2 RUGBY DEVELOPMENT
2 RUGBY DEVELOPMENT

*Increased participation across all non-elite sections of the rugby community.*

It is essential for USA Rugby to continue to promote and develop the game of rugby across all levels of the rugby community. Rugby Development is designed to encourage and support all those who want to participate either by playing, coaching, refereeing, administrating and otherwise following rugby.

The purpose of this section is to identify clear objectives, strategies and plans that will support growth at the participation level of the game by: (1) increasing amateur participation at all levels, (2) reducing the age of introduction to rugby, (3) recruiting new players at all levels and retaining players in the game as they transfer between levels, and (4) supporting enjoyment of the game by ensuring there are sufficient fields, coaches, referees, and administrators to support the players.

Rugby Development will create a common agenda that enables, territories, local area unions, state-based rugby organizations, volunteers and executive staff to work closely together in a partnership.

In recent years, there has been rapid growth in leisure forms of the game covering touch, tag, beach, 10s and others. It is important that these new forms of the game of rugby union should also come under the USA Rugby’s governance. Over the course of the plan period, USA Rugby should include in its regulations separate sections for these new developing brands.

**OBJECTIVES**

20. Create a new Rugby Department that promotes all aspects of the amateur (non-elite) game.
21. Promote all elements of the ‘Rugby For All’ continuum.
22. Create and deliver against strategic, annual operating plans, as well as budgets for all areas of game participation including:
   i. Membership
   ii. Youth and High School (Boys and Girls)
   iii. Club Rugby (Men and Women)
   iv. Referee Development
   v. Coach Development
   vi. Administrator Development
MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

*Increase participation in rugby at all levels by retaining more existing members and enrolling more new USA Rugby members each year.*

The foundation to USA Rugby and USA Rugby member clubs’ future ability to recruit new members and retain current members is a stable and robust relational member database, with an arsenal of online tools provided to member organizations and clubs to manage their own information. By maintaining contact with and retaining more members over the next three years, USA Rugby can leverage sponsor and partner support to provide additional value in the form of benefits to members. USA Rugby overall club and individual membership will increase from 84,500 members in August 2009 to 136,000 in August 2012 (62 percent increase).

PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND METRICS

23. Increase membership at all levels.

**STRATEGY**

i. Achieve 100 percent registration compliance organization wide-for clubs and individuals.
ii. Communicate and enforce club and individual member registration requirements.
iii. Continually improve ease of online registration for members and administrators.

*KPI - 62 percent increase in membership headcount over 3 years.*

24. Competition Management System is in widespread use and provides online tracking and administration for schedules, league tables, match rosters and scoring.

**STRATEGY**

i. Train club and union officials to use the Competition Management tools.
ii. Maximize commercial opportunities by drawing traffic to website.

*KPI – Competition Management System used by all national level competitions, all stage three SBROs and for all other rugby competitions occurring in the USA.*
25. Increase reporting capability and demographic data collection for marketing, recruitment and retention purposes.

**STRATEGY**

i. In conjunction with the marketing department, involve stakeholders and partners in creating surveys to be distributed to the membership (i.e. occupation, household income, education level, etc.).

ii. Collect and retain parent information.

iii. Improve reporting capacity for coach/referee departments regarding registration and certification.

*KPI - Establish historical retention rate for USA rugby at each level. Establish a reasonable goal for retention rate compared to other U.S. sports and activities per level. Collect additional strategic demographic information for marketing purposes.*

26. SBRO management portal is available for use by SBRO organization for dues collection and management of member information. SBRO overhead cost for member registration is reduced, which allows each SBRO to produce revenue streams and retain flexibility to establish dues structures, while ensuring that member dues continue to support USA Rugby development of the youth and high school game.

**STRATEGY**

i. Establish interim dues collection system.

ii. Ensure SBROs can produce revenue streams through member registration.

iii. Provide flexibility for price structure.

iv. Provide sound IT platform for data management.

v. Provide clear policies for data protection.

vi. Implement strict management protocols for IT project development and implementation with users.

