

# Rugby Arizona

State Youth Rugby Organization



## 2024 Annual General Meeting Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Saturday, July 13, 2024  
**Time:** 12:00 – 5:10 pm  
**Location:** Boulders on Broadway  
530 W Broadway Rd, Tempe AZ 85282

### I. Call to Order and Administrative Points

- a. Roll Call of Executive Committee Members Present  
See Exhibit A, Executive Committee Attendance and Voting Log.
- b. Quorum Determination  
9 of 9 Executive Committee Members in attendance, a quorum is determined present.
- c. Notes Regarding Voting  
Secretary Taylor McGilvray shared comments on voting procedures for the Executive Committee, reiterating that this year's AGM will be the first to feature voting only, with no discussion on any proposals except to clarify proposal language, given the online "public comment period" held in advance of the AGM to deliberate, comment on, and provide feedback regarding the proposals.
- d. Approval of any prior General Meeting Minutes  
Secretary McGilvray noted the draft minutes from the 2023 AGM which were circulated in advance of the 2024 AGM requiring Executive Committee approval.
  - **MOTION:** Phoenix (Rob Speers) motions to approve the 2023 AGM Minutes. Seconded by Tempe (Hal Morgan).
  - **MOTION PASSES.** Motion passes unanimously.

### II. President's Report

#### a. State of the SYRO

President Elf Thomas summarized the season. For the most part it was a success, and it was evident players had another fun season. Sometimes we can lose sight of that ultimate objective.

Rugby Arizona (RugbyAZ) is still battling the negative recruiting impact of Covid-19 in certain age groups, especially U16 and U19. Younger age groups look relatively healthy. Everyone in RugbyAZ will have to come together to recruit, not being exclusively reliant on the Management Team. The Management Team is here to support in every way possible, understanding recruitment takes place at the club level. As part of the effort, at last year's AGM each club received *Rookie Rugby* kitbags for use in promoting rugby in each club's region. For those looking to do more, President Thomas encouraged clubs to talk to others who have been successful in recruiting. Increased online content at the union level could perhaps benefit the whole as well.



In other comments, President Thomas remarked on last year's distribution of game day field locations by club and the increased exposure to rugby as a result of the geographic dispersion. Many positions are available on the Management Team this year, and President Thomas is optimistic that the parents of the next generation will step up, take the reins, and lead RugbyAZ into the future. President Thomas expressed gratitude for the support of the entire team including the commissioners.

**b. USA Rugby / USA Youth & High School Rugby Updates**

President Thomas provided updates relating to USA Youth & High School Rugby (USAY&HSR), our governing body under the authority of USA Rugby, under which Rugby Arizona is an SYRO (State Youth Rugby Organization). Nationally, membership passed the 50,000 registration mark, a significant milestone. Areas of success also include 19 new clubs last year (noting some of these were from pre-existing organizations outside of USAY&HSR, including in Utah). A new age verification system is to be implemented by USAY&HSR where players' ages will have to be verified before they can be added to a game roster. Sarah Dunbar is our new liaison for membership. Akuma Sports is the new apparel partner for USAY&HSR. Financially, in the 2023-24 fiscal year, USAY&HSR generated net income of \$139k. There will be no increases in dues this coming year either at the USA Rugby level or USAY&HSR level for youth and high school.

**III. Girls Division Report**

Commissioner Deirdre Colao provided an overview of the Girls Division season, which was successful. In the fall, 7s were played, with U15s players engaged in touch rugby while older girls played both touch and tackle. In the spring, tackle was played, with a combination of U10s. The Girls Division experienced no increase in minor or serious injuries. A couple of weekends were rained out, while a travel team was hosted during the season break. RugbyAZ had 37 girls players in U15 and U19 groups, and importantly, there were players from all teams participating. Girls played 12 matches at the U19 level and 10 matches at the U15 level in the spring. Many of the players expressed appreciation for the level of play. Instead of a traditional final championship, it was decided a 7s round-robin would be held so that all girls could participate, which was fun and incredibly successful. At this point, Mr. Carson Mellott (Red Mountain) agreed and extended gratitude to all for making it happen. Mr. Paul van Ballegooie indicated Red Mountain was going to continue working hard to grow the girls division. The benefits of girls rugby were collectively agreed, with Commissioner Colao remarking that four girls from RugbyAZ received college scholarships this last year.

**IV. Youth Division Report**

Commissioner Charlie Diaz summarized the Youth Division season. Flag rugby in the fall had its advantages and disadvantages, providing a faster, more fun game, but with some reservations about the ability to transition to tackle; Commissioner Diaz senses that flag rugby will probably not transition as well as touch rugby. Mr. Kevin Harris (Northern Arizona) asked whether recruiting was positively impacted, a key discussion point in last year's AGM decision to try flag rugby. Commissioner Diaz is uncertain if it helped with recruiting just yet. One club didn't want to participate in spring non-tackle, so they moved their players up to tackle. Commissioner Diaz commented that last season he saw some of the best youth rugby in the last few years in terms of physicality, coaching, players using space and passing. In the spring, Commissioner Diaz pointed out, RugbyAZ experienced challenges surrounding people from clubs making decisions on their own, which possibly originated from the fall season where the format was looser, and which resulted in problems which progressed through the spring. Mr. Rob Speers (Phoenix) commented on game play at the Youth Division level from the referee perspective, mentioning negative



interactions encountered by sideline referees. Commissioner Diaz confirmed he heard about such activity, where at some matches the whistle had to be broken out; referee harassment is not something we want the kids to learn. In all, a successful season.

Mr. Tim Pappas (Tucson) commented on flag rugby; he personally likes the change from touch to flag, and believes flag rugby orients the shoulders and body of a player in preparation for tackle later; Mr. Pappas would like to see RugbyAZ use flag rugby another year or two, transitioning to tackle sooner if desired. Mr. Hal Morgan (Tempe) picked up the topic, reminding the group that the point of flag rugby was to attract potential additional recruits; he agrees with Mr. Pappas to try it another couple years. In terms of improvements to flag rugby, Mr. Barry Gabbard (Marana) suggested perhaps using three flags instead of two. Mr. Paul van Ballegoie (Red Mountain) discussed consistency with flag rules; after players pull flags, having players consistently move back. To this, Mr. Speers clarified that in flag rugby, there are no formal rules including no provision to be “back 5 meters” after a flag is pulled. Mr. Ballegoie made a second comment regarding trouble experienced at the U8 level, where all players tended to group together. Mr. Morgan recounted that the season ended up with only Tempe and Red Mountain at the U8 level; if we can get more teams to participate, it will be a better experience for our families. Mr. Speers encouraged the group to help reinforce flag rules to make it easier for coaches as we continue this format, and mentioned flag rugby is much easier for new referees to manage (much quicker than touch).

Commissioner Diaz congratulated the winners of each division: Red Mountain were champions of the U8, U10, and U12 divisions; Tempe were the champions of the U14 division.

V. **U16 and U19 Boys Division Report**

Commissioner Rob Speers summarized the U16 and U19 Boys Division season, congratulating Tempe for winning the U19 D1 championship (four years in a row), Brophy for winning the U19 D2 championship, and Red Mountain for winning the U16 championship. For the three weeks of Fall 7s, player numbers weren't strong which reflected in the level of game play. Commissioner Speers remarked on the scheduling cut-off date, which was introduced years ago as a mechanism to establish structure; before Covid 19, RugbyAZ was more disciplined as an organization in this regard, whereas post-Covid 19, we were more lenient in the effort to rebuild player numbers and grow the game. That said, the reality is the player counts you have in December are the player counts you will have in January. Commissioner Speers recalled the situation encountered by Brophy, who expected to play a certain set of clubs instead of the merged clubs they ultimately played. We could have had five teams playing 10s last season, but clubs decided to continue to play 15s; the U16 division naturally devolved to a three team competition. The view was voiced that moving to 10s would be a backward step, therefore structure should be determined in December which we should then stick to. If we proceed with a schedule like last year, and have preseason weeks in the spring, it will help.

