

MIAA Rugby Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 18, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Minutes

1. Call to Order

2. [Minutes of October 24, 2024](#) – Approved Rich, 2nd Tom – Unanimous approval

3. New Business

a. 2025 MIAA Rugby Tournaments ([format linked here](#))

- Amy Daniels updates
 - Championship Site – Curry College
 - Have looked into Veteran’s Memorial Stadium and Harvard. Greg noted they used to play at Fort Devens
 - Next Level Rugby – live stream
 - Secure commentators well in advance.
 - Ball Sponsor – Ruggers
 - [Practice Ball](#)
 - [Match Ball](#)
- Bill Good Sportsmanship Award reminder

b. Regular Season update

- Update from league representatives
 - Greg- Previously, we had two conferences, but this year we merged back into one. I’d like to propose having an annual conference meeting before setting the schedules. There has been some confusion on the coaches' end. While the schedules have worked out, it’s still challenging for Division 1 schools to secure games, especially when some Division 1-sized schools are playing down.
 - Sarah hosted coaches clinic, run by Jeff, with over 40 coaches in attendance
- [MIAA Sport Limitations Information Sheet](#)
 - First allowable practice date- March 12, 2025
 - Cut-off date- Saturday, May 24, 2025 (new)

c. 2025-2027 PROPOSED Rugby Alignments (attached)

- Review/ suggested changes before finalizing
 - **Greg:** Coaches have expressed concerns about not having three divisions, as opposed to the current two. Having three divisions may help attract new programs.
 - **Phil:** TMC has criteria that outlines that the number of teams in a sport determines how many divisions the sport will offer. For two divisions, right now rugby really should have over 50 teams. However, the TMC has granted flexibility in this case, recognizing the unique circumstances of the sport.
 - **Greg:** Another potential pathway is to make Division 1 larger, which could free up space in Division 2 for newer programs.
 - Schools like Brookline, Cambridge, Algonquin, and Chelmsford are possible candidates for realignment based on enrollment.
 - **Scott:** In the current conference schedule, we can accommodate weaker schedules. However, with only 19 teams, we don’t see a move to three divisions as feasible at this time.

- **Greg:** Is anyone else interested in moving another team or two up to Division 1?
 - No feedback

d. **Growth of Rugby**

- Strategies for increasing high school interest in rugby.
 - **George:** I've always had an interest in Rugby, having played 30 years ago. There's a lot of enthusiasm out there, but I feel the knowledge of how to start a program is lacking. I would love to see Superintendents get more involved in the process.
 - **Sean Bevan:** I see growth potential through a former collegiate rugby player in the community who is interested in coaching and helping grow the sport from the grassroots level.
 - **Grace:** There's been an explosion of flag football for girls. I wonder if there's an opportunity to connect these programs with rugby.
 - **Kate:** There are many girls in the state who want opportunities to play but aren't sure who to reach out to. In some schools, Athletic Directors (ADs) are the primary point of contact. Given the small nature of the sport, coaches' meetings are essential for collaboration, joint practices, and mutual support. This is where growth will happen and where coaches can address questions and share resources. I suggest we hold these meetings at the beginning and end of each year.
 - **Chris:** We're seeing growth at the middle school level, especially with flag rugby. This will eventually lead to more high school players. MYRO has a booth at the MA Physical Education/Recreation and Dance conference, which takes place in the first week of November. We've been doing this for the past 10 years. Should we consider sharing the contact list we gather at this event with this committee to help expand outreach?
 - **Sarah G:** I think it's a good idea to have coaches check in with PE teachers. This is a great way to connect the dots and help PE teachers understand the possibilities, such as space and equipment needs.
 - **Chris:** We offer lesson plans for teachers and can visit schools to provide support. Additionally, we offer connections with the Free Jacks. Another challenge we've faced is pushback from football coaches who don't want their athletes playing rugby.
 - **Kate:** MYRO has a comprehensive list of rugby clinics and opportunities across the state. Perhaps we could create a flyer to highlight these events. This would also serve as a way to connect the rugby community to grassroots organizations.
 - **Chris:** That's a great idea. I'll work on putting together the flyer and send it to the group.

USA Rugby had a program designed specifically for young girls, called 'Try It On.' It's a three-pronged approach that requires involvement from someone within the schools:

 - Physical play
 - Body image and nutrition
 - Conflict de-escalation

e. **Other**

4. **Coaches Input**

- a. **Kate-** want to examine how to change the subbing rules, allow for more management of the game, which fits the high school level. Allows more kids to access game time.
 - i. Phil- Rule change process is the path.

5. **Officials Input/Rule Changes**

- a. 19 registered officials. At least 6 more that need to get into the system
- b. No rule changes at this time

6. **Adjournment**