

RUGBY TOUR TO A FOREIGN COUNTRY

Going on tour is a fun and exciting way for college rugby teams to build a common style and purpose, and for players and coaches to get to know each other better. Tours provide memories and friendships that will last a lifetime and are often the highlight of many player's rugby careers. As a college student, spending a term or year abroad and joining the local rugby team is a great way to enhance the overall experience.

Once the basic details have been decided upon, you must secure USA Rugby Football Union approval.

The Union must verify the applicants (team or individual) "standing" (registration, disciplinary and financial status, etc) in order to grant approval. Once the team or individual's standing has been determined, a letter is sent to the applicant and to the foreign union(s) involved. This protocol is mandatory worldwide. Teams and players traveling from the USA to play in a foreign country (even exhibition matches) should expect to be asked for their letter(s) of approval from USA Rugby.

If you have any questions please contact USA Rugby Membership Staff or email: tours@usarugby.org

PREPARING FOR THE TOUR

Three general issues should be assessed before traveling (1) can the necessary funds be raised in time; (2) can a strong and fit team be ready to travel for what may be an extended period of time; and (3) are there enough responsible people available to share in the duties required to take on the considerable organization and efforts involved with travel. If each point is addressed satisfactorily, the planning should proceed.

The following notes provide an outline and checklist on issues key to the success of your tour.

1. Identify the touring club's Tour Organizer or Tour Manager, the person in charge and directing the itinerary and financial arrangements.
2. No collegiate club will be allowed to tour outside the continental United States unless accompanied by a responsible adult appointed or approved by their university administration.
3. Communicate with USA Rugby and your local governing organization (college conference/GU) early to ensure all requirements are met. Information shared should include:
 - (a) Travel Itinerary (dates of departure and return, opposing club names and addresses, match dates, travel dates between competitions while on tour.
 - (b) Number of people in the touring party, players and non-players.
 - (c) Name, contact information of your club/team Tour Coordinator and the name/contact information of the Travel Agent or Coordinator.
 - (d) Name, contact information of the host clubs.
 - (e) College Teams must provide name, contact information and position with the college of the adult appointed/approved by the College who will be accompanying the team on tour.
4. After returning from your tour, please complete a Tour Report for your local rugby governing organization so that the other member teams can learn more from your experience.

Three key (different) individuals must be identified as essential to the overall coordination of this tour: the Tour Organizer, the Tour Manager, and the Team Captain. The duties of each of these positions:

1. Tour Organizer. Person responsible for planning every facet of the tour **off** the field, whether handled by the individual or delegated to assistants or travel agencies. This includes communication with hosts, airlines, hotels, etc. It is vital that all confirmations and arrangements be provided **in writing well in advance**. During the tour, the Tour Organizer should maintain continued contacts regarding all travel and lodging arrangements.
2. Tour Manager. Person overseeing the well-being of the members of the tour group, from departure to return. All facets of the tour are included: discipline, equipment, mementos/gifts, medical kit/emergency contact forms, making sure all players are aware of their schedule of daily activities.
3. Team Captain. Person responsible for the team on the field. The Captain should be included in the selection process. Both the Captain and the Tour Manager should be expected to speak at public functions after games, etc., so both must be prepared.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS / CHECKLIST

____Notification and Approval: Overseas unions do not tolerate touring sides without proper approval. Notify USA Rugby and receive the necessary permission one month in advance of the departure day/date.

____Finance: A party of 30, traveling for two weeks to Europe, will require a budget of at least \$20,000. Most of this will come from the touring players and team supporters. Expenses may be reduced by arranging private accommodations or billeting with the hosting teams, host meals, etc. Assess your needs from the start of your planning and remember bills will need to be paid during the tour. Remember to include additional funds in event of unexpected opportunities or an emergency in addition to the basic transportation (air and ground), accommodation, meal costs.

____Travelers Checks. For protection, some portion of the required funds should be in the form of traveler's checks in the local currency. Check in advance of the tour any restrictions or additional fees associated with using the club's ATM or Credit Card. A small amount of local currency should be purchased prior to departure so there is some cash available upon arrival. Notify the credit card companies of the trip to avoid any issues with the transactions while on tour.

____Travel. Consult a reputable travel agent whom you trust. For internal travel across Europe, public transportation is generally of a high standard, and there are often incentives for foreign visitors. Costs and reservations can and should be obtained in advance. Many clubs hire a bus for duration of their stay within one country.

