



Minnesota Youth Rugby
Coaches Manual

Minnesota Youth Rugby (MYR), under the leadership of the Minnesota Youth Rugby Board of Directors, is the governing body for rugby in the state of Minnesota. MYR is a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation committed to fostering and supporting the development of the game of Rugby. We join a multitude of other states receiving guidance from USA Rugby to grow participation at the youth and high school level.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide up to date information on how the organization operates and provide the rules, regulations and recommendation for all players, coaches, and referees. It is MYR's goal for players, coaches, referees, administrators, and parents to utilize this handbook as a resource as it represents MYR's dedication to the continued development of children as players and as members of their communities.

Thank you for your contribution to the growth of the game, and all the best for the coming rugby season!

Sincerely,

Tammy Cowan
President
Minnesota Youth Rugby
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Minnesota Youth Rugby Contacts

Below is a list of important contacts for your reference. Please feel free to reach out to Minnesota Youth Rugby staff and Board of Director members with any questions or constructive feedback.

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Team Eligibility Requirements (USA Rugby)

Minnesota Youth Rugby adheres to USA Rugby club and athlete eligibility policies. Please follow the club eligibility information below to ensure your club is in compliance.

Mandatory Registration Conditions

Each team must meet the following requirements to be current and participate in any Minnesota Youth Rugby competition. The deadline to meet these requirements is March 15th for the spring season and June 1st for the summer competition. If your team does not meet these by the appropriate deadline, there is a risk of not being added to the competition schedule. The minimum requirements that must be met are:

- Teams must have an appropriately certified USA Rugby coach with a current, paid registration in the USA Rugby registration system.
 - **All tackle teams** must maintain at least **one USA Rugby Level 200 Certified Coach**
 - non-tackle teams must maintain at least one USA Rugby Level 100 Certified Coach.
- **Fifteen players** must appear on the public roster prior to participation in fifteen-a-side rugby and ten-a-side rugby
- **Nine Players** must appear on the public roster prior to any seven-a-side rugby.
- All players must have a current, paid registration with Minnesota Youth Rugby and appear on their team's online roster as a player for the current registration period.
 - **All MYR players are automatically registered with USA Rugby when they complete the league registration** (even if they don't show up right away in the USA Rugby participation roster.)
 - MYR staff will complete a bulk upload once a month with USA Rugby, this may account for the delay in seeing the player appear on the USA Rugby site.
- Teams must be in good standing with the Minnesota Rugby Referee Society.

Athlete Eligibility

Minnesota Youth Rugby adheres to USA Rugby eligibility policies. Please see the document, [USA Rugby High School Rugby Eligibility](#) for the full listing of USA Rugby's High School Rugby Competition Rules and Eligibility. Athletes that are enrolled in a GED program, homeschooling, or online education will be considered on a case by case basis.

- For the 2020-2021 season, players may remain with the team they were registered with for the 2019-2020 season.
- All new players that attend a school that currently has a rugby program must participate with the program at their school.
- Any new players that do not have a rugby program at the school they currently attend, may play for a club that is closest in distance to their home of record in the following order of precedence:
 - School district they attend school in;
 - Contiguous school district;
 - Club (if none exists within a reasonable distance within the above listed criteria)
- Players may request a transfer from the team they were registered with in the previous season.
- All transfers will be considered on a case by case basis. Requests to transfer shall be made directly through the MYR Executive Director in writing. The above criteria will be used in regards to all transfers.
- In the case of rare and extenuating circumstances, MYR reserves the right to determine club participation based on player welfare and safety.