*KPI - SBRO Management Portal is in use by 75 percent of recognized SBROs.*

27. Identify and deliver recruitment and retention strategies for USA Rugby and its member organizations.

**STRATEGY**

i. Continue to improve reporting to better identify transitioning players between levels (i.e. juniors and seniors in high school and seniors in college).

ii. Develop recruitment and retention tools to be accessed by member clubs and unions.

iii. Continue to improve on membership database capacity and increase modules in use that provide services to clubs and member unions.

iv. Institute a comprehensive marketing plan for membership that covers printed items delivered by mail and at events, online outreach, print and online ads and email campaigns.

*KPI - Establish a working group made of key staff from each department. Improve recruitment and retention rates (rate of increase to be determined).*
28. Establish new levels of membership for USA Rugby.

**STRATEGY**

i. Train LAU/TU/SBRO and club administrators on membership categories and registration logistics.
ii. Coordinate marketing and commercial efforts to promote new categories to the rugby community and non-traditional members.
iii. Improve individual opt-in/opt-out capacity to improve filtering of data.

*KPI – Establish the following: Rookie Rugby, Temporary Membership (for old boys/girls and alumni), Corporate Membership categories and maintain Eagle Supporters Club.*

29. Launch Club Management Portal that enables clubs to manage their own database tools and maintain a single interface with USA Rugby online systems. This will provide consistency and maintenance of historical team information for the club’s own use and promotional efforts, as well as easy of interface with competition management, registration and future online features.

**STRATEGY**

i. Train LAU/TU/SBRO and club administrators.
ii. Coordinate marketing and commercial efforts.
iii. Build stronger relationships with members, administrators and clubs by increasing and improving membership specific information.
iv. Improve individual opt-in/opt-out capacity to improve filtering of data.

*KPI - Fifty percent of USA Rugby member clubs are using the Club Membership website interface.*

30. USA Rugby will provide an exemplary and comprehensive customer service department, covering aspects of registration, compliance, eligibility, liability insurance coverage and members benefits for member clubs - communication with all member organizations will be proactive in order to provide them with accurate and consistent information that supports growth.

**STRATEGY**

i. Adjust staffing levels to maximize efficiency.
ii. Train union and club administrators in the use of online tools.
iii. Continually improve online tools so administrators can manage and access more information.
iv. Build stronger relationships with members, administrators and clubs by increasing and improving available membership-specific information.
v. Enforce response time of one business day to all e-mail and telephone inquiries.
vi. Maintain strict turnaround timeframes for all other forms submitted (i.e. certificate of insurance requests, paper forms, international tour requests, etc.).
vii. Continue to improve member access to customer service through website, e-mail, telephone and online chat availability.
viii. Institute customer service surveys to measure success.

*KPI - Prompt response to enquiries, rapid turnaround on forms and paperwork.*
YOUTH AND HIGH SCHOOL (BOYS AND GIRLS)

Create explosive and sustainable growth in player participation and drive down the age at which young Americans are introduced to the game.

The objective is to spark explosive but sustainable growth in player participation while lowering the average age at which young Americans are introduced to rugby. Achieving this objective should lead to increased competition, improved player development pathways and ultimately improved national team performance.

Support the development of State Based Rugby Organizations (SBRO) in enhancing administration, the quality of play, player/coach/referee and administrator development pathways, player participation and retention from youth and pre-college rugby.

Promote the introduction of Rookie Rugby to hundreds of schools creating thousands of young rugby players. Additionally, at the high school level, we will pilot a club development program while continuing focused promotion of high school girls rugby as a varsity sport, and increasing the visibility of boys high school and club rugby at state level.

PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND METRICS

31. Introduce a youth and high school participation and development program (PDP) that creates explosive growth and new participants.

