



Rules and Regulations

**USA Rugby League LLC
National Competition
for the 2017 Domestic Season**

(Revised April 2017)

ALL CLUBS SHALL HONOR THE SPIRIT OF THE USARL RULES
AND REGULATION

Table of Contents

1.0	USARL NATIONAL COMPETITION	5
1.1	General	5
1.2	North and South Conference Competitions.....	5
1.3	Finals Series / Playoffs	6
2.0	FORMAT OF MATCHES	6
2.1	Match Commencement, Delays, Duration and Number of Players	6
2.2	Postponed Matches	7
2.3	Abandoned, Incomplete and Forfeit Matches.....	7
3.0	ON-FIELD.....	7
4.0	PLAYING KIT	8
4.1	Colors.....	8
4.2	Numbering of Players.....	8
4.3	USARL Logos.....	8
5.0	MATCH-DAY REQUIREMENTS	8
5.1	General.....	8
5.2	Field Markings.....	8
5.3	Posts and Post Protectors.....	9
6.0	TEAMS.....	9
6.1	Medical Provisions and Emergency Management Plan	9
6.2	Communication	9
7.0	REFEREE AND TOUCH JUDGES.....	9
7.1	Selection	10
7.2	Appointment	10
7.3	Match Officials Costs	10
7.4	Decision of Match Officials	10
7.5	Interchange Procedure	10
8.0	MATCH DAY PROTOCOL	11
8.1	Match Balls.....	11
8.2	Team Sheets.....	11
8.3	Results & Match Reporting	11
8.4	Athletic Trainer / Physiotherapist / Doctor.....	11
8.5	Technical Areas / Interchange Bench.....	11
8.6	Bleeding Players.....	12
8.7	Contaminated Clothing.....	12
9.0	MISCONDUCT.....	12
9.1	Behavior Considered Misconduct	12
9.2	Proceedings for an Offense or Breach.....	13
9.3	Judiciary Committee / Disciplinary Action	13
9.4	Appeals.....	13
10.0	MISCONDUCT OFFENSE	13
10.1	Inducements.....	13
10.2	Betting	14

10.3 Criticism of Match Officials.....	14
10.4 Discrimination	14
10.5 Gestures & Foul Language.....	14
10.6 Unruly Behavior	14
10.7 Conduct Prejudicial to the Interest of the USARL	14
10.8 Safety	14
10.9 Spectators.....	14
11.0 MEDIA RELATIONS.....	15
11.1 Team Photograph.....	15
11.2 USARL National Championship Pre-Match Press Conference	15
11.3 Weekly Press Briefings	15
11.4 Pre-Match Venue Visit	15
11.5 Post-Match Press Conference.....	15
11.6 Official Spokesman	15
11.7 Media Interviews	15
12.0 PLAYERS’ REGISTRATION AND ELIGIBILITY.....	15
12.1 Player Registration	15
12.2 Player Eligibility.....	16
12.3 Playoff & Finals Series Eligibility.....	17
APPENDIX A: USARL ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY.....	18

1.0 USARL NATIONAL COMPETITION

1.1 General

- (a) All participating teams shall ensure that their players, coaches and club officials agree, without reservation, to abide by these Rules and Regulations pertaining to the USARL National Competition: Preliminary Rounds, Finals Series and Championship Final; as set out hereunder.
- (b) All matches in the Competition will be played in accordance with the International Laws of the Game as current at the time of the competition. ([International Laws of the Game - click here](#))
- (c) Variances to the International Laws of the Game are noted in these Rules and Regulations; as ratified by the USARL Board of Directors for the purpose of competitions governed by the USARL.
- (d) The USARL Board of Directors has appointed a Judiciary Committee and Judiciary Chair Person to oversee the USARL National Competition: Preliminary Rounds, Finals Series and Championship Final.