Recruiting Boundaries

All teams competing in the Minnesota Youth Rugby High School League must abide by the following policies regarding recruiting:

- Teams shall be school based wherever possible.
- Teams with all registered players from one school will be known as high school teams
- Teams with registered players from two or more schools will be known as high school club teams
- A team may draw from multiple schools (club teams), but the players must be enrolled in the district that the club resides in. If there are no clubs within a contiguous school district of that club, clubs may recruit players from that district provided another club is not closer in distance.
- Teams that are deemed to have played an ineligible player shall forfeit all matches the ineligible player played in.
- Teams may appeal a case of ineligibility in writing to the Executive Director of MYR for consideration by the High School Committee. Players that are the subject of that appeal may play during the appeal process but run the risk of their team forfeiting games if they lose the appeal.
- Teams that play ineligible players may also be subject to further action upon review of the circumstances of the infraction and its impact on the competition.
- Single School teams are eligible for the USA Rugby High School Varsity Initiative.
 - Information on this can be found at: <https://www.usarugby.org/varsityhs/>

Minnesota Youth Rugby Coach Code of Conduct

Minnesota Youth Rugby has adopted the current USA Rugby Coach Code of Conduct for all coaches. All Minnesota Youth Rugby coaches & staff shall review this document and comply with the standards set forth in it.

MYR Coach Certification & Registration Requirements

Minnesota Youth Rugby coaches should commit themselves to a positive, player-centered approach in their coaching. All coaches are expected to maintain a high level of sportsmanship, professionalism, and integrity on and off the field. Head coaches are responsible for the conduct of their athletes and supporters during all team events (practice, competition, etc...)

In accordance with USA Rugby policies, under the new coaching structure, every coach, regardless of their experience, is responsible for completing the following requirements to have a “current” standing with USA Rugby.

A coach is considered “current” for the membership cycle when they complete the following:

1. Complete the registration as a coach with USA Rugby to the appropriate level at www.usarugby.org/membership
2. Pass a biennial background screening (included in USA rugby registration)
3. Complete & submit proof of completion of the Safe Sport Player Protection Package to rugbyguru@hotmail.com
4. (included in USA rugby registration)
5. Complete a certification course (If not previously completed. Level 200 for head coaches, Level 100 for all others)
6. Maintain “current” status by completing annual continuing education credits
7. As required by Minnesota law, complete and submit proof of completion of the CDC Heads Up program to rugbyguru@hotmail.com
8. Read, sign, and submit signed USA Rugby Coach Code of Conduct to rugbyguru@hotmail.com

Middle School League

The MYR Middle school league structure will be as follows:

Team Practices

Coaches of each team will determine the start date and times of practice. Minnesota Youth Rugby will obtain a Certificate of insurance for each team upon request once a team meets the minimum requirements to be current and in compliance with USA Rugby.

Teams may not conduct contact or tackle practices until they are compliant.

Season Structure

The league schedule will be determined by MYR based on number of teams in each division. All teams from the division will meet at the host's location and play at least one game each. The schedule will also provide one time slot for a non-contact game for players wishing to opt out of tackling, new players, or anyone from the teams who wish to get more experience.

The following formats shall be played unless agreed upon otherwise by the coaches in the league:

Girls 7s Rugby

Boys 10s Rugby

Coaches may mix same gender teams based on size or experience using their best judgement. The goal is to learn the game and have fun.

Field Size

Each host will provide two fields with reduced dimensions. The fields will both fit perpendicular on one regulation size rugby field. There shall be a 10 yard buffer zone between fields where coaches and reserves will stand. The width will not exceed 40 yards and the length will not exceed 60 yards. Ropes and markers shall be used to maintain a five yard safety perimeter around the fields.

Laws

The game will be played under the middle school game variations that were developed with the input from all coaches within the league. These are available at www.minnesotayouthrugby.com/Middleschool

High School League

The MYR High School League structure will be conducted according to the following policies and procedures:

Team Practices

Coaches of each team will determine the start date and times of practice. Minnesota Youth Rugby will provide a certificate of insurance to each team upon request. A certificate of Insurance will be issued once a team meets the minimum requirements to be current and in compliance with USA Rugby policies and procedures.

Teams may not conduct contact or tackle practices until they meet the requirements for compliance.

2020 – 2021 High School League Structure

The High School league will be structured in the following divisions:

- High school girl's Championship 10s Rugby
- High school girl's Championship 7s Rugby
- High school boy's Championship 15s Rugby
- High school boy's Development 15s Rugby
- High school boy's Championship 7s Rugby

All of the teams from the previous season will be added to the current registration cycle. Any team that wishes to join the competition must request addition from the MYR Executive Director and must prove that they can meet all of the requirements to be in compliance with USA Rugby prior to being included in the competition schedule.