Mr. Hal Morgan (Tempe) commented it's easier to add teams into a schedule than to adjust a schedule to account for teams that don't materialize, a point which received agreement by Commissioner Speers. Mr. Barry Gabbard (Marana) commented how some teams left during the season; Commissioner Speers responded to this comment by providing background on Brophy's decision to pull back from completing the season, but that he wouldn't speak on behalf of Brophy Coach Tim Moran and the rationale behind Brophy's decision. Commissioner Speers made the reflection that if we fixate on the trophy, we lose opportunities for the kids to play. The group continued discussion regarding the U16 and U19 Boys level, with Mr. Morgan commenting on a few players who played at both U16 and U19 levels in an effort to keep it working, but which ultimately did not in the absence of an influx of player numbers. Mr. Bertus Jansen van Vuuren (Tucson) followed on this comment, remarking the biggest problem all clubs seem to have is getting more players; why not get together and do a huge advertising campaign with marketing



similar to what youth football does, including specific details about where interested kids can find and play rugby. Commissioner Speers returned to the preceding season and said overall, the division seemed to have pretty good camaraderie. At the U19 D1 final, RugbyAZ encountered something we never experienced before – a rain delay – and we have a Bylaws proposal later in the AGM as put forth by Red Mountain as a result. As another point of improvement, we must get our fields lined consistently; the senior players in the division require lines as part of their game strategy, and we had some matches where cones were not properly in line; RugbyAZ should consider a consistent vendor we can use. Mr. Jansen van Vuuren mentioned the football players that have historically improved their skill by playing rugby, and he would love to build on that. Commissioner Speers said the more we can be lock-tight on what we coordinate, the more we can draw players to the sport.

## VI. Disciplinary Committee Report

DC Chair Ted Brandt summarized Disciplinary Committee (DC) activities for the season, beginning, “It’s my favorite sentence to say ‘it was pretty quiet.’” The total for yellow and red cards was comparatively low, and mostly related to tackling, which generated good conversation around cards with stakeholders. The only incident that was new this year was an event wherein a red card was issued during a fall match, and then rescinded in match play. Mr. Brandt requested that we be “tidy” in match reports regarding cards, and for clubs to be cognizant of what referees issue to their team’s players.

Group conversation opened with Mr. Hal Morgan (Tempe) saying he put together a compilation video of infringements and will take the footage back to the team to show what gets called and ultimately prevents players from being able to play in the championship (a type of educational video). The group discussed dangerous tackles as being the highest point of focus by World Rugby. The best preparation to mitigate dangerous tackles is coaching, especially for players transitioning from football to rugby. Mr. Morgan shared that, as part of the Tempe club’s equipment purchases, coaches have already asked to purchase medicine balls as part of tackle training (requiring the tackler to duck under the medicine ball as part of the drill). Mr. Tim Pappas (Tucson) directed a question to Mr. Brandt about the process if video footage of a match reveals lead-up actions to a penalty infringement called by the referee. The DC Chair responded that it shouldn’t be the role of the DC to review footage from an entire match, but footage from an entire match can provide context and show the development of actions; if someone has something they send to the DC, as Chair he’s going to do his job. Mr. Morgan added to the topic, saying he had three starters sit out the division final; he experienced a similar scenario where other footage was brought forward afterward, and where coaches were upset that not all infringements were adjudicated by the DC. Mr. Pappas followed with a suggestion to structure a DC complaint with context. Mr. Speers commented that, if you think about World Rugby, it’s a red card threshold to bring new evidence post-match from video footage; the DC should be focused on red cards as a threshold. Mr. Brandt offered that the DC often turns video footage over to the referee society (Southwest Rugby Referee Society, SWRRS) to assist with SWRRS education. Mr. Bertus Jansen van Vuuren (Tucson) shared that, as an administrator for his club, he will always appeal a red card because it then becomes a point of education he can take back to the team. Mr. Morgan expressed support for the work of the DC, with “100% confidence” in Mr. Brandt’s work. Mr. Jansen van Vuuren asked about the procedure if a player has a clear medical issue (eg, an ER visit) as a result of play; Mr. Brandt responded there would have to be some point of evidence to penalize any alleged actions, whether that be a card or video submission. Off-the-ball violence is serious, and the DC will seek higher penalties for red card situations that are off-the-ball. Mr. Carson Mellott (Red Mountain) stated we have ultimate ability to control the behavior of our players. Mr. Rob Speers (Phoenix) said that a review of the text of our DC procedures reveals that when a matter arises, you can refer an issue by submitting something as evidence. Mr. Andy Avery (SWRRS) pointed out that these submissions are coachable moments for referees as well. Mr. Brandt encouraged clubs that when it is required to pull a touch judge from their team for a match, to stop pulling the least qualified person to be



assistant referee; this will help address conduct significantly. Mr. Jansen van Vuuren shared one challenge they had was one of his players talking to the referee, but perhaps we should sometimes allow for that; Mr. Speers responded to the comment. Mr. Charlie Diaz (Tempe) asked Mr. Avery about scenarios when a touch judge calls touch or foul play, but the center judge doesn't recognize the call; Mr. Avery responded with the proper procedure to be used when these events take place, that the assistant referee should keep their flag held out, with the center judge returning to the assistant referee when the flag is noticed. To provide the highest level of support, the preferred model is every match has three referees with both radios and the requisite level of skill relevant to the match being played.

## VII. Arizona Bobcats Report

Ms. Jessica Brandt provided a report on the activities of the Arizona Bobcats, commenting that 2023-24 was a moment to celebrate and a breakthrough year, with the most community involvement to date and the highest number of clubs participating. The Montana trip coordinated by the Arizona Bobcats included the participation of all clubs. "This is Rugby Arizona, this is why we do this," said Ms. Brandt, so that when we come back for the regular season all the players know each other not just as opponents but also as teammates. The second annual golf tournament also saw strong participation, with most of the men's teams from the Southwest Rugby Union (SWRU) as well as the SWRRS and many other attendees joining. Arizona Bobcats events this year also included a San Diego Legion halftime event and a USA Rugby Eagles clinic, where girls received a full Eagles kit. This provided an opportunity for players to see the pathway to professional rugby. A 15s team match to build skills in the Girls Division was also arranged, and the Bobcats registered a girls team for Tropical 7s tournament in Florida, taking seven players who combined with another team (an atypical scenario for the Bobcats, but a learning opportunity; the combination team was not as well-run as the Bobcats program). The rosters for the Arizona Bobcats filled immediately last year with 74 players on the roster, a sign that players recognize the quality of the program. Mr. Hal Morgan (Tempe) asked how the Bobcats performed at the Montana event; Ms. Brandt responded that three teams were brought to the tournament at the U16 Boys, U19 Boys, and U19 Girls levels, with the Bobcats winning roughly half their matches and the girls team winning a big upset match against the Colorado team. Coming up, the Bobcats will compete in the Cal State Games with teams including nine U15 girls. There are two new coaches to the Bobcats squad, Nick Davies and Kia Bighorse. Seth Catchpole, former RugbyAZ player, also returned to the organization to help coach. Players from the Grand Canyon University (GCU) women's team also helped provide support. In terms of success stories, one girl received an invite from the USA Eagles, and scholarships were awarded to RugbyAZ girls for Princeton, Lindenwood, West Point, and Western Washington. Ms. Brandt shared that the goals of the Bobcats include providing an opportunity for every player to participate regardless of economic ability; Bobcats fundraising supports this goal, and no one knows which players paid 5% or 100% of their bill, which includes practice gear for the girls. In the coming year, the Bobcats would like to bring some teams to Arizona as well as schedule a coaching clinic. Mr. Ted Brandt (Scottsdale) followed this comment by encouraging coaches who are looking to improve their abilities to also attend the future clinic, reminding the group that Chris Brown conducted a 7s clinic last year; the Bobcats are looking not only to build just players but also the ecosystem. Ms. Brandt concluded her report by offering the Bobcats are always looking for additional qualified board candidates.