1.2 North and South Conference Competitions

- (a) The 2017 USARL National Competition regular season will be conducted in a North and South Conference format with the winner of each to play in the Championship Final. The North Conference will include teams consisting of Boston 13s, Rhode Island Rebellion, White Plains Wombats, New York Knights, Brooklyn Kings, Philadelphia Fight, Delaware Black Foxes, and Northern Virginia Eagles with the top four (4) clubs from the North Conference advancing to the Finals Series/Playoffs and the top two (2) teams in the North Conference will play for the North Conference Championship. The winner of the North Conference advances to the Championship Final. The South Conference will include teams consisting of Atlanta Rhinos, Jacksonville Axemen, Central Florida Warriors, and Tampa Mayhem with all four (4) teams in the South Conference advancing to the Finals Series/Playoffs and the top two (2) teams in the South Conference will play for the South Conference Championship. The winner of the South Conference advances to the Championship Final.
- (b) National Competition: matches will be played for competition points to qualify for the end-of-season Finals Series/Playoffs by gaining the greater number of points for win and drawn matches on the League table. The following competition points system shall apply:
 - (i) Two (2) competition points for a win;
 - (ii) One (1) competition point for a draw;
 - (iii) No (0) competition points for a defeat; and
 - (iv) A loss of two (-2) competition points for a team who forfeits.
- (c) League Standings will be determined by:
 - (i) Overall points on the table
- (d) If two or more participating teams finish equal on competition points after completion of the regular season, their relative positions on the competition league table for their Conference/Division shall be determined as follows:
 - (i) The team having the best head to head win loss record for the Preliminary Rounds, between the two teams, shall be placed ahead of the other team; if the teams are still equal then:

- (ii) The team having the greater points difference shall be placed ahead of other teams (points difference is calculated by subtracting the match points scored against a team from the match points scored by the team); if teams are still equal then:
- (iii) The order between the relevant team(s) will be decided by coin toss.

1.3 Finals Series / Playoffs

- (a) The top four (4) teams in the North Conference, and all four (4) teams in the South Conference will qualify for the Finals Series (playoffs) matches to determine the teams for the USARL Championship Final. The winner of this match will be the USARL National Champion.
- (b) Should a Final Series/Playoffs match or the Championship Final be drawn after 80 minutes of playing time, two (2) x 10 minute halves of extra time will be played to determine the winner. Should the game be drawn at the completion of extra time the game will continue into additional “Golden Point” extra time. The team scoring first in this extra time will be the winner by “Golden Point.”
- (c) Finals Series Week-1: North Semi Final; The number 1 and Number 2 ranked teams on the League table for the North Conference will play at their designated ground, as approved by the USARL Board, the Number 4 and 3 ranked teams respectively.
- (d) Finals Series Week-1: South Semi Final; The number 1 and Number 2 ranked teams on the League table for the South Conference will play at their designated ground, as approved by the USARL Board, the Number 4 and 3 ranked teams respectively.
- (e) Finals Series Week-2: North Championship; The winners of the (1v4) and (2v3) matches will play, at a designated ground as approved by the USARL Board, to determine the North Conference Champion.
- (f) Finals Series Week-2: South Championship; The winners of the (1v4) and (2v3) matches will play, at a designated ground as approved by the USARL Board, to determine the South Conference Champion.
- (g) Championship Final Week-3: the match will be played between the winners of the North Conference and the South Conference at a ground determined by the Board of Directors.

2.0 FORMAT OF MATCHES

2.1 Match Commencement, Delays, Duration and Number of Players

- (a) Matches are to start at the scheduled kick-off time. Should a team be delayed, they must notify the opposition team and match referee no less than one (1) hour before the scheduled kick-off time.
- (b) Delayed matches can be played if both coaches or club officials and Referee agree unanimously. The Referee will have the deciding vote.
- (c) Each match shall be of 80 minutes duration, consisting of 2 x 40 minute halves with a half-time interval of 10 minutes.
- (d) There shall be water breaks for the purpose of player hydration about and or, near to the 20 minute mark of each half, as determined by the Referee. The water breaks are to be taken on the Playing Field and the length of time for water breaks will be at the discretion of the Referee.

- (e) The Referee will be the official timekeeper unless the Referee appoints a Timekeeper, at which time the Timekeeper shall describe to the Referee the mode of signaling the end of each half.
- (f) The game shall be played with each team having not more than 13 and not less than nine (9) players on the playing field at any one time. Each team may have up to four (4) interchange players with unlimited interchange for a total of 17 dressed players.
- (g) If a team has less than nine (9) players, both coaches and the Referee should consider all options for the game to proceed without forfeit including, but not limited to, the loan of players to the team having less than nine (9) players. Should the game not be played due to a team having less than nine (9) players, it shall be a forfeit.