State Tournament

The State Tournament will be held annually on the first weekend of June. The spring season will serve as the pathway for state tournament qualification.

Seasonality

The approximate start times (weather permitting) for each season will be:

Spring: Second week of April

Summer: Week after the Independence Day holiday

Fall: First week of October (If a Fall season is executed)

Laws of the game

For all high school matches, referees are required to follow the World Rugby Laws of the Game with the corresponding U19 Law Variations. Referees and coaches will reference the USA Rugby referee resources and game management guide found on the MYR coaching page on the website.

U19 Law Variations will be used, and can be found at laws.worldrugby.org/u19.

Prior to hosting a match

The **Home team** must confirm the status of the game with the assigned referee, opponent, and the MYR Executive Director no less than **72 hours** prior to the game. The confirmation shall include the field address, kickoff time, Emergency Action Plan, and/or any special instructions that all parties may need.

The **Home team** must contract the services of a certified athletic trainer or qualified Emergency Medical Technician.

- As per Minnesota state law, only certified athletic trainers may return a player to play from injury during a match.
- There are no Head injury assessments for any Minnesota Youth Rugby competition. If a player has a suspected head injury, they will not be allowed to return to play or practice until they are fully cleared by a certified physician.

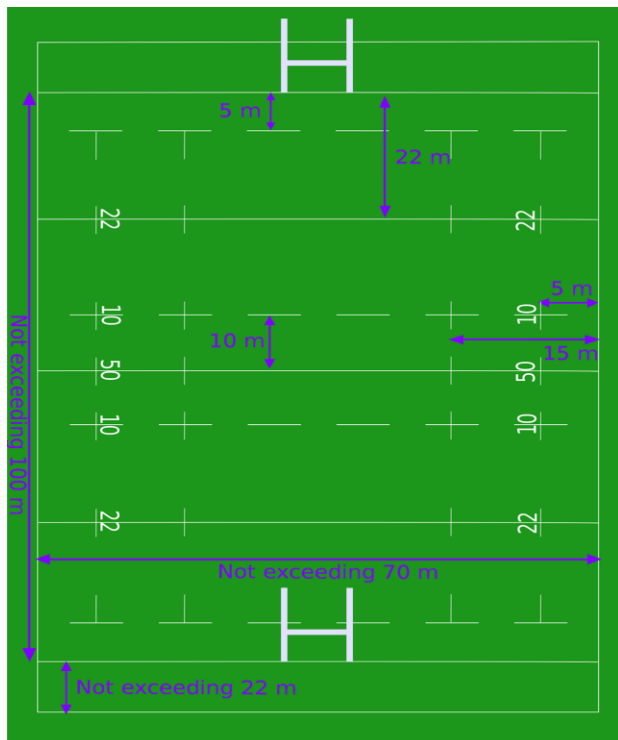
- Coaches must have documentation from the physician that the necessary return to play protocols have been completed and the athlete is cleared to play. The athlete's parent or guardian should provide this documentation.

