

Mid-America Rugby Football Union

Rules of Operation

1. Introduction

- a. These regulations and procedures are to be utilized for all rugby clubs which are members of the Mid-America Rugby Football Union. Unless specifically mentioned, the regulations are the same for all clubs and league competitions under the auspices of the Mid-America Rugby Football Union. Additional competitive programs and regulations may be added by USA Rugby and the MARFU Board.
- b. Members must comply with all of the requirements set forth in the By-Laws, these Rules, and such other resolutions that may be adopted by the Board.
- c. All regulations and procedures adopted by the United States of America Rugby Football Union (USARFU) in the areas of eligibility, appeal processes, discipline regulations and procedures, and any other regulations applying to competitions are considered part of these regulations.
- d. Subject to the right of the Board to suspend a person, team, or club, a Member shall be entitled to participate in all regularly scheduled events conducted by the Union. Following the initial acceptance of a club as a Member of the Union, the acceptance of dues from a Member shall be evidence that the Member is in good-standing, subject to all Union policies and regulations, and entitled to all rights and privileges accorded to Union Members.

2. Application Process.

- a. All applications for New Club membership shall be submitted to the Union Administrator.
- b. Applications shall include:
 1. the proposed name and colors of the club,
 2. club history and past record (if applicable),
 3. classification of membership desired,
 4. a complete roster of club members including

1. the name, residential and business addresses and telephone numbers, email address, and previous rugby experience and certifications of each club officer and coach.
2. an affidavit stating that the club, its teams, and members will abide by the By-Laws, these Rules and such other resolutions that may be adopted by the MARFU and USA Rugby Board of directors.
- c. For Changes in League affiliation – notice must be sent by July 15, to MARFU board and Frontier Competitions Committee (if applicable). Exceptions will be handled on a case by case basis.

3. Club Requirements

- a. *REFEREES*: Every club, regardless of gender or division, is required to have one (1) certified referee who must also be a member of the Mid-America Referee Society.
 1. College team are required to have a certified referee on their team roster. This ref is not required to be available to ref regularly, but can make themselves available and is there in case of unforeseen circumstances with the teams assigned ref.
 2. Referees of senior clubs must be available to ref at least two weekends a month to be considered active and full-time. (If they are not scheduled to referee but have provided their availability, it is seen as being compliant.)
 3. A member club which is unable to provide a certified referee to the Society may still be able to schedule and participate in matches but must work with the Committee in order to fulfill this requirement in a timely manner or be subject to the following:
 1. Will not receive referee assignments.
 2. Will be ineligible to advance to championship play, and will forfeit all league matches, until the referee is provided.
- b. *CONTACT INFO*: All clubs are required to submit the names, current phone numbers and email addresses for at least three club officials to be posted on the MARFU website in order to allow each member club to be contacted, if necessary, for rugby matters.
- c. *DUES*: All clubs are responsible for paying dues at the beginning of the

new competitive cycle. Dues will be collected via the USA Rugby online registration system and will be in addition to any dues or fees collected by USA Rugby. Teams must be registered with USA Rugby along with players in order to be compliant.

- d. The MARFU Dues Schedule is (does not include USA Rugby Dues):
 - 1. Senior Men and Women: \$45
 - 2. Collegiate Men and Women Teams affiliated with MARFU: \$25
 - 3. Youth (contact) affiliated with MARFU: \$30
 - 4. Youth (non-contact) affiliated with MARFU: \$5
 - 5. Team Dues: \$275

4. Eligibility

- a. Players must meet all requirements for eligibility as set forth in the USARFU Eligibility Rules.
- b. All players, regardless of gender or league, must be registered with the club they are representing and they must be listed on the club's CIPP roster as of the day of and before the start of the league match.
- c. If a player is playing in a friendly, they must be CIPP'd with USA Rugby as of the day of and before the start of the match. There are absolutely no exceptions to this regulation.
- d. *Illegal use of Player* - The use of any player in any league match who does not meet this criterion will result in an automatic forfeit loss to the offending team. A \$100 fine per player, per game to the offending club will be assessed for any game using a not registered player and, in addition, the club may be dismissed from further league competition for the remainder of that competitive cycle.
- e. *Roster Check* - Clubs can ask to verify rosters as long as it is done in a timely manner before the match. Refusal to do a CIPP check will result in an automatic forfeiture of a match and any costs accrued by the non-forfeiting team can be submitted in the form of invoices to be reimbursed by the forfeiting team upon approval of the board. The invoices must be submitted within 10 days of the forfeited match. The forfeiting club is considered in bad standing with the union until the fine is paid.
- f. Club Compliance - All clubs, regardless of gender or league, playing in any match, league or otherwise, must have a current and valid club membership in the USARFU membership system (CIPP), a minimum of

15 registered players, and a certified coach according to USA Rugby Guidelines.