2.2 Postponed Matches

- (a) If a match is postponed due to bad or inclement weather, Act of God, hazard or emergency then the match will be replayed on such date, venue, and time as agreed by the USARL Board in consultation with the two affected clubs.
- (b) If a match must be postponed and rescheduled, it is the responsibility of the host club to notify the participating clubs, match officials and Referees as soon as possible.
- (c) In the event of a match not played, and after attempts to reschedule have been exhausted, the USARL Board may decide to waive the match so long as it has no bearing on league table positions.
- (d) If a club requires rescheduling a match due to circumstances not related to 2.2 (a) above, they must send a request in writing to the Judiciary Committee at least 14 days prior to the date of the scheduled match.
- (e) A club failing to fulfill or forfeit a fixture without a satisfactory reason shall be sanctioned by the USARL Board for referral to the Judiciary Committee, which may lead to fines or financial recovery including, but not limited to, the cost of field hire, travel expenses, and match officials and competition points deducted.

2.3 Abandoned, Incomplete and Forfeit Matches

- (a) If a match cannot be completed due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. inclement weather, Act of God, hazard or emergency, player injury, etc.) or a team is reduced to less than nine (9) players, it will be considered completed if at least 60 minutes (or three-quarters) have been played. If 60 minutes cannot be played then the game will be rescheduled, unless both coaches and the referee agree unanimously to accept the score at the time the match was stopped as the final result. When the USARL Board subsequently endorses such decision, it shall be final and not subject to appeal.
- (b) A match is forfeited when less than nine (9) players from either team are available to take the field at the scheduled start time.
- (c) If a match is forfeited it counts as a loss for the forfeiting team with a deduction of two (2) competition points. The opposing team will win 30-0. No player will be accredited these points.

3.0 ON-FIELD

- (a) Each team must play in USARL approved player apparel.
- (b) Kick Off: See: 2.1 (a)

- (c) Sin Bin (10 Minutes): It is mandatory for a sin-binned player to remain behind the goal-posts beyond the playing-field or, if present, as near as possible to the Fourth Official, and is not permitted to sit with their respective team's interchange players.
- (d) Send-Off: Should a Referee send-off a player from the field, they will take no further part in the match, and will remain outside the playing area until they have been otherwise advised by the Referee. The Referee will report the incident in writing to the respective club and Judiciary Committee as soon as possible after the match but not later than 12:00pm on the Monday following the match.

4.0 PLAYING KIT

4.1 Colors

- (a) Each participating club is required to advise, and register with, the USARL Board their respective club's attire design and colors/pantone by March 1, in the year of competition.
- (b) Where, in the opinion of the USARL Board, the registered colors of two clubs are likely to cause confusion, the USARL Board will confirm the first club to register their colors and advise the other club a change of colors, or an away strip, is required.

4.2 Numbering of Players

- (a) Players' numbers will be displayed on the player's back, be not less than nine (9) inches in height and be clearly visible and must stand out from the surrounding background.

4.3 USARL Logos

- (a) All teams will be required to display the USARL Logo on the right breast of the club jersey and right leg of club shorts.

5.0 MATCH-DAY REQUIREMENTS

5.1 General

- (a) The host team is responsible for making all necessary arrangements for hosting the match at their venue including, but not limited to, those set out in the USARL Participation Agreement.
- (b) The host team shall ensure that when hosting a USARL fixture, it complies with all applicable US Local, State and Federal Laws, obtains all necessary licenses and permits to operate the event.

5.2 Field Markings

- (a) Field markings should be in reference to the International Laws of the Game. Where the measurements are referred to in meters, they can be yards. See link above in section 1.1(b) for link to laws.

5.3 Posts and Post Protectors

- (a) It is the host club's responsibility to ensure that the posts are fit for purpose and are secured to the ground. Hybrid posts (such as those attached above soccer post) or Gridiron posts are acceptable. Goal posts are required to be suitably protected. Corner posts for the goal line should be in reference to the International Laws of the Game and of a soft or thin plastic (not fiberglass, steel or timber) material. Other field posts and flags should be of similar material at least one (1) yard outside of the touch-line.

6.0 TEAMS

6.1 Medical Provisions and Emergency Management Plan

- (a) The host club shall provide, during all matches, ample water and at least a qualified Athletic Trainer. All medical personnel should be made available to opposition teams and Referees for treatment if required.
- (b) Each club shall develop an Emergency Management Plan in conjunction with local Police, Ambulance or Emergency Response personnel, including crises communication to all appropriate personnel.