____Accommodations. There are a variety of sources, ranging from private homes to student hostels or inexpensive hotels. Confirm reservations and cost in advance. Consult with your hosts and/or your travel agent for other sources.

____Fixtures. There is no reason why games cannot be arranged with teams of comparable playing abilities, lopsided scores that should have been anticipated are not appealing to the host Union. It is easy to overestimate one's own strength, particularly when underestimating the normal attrition caused by the issues of travel, competitions, and hospitality. While on tour seek advice after each game from your hosts, and if necessary, contact your next hosts if you think you are not strong enough to cope with the team they will put out to face your team.

____Relaxation. There is a tendency to be too ambitious in planning fixtures. Playing on and off the field takes a considerable toll, even with minor injuries and late nights sapping strength. Five matches in two weeks for a party of 25 players should be the absolute maximum, particularly when there is travel between fixtures. Rest days are of great importance. Some sightseeing can be planned in advance, particularly as rest stops on long bus trips. Ask your hosts for suggestions.

____Kit. A clean, well turned-out team builds confidence, spirit and reputations. Take at least one full set plus at least one set of spares (jerseys, shorts, socks) for each team. Training kits (old jerseys, track suits, etc) are each player's responsibility. Off the field there will be official functions to which blazer/sweater, shirt and non-jeans (skirt or slacks), and tie should be worn.

____Tour Brochure. This is an excellent promotional piece that does not need to be too elaborate. It should include a basic profile of your college, club and list of the players, recognition of sponsors, donors, key campus administrators. Messages of good luck from local rugby and community dignitaries could be included.

____Mementos. It is customary to present some give in recognition of your visit to each host club. The most common item is a college crest in plaque form that includes team name and date of that match. Additional items could be pins, ties, etc. for those who play against you and for their officials, the referees and match officials. Gifts should also be given to families hosting individual players (not cash!).

____Insurance. Some countries have national health programs that apply to visitors. Despite this, all members of the travel party should carry adequate protection.

____Passports, Visas, Vaccinations, Student I.D.. Each traveler must confirm, as early as possible, that s/he has a valid Passport, confirm the date of expiration, and if necessary the requisite Visa(s) and/or Vaccinations. Many destinations offer a Student Discount so college students should ensure they bring a current Student Photo I.D. issued by the institution.

____Medical Kit. This need not be too extensive but can save many minor irritations while in an unfamiliar area. Band aids of assorted sizes, alcohol preps, antibacterial ointment, anti-infective solution, arm sling/triangular bandage, butterfly closures, cotton swabs, elastic tape, ACE wrap, saline solution, moleskin, nail clippers, plastic bags, safety pins, petroleum jelly, sterile gauze pad, Tuff skin/QDA spray, Tape under wrap, athletic tape, white tape (1" and 1.5"), sunscreen, SAM splint, thermometer, extra mouth guards and shoe laces. Keep everything sealed to avoid issues in clearing Customs.

Post-Tour Report.

Within 30 days of the completion of the tour a report should be sent to the local rugby governing organization (conference/GU). This report should discuss the tour, give highlights and share any problems or recommendations. This report will help others planning to tour in the same area in the future so include any helpful ideas and suggestions.

REQUIRED FORMS

TEAM TOUR TO ANOTHER COUNTRY.

International Club Tour Application (<http://usarugby.org/tours?id=171>) is required of all clubs and players planning to play rugby in another country. This form must be completed and returned to USA Rugby by fax (303.539.0311) or by email (tours@usarugby.org). To avoid an expedite fee please submit at least four weeks prior to the date of departure.

INDIVIDUAL PLAYER PLANNING TO PLAY IN ANOTHER COUNTRY (TRANSFER).

Individual Outbound Form (<http://usarugby.org/documentation/membership/individual-inbound-outbound-clearance.pdf>) is required of all individuals planning to play rugby in another country. The form must be completed and returned to USA Rugby by fax (303.539.0311) or by email (tours@usarugby.org). To avoid an expedite fee please submit at least three weeks prior to the date of departure.

APPLYING TO HOST FOREIGN TEAMS OR PLAYERS.

U.S. clubs planning to host foreign clubs or players must request the appropriate approval letters of the visiting club or player. In each case, it is up to the visiting club or player to obtain approval from their respective National Union.

Any questions: contact USA Rugby Membership (tours@usarugby.org / 303.539.0300-Membership).

Have a Great Tour!