronic voting without a meeting with sufficient notice and participation by a requisite number of clubs. Thank you to Tim Walsh for putting together a bylaws restatement for us. The Governance Committee has not met since the USA Rugby reorganization has been in flux. We will wait and see what comes out of their new governance structure to determine if there are additional things we need to incorporate to our structure or bylaws. If anyone has anything important for us to consider adding to the bylaws, email those to ec@rugbyillinois.org and we will make sure those get communicated. A few points raised in the past for addition to the bylaws are: requiring Board and Officers to join USAR, Considering permitting weighted voting (more clubs, more votes) and staggering terms of officers. There were no questions from the floor.

III. Guest Speaker, Bill Stevens, our Midwest Representative for the new USA Youth & High School Rugby National Body, being formed as a result of USA Rugby's bankruptcy.

- A. Bill sits on the USA Board as the HS representative as well. USA Rugby's bankruptcy petition has been submitted and is now pending in court. The goal is for the plan to be approved by the end of August, which is optimistic given the current Covid crisis and impact on revenue and dues when there is not rugby.
- B. The New Youth & HS organization is an independent legal entity and has obtained 501(c)(3) approval. Goal is for final bylaws to be in place by January 1. All the State Governing Bodies are meeting on a teleconference every two weeks now for updates and USAYHS Rugby is meeting weekly.
- C. Insurance - USA Rugby previously split the insurance cost equally across all it's aged divisions. Because the kids have lower claims against insurance, we should be paying the same premiums as the older players. We have hired Injure Free as our broker as of last week. You will see the cost for coverage go down from \$13 - 14 per player to around \$6.
- D. Injure Free is working with Sports Lomo to become integrated online for registration to be available as soon as possible. You can begin to register for the next year on the same cycle as before some time in August, because there are states where

rugby is still being played. The Community Agreement was given back to USAR for better terms and to provide more value hopefully to be negotiated next week. The registration fee per player is undetermined but is expected to be lower. USA Youth does not want to agree to the first offer if it is not in the best interest of the state bodies.

- E. 11 Working groups are active and you can email Bill if you are interested in joining in the future (groups are full now) or want to provide input: Sponsorship and Marketing, Nominations Committee, Girls Rugby Development, Basic Member Services, Competition Playing Standards, Covid 19 Return to Play, Coach and Ref Development and Culture, Affiliates, Q&A, Touch/Noncontact, Budget and Business Planning for youth and high school. Paul will continue to forward information to the coaches listserve.
- F. Bill fielded Questions from membership - There will be a new insurance provider who will provide comparable coverage but more responsive claim time than before. Current insurance is in place through USAR until September 1. There will be a Varsity Initiative in place that is able to self-insure as before. USA Youth & HS website will be up on August 1. USA Rugby has included in its Chapter 11 bankruptcy plan how it will pay out to creditors and does not yet have direction on what it will be able to write off. It has collected money from high performance teams to keep them going through a Covid Grant. Referee insurance plans are underway as part of the community agreement negotiations.

IV. Treasurer's Report, Stewart Boynton

Income for 2020 is \$53,218 and expenses were \$21,573. The majority of the expenses were dues paid to USAR. We also bought Rookie Rugby equipment, provided some ref and player scholarships for training, paid for Facebook posts. Covid refunds totaled only \$2,841. A written report detailed additional fixed and potential expenses. If all of those come to fruition we would have a total loss of approximately \$4,000. Our financial position is strong and our current assets total \$102, 513.46. We have a portion of our budget unallocated for any emergency need, based on a member comment from the prior AGM.

Stewart answered questions from the floor: that tax returns for 2018 and 2019 will be published as soon as filed. Bank Charges from 5/3 were not explained by the bank other than for the type of account that we have and Stewart will be closing the account there and switching us to Wintrust who has given us a \$5000 sponsorship. We cannot yet charge fees for 2020 - 2021 until we initiate activities (per Paul Bergman), otherwise we cannot justify asking people to register. The savings from the newly reduced membership dues can be expected to cover the \$4,000 loss projected. The sponsorships shown totaling \$12,714 are from IBJI, Wintrust and the OCC.

V. Old Business - None

VI. New Business

A. Elections

A. Introduction and Statements by New Candidates, Tim Walsh for Compliance officer and Nick Larma for VP Competition. Candidate resumes were shared by email with membership.

B. eBallot was Activated at approximately 10:25am and will remain open for one hour. One representative from each club received an email invitation to complete the ballot. The Secretary clarified questions on the ballot options and instructions. In addition to casting a vote for officers on the ballot, Members are also asked to provide input by writing in their recommendations for Nominating Committee members and future Director candidates from your club or community. These write-ins are not for election.

C. Additional question from the chat is on the extended deadline for our tax returns, which would be November 15, 2020 unless extended further for Covid.

B. COVID and Return to Play, including the Midwest protocol - John Honcharuk

- a. How can we participate in rugby safely? The Midwest RFU has issued directives for return to play and those will be incorporated into the Compliance committee's considerations on what our return to play programs should look like.
- b. IHSA has deferred to IL Dept of Public Health for further instructions and we are waiting for further instructions from them. In the meantime, we should access the World Rugby RTP protocol training on their website. USA Rugby also has provided some good guidelines on their website.
- c. Tim Walsh summarized some of the Midwest requirements that we need to further consider, as we may not be able to align on them. For example, having a Covid 19 LAU officer and getting our clubs' RTPs approved by a local health organization. There is a World Rugby RTP Awareness for administrators that we can take this module also.
- d. Paul Bergman recommends going forward from today, that Tim, Paul and Honch should be the small group that moves us forward in this process of putting together a process for reviewing RTP plans and keeping abreast of the Department of Health's changing guidelines for sports in Illinois. Honch is willing to assist in reviewing club RTPs. The Lions requested and were granted a waiver from the Midwest and CARFU from the requirement to have their RTP approved by a public health department. We do not expect the changes at USAR to create any new subordinate relationship among RIL, CARFU and the Midwest. RIL will be a member of USAR and the Youth and High School org.