## VIII. Treasurer's Report

### a. Financial Summary, 2023-2024

Treasurer Lindsey Miller presented the financial report for the 2023-24 year, referencing the printout "2023-2024 RugbyAZ Budget to Actuals as of 2024 07" as circulated to AGM attendees. Actual revenue was down \$6,508, driven by 75 fewer registrations than budgeted (44 fewer player registrations compared to last year; 49 fewer player registrations compared to budget). Treasurer Miller reminded the group that we increased dues last year by \$10 across the board, expecting many expenses to increase



from last year (which they did). In terms of net operating income, actual was \$6,109 compared to \$1,930 in the budget (positive difference of \$4,179 *before* outstanding expenses including the AGM dinner, with total remaining expenses estimated to be near \$750). The positive difference in net income is a direct result of not hiring an executive director, which helped financially although obviously the lack of an executive director was a negative factor to growing Rugby Arizona player numbers. Among expenses that rose this year were referee fees as expected, along with athletic trainers. From monies left over from the previous 2022-23 fiscal year, only \$250 in marketing was spent, on a flyer sourced from DesignCrowd, meaning there are marketing funds left to be spent. Among other expense lines in the budget, Storage is something to consider since at present, the Management Team is housing storage among several households. Funds were distributed this year for traveling teams as discussed and agreed at last year's AGM. RugbyAZ now has a surplus of about \$6,000; after discussion of next year's budget, we should discuss what to do with the surplus. Mr. Barry Gabbard (Marana) asked a question about trophy expenses in the budget; Treasurer Miller responded that trophies are found within Field Expenses, and that the expense for trophies came in over budget due to the ordering of plaques by Angela Wagner-Gabbard.

#### b. 2024-2025 Budget Discussion

Treasurer Miller reviewed the 2024-25 budget with the group. Secretary McGilvray pointed out this budget assumes no Executive Director, an important divergence from the prior year's budget. Mr. Hal Morgan (Tempe) added that if we hired an Executive Director, our savings would effectively be diluted. Mr. Barry Gabbard (Marana) shared the quick math that we'd have to recruit "140" additional players to substantiate the cost of an Executive Director.

The discussion turned to recruiting and marketing efforts. Mr. Tim Pappas (Tucson) offered that it's great to do marketing, but a simple repost on Facebook is us just speaking to each other; Mr. Pappas suggested hiring an outside party to bring about real change, and bring a point of accountability to our marketing outcomes. Mr. Morgan suggested the outside marketing party should be someone who knows rugby. Mr. Ted Brandt (Scottsdale) commented that we're struggling "union-wide", that "we're all bad at this" (referencing marketing efforts), and we should use professional help or to be blunt, we will "die on the vine" in time. He pointed out that at one time there were 100 players in Scottsdale's program. Whoever does marketing for flag football, let's connect with that entity as they seem to have had positive traction; it's critical we take this seriously as a group. Mr. Carson Mellott (Red Mountain) suggested we somehow combine our marketing and recruiting efforts with the MLR team San Diego Legion. Mr. Gabbard suggested that whoever takes over, to assign "\$ X" funding toward the marketing effort, but at this stage in the AGM agenda we're short of any accurate information to develop additional specifics. Mr. Gabbard offered "\$5,000" as a placeholder for monies to be set aside; the group can return in a few months' time with a plan, detailed costs, and a selection for a third party marketing vendor. Mr. Morgan insisted that, while we're good at brainstorming, we have to be specific about a marketing plan and hit the ground running in December; last year we did well with a small goal which was executed upon and which produced a flyer. Mr. Bertus Jansen van Vuuren (Tucson) added a good marketing company will know Facebook is not the answer; perhaps we can identify several marketing companies to approach and ask them to tell us the right methods and approach for optimal results. Mr. Paul van Ballegooie (Red Mountain) shared that their club was able to grow youth teams by 50 players within two years, and commented about methods to pull in recruits. Mr. Morgan pivoted to the other side of the coin and encouraged clubs to prepare for an influx of players in the event we undertake significant marketing, with clubs being organized and professionally presented, which will help players to "stick" and be sustainable over time; Mr. Morgan again indicated agreement with getting someone outside the organization, perhaps by utilizing a RFQ (Request for Quote) approach. Mr. Gabbard offered a potential proposal: By August 31, plan to utilize \$12,000 from Rugby Arizona surplus funds to grow Rugby Arizona by "20%" and, if additional resources are required, to have an additional vote of the Executive Committee. Mr. Rob



Speers (Phoenix) suggested moving aside the proposal to later in the meeting under New Business, and to move forward with approval of the 2024-25 draft budget.

- **MOTION:** Phoenix (Rob Speers) motions to approve the 2024-25 Draft Budget as a provisional budget. Seconded by Northern Arizona (Kevin Harris).
- **MOTION PASSES.** Motion passes unanimously; the 2024-25 budget is approved.

c. **Other Treasurer Comments**

Treasurer Miller concludes her section without further remarks.

IX. **SWRRS Yearly Report**

Mr. Andy Avery reported on the 2023-24 season from the SWRRS perspective. In terms of referee numbers, the SWRRS experienced good recruiting including with younger referees. The SWRRS has spent ≈\$38,000 to date on referee development, including NAI 7s for younger referees and others. Operationally, the SWRRS will continue to use *RefUp* as their platform. Mr. Avery encouraged the group to provide any feedback so the SWRRS can improve as a referee society. In terms of fee structure, the SWRRS is changing from \$25 a match to \$40 a match for assistant referees, which will impact RugbyAZ at the high school match level. Saturdays are still stretched in terms of referee demand; if RugbyAZ can consider moving youth matches away from Saturday wherever possible, it will help ease capacity constraints. Over the prior year monthly referee calls were conducted, a help for the organization as a whole. Mr. Avery offered the opportunity for RugbyAZ clubs to have referees make pre-season visits to club practices to talk about topics like “what does a high tackle look like?” The SWRRS is communicating with USA Rugby to get further guidance on new World Rugby laws, and will disseminate the information to RugbyAZ when complete.

Mr. Carson Mellott (Red Mountain) asked about a fourth official at matches for further oversight; Mr. Rob Speers (in his capacity as a member of the SWRRS) indicated a fourth match official was used for the championship final. Mr. Barry Gabbard (Marana) commented about youth players who are later scheduled to referee; when youth matches took place in the morning, it seemed RugbyAZ had better referee coverage compared to the recently completed season. Mr. Gabbard then asked if we have enough referees in the pipeline. Mr. Speers responded we have 40+ youth referees and, if they show when called upon, we can meet referee demand; Mr. Speers feels it was better this last year because more referees were available (there were no game injuries to interfere). Mr. Charlie Diaz (Tempe) made comments about youth referee turnout. Paul van Ballegooie (Red Mountain) said their club will encourage players again to attend referee clinics, which improves player knowledge. Discussion turned to referee pricing for youth referees, which is currently \$50 block pricing for youth to referee other youth matches. Mr. Ted Brandt (Scottsdale) returned to referee clinics, encouraging attendance as the rules have changed from when older adults first played rugby. Mr. Bertus Jansen van Vuuren (Tucson) returned to the topic of a fourth official, saying a fourth official can help where sideline parents may not know the rules. Mr. Speers advocated again as in years past for all coaches to also be certified referees. The SWRRS report concluded with the announcement that referee clinics will be held in the fall, with dates to be scheduled shortly.