Field Size and Regulations

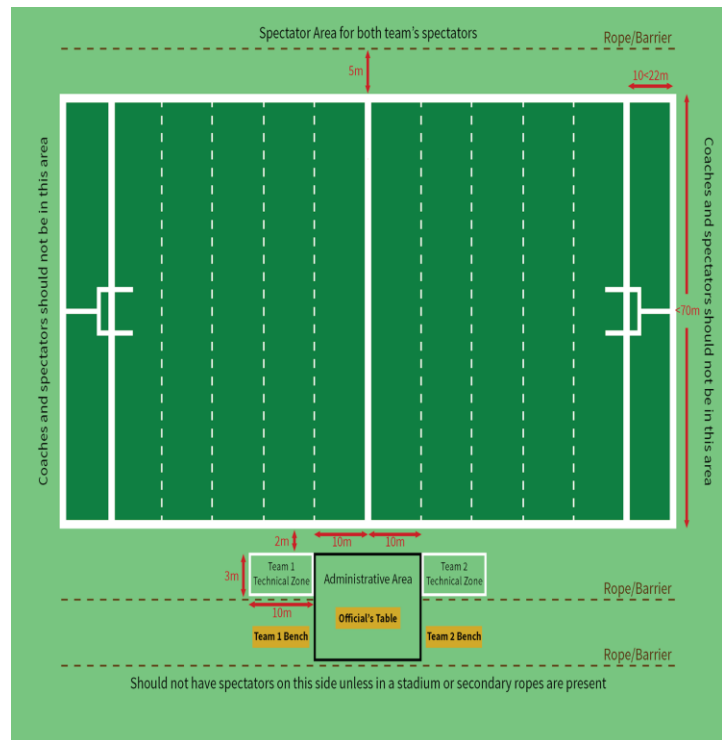
All fields MUST be of proper size, with proper markings. A field that is approximately 105 yards long and 75 yards wide is recommended for all high school rugby matches. Fields may not be smaller than a standard american football field (100 yards long by 53 yards wide).. Fields must also be as flat as possible and free from any safety hazards. The referee has the ability to make a judgement in any situation brought up by the other team, MYR, or parent.

- The field must have a marked Technical Zone for each team on the same side of the playing area as one another.
- Each team must have one USA Rugby Level 200 certified coach in their respective technical zone (TZ).
- Each team is allowed two water carriers in each TZ. They must be wearing bibs or colors that contrast the playing jerseys of their team. Reserve players or USA Rugby certified coaches may act as water carriers but must not enter the field unless given permission by the referee.
- Medical staff (certified athletic trainers, on duty EMTs, or Doctors) may enter the field at any time, and should be properly marked with a training bib. Coaches are not to enter the field of play except during halftime or if the referee has given them permission to enter the field.
- Reserve players must remain in their bench area. Any non dressing players are not allowed to be in the bench area or technical zone. They can be utilized as ball runners i if the referee allows it.
- All fields must be properly lined, sideline flags posted, goal posts padded, and have **elevated** crowd barriers (i.e. ropes, fences, etc.) on both sides of the field. Barriers need to extend from dead ball line to dead ball line.
- Fans must stay behind barriers and off the field at all times.
- Goals must not be smaller than 10 yards deep.
- Football Fields are acceptable.

Pitch Markings Diagram



Technical Zone Placement



Match Reporting

- The home team shall supply a match report card.
- Both teams shall supply a printed team roster list from the **Minnesota Youth Rugby website**
- Both teams shall sign the match report verifying that those playing in the match at any time are registered.
- Both teams shall indicate their starting roster by marking the jersey number they will play in next to the individuals name on the printed MYR team roster (no matter the format, 15s, 10s, or 7s.)
- Both teams shall indicate who are the designated substitutes will be for the match. (8 reserves for 15s, 5 for 7s and 10s).
- Both teams shall indicate who are in the front row capable players on their roster by marking “FR” next to their names.

During the Match

Both teams shall provide competent Touch Judges. If suitable touch judges are not provided, the teams take full responsibility for the referee’s ability to adequately monitor this aspect of the game.

Post-Match Procedures

Required:

- Home Team (and Referee) report all divisional play scores, within 48 hours, to MYR at rugbyguru@hotmail.com via the match report form
- Send electronic copy of rosters and match reports to rugbyguru@hotmail.com
- If a yellow or red card is issued during play or any incidents happen before or after, submit a report directly to the Disciplinary Chair or MYR. Referees will report all cards, anyone can submit a report if you think an incident should be investigated.

Optional:

- Complete and submit Referee Evaluation Form:
<http://www.mnrugby.org/page/show/69019-referee-evaluation-form>

Overtime Policy (Regular Season)

No regular season match shall go into overtime. If full time expires and the score remains drawn, the result will remain a draw for both teams and the standings will reflect as such.

Overtime policy (Playoffs and State Tournament)

MYR shall determine and notify teams of the overtime policies for playoffs and the state tournament.

Forfeits

Forfeits should only be used as a last resort under extreme circumstances. Forfeits will be recorded as a 28-0 win by the non-forfeiting team and recorded as a bonus point win. If a team forfeits more than one season match, the team will immediately be placed under review, pending a meeting with the MYR Executive Director.