C. Field Safety provisions and Division structure - Eric Bangeman presented a powerpoint including the below highlights.

1. **Field Safety:** In previous seasons, coaches have expressed concern about the safety of some of the pitches. It is the responsibility of each member club and RIL to ensure a safe playing environment. A club concerned about field condition must raise the issue with the host team 7 days in advance and the match safety issue must be corrected at the original venue or the venue can be moved to an agreeable location. Details of the process to be followed under this policy are outlined in Eric's presentation. A Ref also can make the determination that a pitch is unsafe to play on. The expectation is that if a visiting team (with a full side ready to play) refuses to play and the host and ref do not share the concern, the two teams still must come to an agreement.
2. **Playing Divisions** were briefly reviewed, which was presented originally at the last Winter AGM. The goal is to better match clubs of similar size and competitiveness and offer more competitive balance throughout the divisions. Previously there were too many forfeits and too many exceptions for division criteria on promotion and relegation were too subjective. CC has authority to determine club placement and criteria is more clearly defined. Resulting tiers are Division 1A (most competitive and have a JV side), Division 1AA (most competitive but unable to consistently field a JV side), Division 2 (competitive clubs that have to include fresh/sophs to field a full side), and Small Club (emerging or returning clubs). There were not questions from the floor.

VII CARFU Referee Society Report - Eric Bangeman

Match fees have increased to \$120 per full HS match and \$75 for JV match. Ref Society has been working with RIL to develop a program whereby HS refs work at MS festivals with mentors present. We continue to have the referee feedback form on the website for your input and ask that you utilize it as they value the information. Refs are also available to come to your trainings and help educate your players. Since we last met, the only law change that has taken place has to do with scoring a try. You can no longer score by grounding the ball at the base of the post.

VIII Disciplinarian Report, Pascal O'Reilly

Fall Ball - 10 yellow cards (1 spring before season was canceled) and no red cards. Referee reports are needed promptly after the match to properly record cards and results. When we return to play, please make sure all players are registered as there will be zero tolerance for players participating without registration. Last meeting we discussed whether to reduce sanction

time periods based on the severity of the red card and considering the remaining length of the season. The Committee is still struggling with whether or how to put such a reduction into place without it being arbitrary. This question is still under consideration and Pascal is open to your input. He is also willing to get on a call and explain any provisions, or have a Q&A. Paul asks that you ensure your club is familiar with the Disciplinary Policy.

IX Presentation of Sport Lomo - Todd Fouts shared a powerpoint on the features of and how to setup SportLomo.

We do not currently have the cost but the platform is already being used nationally for all levels within USAR. The system will register everyone from players to admins and refs. It will allow us to continue to collect forms and signatures electronically. The registration links on rugbyillinois.org are updated (no longer TopScore) and it will direct you to continue registering through USAR, starting by selecting your club. Clubs can utilize SportLomo for their own dues and forms collection as well. There are still some questions around how to use varsity initiative and RIL is still not fully set up on Sport Lomo. We will not go live until USAYHR is ready to accept payment by the SGBs and we are sure insurance is in place. Todd demonstrated how to collect information and forms using the website using the Content pages. There will be official training at a later date or you can access help documentation through SportLomo itself including a Registration Manual. There may be additional costs associated with using their platform for events.

X. Elections Continued.

- A. Introduction of and statement by Tony Boylan, candidate for VP Marketing recommended by Stephanie Esposito.

Question from the floor is how Marketing and Development VPs are different in their roles and how they will overlap, plus what are some ideas he has for fundraisers? Tony explained that fundraising and events are a symbiotic relationship. If Development is responsible for the direct ask then marketing will support. A golf outing was mentioned by the prior EC as one target idea, which would require a build out over social media. We can also create some micro fundraising for missions or clubs and use online fundraising tools. Tom adds that Development is growing the game and number of coaches and clubs. Paul explains that marketing helps to get the word out for the work development is looking to do.

- B. Announcement of Election results - 29 clubs voted and 34 active clubs are in attendance today. All candidates on the ballot were approved. Secretary shared results by email as soon as eBallot closed:

Executive Committee

President - Paul Bergman

VP Competition - Nick Larma

VP Development - Tom Kean

VP Marketing - Tony Boylan
Secretary - Anne Schwaab
Treasurer - Stewart Boynton
Compliance Officer - Tim Walsh

Competitions Committee

VP Competitions - Nick Larma
Disciplinarian - Pascal O'Reilly
MS Coordinator - vacant
Girls - Amy McCormack
DIA - Eric Bangeman
DIAA - Mike Size
Small Club D2/Small club - Todd Fouts

XI Announcements from Membership - None

XII Chevy motioned to adjourn at 11:40am and there were multiple seconds.

XIII Minutes. The Secretary called for Approval of the Winter 2019 Meeting Minutes, which was inadvertently skipped earlier in the agenda. Paul motioned to accept the minutes from December 2019 and the motion was seconded. The motions were approved on verbal vote with no objections.

The President adjourned the meeting at 11:43am

Division Breakouts to be scheduled by Coordinators for future dates.