X. **2024-2025 Season Calendar**

a. **Determine scheduling cut-off date per Section 14.2 of Bylaws**

Mr. Speers proposed Monday, 16 December as the team declaration cut-off date for all age groups, to allow for two weeks of December play. Mr. Hal Morgan (Tempe) agrees. No objections were made by the Executive Committee. The date of 16 December stands as the scheduling cut-off date.



*Note to Minutes: In terms of sequencing, the vote for the scheduling cut-off date was held after the Executive Committee discussed and approved the RugbyAZ season calendar (below).*

**b. Approve season calendar (referencing schedule proposal from Rob Speers)**

Mr. Rob Speers (Phoenix) introduced the proposed calendar for 2024-25, which is essentially the same calendar as the prior year. The proposed spring start date of 11 January is the week after winter break, with the Youth Division's season complete before spring break. Researching the spring break dates of various relevant school districts, the week starting Saturday, 15 March surfaced as the week with most overlap. Another event which usually factors into the schedule is HSBC 7s in Los Angeles, however at present we don't know those dates. Regarding a schedule for the fall, Mr. Speers recalled that last year, at one point some teams didn't want to continue playing flag and instead wanted to take up tackle; as a result, he suggested not getting into the details as to the format of play, but simply agree on calendar dates for now. Once new commissioners are elected, the game format can be discussed and agreed. Proposed for Fall 2024: five weeks of flag rugby; three weeks of tackle 7s in November, wrap up in December. Proposed for Spring 2025: six weeks for Youth, with semis and finals; eight weeks for U19s; six weeks for U16s with semis the 5th of April and final the following week. Mr. Speers noted Easter comes later in 2025, and will act as a bye week with U19 finals afterward. There is interest in having the Girls Division showcase a 15s match on the same day as the U19 Boys finals.

Group discussion opened with Mr. Barry Gabbard (Marana) who asked the group if we can consider what happens in the event we have weather issues on a particular weekend. Conversation included comments about rugby as a secondary sport for many families (a recurring comment) and Mr. Speers recalling that, for younger kids, players tend to participate in many sports; as a result, RugbyAZ has historically tried to finish the Youth Division before spring break after which players are "scattered to the wind". Mr. Paul van Ballegooie (Red Mountain) asked if it was possible to start earlier than after winter break; Mr. Speers responded that we could, however family availability drops precipitously in December with end of year events. As it relates to the fall, Mr. Speers commented, before Covid 19 the fall season used to culminate with Roadrunner 7s; if we want to extend the playing season, there are two weeks after Thanksgiving available should we wish to schedule more play. We could experiment with youth pre-spring tackle matches so clubs feel more comfortable by week one of the spring season. The group discussed whether there is the family commitment to participate after Thanksgiving based on historical experience. If scheduled at the RugbyAZ level, there is increased expectation it will gain traction with families. It was mentioned the Arizona Bobcats held a tournament during that part of the season that ruffled feathers because of the tournament fee element for Bobcats fundraising. Two preseason tackle weekends were proposed for December for U14 and below.

- **MOTION:** Red Mountain (Paul van Ballegooie) motions to adopt the 2024-25 season calendar as put forward by Rob Speers with an amendment to include two tackle preseason weekends in December for the Youth Division, with flag rugby on those two weekends for any players interested. Seconded by Tempe (Hal Morgan).
- **MOTION PASSES.** Motion passes unanimously; the 2024-25 season calendar (as amended) is approved.

It was collectively noted that the spring schedule will continue to feature Youth Division matches in the afternoon, with U16 / U19 matches in the morning. As season calendar discussion concluded, Mr. Gabbard posed an open question about the scenario where a team might declare a team with a registration count of one; the Bylaws calls for minimum player counts by division, 7s, 10s, 15s; discussion followed of teams combining, folding. There was general consensus that announcing one additional team in the spring after the cut-off date was preferable to reorganizing the schedule in the event a small team folds.



c. **Allocate dates among clubs for match weekend hosting**

Mr. Hal Morgan (Tempe) opened conversation regarding the sharing of match weekend hosting in the coming year. First introduced in Spring 2024, Mr. Morgan spoke of the benefits of rotating fields and exposing various communities to rugby. The key is making sure logistics are handled by each host club, including field lining, technical zones, other coordination. Early reservations of fields is the most critical component for clubs that are hosting. Mr. Morgan expressed thanks to Rob Speers for creation of the season calendar and encouraged clubs to consider which weekends they can host in Spring 2025 by the end of this month (July). Mr. Ted Brandt (Scottsdale) commented on the advance time frame required to reserve fields with various cities, encouraging clubs to “over-reserve” fields as a precaution. Mr. Kevin Harris (Northern Arizona) suggested having a weekend scheduled in Flagstaff, which Mr. Morgan fully supports. Mr. Harris offered to have an alternate field in Prescott if Flagstaff weather did not permit; Commissioner Colao suggested we stick to one location like Prescott from the beginning to enhance commitment. Mr. Morgan then asked the Executive Committee which clubs could commit to hosting a match weekend in Spring 2025. The following clubs confirmed they would participate as hosting clubs: Eclipse, Northern Arizona, Red Mountain, Tempe, Tucson/Marana, Scottsdale.

A committee was formed, led by Mr. Morgan, for the allocation of spring season weekends among hosting clubs. Emails are to be sent out by the end of next week to Mr. Morgan with each club’s preferred dates to host. Treasurer Miller clarified Rugby Arizona handles all field scheduling for the fall season, where clubs are responsible for spring field reservations.

XI. **Officer Nominations and Elections**

The topic of officer elections was introduced by Secretary McGilvray. 2024 cycle elections include President, Secretary, Disciplinary Chair; off-cycle elections: Vice President, Treasurer; Division Reps also up for election as they are each year.

*Note to Minutes: Elections are presented here in the order of position, however nominations and elections were not necessarily conducted sequentially by position. Further note to Minutes: Jason Orme (Red Mountain) was in attendance by 3:02 pm, in time for officer elections.*

a. **Executive Officers**

**President**

- Nomination: Jason Orme nominated by Red Mountain (Carson Mellott), seconded by Tempe (Hal Morgan); Mr. Orme declined the nomination.
- Nomination: Bertus Jansen van Vuuren nominated by Phoenix (Rob Speers), seconded by Marana (Barry Gabbard); Mr. Jansen van Vuuren declined the nomination.
- The group discussed the duties involved at the President level, including engagement with USA Rugby, USA Youth & High School Rugby (USAYHSR), SWRRS, parents, and stakeholders; and management team correspondence, calls, and meetings. The greatest time commitment is Oct-Mar each year, with a USAYHSR AGM in January. Being available is the key to the role, and presidential duties become easier the more activities are coordinated.
- In order to be nominated for President, Paul van Ballegooie stands down as recently elected Vice President.
- Nomination: Paul van Ballegooie nominated by Marana (Barry Gabbard), seconded by Eclipse (Chris Gray); Mr. van Ballegooie accepts the nomination.



- **MOTION:** Marana (Barry Gabbard) motions to elect Paul van Ballegooie for President, seconded by Eclipse (Chris Gray).
- **MOTION PASSES.** Motion passes unanimously; Paul van Ballegooie is elected President.