1. If clubs are unable to carry 15 registered members, they must submit an action plan to become compliant to the MARFU Board.
2. If a club does not have a full side to play a game but would still like to hold a match, they must contact their opposition and the Union Administrator stating this and what type of match will be played (10's, combined with another team, or assistance from opposition) no later than seven days before the match to ensure that a referee is assigned to the match. *If it is a league match, USA Rugby policies must be followed in regards to reduced players (must have minimum of 5 in the scrum.)*
3. Clubs without valid club membership in the USA Rugby membership system or who do not have at least 15 registered players and have not made arrangements with the MARFU Board who play in violation of the above mandate; will be fined \$250 payable to the Union per match played, will result in forfeiture of all matches played, including league matches, until such time as the club becomes compliant.

g. Any Member and/or person who fails to comply with the eligibility requirements inclusive, shall be deemed not-in-good-standing, and further, while Not-in-good-standing Status:

1. shall not play any rugby matches or use Union fields;
2. shall not be assigned Union referees;
3. any league matches played or scheduled by a Member while Not-in-good-standing status, shall be deemed a forfeiture loss in favor of its opponent;
4. shall not reschedule any such forfeited rugby matches; and
5. may be subject to further disciplinary action by the Board.

5. RULES OF CONDUCT

- a. All individuals under the jurisdiction of the Union shall be expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. The Board reserves the right to take firm disciplinary action against all individuals and clubs who embarrass or discredit the Union or Rugby Union Football, at any time or place. Abusive, intimidating, and obnoxious actions or language are

prohibited. Under extraordinary circumstances, the action of any member or supporter of a club may be considered by the Union to be the action of the club as a whole, and appropriate disciplinary actions may be imposed upon the entire club.

b. Ground Rules. - Participation Agreement

Member conduct shall adhere local facility policies and conduct themselves in a manner which reflects positively on their team, fans, MARFU, and USA Rugby.

c. Inclement Weather

1. In non-league matches conducted under the auspices of the Union, sweat pants and/or gloves may be worn if the temperature is less than 20 °F (-7 °C) or if the referee determines the conditions warrant.
2. The MARFU Board or its designee may, in times of inclement weather, declare unplayable conditions to protect player safety and health and prevent damage to fields.

6. Match Day Procedures

- a. All clubs are required to produce an accurate match roster for the use of the opposing team and the referee prior to the start of any match on a schedule acceptable to both teams.
- b. Teams may request an I.D. check in order to verify validate of CIPP register and match roster. This must be done in a timely manner prior to the match kick-off. Refusal to participate in I.D. check will result in a forfeit and other possible sanctions.
- c. All collegiate clubs in any league are REQUIRED to adhere to the rules of their College Conference in regards to college eligibility procedures.
- d. It is inappropriate for a team to ask the opposition to allow the use of non-CIPPed player or the use of ineligible players. If a team allows the opposition to use ineligible players in a league match, they will be subject to penalties, as well.
- e. Home clubs are responsible for securing a suitable venue for playing matches. The playing field size requirements are noted in the laws of the game.
- f. The home club is responsible for marking the field in accordance with the requirements detailed in the laws of the game.

- g. The home team is also required to provide field flags, goal post pads, and a 5 meter crowd control barrier (on both sides of the field, if only one side is marked, the non-marked side must be closed to players and spectators) that meet the requirements as noted in the laws of the game and other regulations. Clubs are strongly encouraged to consult the latest version of the USA Rugby Handbook and Laws of the Game, as well as the current version of Game Management Guidelines for applicable laws, procedure and comment on field conditions and requirements
- h. For each instance of failure of the home team to properly mark the field, provide suitable field flags, goal post pads, and crowd control barriers, as determined by the assigned referee, the home club may be fined \$50.
- i. The referee has the discretion to not allow the match to take place if there are safety issues related to the playing facilities. If teams have concerns, they are encouraged to consult the Committee.

7. Match Cancellation

- a. If any club cancels a match with another club, the opposing club must be notified no later than 5:00 p.m. the Wednesday prior to the match or the cancelling club can be fined up to the sum of \$250 and payable to the opposing club for any costs they may have incurred due to the late cancellation.
- b. The fine will only be enforced and collected if the opposing club so chooses. A game may be cancelled due to extenuating circumstances (weather, acts of god, deployment, etc) if approved by the area field marshal and or referee.
- c. If a club desires to collect the fine from the opposing club, they must inform the MARFU Board within 10 days of the cancelled event.

8. Results Reporting

- a. To provide accurate and timely league standings both participating clubs are required to submit a match report through the Union website containing the results of every match played or through the USA Rugby Reporting system if your league is utilizing this tool.
- b. The form will require the names of every player in the match, the score of the match, the number of tries scored by both teams, the kick off time, the conditions of the field, any discipline activity during the match, and other information about the match.