6.2 Communication

- (a) Each club must provide the USARL Board with contact details of their match-day Official for the purpose of emergencies.
- (b) All clubs should nominate players, coaches, and club officials who can make themselves reasonably available for media calls and comments. Comments are to be associated only to their club and not the Referee, Touch Judges, or the USARL.
- (c) Comments made to the public or press by player, coach or club official that are found to be derogatory in their nature, could be guilty of misconduct and will be referred to the USARL Judiciary Committee and/or the USARL Board. (*See Zero Tolerance Policy in Appendix A*)

7.0 REFEREE AND TOUCH JUDGES

- (a) The Referee may, at his discretion, temporarily suspend or prematurely terminate a match because of adverse weather, undue interference by spectators, misbehavior by players, or any other cause which, in his opinion, interferes with his control of the game.
- (b) He shall not allow anyone apart from the players onto the playing area without permission.
- (c) Any person wishing to speak to the Referee or Touch Judges should do so through the host club's match-day Official or club captain on the field.
- (d) All clubs should ensure that the Referee and Touch Judges are not subjected to abuse, derogative comments or harassment on the field, entering the field or leaving the field. The USARL Zero Tolerance Policy is in effect and will be enforced by the Judiciary Committee. (*See Zero Tolerance Policy in Appendix A*)

- (e) Should a spectator, player, coach or club official have an issue with a Referee or Touch Judge, it should be reported with an appropriate club official who is to immediately contact the Judiciary Committee.

7.1 Selection

- (a) The Referee and Touch Judges will be appointed by the USARL Referee Appointments coordinator. Should no Touch Judge(s) be available for appointment, the Referee, prior to the match, shall consult with the host club official and respective team coaches to exhaust all avenues in providing Touch Judges.

7.2 Appointment

- (a) The USARL Referee's Appointments coordinator, shall advise club officials via email of Referee appointments no later than 48 hours prior to start of scheduled matches.
- (b) Should an appointed Referee be injured prior to, or unable to attend the match, then the host club official may appoint a substitute Referee at their discretion; should no other Referee be in attendance.

7.3 Match Officials Costs

- (a) All costs for Referees and Touch Judges will be met by the host club unless advised otherwise by the USARL.
- (b) Travel costs and requirements will be noted on the appointments for payment and organization by the host club.
- (c) Payments are to be made directly to the official.
- (d) Officials will submit a detailed invoice to club for record and accounting purposes.

7.4 Decision of Match Officials

- (a) Decisions made by the Referee during a match relating to the International Laws of the Game shall be final and not subject to objections or appeal.

7.5 Interchange Procedure

- (a) Each team shall be allowed to make unlimited interchanges from those players named on their respective team's official team sheet. Should there be a Fourth Official or official Touch Judge present, the interchange player will initially report to them prior to entering the field.
- (b) Interchanges may take place during general play, after any scoring has been completed, when the ball is out of play, or when play has been temporarily suspended by the Referee.
- (c) The interchange player must not enter the playing field without first allowing the player he is interchanging with to leave the playing field.
- (d) If a player is sent from the field or sin binned, a replacement cannot be made for that player until the subsequent time has elapsed.
- (e) Failure to comply with the interchange rule may be treated as misconduct by the Referee.

8.0 MATCH DAY PROTOCOL

8.1 Match Balls

- (a) The host club of each match will provide a minimum of three (3) Rugby League match footballs. These may be examined and approved by the Referee prior to use.

8.2 Team Sheets

- (a) A team sheet, approved by the USARL Board, must be completed by each team, with one copy submitted to the opposing team **prior to kick off**.
- (b) The 17 players named on the Team Sheet will be allowed to take part in the match. If there is a change in the 17 players listed after the team sheet has been submitted, the Referee and opposition team must be asked for their approval.
- (c) The “Team Sheet Instructions” on the USARL Team Sheet must be followed.

8.3 Results & Match Reporting

- (a) Both club officials, in consultation with the Referee, must agree on the final score immediately on completion of the match. The club official must then by simple photo or scan and e-mail the Team Sheet to teamsheets@usarl.com.
- (b) Clubs not submitting team sheets by 12:00pm on the Tuesday immediately following the match, with a 24 hour notice provided to each team, will be referred to the Judiciary Committee for a two (2) competition point deduction.
- (c) A brief match report must be compiled by each club and e-mailed to the USARL PR & Communications Director before 12:00pm Monday each week. Include the date, time & location of the match, as well as the full-names of all points’ scorers.