STRATEGY (Rookie Rugby participation)
   i. Engaging SBROs and the wider rugby community to promote the game outside of the rugby community.
   ii. Attending state educational conferences, district level physical education teacher training days.
   iii. Establishing relationships at the national and local level with YMCAs, parks and recreation departments, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.

STRATEGY (youth and high school rugby)
   i. SBROs minimize barriers to entry for new clubs by providing centralized administrative support.
   ii. SBROs increase the visibility of the game at state level through establishing relationships with state athletic association officials, running state championships and supporting promotional activities throughout the state.
   iii. High school and U-19 clubs being supported in establishing age grade feeder programs.
   iv. Engaging college players in coaching and refereeing of age-grade players.
STRATEGY (Rookie Rugby members)

i. SBROs engage local clubs and universities in establishing sustainable player pathways from the educational sector (i.e. physical education classes to after school, weekend and summer clubs/programs.

ii. Continued organic growth in other youth programs and clubs.

KPIs - 500,000 Rookie Rugby participants, 77,000 youth and high school-aged members, 1,600 youth and high school teams, 20,000 registered Rookie Rugby members.

32. Sustainable Funding Model that delivers financial resources to the Youth and High School Department in excess of membership revenues received through the Youth and High School teams and players.

STRATEGY

i. One hundred percent allocation of youth and high school membership revenues to youth and high school team and player development.

ii. Work with CEO to seek corporate sponsors and support for the youth rugby movement, promoting the health and educational benefits of rugby.

KPI - One hundred percent of previous years Y&HS membership revenues dedicated to Youth and High School department.

33. Thirty professional state-based rugby organizations by 2012.

STRATEGY

i. National Youth and High School Director to lead and support the establishment of SBROs.

ii. National Championships - creation of national templates for use at state level, covering organizational development, business planning, program development, sustainability, etc.

iii. Sharing of best practices between SBROs through monthly conference calls, webinars, conferences, shared online document files, Rookie Rugby Club group and ongoing communications.

iv. Creation of restricted grant programs from the National Office supporting development of the game at state level.

v. Selected HR support programs for regional development officer (RDO) and administrative positions.

KPI - 10 x level 4, 10 x level 3, 5 x level 2, 5 x level 1.
34. Cohesive competitive structures (in conjunction with Competitions and High Performance departments).

**STRATEGY**

i. Thirty State Championships - National level support for the creation of state championships, including sponsor donations, kit incentives, sharing of best practice from other states.

ii. Revised National Championships - Youth Committee to compare National Championship structure with that of other sports, communicate with high school and under-19 coaches and make recommendations to Competitions Committee.

iii. Establish Summer Sevens Series template for replication throughout the states and complete the Summer Sevens events.

iv. Coordinate with Coach and Referee Development Department to increase availability of sevens-specific coach and referee education to encourage Summer Sevens leagues to be established.

v. Work with National Sevens elite program to increase clinics and camps available at state level.

*KPI* - Thirty state championships, revised national championships and 10 Summer Sevens Series events.

35. Coach and Referee Development - Support Coach and Referee Departments to increase dedicated youth and high school and Rookie Rugby coaches and referees.

**STRATEGY**

i. One thousand registered youth and high school coaches - Age-grade H.S. and U-19 registered coaches to be developed through improving accessibility of Coach Development Program (CDP) courses and increasing availability of Coach Education Unit (CEU) courses.

ii. Two thousand registered Rookie Rugby coaches and referees - promotion and continued improvement of online Rookie Rugby training course.

iii. Five hundred Rookie Rugby educators - promotion and continued improvement of Rookie Rugby Educator Course.