#### **Vice President**

- Nomination: Paul van Ballegooie nominated by Marana (Barry Gabbard), seconded by Phoenix (Rob Speers); Mr. van Ballegooie accepts the nomination.
  - No other nominations were immediately received, and the motion was made to elect Paul van Ballegooie for Vice President by Marana and Phoenix; while the motion passed unanimously and Mr. van Ballegooie was initially elected to the position, he later stood down from the role to pursue nomination for President.
  - Nomination: With Paul van Ballegooie standing down from the role of Vice President, Bertus Jansen van Vuuren was nominated by Tucson (Tim Pappas), seconded by Marana (Barry Gabbard); Mr. Jansen van Vuuren accepts the nomination.
- **MOTION:** Tucson (Tim Pappas) motions to elect Bertus Jansen van Vuuren for Vice President, seconded by Marana (Barry Gabbard).
  - **MOTION PASSES.** Motion passes unanimously; Bertus Jansen van Vuuren is elected Vice President.

#### **Treasurer**

- Nomination: Barry Gabbard nominated by Eclipse (Chris Gray), seconded by Tempe (Hal Morgan); Mr. Gabbard accepts the nomination.
  - No other nominations received.
- **MOTION:** Eclipse (Chris Gray) motions to elect Barry Gabbard for Treasurer, seconded by Tempe (Hal Morgan).
  - **MOTION PASSES.** Motion passes unanimously; Barry Gabbard is elected Treasurer.

#### **Secretary**

- Nomination: Hal Morgan nominated by Charlie Diaz (Tempe), seconded by Marana (Barry Gabbard); Mr. Morgan accepts the nomination.
  - No other nominations received.
- **MOTION:** Tempe (Charlie Diaz) motions to elect Hal Morgan for Secretary, seconded by Marana (Barry Gabbard).
  - **MOTION PASSES.** Motion passes unanimously; Hal Morgan is elected Secretary.

#### **b. Division Reps**

##### **U16 / U19 Boys Commissioner**

- Nomination: Jason Orme nominated by Phoenix (Rob Speers), seconded by Marana (Barry Gabbard); Mr. Orme accepts the nomination.
  - No other nominations received.
- **MOTION:** Phoenix (Rob Speers) motions to elect Jason Orme for U16 / U19 Boys Commissioner, seconded by Marana (Barry Gabbard).
  - **MOTION PASSES.** Motion passes unanimously; Jason Orme is elected U16 / U19 Boys Commissioner.



### Girls Commissioner

- Nomination: Tim Pappas nominated by Phoenix (Rob Speers), seconded by Scottsdale (Ted Brandt); Mr. Pappas declined the nomination.
  - Carson Mellott nominated by Scottsdale (Ted Brandt), seconded by Northern Arizona (Kevin Harris); Mr. Mellott accepts the nomination.
  - No other nominations received.
- **MOTION:** Scottsdale (Ted Brandt) motions to elect Carson Mellott for Girls Commissioner, seconded by Northern Arizona (Kevin Harris).
  - **MOTION PASSES.** Motion passes unanimously; Carson Mellott is elected Girls Commissioner.

### Youth Commissioner

- Nomination: Charlie Diaz nominated by Marana (Barry Gabbard), seconded by Scottsdale (Ted Brandt); Charlie accepts the nomination.
  - No other nominations received.
- **MOTION:** Marana (Barry Gabbard) motions to elect Charlie Diaz for Youth Commissioner, seconded by Scottsdale (Ted Brandt).
  - **MOTION PASSES.** Motion passes unanimously; Charlie Diaz is elected Youth Commissioner.

### c. Disciplinary Committee Chair

- Nomination: Ted Brandt nominated by Marana (Barry Gabbard), seconded by Tempe (Hal Morgan); Mr. Brandt accepts the nomination.
  - No other nominations received.
- **MOTION:** Marana (Barry Gabbard) motions to elect Ted Brandt for Disciplinary Chair, seconded by Tempe (Hal Morgan).
  - **MOTION PASSES.** Motion passes unanimously; Ted Brandt is elected Disciplinary Chair.

## XII. New Business

### Voting on Proposals

Secretary McGilvray reminded the Executive Committee that this year's proceedings related to new proposals will feature voting only, with no deliberation from the floor given the circulation of the *2024 AGM Proposals* file made available on *Google Sheets* for public comment to replace in-person debate. Discussion to be held only to the extent it is to clarify language or correct textual errors.

### 1. (Red Mountain): Required Staffing for Match Day

#### Proposal Summary:

Both RAZ and the host team must have at least one representative at the field at least one hour prior to the start of the first match and throughout the day until all matches are completed and fields are cleaned up. Representatives can switch out with other personnel as long as there is at least one representative of RAZ and the host team. Host team representative must be someone other than the league representative.

#### Proposal Benefit:

This will ensure that any problems with registrations, scheduling, fields, or any other issue can be resolved as quickly as possible. Having game days run in a smooth and structured manner will continue to attract and retain players.

#### Clarification Discussion:

None.



Voting (weighted):

In Favor (Yay or Yes vote): 18

Opposed (No vote): 5

**Proposal is APPROVED.**

2. (Red Mountain): Match Day Hosting Responsibilities

Proposal Summary:

The host team is responsible for monitoring each field and ensuring matches start at the scheduled time throughout game day. If there is a problem, they will communicate with the league rep and commissioners so they can resolve the issue.

Proposal Benefit:

Benefit: This will create a chain of command to ensure that all matches are being played on the correct fields at the correct times. This allows someone to be roving the fields to ensure the schedule is being carried out and someone to be at the league tent so there's always a stationary person for people to find if needed. Again, having game days run in a smooth and structured manner will continue to attract and retain players.

Clarification Discussion:

None.

Voting (weighted):

In Favor (Yay or Yes vote): 23

Opposed (No vote): 0

**Proposal is APPROVED.**

3. (Red Mountain): Player Check-Ins, Season Start and Match Day

Proposal Summary (as updated in the final *Google Sheets* version):

On opening day, each team is to have a roster with picture in hand for the league. Once a player is weighed/checked in by the league, they will be issued a colored sticker (or other identifying marker) for divisions they are eligible to play in. We will work throughout the season to implement the digital ID process available in Xplorer.

Proposal Benefit:

To provide a more effective and efficient check-in process. Opening day is always busy and chaotic and a logistical nightmare. Players often miss check-in/weigh in times and it's difficult for coaches to always track who has and hasn't been checked in. This will give a quick visual for coaches and referees to easily check if a player is cleared to play. Similar ID cards have been used in other leagues.

Clarification Discussion:

None.

Voting (weighted):

In Favor (Yay or Yes vote): 6

Opposed (No vote): 17

**Proposal DOES NOT PASS.**

4. (Eclipse): HS Boys: Adoption of U15 and U19 Tiers in 2024/25

Proposal Summary:

For HS Boys Division, create U15 and U19 tiers.

Proposal Benefit:

This should help with the low player numbers between the current three divisions U14, U16, U19.

Clarification Discussion:

Mr. Rob Speers clarified: With the proposal as worded, RugbyAZ would still have U14 Boys; thus we would have U14, U15, and U19 levels for boys divisions.

Voting (weighted):



In Favor (Yay or Yes vote): 10

Opposed (No vote): 13

**Proposal DOES NOT PASS.**

#### 5. (Marana): Girls Division: Return to Age-Based Tiers, U14, U16, and U19

##### Proposal Summary:

##### **Proposal in Brief:**

Revert the girl's division of Rugby Arizona back to an "age-based" division where there is a U14, U16, and U19 division rather than an open high school division to improve player safety, promote player development, and align with World Rugby and USA Rugby age-based guidelines.

##### **Considerations, Information, and Arguments for Proposal:**

The Rugby Arizona Constitution under section 13.3 "Tackle Rugby Specific Requirements" outlines that "Tackle Rugby requires Members to follow RugbyAZ and USA Rugby guidelines that are designed to improve safety and enjoyment for all."

Section 13.3 further states:

"-We play separate boys and girls tackle for U14, U16, and U19.

- We are primarily an age-grade based league for tackle.
- The weight charts are a backup factor used to assess waiver requests."