8.4 Athletic Trainer / Physiotherapist / Doctor

- (a) A licensed Athletic Trainer, Physiotherapist or Doctor may enter the playing field at any time behind play and must not interfere with the progress of play unless a serious injury has occurred.
- (b) An Athletic Trainer or Physiotherapist may enter the field to inform a player that he is being interchanged.
- (c) In the case of a breach by the Trainer or Physiotherapist, the Referee will stop the game and provide a warning to the Trainer or Physiotherapist. Should further breaches occur the Referee can require the trainer or Physiotherapist to be replaced.
- (d) Each of the above personnel shall wear distinctive colored tops clearly contrasting with club colors.

8.5 Technical Areas / Interchange Bench

- (a) The host club will identify which interchange bench, inside the designated Playing Area, each team will occupy during the course of the match.
- (b) A maximum of four (4) team officials and four (4) interchange players will be allowed to sit on the interchange bench.

- (c) Only registered players, medical staff and coaching staff will be allowed to sit on the interchange bench.
- (d) All other personnel are to remain outside the designated Playing Area.
- (e) All personnel must remain seated on the interchange bench or inside a marked interchange area unless they are in the act of warming up, the mode of being interchanged, seeking medical attention, or attending to their duties, other than at half-time.
- (f) Any personnel from the interchange bench not seated, behaving in a manner of misconduct or not in the best interest of the game, will be requested by the Referee to leave the Playing Area and may go on report to the Judiciary Committee.
- (g) No player, spectator or person will enter the Playing Field without due cause or become involved in any on-field altercations. The strictest disciplinary review from the Judicial Committee will be pursuant of such an instance.
- (h) All personnel in the interchange bench area must be properly attired at all times in suitable clothing, e.g. a tank top / vest / t-shirt and shorts / tracksuit bottoms / trousers.

8.6 Bleeding Players

- (a) The following procedure will apply in all cases where a player is bleeding or his person, clothing or equipment has been contaminated by blood:
 - (i) When the Referee notices a bleeding or blood contaminated player he will immediately stop play and signal the player is to leave the playing field, at which time the player can be interchanged;
 - (ii) A player who was signaled to leave the playing field by the Referee because of bleeding, who has not been interchanged, is not to be regarded as an interchange player, and therefore may return to the field of play at any time and is permitted to take a kick for goal.

8.7 Contaminated Clothing

- (a) In a case where a player's person, clothing or equipment has been contaminated by blood, the Referee will signal for the player to leave the field for the replacement of clothing, equipment or bandages. This player is subject to the same interchange rules as outlined in Section 8.6(a)(ii) above.

9.0 MISCONDUCT

9.1 Behavior Considered Misconduct

- (a) All Participating Clubs shall ensure that their players, coaches and club officials are bound by the provisions of these Rules and Regulations and the USARL Code of Conduct.
- (b) A player, coach or club official may be guilty of misconduct if he/she:
 - (i) Commits a serious or persistent breach of these Competition Rules and Regulations;
 - (ii) Without limiting Section 9.1(a) above, commits a breach of any of the rules listed in rule 10 below;

- (iii) Engages in conduct that is prejudicial to the interests of USARL matches, the USARL or USARL officials or members;
- (iv) Is convicted of a criminal offense by any court of competent jurisdiction;
- (v) Fails, within the time allowed, to comply with any decision of the Judiciary Committee or USARL Board.

9.2 Proceedings for an Offense or Breach

- (a) In the case where a team, player, or club official has failed to comply with a provision of these Rules and Regulations, proceedings may be taken against that team, player, or club official with a penalty imposed.
- (b) If any person reasonably believes that any player or official is guilty of misconduct, he or she must immediately inform the Judiciary Committee in writing, setting out all relevant details of the alleged misconduct.
- (c) The Judiciary Committee shall be responsible for investigation, hearing, and consideration of all offences or breaches.