MYR asks teams to give at least 48 hours advance notice of a forfeit. MYR encourages teams to lend players so that the game can be played even if a forfeit is to be awarded.

- For team with at least 15 players (15s) or 10 (10s) – Team does not forfeit and can play a full official league rugby match.

- For team with 14 (15s) or 9 (10s) less players – Automatic forfeit. The team is still encouraged to travel and play 10s or 7s in order to play rugby.
- For team with 10 (15s) or less players – Automatic forfeit. The team is still encouraged to travel and play 7s in order to play rugby.
- Any team that does not show up to play a game without notice – Automatic forfeit. The offending team will be placed under review, pending a meeting with MYR Staff.

Cancellation Policy/Make-up Games

Games should not be cancelled or rescheduled for any reason other than severe weather, or potential damage to the field. If a game must be cancelled or rescheduled for ANY reason, the team must notify MYR and the MNRRS (mnrugbyref@gmail.com) **PRIOR** to the match officially being cancelled. A reschedule date and make up plan, must be agreed upon by all parties prior to cancelling a match (home team, the away team, MYR and the referee society).

Medical and Safety

Minnesota Youth Rugby does recognize and adhere to USA Rugby’s medical and safety recommendations and policies. To review these on their website, please visit <http://usarugby.org/medical-and-safety>.

It is vitally important that rugby programs provide the tools necessary to create a fun and safe environment for all athletes. This section has been developed to explain what is needed to reduce injuries and improve medical coverage at local events, league competition, and all other development activities. This section also serves to provide information to parents so they feel comfortable with rugby. When working to establish safety standards, local rugby administrators and coaches must consider:

- Injury Reduction
- Emergency Action Plan Development
- Return to Play Procedures

A wealth of documentation focusing on safety in youth sports is available to all rugby enthusiasts. This section consolidates information to encourage every program to follow a baseline of safety considerations. With preventative measures in place, athletes and parents can find security in knowing the risk of injury is significantly reduced through responsible preparation.

Injury Reduction

Injuries in rugby are no different from those in other sports. The key to reduction is identifying associated risk factors. Rugby programs can work towards decreasing the rate and seriousness of rugby-related injuries by implementing research-based preventive interventions. The first step towards making rugby safer is addressing the following key factors:

- Pre-Participation Examination
- Medical Kit including Medical Documents
- Coaching/Officiating
- Player Education
- Facilities and Playing Conditions
- Physical Conditioning

Medical Kit

MYR requires all coaches to maintain an adequate medical kit and recommends updated player medical documents at all practices and games. For your free medical kit please contact rugbyguru@hotmail.com

Recommended medical documents include:

- Injury Incident Report
- Emergency Information/Medical Release Form
- Emergency Action Plan

All of these forms can be found on USA Rugby's website here: <http://usarugby.org/medical-and-safety>

Lightning Policy

The referee has the power to end the match at any time if he/she believes that play should not continue because it would be dangerous. Please reference USA Rugby's Severe Weather and Lightning Policy. Please reference MYR's Cancellation Policy regarding make-up and rescheduling season matches.

Emergency Action Plan Development

Each program should create an established emergency plan unique to each place of assembly. The action plan includes naming the individual trained to assess the situation, secondary assessment, 911 involvement protocol, parental contact responsibility, directions/contact information for the nearest hospital, and notation of coach or volunteer responsible for accompanying the injured athlete to the hospital. A detailed emergency action plan should be drafted prior to any activity, reviewed by all medical staff and made available on-site as a reference. See enclosure 1 for an Emergency Action Plan template.

Medical Staffing

A certified athletic trainer or qualified EMT is required to be at all high school rugby competitions (scrimmage, non-conference matches, conference/league matches, state tournament matches, etc). Certified athletic trainers are medical professionals who specialize in the prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and illnesses that occur in athletes and the physically active. Athletic trainers should not be confused with personal trainers from the fitness industry. Athletic trainers are certified by an independent organization that sets the standards for certification.