Under Section 13.3.8 Other Considerations, the RAZ Constitution goes on to read as follows:

"All players are designated to their appropriate age-grade tier...Under 14, Under 16, Under 19. The tiers are defined by age as of September 1 of the start of the Rugby Calendar."

"USA Rugby requirement is that 8th graders and below are not allowed to play U19 tier. This means that U14 players are not allowed to play U19. They are allowed to play U16. Any candidates for a high-performance exemption waiver must be approved by the Executive Officers."

Per the Rugby Arizona Constitution, one of the objectives and purposes of "RugbyAZ shall be: (Section 2.5- 'To ensure that the playing of Rugby Union Football within Arizona is carried out in accordance with the Laws of the Game of Rugby Football as framed by World Rugby and endorsed by the United States of America Rugby Football Union (USA Rugby)."

Furthermore, the "Girls Division Representative (Girls Commissioner)" role is outlined in section 13.2.5 "Division Reps" as overseeing 1. Under 14: Girls Tackle, 2, Under 16: Girls Tackle, and 3. Under 19: Girls Tackle."

It is our understanding that in addition to combining U19 and U16 players in the girls' division last fall, U14 players were also allowed to play with the older girls in the fall. This goes against our own constitution, USA Rugby age-based guidelines, and World Rugby age-based guidelines.

Additionally, we understand that the girls' division was shut down this season for at least one weekend due to the number of injuries sustained playing rugby, leaving the league too short players to continue that weekend.

Based on what is established in the Rugby Arizona Constitution, it is our opinion that by removing the age-grade structure in the girls division last year, we violated the terms and conditions of our own state rugby constitution. Play also occurred against USA Rugby and World Rugby guidelines.



Our club, as well as others, expressed concern during last year's AGM that combining age-grade divisions when Rugby Arizona is an age-grade based organization was not only unsafe, but also failed to consider proper player development. With that in mind, we'd like to address these two issues.

First, safety is a priority in rugby as established by the RAZ Constitution, USA Rugby, and World Rugby guidelines. Playing U14 age girls with girls in the U16 and U19 age groups is not always safe. It is not safe to have a 14-year-old freshman girl who has never played rugby before step onto a pitch with a girl who may be as old as 19, much larger and stronger physically, more mentally and emotionally mature, that may have more than a decade of rugby experience.

While there are exceptions through waivers for higher-level players and higher-weight players, the majority of girls are safest in their own age divisions. They are playing with and against girls of similar age, physical size, and maturity levels in most instances. Keeping girls in their proper age division allows for safer play as a result.

If we don't keep players safe and make safety a priority, parents will not want to allow their girls to play or to continue playing rugby. We all know it's difficult enough to recruit, but with proper age-grade based divisions in place, we can best assure parents their girls will be playing in the safest environment we can offer them.

Secondly, player development is of utmost importance. If we wish to grow the sport of rugby in Arizona, we must also consider player development. It is our belief that by developing higher-level players in Arizona, we can provide the best opportunities for our players while promoting the sport. Higher-level players equates to better opportunities such as scholarships, travel, and professional play which we can then spin into a marketing campaign to further recruit and draw positive attention from USA Rugby and World Rugby to Arizona.

Please recall the earlier scenario of a 14-year-old freshman new to the sport versus a 19-year-old senior with years of experience. The 14-year-old will be intimidated when faced with playing against the older, larger, more experienced girl. Fear can immobilize a player, leading to injury, and even them leaving the sport. The 14-year-old needs time to properly learn the sport before being pitted against a higher-level player. In addition, the older girl will not benefit by playing against the younger, inexperienced girl. The older players rugby skillset will likely suffer as a result of playing "lower-level" rugby.

To properly develop players, we must meet them where they are at and gradually introduce them to new drills, rugby skills, plays, etc. Throwing them into higher-level rugby will only serve to stunt their growth and development in the game. Everyone needs to be able to learn and develop at their own pace, which is why keeping them in the proper age-grade divisions is so important.

World Rugby understands the above arguments regarding safety and player development. As a result, the standard set by World Rugby for age-grade divisions is as follows:

**"Age differential playing guideline**

This guideline aims to protect the safety and welfare of age grade rugby players by trying to ensure that participants with broadly compatible physical development and skill levels play with and against each other.

Best practice is for players to play within a one year "age window". This tends to be driven by calendar year, for example born in 1997 or in some Unions by academic year.



Acceptable practice is for players to play within a two year “age window”.

In exceptional circumstances a player may play within a three year “age window”. As an example, a player participating in an Under 12 match must be turning 10, 11 or 12 years of age during the competition in which the match is played. In order to assess the suitability of players in such circumstances, the following criteria should be considered for inclusion within a Union's Policy:

1. Written agreement from the player’s parents or guardians to play and acceptance of the associated risk with playing with people who may be stronger and more physically developed than them;
2. Written confirmation from a medical practitioner with an understanding of the demands of Rugby to whom the player is known that the player is in a physical condition to play Rugby at the desired level and that this view is supported by a musculoskeletal evaluation and/or other appropriate assessments;
3. Written agreement from a medical officer with an understanding of the demands of Rugby employed or retained by the player’s home union that the player is in a physical condition to play Rugby at the desired level and that this view is supported by musculoskeletal evaluation and/or other appropriate assessments;
4. Written confirmation from a coach with an appropriate understanding of the physical attributes required and of the risks to players in Rugby and to whom the player is known that the player has the requisite skills and experience to play Rugby at the desired level; and
5. Such other consents, agreements or confirmations (if any) as may be required by the player’s home Union or to comply with the local jurisdiction.

A player should not participate in an age grade competition more than three years above his or her age.

#### **Front row players need particular attention**

It is recognized that the front row playing positions (prop and hooker) in Rugby potentially carries an increased risk of injury with respect to the scrum. It is therefore recommended that a more rigid process and criteria for these positions be applied if a two-year "age window" is adopted. This could be similar to the requirements set out above for the three year “age window.” It is possible that Unions may introduce some form of strength assessment and or investigation into physical capacity of players in this situation.

Under no circumstances should consideration ever be given to allowing a player to play front row within a three year "age window" situation.

It is important that all people involved in a decision to permit a player from the lowest age to participate in an age group above the two-year period understand that rugby is a contact sport and, like all contact sports, players are exposed to the risk of injury.

A parent or guardian of a child under the age of 18 must consent to the child playing with players who are two years older. That consent can be evidenced by completing a Consent Form.

Players irrespective of their age should be prepared in a manner to play the game safely and should have undertaken a safety awareness program such as Rugby Ready or the equivalent available within the Union.”

Source: <https://www.world.rugby/the-game/player-welfare/guidelines/age-grade>



USA Rugby also recommends the same age-grade level divisions as World Rugby. Please see the chart below:

**7th/8th Grades**

**9th/10th Grades** “Junior Varsity”

**11th/12th Grades** “Varsity”

Source: <https://d26phqdbpt0w91.cloudfront.net/NonVideo/bedd5640-aa50-4b02-8021-421c4ea50e6e.pdf>

Furthermore, USA Rugby has changed its U19 designation to “High School Rugby” as follows:

“USA Rugby reclassified all rugby played by High School student athletes to ‘High School Rugby’. There is no longer an ‘Under 19’ classification of rugby in the USA. The ‘Under 19’ age bracket and classification is now ‘High School Rugby’ and played by the eligibility and competition rules in this document.

g) Players must be at least 15 years old to participate in High School Rugby. Players that are 14 and enrolled in high school must complete the ‘Under 15 Waiver’ to participate in High School Rugby. 14-year-old players must not participate in the front row of fifteens or 10s contact high school rugby matches.”

The high school waiver from USA Rugby warns of the risks associated with those under age 15 “playing up.” You can see the verbiage in the waiver for yourself at <https://d26phqdbpt0w91.cloudfront.net/NonVideo/1bcd1e55-d743-4ee2-8369-75f4eea1a7a9.pdf>. This, again, underlines the focus we should have on safety within Rugby Arizona.