*KPI* - One thousand registered youth and high school coaches, 2,000 registered Rookie Rugby coaches, 500 Rookie Rugby educators.
 CLUB RUGBY (MEN AND WOMEN)

*Enhance the quality of the men’s and women’s club rugby experience through improved competitions, promotion and support.*

USA Rugby will increase participation at all levels of adult competition, as well as increase retention rates across all levels of play. USA Rugby will improve its competitive offerings by providing an exceptional playing experience, adequate player movement opportunities, suitable competition structures and improved coaching for senior level coaches. Improved communication should be developed between activities and decisions of Competitions, Eligibility, Disciplinary and Rugby committees.

**PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND METRICS**

36. Complete a strategic review of eligibility regulations and competitions structures.

**STRATEGY**

i. Ensure timely production of eligibility regulations between seasons.

ii. Competition review and changes to occur within each division, gender and level of play.

*KPI - Regulations revised and published prior to season start for men and women.*

37. Improve coordination and communication between Competitions, Eligibility, Disciplinary and Rugby committees.

**STRATEGY**

i. Develop online tracking and disclosure process for competition, eligibility and disciplinary decisions, as well as appellate decisions.

*KPI – Increase number of communications between committees and committee chairs.*
38. Improve retention rate of graduating college players into club rugby.

**STRATEGY**
- i. Establish baseline historical retention rates.
- ii. Establish functional pathways and tools for retention across categories while respecting privacy concerns.
- iii. Develop a marketing campaign targeting college seniors and provide information about club rugby.
- iv. Establish club management and competition tools that assist clubs with promotion, communication and compliance.
- v. Continually improve reporting features and integration of information technology and evolve to support research in each area of rugby participation.
- vi. Actively educate members about non-discrimination policies and creating an athletic climate that is respectful, safe and enjoyable for all people.
- vii. Establish temporary membership category that encourages registration of casual rugby participants and improves retention at the adult level.
- viii. USA Rugby Board of Directors to pursue field development/real estate funding or loan program with IRB.

**KPI - Improve retention rate by 10 percent over historical average.**

39. Establish a biannual ‘Conference on the Game’ as a forum for exchanging information and educating the membership.

**STRATEGY**
- i. Establish working group/steering committees to research needs and develop agenda for conference.
- ii. Secure sponsors and vendors to support event.
- iii. Potentially coordinate with Youth Conference on the Game and/or other event(s)

**KPI - First conference to be held in fall/winter 2010.**
REFEREE DEVELOPMENT

Recruit, develop and retain referees that support the growth of the game.

The objective is to effect sustainable growth in match officials including lowering the average age at which Americans are introduced to refereeing. Achieving this objective should lead to increased competition, improved match official development pathways and ultimately improve overall performance.

PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND METRICS

40. Increase the number of registered, certified and active referees at a sustainable rate.

STRATEGY

i. Negotiate targets with Local Referee Officers (LRO).
ii. Review organizational model.
iii. Develop recruitment best practices.
iv. Performance support systems.
v. Referee Level1 Course to include Rookie Rugby component.

KPI – Twenty-five percent per annual growth, increasing from 1,100 to 2,200 in 2012.

41. Develop resources and programs in support of the growth goal of 500,000 Rookie Rugby participants, including 2,000 new referees/coaches by 2012.

STRATEGY

i. In partnership with the USA Rugby Coach Development Department, promote and register 2,000 Rookie Rugby referees/coaches.
ii. Develop and implement new referee advancement pathways from Rookie Rugby to Level 2 accreditation.
iii. Work with the Coach Development Department to include officiating component in the High School Rugby Course (2010).

KPI – Two thousand new referees/coaches by 2012.
42. Increase the number of referee course participants.

**STRATEGY**

i. Encourage Rookie Rugby coaches/referees to advance to the Level 1 Officiating Course.
ii. Improve match official support systems.
iii. Conduct comprehensive reviews of current training and developmental processes.
iv. Explore potential of online learning opportunities and modules.
v. Develop comprehensive certification and accreditation tracking database.
vi. Develop national match official recruitment and promotional materials.
vii. Develop referee exchange and promotion database.
viii. Negotiate targets with LROs.
ix. Increase USAR Instructor and IRB Educator ranks as necessary to meet demands of course participation.