There is no Head Injury Assessment during any Minnesota Youth Rugby competitions, league matches, friendlies, or tournaments. Recognize and Remove is the standard.

Note: As per MN State law, an EMT CANNOT return players to play during a match.

USA Rugby's Medical Kit Recommendations

- Athletic tape (1 1/2" white adhesive) - 2 or 3 rolls
- Adhesive bandages - assorted sizes
- Elastic wrap (3 " and 4 " wide) - 1 of each
- Bandage scissors
- Latex free gloves - 3 pairs
- Sterile gauze pads (3" and 4" squares) - 1/2 dozen of each
- Plastic bags for ice
- Plastic bags for biohazard
- Contact lens case
- Saline solution
- Insect sting swab

- Petroleum jelly
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Antibacterial ointment
- Rubbing alcohol
- Antibacterial soap
- Necessary medical documents

Spirit of the Game

Rugby owes much of its appeal to its traditions, which dictates 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.

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'

MYR 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. MYR 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.

Club Organization & Season Planning Overview

Whether organizing a youth or high school league/team, there are a few key steps one should follow to ensure success. The following outlines the basic yearlong structure, which can be utilized by both coaches and administrators.

1. Recruit and retain players
2. Plan season budget, parent association structure, and practices
3. Hold parent meeting
4. Start the season

Recruitment vs. Retention

As the game grows at all levels, many rugby programs struggle to recruit and retain a consistent number of players. The lack of athletes makes development difficult, as there are never enough players at practice to work on certain aspects of the game. At best it is an inconvenience, at worst it can lead to unsafe players taking the field.

This section is designed to help everyone recruit and retain players to grow their teams. It is a collection of best practices from coaches that have found ways to grow the game. There are no magic bullets, but there are approaches anyone can take that will increase the number of players on their team.

Recruitment

The best way to recruit new rugby players is through teaching Rookie Rugby. These clinics are excellent for children ages 5 – 18 and can be held in schools, after school programs, community organizations, and anywhere a group of children gather for an organized activity. Rookie Rugby is an easy, safe, and inexpensive way to teach basic game play and the rules of rugby.

A team's best recruiters are always the current players. They play rugby for many reasons, which should be shared with others in a positive and respectful manner. One of the most difficult challenges rugby has is the brand that it has within the general community. It takes a lot of work for a rugby program to create a positive image of the sport, but the payoff is immeasurable. Often this image forms a brand identity, and creating a good rugby brand in the community is an important part of recruiting.

Tips on improving rugby:

- Player behavior – Current players must take on the role of *Rugby Ambassadors*. They must behave better than other athletes in the community.
- Positive clothing or team chants – A branding expert once said that one of the best things for rugby would be to take every negative t-shirt (i.e. "Give blood, Play rugby", "15 Positions") and burn them. Require your players, parents, and fans to wear clothing featuring positive, COACH, ADMINISTRATOR, OR SCHOOL APPROVED rugby slogans, images, or chants.
- Posters and brochures – Using professional posters and brochures gains recognition for rugby as an attractive option in the world of sport choices. USA Rugby has professional print quality posters and spectator guides available for download and use towards gaining new players and fans.

Generally, you want the rugby program's interactions with community members to inspire an interest in supporting the game as a whole.

One way to look at how to improve your recruiting is to identify the barriers that prevent athletes from participating. A common example of a barrier is the unknown nature of the sport. Athletes often hesitate to try something new for fear they will not understand or have the right skills. One way to overcome that is to host a "Rookie Day" and make it for players that have never played before. It will be less intimidating for a new player to learn about the game with others in the same position. You should introduce enough information so each new player feels comfortable.

Retention

Rugby is a growing sport in the USA, and as such, has barriers that it must overcome. However many problems that rugby teams encounter are actually self-imposed barriers. With the growth of the game at the youth and high school level, recruiting is often not the issue. Over the course of a season many rugby teams have plenty of players come out to try the sport. However, for some reason, they are not retained through the entire season. A team must decide if retention is in fact the issue, and not recruitment.