- c. The referee for the match, whether appointed by the Association or procured by the home team if no appointment is available, will submit a match report as well.
 - d. For all matches, regardless if played on Friday, Saturday or Sunday, the match report forms, from both teams and the referee, must be submitted by 11:59 pm the Monday following the match.
 - e. Any club who fails to timely submit match results as detailed above for any match played may be fined a maximum of \$25 per match for the first offense and \$50 for the second and subsequent failures during a competitive cycle.
 - f. Any referee who fails to timely submit match results will not be paid for their services. Continued failure will result in removal from schedule.
9. **Leagues:** The Mid-America Rugby Football Union will host leagues under the umbrella of USA Rugby, and its national championship competitive structure.

Competitions overseen in conjunction with Frontier Competitions Committee:

- a. *Men's Division II Club League*--
- b. *Men's Division III Club League* –
- c. *Women's Division II Club League*-

Competition for the MARFU Championships shall be divided into the following Divisions:

- d. *Men's Division IV Club League*--The clubs are encouraged to play home and away against each team in their conference during the course of the league season. The top two based on a point-based system at the end of the season will play each other to determine the league champion.
- e. *Women's Division II College League* –The clubs will play a home or away schedule during the course of the league season.
- f. *College Teams* may choose to affiliate with any collegiate leagues operating under the USA Rugby competitive structure.
- g. *Boys High School League* –The State Rugby Organizations will organize the competitions.
- h. *Girls High School League* –The State Rugby Organizations will organize the competitions.
- i. The league season for all Men's Club, Men's College, Women's Club, and Women's College leagues overseen by MARFU will commence on September 1 of each year, through April 15 or three weeks before play-off competitions commence.
- j. If any club forfeits and/or cancels *more than one* league match, they may

be removed from the league competition. Said club will be on probation until the beginning of the next competitive cycle, at which time their status will be reviewed by the MARFU Board and Frontier Competitions Committee. Clubs competing in the same league structure will not be required to play league matches against clubs put on probation, but are encouraged to schedule friendly matches.

k. *Scheduling of Matches*

1. The MARFU will maintain a master schedule with all matches for all member clubs.
2. The MARFU reserves the right to schedule league matches for clubs that fail to meet the requirements for completing match schedules.
3. Clubs participating in the leagues are required to submit their complete league match schedule to the Administrator date set by competitions committee for both fall and spring session.
4. Match schedules must, at a minimum, provide the date, opponent, and venue of all required league matches. Failure to submit a match schedule will result in that club receiving lowest priority referee assignments for that season and a \$50 fine.

l. Clubs participating in the leagues may schedule other participant clubs more than the number of times determined by the league. However, both clubs must clearly note on their submitted schedule, which matches are to be included in the league standings/results.

m. *Change in Match Schedule* – By mutual agreement by the two clubs involved in any league match, a match may be rescheduled to a different date or venue. Such changes must be communicated to the MARFU Board at **least two weeks before the original match scheduled or one month before the proposed new date**. Any cost incurred in the change will be borne by the club requesting the change of date or venue.

10. League Standings

- a. The Union will post the updated and current league standings after each weekend of league and playoff activity play. Union will compile the results received from the results reporting process described below. Leagues utilizing USA Rugby's Competition management system will have their standings updated and maintained through the system. A link will be provided on MARFU website to league standings.
- b. Point-Based System - Standings within each league will be based on a

points system similar to that employed by the Super 12 Competition and outlined below.

Win	= 4 points
Tie	= 2 points
Loss by less than 7 points	= 1 point
Loss by more than 7 points	= 0 points
Scoring four or more tries in a match	= 1 bonus point
Defaulting on a Match	= loss of one point
Forfeiting a match	= loss of one point

In the event of a tie (draw) in the number of points earned during the league season, the following tie-breaker rules will apply, in order:

- i) The result of the head-to-head match or matches between the tied clubs (for leagues playing home AND away).
- ii) The cumulative point differential (i.e., total points “for” less total points “against” in all league matches.
- iii) The ratio of “points for” to “points against” for all league matches.

11. Non-Union Hosted Tournaments

- a. Any member wishing to host a tournament within the geographical jurisdiction of the Union must have the prior approval of the Board.
- b. The tournament must be sanctioned by USA Rugby at least three weeks before date of event.
- c. Before such approval will be granted, the host member must submit the tournament application to the Union Administrator no later than two (2) months before the proposed date of the tournament.
- d. Hosts will work with MARFU Referee society on services.

12. Referee Association

- a. The Mid America Rugby Referee Society (MARRS) shall be responsible for providing qualified referees for matches played under the auspices of the Union, and for disseminating information regarding the Laws of the Game and for other such functions as the Board deems appropriate. The

Referee's Association may also work with the College Conferences and SRO competitions to provide referees for matches.