9.3 Judiciary Committee / Disciplinary Action

- (a) A written report of match-day misconduct or foul play from USARL Officials and Member Club Officials will trigger a Judiciary Committee hearing. All reports must be submitted to the Judiciary Committee by 12:00pm on the Monday immediately following the match in question and the Judiciary Committee will endeavor to hand down its findings by the Wednesday prior to the next scheduled match.
- (b) On consideration of such reports, the Judiciary Committee may impose a penalty that may involve a caution and/or fine and/or costs to a player, official, and/or team, or the suspension or expulsion of a player or official. Where the penalty imposed on a player or official includes a fine and/or costs, these shall be paid by the club to which that player or official is registered.
- (c) The USARL Judiciary Committee Sentencing Guidelines shall be used in all cases unless a unique case is listed. Third party recommendations (RLIF) may be used.

9.4 Appeals

- (a) A player, official, or team who is found guilty by the USARL Judiciary Committee shall have the right to appeal. Such an appeal is to be made in writing and to be lodged with the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee within 48 hours of notification of the decision.
- (b) The Judiciary Committee will consider and review the appeal.
- (c) The filing of an appeal shall not operate to stay the original decision of the USARL Judiciary Committee.
- (d) After an appeal, decisions handed down shall be final and conclusive.

10.0 MISCONDUCT OFFENSE

10.1 Inducements

- (a) It shall be an offense for any player, coach, club official or match official offering or receiving a bonus or any form of inducement to or from any other player, coach, official, or referee whether directly or indirectly and by whatever means to win, lose, or draw a match or alter or influence their decision in a match may be deemed guilty of misconduct.

10.2 Betting

- (a) It shall be an offense for any player, club official, coach, or match official to place, accept, or lay a bet on any match in the National Competition, or in relation to the National Competition matches in any way, or to provide information or do any act or thing which is calculated to or does assist others involved on any of the foregoing.

10.3 Criticism of Match Officials

- (a) It shall be an offense for any player, coach, club official, or match official to publish, or cause to be published, or make public (by whatsoever medium), comments that are prejudice or derogative of USARL National Competition Referee or Touch Judge, or the manner in which a Referee or Touch Judge has conducted their duties. (*See Zero Tolerance Policy in Appendix A*)

10.4 Discrimination

- (a) It shall be an offense for any player, coach, club official, or match official to engage in discrimination on the grounds of age, ethnic origin, gender, and special needs, including learning and physical disabilities, class or social background, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, color or political persuasion (Discriminatory Behavior).

10.5 Gestures & Foul Language

- (a) It shall be an offense for any player, coach, club official, or match official to make any gesture, or use foul and/or abusive language, that may be considered obscene or likely to incite disorder. (*See Zero Tolerance Policy in Appendix A*)

10.6 Unruly Behavior

- (a) It shall be an offense for any player, coach, club official, or match official to behave in an unruly manner in any public place, which for the avoidance of doubt shall include to and from competition venues, within team transportation, and in vicinity of playing venues.

10.7 Conduct Prejudicial to the Interest of the USARL

- (a) It shall be an offense for any player, coach, club official, or match official to behave in a manner which is prejudicial to the interests of the USARL or which may cause damage, annoyance or disrepute to the USARL or the game of Rugby League Football.

10.8 Safety

- (a) It shall be an offense for any player, coach, club official, or match official to fail to comply with safety instructions provided by the recognized club or USARL representative and/or person of authority responsible for safety & wellbeing of the venue.

10.9 Spectators

- (a) Participating clubs shall use their best endeavors to ensure that their supporters and spectators attending USARL official events, and in respect of local residences, do not use foul and abusive language or threatening gestures towards players or members of team management, match officials, tournament officials, other supporters and members of the public. (*See Zero Tolerance Policy in Appendix A*)

11.0 MEDIA RELATIONS

- (a) It is imperative for the success of the USARL that all players, coaches and officials make themselves available to the media at all times. In particular there will be the following requirements:

11.1 Team Photograph

- (a) The USARL will require clubs to provide team photos prior to the commencement of the Finals Series.

11.2 USARL National Championship Pre-Match Press Conference

- (a) Prior to the Championship Final, participating teams, senior club representative, coach, and captain must be available to meet for a pre-match Press Conference, if and as when required.

11.3 Weekly Press Briefings

- (a) Each club's representative, team manager or coach shall liaise with the appointed media officers each week to discuss potential news stories to be released to the media.

11.4 Pre-Match Venue Visit

- (a) Venues should be open to the public and media, as reasonably available, and all players and officials should make themselves available for informal interviews. Every effort will be made to provide a 24-hour notice prior to a visit.