We understand the argument that “there aren’t enough girls” to have different age divisions. The lack of players in a division should serve as an impetus for growth, not a lowering the standards for safe, strong developmental play. The executive board for RAZ could easily put together a committee to hold recruiting events, handle media outreach, and hold rookie rugby events to draw attention to our growth goals.

The other argument at the last AGM was to move the girls to playing tens versus sevens. We would love to grow the game so that the girl’s division can play 15s just like the boys, but we simply don’t have the numbers, yet. We believe that working together, we can grow the game, but each club must work to grow their own numbers and not just rely on Rugby Arizona to do so.

In conclusion, Marana Youth Rugby Club proposes a return to age-grade divisions within the girl’s league of Rugby Arizona. We can work together to share recruiting ideas, build a recruiting committee to help grow the sport, and support one another with recruiting ideas. As numbers build, we can move from sevens, to tens, to 15s to give our girls the opportunities for safe play while growing in rugby. Additionally, doing so will bring RAZ in compliance with USA Rugby and World Rugby age-grade guidelines as well, demonstrating our commitment to safe, fair play as well as proper player development.

**Proposal Summary:**

Revert the girl’s division of Rugby Arizona back to an “age-based” division where there is a U14, U16, and U19 division rather than an open high school division to improve player safety, promote player development, and align with World Rugby and USA Rugby age-based guidelines.



Proposal Benefit:

Improve player safety, promote player development, and align with World Rugby and USA Rugby age-based guidelines.

Clarification Discussion:

None.

Voting (weighted):

In Favor (Yay or Yes vote): 5

Opposed (No vote): 18

**Proposal DOES NOT PASS.**

**Proposals Requiring 2/3 Majority Vote:**

6. (SWRRS): Penalty for Players Coming Off Bench

*(Would require amendments to DC Policy and Procedures 5.3. Penalties for Specific Actions)*

Proposal Summary:

SWRRS proposes the below additional language to be added to the Rugby Arizona by-laws. We've had several incidents over the past year with players who are not part of the "playing team" coming onto the pitch during an incident and do not have any language in the by-laws.

Proposal Benefit:

This new language defines how referees and Rugby Arizona will address players who are on the sideline coming onto the pitch during an incident and will benefit Rugby Arizona's mission statement by ensuring a "safe and fair sporting environment..." Section 5.3 is for Penalties for Specific Actions which notes other similar specialty items and should be a good location for the new proposed Law.

Proposed Change to DC Policy and Procedures:

(DC Policy and Procedures 5.3. Penalties for Specific Actions)

**LANGUAGE TO ADD:**

5.3.6 A player who is on the sideline (either listed as part of the match day roster of a team playing in the match or generally registered with Rugby Arizona) who then enters the field of play and engages in an altercation or incident that is taking place on the field may be issued a red card by the referee and ordered off the field, and referred to the Disciplinary Committee for resolution per the Disciplinary Guidelines. In addition, the team that the player represents shall be required to remove a player from the field, as determined by the Captain, and play short-handed for the remainder of the match.

Clarification Discussion:

Red Mountain: Red Mountain sought clarification about the player being removed from play, and when a match would be called due to insufficient players on the field.

Voting (weighted):

In Favor (Yay or Yes vote): 23

Opposed (No vote): 0

**Proposal is APPROVED.** *(100% in favor, greater than 2/3 majority)*

7. (Scottsdale): Refined Playoff Structure

*(Would require Bylaws amendments to Section 14.4 Overtime for Playoff Elimination and Finals)*

Proposal Summary:

Refined playoff structure to align better with typical tournament / playoffs.

Proposal Benefit:

Align better with typical tournament / playoffs.

Proposed Change to Bylaws:

(Section 14.4 Overtime for Playoff Elimination and Finals)

**LANGUAGE TO REMOVE:**



[Change to section title]  
Overtime for Playoff Elimination and Finals

**LANGUAGE TO ADD:**

[Change to section title]  
Playoff Elimination and Finals

[14.4.1 7's, before existing language]

All teams submit a 12 person roster Wednesday before playoff match. Teams are allowed 5 substitutions only. Substitutions may be direct replacements or reversals, but each counts as a single substitution. At the relevant division commissioner's discretion, additional roster changes may be allowed.

[14.4.2 10's, before existing language]

All teams submit a 15 person roster Wednesday before playoff match. All teams are allowed 7 substitutions only. substitutions may be direct replacements or reversals, but each counts as a single substitution. At the relevant division commissioner's discretion, additional roster changes may be allowed.

[14.4.3 15's, before existing language]

All teams submit a 25 person roster Wednesday before playoff match. All teams are allowed 8 substitutions only. Substitutions may be direct replacements or reversals, but each counts as a single substitution. At the relevant division commissioner's discretion, additional roster changes may be allowed.

Clarification Discussion:

Mr. Carson Mellott asked if this proposal is intended for all age divisions including youth. Mr. Ted Brandt responded it is meant for U14 and up. Mr. Charlie Diaz asked, "What is meant by a 'movement'?" referring to the original proposed language (*note to Minutes: 'movement' superseded by 'substitution'*). Mr. Brandt conceded it is synonymous with 'substitution'. Mr. Tim Pappas asked about the reasoning behind the numbers used; Mr. Brandt indicated it was to be more inclusive. Mr. Barry Gabbard asked if we state who is in charge of that; Mr. Brandt replied the division commissioner would be responsible. Mr. Mellott asked about the scenario whereby if a team sets a roster on Wednesday, but then has an injury, what would be the result? Multiple other clarification questions posed. Mr. Brandt shared further context about having a refined roster and the number of substitutions. The proposal was amended as follows during discussion:

- a) The term 'movement' was replaced with 'substitution'.
- b) The following sentence was included in each subsection: "At the relevant division commissioner's discretion, additional roster changes may be allowed".
- c) The number of 15's substitutions was increased from 7 to 8.

Voting (weighted):

In Favor (Yay or Yes vote): 18

Opposed (No vote): 5

**Proposal is APPROVED.** (78% in favor, greater than 2/3 majority)

8. (Red Mountain): Release of Schedules and Scheduled Match Priority  
(*Would require Bylaws amendments to Section 14.3.1 League Matches*)

Proposal Summary:

Maintaining a schedule is vital for the success of the league. Families are busy and often plan their weekends well in advance. Not allowing last minute changes will avoid issues such as the one this past season where we had multiple teams and families sitting around waiting for their matches to start 2



hours after the scheduled time while unscheduled games were being played. The #1 feedback we got back from parents was frustration with changes to game day schedules.

Proposal Benefit:

Maintaining a schedule is vital for the success of the league.

Proposed Change to Bylaws:

**LANGUAGE TO ADD:**

(Section 14.3.1 League Matches)

*[After first paragraph in section]*

Schedules are to be released at the start of the season confirmed two weeks in advance with as little change as possible in regards to time. After the two week mark, no changes can be made unless consent is given by a league member, hosting team rep and all involved parties. Any additional matches, league, non-league, or other must be played after the completion of all scheduled matches. Any matches played outside of the schedule will not be recognized as a league match and there will be no chance for a make-up. Additionally, a match that is started outside the schedule, without consent, will be ended immediately so that scheduled games can continue as planned.

Clarification Discussion:

Mr. Barry Gabbard asked if the entire schedule must be drafted two weeks in advance; confirmation was made that the proposal requires the entire schedule to be released at the start of the season.

Voting (weighted):

In Favor (Yay or Yes vote): 23

Opposed (No vote): 0

**Proposal is APPROVED.** *(100% in favor, greater than 2/3 majority)*

9. (Red Mountain): Assistant Division Commissioners with Apprentice Year  
*(Would require Bylaws amendments to Section 13.2.5 Division Reps)*

Proposal Summary:

Introduce two reps for each division.