Retention is absolutely within the program's control. A coach should reflect on early season practices and make sure that a new player will have a great experience that will encourage them to return to the next practice. So what is a new player looking for at practice? It is encouraged to develop your own list in addition to these suggestions:

- Organized – Many athletes come to rugby because they are looking for another sport to play. They may be familiar with varsity level practices. Early season practices need to be the best run of the year.
- Learning – Players want to feel like they have learned and improved during a practice. This is true for all players, but especially those that are new to the game.
- Context – Most of the athletes that attend their first practice have never seen a rugby ball before. Using skill drills only fails to provide context. Try to come up with competitive games similar to rugby match situations to help players understand *why* they need to learn certain skills.
- Active – All players want to feel like their practice was physically challenging. If you have a large group of new players, make sure you have multiple stations/grids to avoid inactivity.
- Successful – This is probably the most difficult achievement for new players because we tend to mix them with experienced players, which can be intimidating. Early in the season it may be more important to focus on new players than those who already grasp an understanding of the game.
- Attention – Assistant coaches serve as the best retention tool any team can have. Players that are given focused attention by coaches will feel valued and will learn at an accelerated pace. If a coach has a team that struggles with numbers, the coach should reflect on what takes place at practice and ask if the objectives are aimed at retaining players to the next practice.
- Mentoring – Pair up a new player with an experienced player. The experienced player's job is to make sure the recruit comes back and commits to the sport.
- Parents – Catching the interest of parents is critical to new player commitment, as they play a huge role in their son or daughter's life.

Team Budget

It is very important to structure a budget that covers all needed expenses so coaches and administrators are not forced to utilize personal resources to facilitate a successful season. Build a team's budget around the projected number of players, team expenses, and team income.

Fundraising and Sponsorship

Fundraising

Fundraising is a critical component to developing and maintaining a successful youth or high school team. There are many ways a team can raise funds including events, donations, and grants.

Sample Fundraising Projects:

- Develop a game day/tournament program for advertisement sales
- Sell magazine subscriptions or coupon books
- Host a car wash
- Host a tournament
- Host a Rookie Rugby Clinic for the community
- Partner with a local business to share profits (i.e. Chipotle)

Sponsorship

Selling local sponsorship is a great way to raise money for a team and develop relationships within a community. If a potential sponsor is not willing to donate money, they may be willing to donate product or provide advertising space for a team in their place of business.

Teams are encouraged to sell sponsorship space on a variety of items):

- Team website presence
- Team Newsletter
- Rugby balls
- Tent panels
- Team t-shirts
- Team sweatshirts
- Team jerseys

When selling advertising, teams are not permitted to reference tobacco, alcohol, or profanity in any format.

Parent Orientation Meeting

Coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with team parents early in the season by holding a parent's meeting. This meeting will set the tone for your team for the entire season. A parent meeting can be a formal discussion in a school classroom or office building or a casual gathering in a living room. Whatever the format, the time you invest will pay dividends for all concerned throughout the season.

Meeting Objectives

- Become acquainted with your team and their parents
- Review league, practice, and game schedules
- Understand team goals and rules
- Understand league specific rules and structure
- Assign team parent roles
- Address any concerns of the parents
- Review parent, player, and coach codes of conduct

Things to Consider When Organizing the Meeting

- Hold it early in the season, preferably before the first team practice or shortly after.
- Having the players present is optional. However, if they are not present then it is advisable to hold a meeting with your players and clearly explain to them what you explained to the parents.
- Do not hold this meeting at a bar. If you cannot hold it in a school, try a private home, community center, or library.
- Be prepared and be organized to conduct the meeting efficiently.
- Prepare any handouts you would like to distribute, for example:
 - Summary or outline of the meeting
 - Schedule of practice and games
 - Team roster
 - Team goals/rules
- Parents make excellent assistant coaches! Make sure to recruit and retain help from the earliest point possible.

Important Points to Cover

There are many important points to cover during a parent meeting. The following is a sample agenda, which can be adjusted as needed:

1. Coach Introduction
2. Coaching Philosophy/Responsibilities
3. Team Guidelines
4. Team Management
5. Risk Management
6. Player Responsibilities

Team Goals

During the first player meeting, allow players to collaborate and create their own team goals. Utilize the ‘SMART’ model to guide their efforts.

