

To the Rugby Community:
From: Barbara O'Brien, Chair of the USAR Board
Date: January 13, 2020

Background

USA Rugby has had financial challenges that stretch back decades. One challenge has been the cost of cycles of Rugby World Cups and the Olympics. In addition, in response to requests from the rugby community, USA Rugby has tried to do too much with too few resources. USA Rugby now must re-align resources while promoting growth of the game in every community.

Developing Options for Sustainability and Performance

The USAR board is asking youth rugby, college rugby, club rugby, state rugby organizations, and high performance rugby to help create a path toward sustainability that will strengthen rugby across America. At the board meeting on December 9-10, 2109 we voted to create a task force charged with developing proposals for restructuring USA Rugby, re-aligning resources with goals, and proposing realistic revenue-generating systems for the core functions that support rugby in America: including training and certifying referees and coaches, coordinating with the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee and World Rugby, and decentralizing community rugby. We believe that this will lead to more robust community rugby across the country.

Guiding Principles for the Task Force

Based on numerous conversations I've had, the next steps should include:

1. Request that stakeholder groups (youth, college, club, international athletes, referees, finance, and legal be named to the task force.
2. Ask the task force to develop a proposal for a different fiscal structure that makes funding and accountability for high performance teams be transparent and separate from resources for community rugby and the national office.
3. Ask the task force to propose a governance structure that creates greater voice for stakeholder groups.
4. Ask the task force to propose changes to the systems and supports that are best managed at the local/regional level and those systems and supports that should be the responsibility of the National Office.
5. Ask the task force to weigh the pros and cons of fundraising requirements for Independent Board Members as part of creating fiscal sustainability. (The board is aware that this would be a significant change from the recommendation of the Sri Report on Governance that independent board members should be selected for their professional skills in areas such as sports marketing and technology, but not fundraising.)

In discussions with current board members, I can say that we understand that individually we might not fit into a different board and organizational structure. We are unanimous in supporting what will be best for the sustainability and growth of the sport we love.

Time is of the essence

USAR does not have the luxury of a perfect process. We apologize in advance for what will be, in the beginning, broad concepts for reorganization developed by the task force. Details will be added as the task force does its work.

Communications

The board is purposeful in:

- Creating an independent task force comprised of members of stakeholder groups
- Turning guiding principles into specific and detailed questions
- Increasing communications with Congress once the task force is seated .

We welcome your advice in every phase of this process.

Responsibility for Accepting/Rejecting Recommendations

The board is responsible for approving or rejecting final task force recommendations. Congress will have its own process for considering any bylaws, dues, or independent board member proposals.

However, I reiterate, we are in a time-sensitive fiscal situation.

Preliminary Task Force Framework and Membership (to date)

Jon Bobbett will share his preliminary thinking shortly. The financial information is based on current USAR financial reports. However, be advised that financials for December have yet to be reconciled and 2019 financials are unaudited at this point.

The preliminary report from Bobbett does not reflect the opinions of the board and we have not approved any proposals in the report. The preliminary report is designed to serve as a catalyst for everyone's thinking. We are working from the belief that it is better to share too much than too little with the rugby community.

Finally, I want to reiterate that the board is working toward transparency, equity, accountability and sustainability.

The bottom line is that as a community, we need a bold plan for reorganization in order to survive and ultimately thrive.

Thank you for your patience with imperfect communications about complex issues,

Barbara O'Brien
USAR Board of Directors, Chair