11.5 Post-Match Press Conference

- (a) Each participating club's representative, coach, captain, and MVP must be available for a short press conference after each match.

11.6 Official Spokesman

- (a) Each club must nominate one official as the team's Official Spokesman. The Official Spokesman must be available for press contact on their mobile phone between the hours of 09:00am and 07:00pm each day.

11.7 Media Interviews

- (a) Each team shall cooperate with media requests for telephone interviews.

12.0 PLAYERS' REGISTRATION AND ELIGIBILITY

12.1 Player Registration

- (a) All players wishing to participate in the USARL National Competition must be registered with and by the USA Rugby League, LLC (USARL).
- (b) A non-refundable, annual registration fee of \$40.00 is required on registering at the USARL online Player Registration portal.
- (c) The USARL can deregister a player any time it so chooses and without prior notice.
- (d) New player registration, during the season, can be submitted and copy presented to club officials up to 30 minutes prior to a preliminary rounds fixture.
- (e) All players under 18 years must provide a duly signed statutory declaration from parent(s) or guardian(s) approving and allowing them to play and waiving all rights.
- (f) If a player wishes to play for a club other than the club with which he is currently registered, he is to receive a written release from his current club. A copy of which must be sent to, and acknowledged by, the Judiciary Committee at which time the player will be deregistered.
- (g) All registrations are valid for one (1) season and expire on December 31 of the registration year.
- (h) For players to be eligible for the Final Series they must be registered and played a minimum of three (3) games during the preliminary rounds prior to the Final Series/Playoffs.

12.2 Player Eligibility

- (a) All players within the Competition will be categorized into one (1) of three (3) player eligibility groups: Domestic, Import, or Exempt.
- (b) All clubs have the right to field eligible status players, no greater than in the following combinations;
 - (i) Three (3) Import and three (3) Exempt Players, or
 - (ii) Two (2) Import and four (4) Exempt Players, or
 - (iii) One (1) Import and five (5) Exempt Players, or
 - (iv) Zero (0) Import and six (6) Exempt Players.
 - (v) All other players are to be of Domestic Status.
- (c) Any breach of the Eligibility Status on a teams' game-day roster shall be considered as misconduct and a report will be forwarded the Judiciary Committee for hearing.
- (d) Domestic Player [DP]: Is defined as any player who is a **valid** US Citizen, i.e., all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State where they reside.
- (e) Import Player [IP]: Is defined as any non-US citizen player who does not meet the criteria of an Exempt Player. IP's are foreign nationals who have been recruited by a team to participate in the Competition.
- (f) Exempt Player [EP]: Is defined as a player who is not a domestic player, and who:
 - (i) Holds a valid US Green Card or Residence Status,
 - (ii) Domiciled in the United States for no less than six (6) months per year over a period of four (4) or more consecutive years prior to the competition year,

- (iii) As a non-resident, and at the commencement of their third regular season match, has participated and registered in at least two (2) years of Rugby League in the USA; by having registered with a domestic US club, **recognized by the USARL**, and played in at least three (3) regular season matches in each of their years of registration.

12.3 Playoff & Finals Series Eligibility

In order for Players to be considered eligible for the Playoffs, they must:

- (a) Adhere to 12.2 Player Eligibility of the USARL Rules and Regulations,
- (b) Have been recorded as one (1) of seventeen (17) Club / USARL registered players on a USARL Team Sheet for their respective club in a minimum of three (3) preliminary rounds matches in the year of competition. For the South Conference, the first round of playoffs counts towards eligibility due to the limited number of matches in the South schedule.
- (c) Failure to meet these requirements will infer an ineligibility status in respect to that player's ability to participate in their club's Finals Series (Playoffs) match or Championship Final.
- (d) A breach by a player in these eligibility requirements will incur a forfeit and two (2) competition point reduction for the club found guilty.

APPENDIX A: USARL ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

WHY ZERO TOLERANCE

The USA Rugby League has developed this Zero Tolerance Policy regarding verbal abuse. Verbal abuse is the first step leading to physical abuse.

To make Rugby League a more desirable and rewarding experience for all participants, the USARL Board of Directors is instructing any and all persons participating in Rugby League (I.e., players, coaches, administrators, officials, spectators) the League Officials to adhere to certain points of emphasis relating to sportsmanship. These points are written and implemented to maintain a sportsmanlike and educational atmosphere before, during, and after all USARL sanctioned games and events.