*KPI - Increase Referee Level 1 Course from 700 per year to 1000 per year. Increase Referee Level 2 Course participants from 50 per year to 100 per year. Increase number of Referee Trainer Level 2 Course participants from 6 to 10 per year.*

43. Lower average age at which Americans are introduced to refereeing.

**STRATEGY**

i. Introduce a college recruitment program.
ii. Support SBRO recruitment and training programs.
iii. Create Referee Level 1 Course incentives - deliver to 10 new universities per year.
iv. Encourage and support age-grade referee opportunities.
v. Present recruiting materials and presentations at age-grade high performance camps.
vi. Implement a continuously improving training and development program.
vii. Launch Referee/Coach Award Course; deliver to 60 coaches by 2012
viii. Conduct annual Women Referee’s Camp.
ix. Conduct annual Referee with Potential Camp.

*KPI – National Panel referees will have an average age of 37 by 2012 (2009 average age = 41).*
COACH DEVELOPMENT

Recruit, develop and retain coaches that support the growth of the game.

Growth in participation must be supported by a robust coach development program that increases both the quantity and quality of coaching at all levels of the game.

Coaches must be challenged to develop at a faster rate than their players, they must be encouraged to participate in the certification process and be supported with the necessary resources to enhance player development.


PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND METRICS

44. Develop resources and programs in support of the growth goal of 500,000 Rookie Rugby participants, including 2,000 online Rookie Rugby coach/referees.

STRATEGY
i. In partnership with the USA Rugby Referee Department, promote and sign up 2,000 Rookie Rugby referee/coaches.
ii. Continue to include Rookie Rugby in the ‘Introducing Rugby’ coaching certification.
iii. Include Rookie Rugby Coaching element in High School Rugby Course.
iv. Encourage Rookie Rugby coaches/referees to progress to the ‘Introducing Rugby’ coach certification course.

KPI - Two thousand online Rookie Rugby coaches/referees.

45. Train and register 1,000 new youth and H.S. coaches to meet the anticipated growth in the youth/H.S. game.

STRATEGY
i. Maintain or increase the current level of 50 certification courses per year.
ii. Work with course hosts, LAU and SBROs to raise the average attendance per course to 15-20 coaches per course.
iii. Streamline the application process and setup of courses. Deliver a course anywhere in mainland U.S. with three weeks notice.
iv. Pilot an Introduction to Coaching Course for college seniors. Select 5-10 colleges in 2010 to pilot the delivery of the ‘Introducing Rugby’ course to their senior players. This will increase the pool of coaches available to H.S./youth programs.

KPI - One thousand new youth and H.S. coaches, 50 courses per year, 15-20 coaches per course, course scheduled with 3 weeks notice, hold five college courses.
46. Expand the CDP offerings beyond certification programs. Coaches need improved resources, education and information to improve the quality of the players they produce.

**STRATEGY**

i. Develop a series of Technical Coaching Modules that SBROs can deliver locally. These courses will be 1-2 hour courses that focus on the development and coaching of rugby skills required at the Youth/High School level. These courses are also intended to instruct coaches not familiar with the game how to coach the basic core skills of the game.

ii. Continue to develop the 4-8 hour Technical Skill Courses presented by National Team Coaches. These currently include courses on the Line Out and Scrum and Back play. It is anticipated that the Core Skills clinics will be developed with the leadership of the National Teams coaches and delivered by a domain expert and facilitated by a CDP course leaders. Technical Skills clinics will be developed and offered as Continuing Education Units (CEU) through:
   - a. Coaching conferences
   - b. TU/LAUs
   - c. SBROs
   - d. National Team events
   - e. National Championship events

iii. All courses will be aligned and provide a natural progression from the certification courses, through the Technical Coaching Modules to the longer Technical Skill Courses.