- S – Specific and clearly defined
- M – Measurable (can be assessed/observed/recorded in some way)
- A – Action Oriented (contains a clear action to be executed)
- R – Realistic (attainable; not too easy or difficult to achieve)
- T – Time-bound (daily, weekly, monthly, season)

Here are a few suggestions of possible team goals:

- Have fun playing rugby by learning new skills: Young athletes want to play and have fun as well as learn new skills. Developing rugby skills allows athletes to play the game and enjoy the overall experience.
- Maintain a positive environment through encouragement and teamwork: Encourage all players, coaches, and parents to maintain a positive rugby environment, including all verbal and nonverbal actions, behaviors at practices and games, as well as off the field.
- Respect all teammates, opponents, referees, and others on and off the field: Young athletes need coaches and parents to support and model good sportsmanship behavior towards referees, opponents and teammates so they can embody it themselves.
- Learn life skills while playing the game of rugby: Rugby teaches many life lessons including leadership, commitment, respect for others, self-control, decision making, communication, etc. Coaches should encourage the development of people, not just players.

As the season progresses, make sure to check in with players to ensure team goals are being achieved. At the end of the season, review these goals with individual players and as a team. Regardless of how many games were won or lost, coaches can declare a successful season if the players had fun, learned skills, were good sports and learned the Laws of the Game.

Sample Parent Association Structure

This structure is meant to be a starting point and can be adjusted to any coach’s needs. The idea behind finding grade specific parents is to get a lead parent in a job with a parent of a younger player assisting. This way the organization perpetuates itself. This structure can be easily adapted to youth programs as well.

High School Team Sample Operations Committee

HS Team Officers	Grade of Child	First name	Last Name
Commissioner			
Youth Commissioner			
Treasurer			
Secretary/Recorder			
Boys' Team Mom			
Girls' Team Mom			
All Teams Laundry			
Spirit Wear Manager (Apparel)			
Fundraising Manager			
Transportation Manager			
Team Photos Coordinator			
Website manager			
Alumni/Booster Coordinator			

Emergency Action Plan - (Insert Team Name)

A SERIOUS INJURY IS ANY CONDITION WHEREBY THE ATHLETE'S LIFE MAY BE IN DANGER OR RISKS PERMANENT IMPAIRMENT. THESE INJURIES INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO CERVICAL SPINE INJURIES, HEAD INJURIES, LOSS OF LIMB, SERIOUS BLEEDING, SHOCK, SERIOUS FRACTURES, HEAT STRESS, AND CARDIOVASCULAR ARREST.

Emergency Communication: Local EMS is 911, (insert internal facility numbers or contact here if known)

After Hours

In the event of an emergency after hours, the following plan should be initiated:

Call 911 and/or go to the nearest hospital: (Insert name, address, and phone number of nearest hospital here)

Roles of First Responders

1. Immediate care of the injured or ill athlete
2. Activation of emergency medical services (EMS)
 - a. Call 911 (Provide name, address, telephone number, number of athletes injured, condition of the injured, first aid treatment, specific directions, or other information as requested.)
 - b. Have a secondary person notify the facility management of the incident to initiate any protocols the facility may have
3. Emergency equipment retrieval
4. Direct EMS to scene (Input specific venue directions below)
 - a. Open any gates
 - b. Designate an individual to "flag down" EMS and direct to the scene
 - c. Scene control, limit scene to first aid providers and move bystanders away from area

EMS Call

- Hello, I am calling from (location), located at (address)
- A player has been injured at (location)
- The athlete is:
 - Unconscious/Conscious
 - Not breathing/Breathing
 - Not moving/Moving
 - In pain/not in obvious pain
- The injury location appears to be (general description)
- First aid treatment is being administered by (EMT or Athletic Trainer's name)
- Answer any questions from EMS as best as possible
- **Stay on the line until EMS hangs up**
- If a patient's parents need to be notified, this is the responsibility of the COACH.

Specific Venue Directions

(Insert any venue specific directions in this block, for example: "The rugby field is in the back of the school, closest entrance is.....")