PLAYERS

A VERBAL WARNING for UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT Shall Be Assessed Whenever a Player:

- Visually demonstrates ANY sign of dissatisfaction with ANY Official's decision, in a manner that openly embarrasses the Official and/or challenges his or her judgment
- Uses obscene or vulgar language, including swearing, in a boisterous manner to ANYONE at ANY time.
- Deliberately throws the game ball or any other equipment out of the playing area.
- Interferes in any nonphysical manner with any Game Official including Referees, Linesmen, Timekeepers or Goal Judges in the performance of their duties.

The TEAM will be assessed a VERBAL WARNING if a player:

- In the vicinity of the players' bench, uses profane, obscene or abusive language to ANY person or uses the name of ANY Official coupled with vociferous remarks.
- In the vicinity of the players' bench or penalty bench, throws anything into the playing area during the progress of the game or during a stoppage of play.

If ANY PLAYER is Guilty of the Following, He or She Shall be Assessed a YELLOW or RED CARD:

- Persists in ANY course of conduct for which he or she has previously received a verbal warning or been assessed a misconduct penalty by the Official.
- Uses obscene gestures or racial/ethnic slurs on the field or ANYWHERE in the event area before, during, or after the game.

A RED CARD shall be Assessed Whenever a Player:

- Deliberately inflicts physical harm to anyone in ANY manner or attempts to do so.
- Behaves in ANY manner that is critically detrimental to the conduction of the game, including spitting at an opponent, spectator, Game or Team Official, or verbally threatening a Game Official with physical harm.

TEAM OFFICIALS

A VERBAL WARNING shall be assessed whenever a Team Official:

- Uses obscene, abusive or profane language or abusive gestures to ANY person or uses the name of the Official coupled with any vociferous remarks.
- Visually displays ANY sign of dissatisfaction with an Official's decision, in a manner that openly embarrasses the Official and/or challenges his or her judgment.
- Throws anything into the playing area from the vicinity of the players' bench during the game or stoppage of the game.
- Interferes in a nonphysical manner with ANY Game Official including Referees, Linesmen, Timekeepers or Goal Judges.

If ANY TEAM OFFICIAL is Guilty of the Following, He or She Shall be Assessed a YELLOW or RED CARD:

- Uses obscene gestures or racial/ethnic slurs on the ice or anywhere in the rink before, during or after the game.
- Persists in any course of conduct for which he or she has previously been assessed a bench minor penalty.

A TEAM OFFICIAL shall be Assessed a RED CARD for the Following:

- Deliberately inflicting physical harm to a Game Official in ANY manner or attempting to do so.
- Deliberately injuring a Player or Team Official in ANY manner or attempting to do so.
- Behaving in ANY manner that is critically detrimental to the conduction of the game, including spitting at an opponent, spectator, game or team Official, or verbally threatening a Game Official with physical harm.

SPECTATORS

Inappropriate & Destructive Behavior Shall Include:

- Using obscene, racial or vulgar language in a boisterous manner to ANYONE at ANY time.
- Taunting Players, Coaches, Officials or other spectators by means of baiting, ridiculing, threatening physical violence, or physical violence.
- Throwing ANY object in the spectators viewing area, players' bench, sin bin, or on field, that in ANY manner creates a safety hazard.

The Match Official will identify violators to the coaches for the purpose of REMOVING parents/spectators from the spectators viewing and game area. Once removed, play will resume. Lost time WILL NOT be replaced. Spectators may be banned from future events.

OFFICIALS

Officials must apply these guidelines in a realistic manner and MUST be careful not to get overly technical in their enforcement. This ZERO TOLERANCE policy is designed to eliminate direct confrontations with Officials, players, and coaches while allowing an avenue to communicate in a CALM and REASONABLE manner.

Officials are required to conduct themselves in a BUSINESSLIKE, SPORTSMANLIKE, and NON- VINDICTIVE manner at ALL times. The actions of an Official MUST be above reproach. Actions such as "baiting" or inciting players or coaches is STRICTLY prohibited. Any abuses may be referred to the Judiciary Committee for action.

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Any incidents arising from this policy will be reported to the Judiciary Committee by the match referee for review no later than close of business the Monday following the incident. The Judiciary Committee will review the documentation and may assess further penalties (i.e., match suspension, etc) at their discretion. All decisions will be provided to the offending parties not later than the Friday prior to the next match.