Proposal Benefit:

This will ensure some level of continuity and training for the commissioner positions as well as lighten the load of the commissioners. It will also help those filling a commissioner position and a coaching position at the same time by ensuring there is a Commissioner/Assistant Commissioner available to handle any issues while allowing commissioners to focus on coaching during their matches.

Proposed Change to Bylaws:

(Section 13.2.5 Division Reps)

**LANGUAGE TO REMOVE:**

Division Reps serve a 1 year term and are elected at each AGM.

**LANGUAGE TO ADD:**

There are two reps for each Division, each of whom serve a 2 year term. The first year they will serve as an assistant rep and the second year they will serve as the head rep. Reps are elected at the AGM.

Clarification Discussion:

None.

Voting (weighted):

In Favor (Yay or Yes vote): 13

Opposed (No vote): 10

**Proposal DOES NOT PASS.** *(Only 57% in favor, doesn't meet the 2/3 threshold)*

10. (Red Mountain): Playoff Eligibility Based on Registration and 50% Game Participation  
*(Would require Bylaws amendments to Section 15.3 Player Eligibility and Team Conduct)*

Proposal Summary:



Playoff eligibility requirements for players.

Proposal Benefit:

Benefit: Mitigate teams bringing in ringers, unregistered players, or pulling in players from other teams for the playoffs. Playoff matches are intended to be played between players who have played each other throughout the season.

Proposed Change to Bylaws:

(Section 15.3 Player Eligibility and Team Conduct)

**LANGUAGE TO ADD:**

15.3.3: Player Eligibility for Playoffs

In order to participate in a league playoff match in any division, players are required to:

- 1) Be registered with a) RugbyAZ, b) the specific club, and c) the designated age group at least 2 weeks prior to playoffs.
- 2) Play in at least 2 games with the club and division they play for in the playoffs, semi-finals, and championship, or in absence of 2 games, have the relevant division commissioners' approval.
- 3) Be a resident of Arizona and attending an Arizona school (or provide evidence of home schooling in Arizona).

Waivers can be granted with approval from two of the following who have no affiliation with the petitioning club: President and relevant Commissioner by default, then if one of these is affiliated with the petitioning club, then to the Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer. The waiver petition should either include medical documentation proving an inability to play for the required time, or a satisfactory explanation as to why the player wasn't previously registered or is playing in a division they did not play for in the regular season. For clarification, a player can play for more than one division for the club with which they are registered so long as they meet the requirements outlined above for both divisions.

Clarification Discussion:

Mr. Rob Speers asked about the use of the term "whichever is greater" as originally used in the proposed language, with further group discussion. The proposal was amended during discussion (by Carson and Jason Orme of Red Mountain) as follows:

- a) Under the first bullet, removed: "or 40% of regular season matches (whichever is greater from the time they were registered)".
- b) Under the first bullet, added: "or in absence of 2 games, have the relevant division commissioners' approval".

Voting (weighted):

In Favor (Yay or Yes vote): 23

Opposed (No vote): 0

**Proposal is APPROVED.** (100% in favor, greater than 2/3 majority)

11. (Red Mountain): Procedure in the Event of Weather Delay

*(Would require Bylaws amendments to Section 15.0 General Policies)*

Proposal Summary:

Guidelines on how to move forward with a weather delay.

Proposal Benefit:

There are currently no guidelines on how to move forward with a delayed match; this will provide procedure for future events.

Proposed Change to Bylaws:

(Section 15.0 General Policies)

**LANGUAGE TO ADD:**

15.7 In-Progress Game Postponed or Cancelled Due to Weather Delay



In the event weather conditions create game delays or cancellations affecting in-progress matches, once the responsible party (ie, park supervisor) deems a match must be put on hold due to unsafe playing conditions related to weather such as lightning or other elements, and the delay extends for more than 90 minutes or reaches a time that would be unreasonable to complete the game (ie, fields closing due to time), the teams have two choices: 1) the match will be postponed, and a full make-up match will be scheduled for another time, with both teams involved deciding on a time and location to play the make-up match; or 2) at point of stoppage, the two teams can opt to call the game and the score at the time will be considered the final result. If teams cannot reach an agreement, the decision will be made by a vote of three, consisting of President, relevant commissioner, and one other Management Team member. If any of the three are affiliated with the two participating clubs, those individuals will defer their decision to another Management Team member.

Clarification Discussion:

Mr. Hal Morgan indicated he is not sure if 30 minutes is sufficient time, and suggested 60 minutes. Mr. Taylor McGilvray asked for clarity on the meaning of “league members” – meaning “management team”? Mr. Rob Speers responded yes, that was the intent per his conversation with Ms. Marissa Shum of Red Mountain. Mr. Speers then clarified that the proposed rule applies to all matches. The proposal was amended during discussion as follows:

- a) Time duration changed from 30 minutes to 90 minutes.
- b) The term “at point of stoppage” was added.
- c) “Management Team” was substituted for “league member”.

Voting (weighted):

In Favor (Yay or Yes vote): 21

Opposed (No vote): 2

**Proposal is APPROVED.** (91% in favor, greater than 2/3 majority)

12. (Red Mountain): Two New Voting Tiers for Clubs with Higher Player Registrations  
(Would require Bylaws amendments to Section 6.3 Voting)

Red Mountain withdrew their proposal. No further discussion on the topic.

XIII. **Other Business**

A. Barry Gabbard introduced to the floor a marketing proposal to increase recruiting success. After some group discussion, a motion was made.

- o **MOTION:** Tempe (Hal Morgan) motions to allocate \$15,000 from the RugbyAZ bank reserves for the hiring of a marketing firm to put a plan in place by September 15, with the goal of increasing RugbyAZ player registrations by 20%. Seconded by Northern Arizona (Kevin Harris).
- o **MOTION PASSES.** Motion passes unanimously.

After the motion passed, additional discussion was held. Mr. Paul Van Ballegoie (Red Mountain) would like to know who we can reach out to soon, and would like to ensure that social media platforms other than Facebook are used. Treasurer Miller cautioned that we want to make sure there is still enough money in the account as cushion for the many front-loaded costs we experience at the start of each fiscal year. Discussion shifted to our marketing goals and desired recruiting results, including a focus on growing girls rugby. Mr. Van Ballegoie offered if you recruit the girls, the boys will follow. All agreed that individual clubs still have an obligation to recruit independently, a two tier strategy.

B. Secretary McGilvray shared with the Executive Committee a bylaws proposal for RugbyAZ’s next general meeting related to termination of individuals, for which we currently do not have a codified approach in the bylaws (note to Minutes: this proposal printout was later circulated on the same day



by email to the Executive Committee as *RugbyAZ Bylaws Proposal – Individual Termination 2024 07 13.pdf*).

- C. Treasurer Miller asked about the process if there are any changes to the provisional budget. Secretary McGilvray indicated if there are any budget amendments, they can be circulated for vote of the Executive Committee, by email being sufficient.

XIV. **Adjournment**

Secretary McGilvray motioned to adjourn the AGM at 5:10 pm; all in favor, none opposed. Meeting adjourned.

The 2024 AGM concludes.

**Note, the following documents are hereby incorporated into the Minutes:**

- 2024 AGM Attendees and Voting Log
- RugbyAZ 2024 AGM Proposals v0713 1030 as Referenced at AGM

**Rugby Arizona Mission Statement**

*Rugby Arizona's mission is to develop and grow the sport of rugby for all youth within the State of Arizona. Our goals are to provide a safe and fair sporting environment, and to develop youth character by introducing the values of rugby in a team sport experience that will endure for a lifetime.*