iv. Release online coaching courses through American Sports Education Program (ASEP). These courses will enable coaches to attain Continuing Education Units toward certification as well as continue their development online. This will benefit coaches who do not have access to face-to-face courses. These courses will be continuing education courses available to all USA Rugby certified coaches.

v. Establish and develop a College Coaches Association that can act as a clearing house for information and coach education.

vi. Work with our strategic partners, RFU and NZRU each year to agree a program of visiting coaches. These sessions will be delivered in conjunction with the seven TUs. These sessions will be available to all USA Rugby-registered coaches.

vii. USA Rugby Coach Development will continue to sanction a small number of international coaching courses that deliver high-quality coaching opportunities for U.S. coaches. (i.e. Queensland/IRANZ).

**KPI** - Release three Technical Modules by 1/31/09 and four more by year end. Hold four Technical Skill Courses in 2010, release ASEP courses. Establish a College Coaches Association. Two professional coach visits and two partner courses each year.
47. Maintain the quality and IRB equivalence of the certification courses and as needed and increase the number of IRB Licensed Course leaders to satisfy demand.

**STRATEGY**

i. The Coach Development Department will introduce a formal review process that has been designed and developed in conjunction with the IRB to maintain the standards of course leaders (program release - 2010).

ii. Review and maintain the alignment of the CDP courses with the IRB courses.

iii. Introduce quality control process to ensure to consistent delivery of course content. As needed, train more course leaders to ensure sufficient supply of course leaders.

*KPI* - *Quarterly course review, new course leader training if and when required.*

48. Build Coach Development awareness and acceptance and work with each TU, LAU and SBROs to require that each team has at least one certified coach by 2012.

**STRATEGY**

i. Discussions and presentations will be made to TU/LAU and SBRO representatives to increase awareness of benefits of USA Rugby Coach Certification, Development and Education opportunities.

ii. Expand the Coaching Conference to include keynote speakers, expert practitioners and invite papers from domain experts nationwide.

iii. Promote the benefits of certification such that all teams will have a USA Rugby (or equivalent) certified coach by 2012.

*KPI* - *Hold extended Annual Coaching Conference and present to LAU/TUs on Coach Education.*
ADMINISTRATOR DEVELOPMENT

Recruit, develop and retain administrators that can support the growth of the game.

As all areas of rugby expand, it will be critical to develop core administrative skills to aid clubs and member unions in efficiency, compliance, promotion and to establish long-term recruitment and retention tools and strategies. USA Rugby will create an Administrator Certification, which will provide training in club and union administrative functions. Additionally, USA Rugby will create online learning opportunities for administrators.

PRIORITIZED OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND METRICS

49. Increase number of dedicated rugby administrators at the territorial, local and club levels.

STRATEGY

i. Develop and promote a model for professional, paid administrators.
ii. Establish a mentoring/job shadowing/exchange program between TUs/LAUs/SBROs and/or USA Rugby.
iii. Improve club management tools to streamline administration.

*KPI - Establish number of dedicated rugby administrators and determine appropriate increase.*

50. Improve the quality of information, access to information, and delivery of information to and for program and union administrators.

STRATEGY

i. Review club administrative structures and assist in establishing a best practice organizational module.

*KPI - Create online delivery of information modules.*

51. Institute an online USA Rugby Administrator Certificate Program.

STRATEGY

i. Develop funding model and pricing structure to cover costs for Administrator Certification.
ii. Incentivize clubs, LAUs and TUs to have administrators complete the Certification Program.

*KPI - One hundred-fifty rugby administrators complete program.*

52. Determine most effective TU/LAU governance structure, roles and responsibilities.

STRATEGY

i. Define roles and responsibilities for different levels of administration.
ii. Increase communication and sharing of best practices between TUs and LAUs.
iii. Complete review with TU and LAU administrators, and propose any relevant bylaw changes.

*KPI – Complete review outlined in finance/governance section.*