- b. Any person who has at any time refereed a game which was part of a regularly scheduled season of competition conducted by the Union shall be eligible for membership. Membership in the Society shall be obtained by submitting a request to the Head Referee and by compliance with all other reasonable qualifications established by the Referees' Association.
 - c. The Referees' Association may:
 - 1. adopt reasonable By-Laws, which shall be in writing, and which may include provisions imposing reasonable qualifications for membership and for providing for officers of the Association to serve in addition to the Head Referee,
 - 2. establish apprenticeship programs for new referees,
 - 3. hold training and information conferences for members, players, and others,
 - 4. adopt a social program, and
 - 5. do all other things within the general scope of its authority and not inconsistent with the Articles of Incorporation, the By-Laws of the Union, and the Rules of Operation.
 - d. All officials for all matches, regardless of gender or division, will be assigned by the Society. Assignments will be posted on the website and master schedule.
 - e. Home clubs are required to contact the assigned referee no later than noon on the Wednesday before each home match to confirm match time and location. Should no contact be made from the home club to the referee by Wednesday, no referee will be guaranteed.
 - f. In the event an assigned referee is not available a replacement official will be appointed by the Association.
 - g. If the Association is unable to appoint a referee the home club may find and appoint its own referee so long as that referee is certified, registered with USA Rugby, and not otherwise engaged with an appointment assigned by the Society. The home club shall notify the Society of the appointment prior to the match being played.
 - h. Should a club use a referee who is not certified and registered with USA Rugby, that club shall be fined \$100 and forfeit the match played whether a league match or otherwise.
13. Penalties and Fines
- a. The MARFU will communicate a general reminder to all clubs participating in any league or division, prior to the commencement of a season, of any

outstanding dues, fines, penalties, referee fees, etc. by an announcement at the general meeting, and a notice on the website. A communication will also be sent to the club contact as listed on the website. Ignorance of any arrearage by any club is no excuse for non payment as it is the club's responsibility to seek out that information from the union.

- b. The MARFU will assess penalties and fines for failure to abide by the Regulations and Procedures as follows:
 1. Failure to Provide a Match Schedule. Should a club fail to provide a match schedule by the above mentioned due date, they will be fined \$50.
 2. Failure to Follow the Mandated Match Schedule. Should a club schedule or play a league match on a non-approved date, the home club shall forfeit the match and both clubs shall be fined \$100 each.
 3. Use of Ineligible Players. The use of any ineligible player in any league match will result in an automatic forfeit loss to the offending team and a \$100 fine per player to the offending club payable to the union. Players must meet all requirements for eligibility as set forth in the USARFU Eligibility Rules. Clubs using ineligible players in a league match are fined \$100 per match per player in which the offending player participated, payable to the union, and, in addition, the club is dismissed from further league competition for the remaining competitive cycle. Clubs must provide a match roster and CIPP register to the referee and opposing team before the game. Failure to do so will result in the game not being played.
- c. Ineligible Clubs. Clubs without valid club membership in the USA Rugby membership system or who do not have at least 15 registered players and who have not submitted an action plan on what they are doing to become compliant to the Committee, who play a match will be fined \$250 to the union per match played, will result in forfeiture of all matches played, including Merit Table matches, until such time as the club becomes compliant. In addition, any club in bad standing or in arrears with the USARFU, MARFU, another union or Society, in any amount, whether the amounts owed are dues, fines, penalties, match fees, etc., is ineligible to play matches of any kind unless and until the amounts owed are paid in full. If a club in arrears plays a match, of any kind, before satisfying its debt, it shall be fined \$250 per match played.
- d. Submission of Match Results. A club that fails to timely submit match

results as detailed above for any match will be fined a maximum of \$25 per match for the first offense and \$50 for the second and subsequent failures during a competitive cycle.

- e. Referee Submission of Match Results. A referee, whether appointed by the Society for a particular match or not, who fails to timely submit his or her match report to the union will not be paid for their services, and will be fined \$25 for the second and subsequent failures during a competitive cycle.
- f. Use of Ineligible Referee. Should a club use a referee who is not certified and registered with USA Rugby, that club shall be fined \$100 and forfeit the match played whether league or otherwise.
- g. Late Cancellation. Should a club cancel a match after the Thursday prior deadline (without the approval of the Board), the canceling club can be fined up to \$250 payable to the opposing club for any costs they have incurred due to the late cancellation. The fine will only be enforced and collected if the opposing club so
- h. Field Conditions. For each instance of failure of the home team to properly mark the field, provide suitable field flags, goal post pads, and crowd control barriers, as determined by the assigned referee, the home club will be fined \$50.