



**USA RUGBY**

**Executive Summary of Presentation to USA Rugby Board of Directors**

**By the Women's Strategic Committee**

**Sue Parker, Chair**

**Ellen Owens, Member**

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**RUGBY AS A NCAA VARSITY SPORT**

1. USA Rugby's top priority should be succeeding in making rugby an NCAA sport. Prioritizing and funding the NCAA initiative will benefit USA Rugby's mission and dream of inspiring American to fall in love with rugby in the following ways:
  - a. The "NCAA" and "varsity" brand and labels will draw better athletes into our sport
  - b. Those athletes will train in high performance environments, with professional coaches and staff
  - c. This training will put the United States in better positions to win gold medals in the Olympics and in the 7s and 15s World Cups
  - d. The visibility of the sport and availability of scholarships will pull youth and high school athletes into the game
  - e. The NCAA brand will help make rugby mainstream in this country
  - f. Resources of the NCAA and colleges will enhance the visibility of the game at all levels
  
2. What NCAA Varsity Status Could Mean:
  - a. The NCAA will conduct championships for 7s and 15s rugby
  - b. The NCAA, with the input of an advisory board, will govern the manner in which schools train for and play rugby.  
NCAA status will legitimize, familiarize and mainstream rugby as a serious athletic endeavor among university administrators
  - c. Increased funding for programs and conferences
  - d. Athletes and coaches will have access to professional training infrastructure at their institutions, including strength and conditioning, sport psychology, nutrition and academic support and class selection priorities
  - e. Coaches will be professional, full-time employees of colleges, able to devote themselves to improvement of their craft
  
3. How: Full commitment of USA Rugby:
  - a. A highly professional image and interaction with the NCAA, conference directors, athletic directors, coaches and others
  - b. Full-time USA Rugby staff to craft message, create strategies, support colleges, work with athletic conferences and the NCAA, complete realignment into traditional conferences
  - c. Funding appropriate to ensure success
  - d. Marketing and publicity, and possibly a campaign, similar to "7s Rugby is Reaching Out"
  - e. Publicly stated milestones driven by USA Rugby, to ensure success
  
4. Return on Investment
  - a. Olympic gold medals
  - b. World championships



- c. Exposure of the game through televised national championship playoff series and promotion by universities of their teams
  - d. Growth of the sport at all levels: youth, high school, college, club, as well as fan base growth
  - e. Growth of the coaching ranks: paid positions will attract more talent into rugby
  - f. Growth of opportunities for USA rugby to develop and broaden partnerships with sport science and sport management research, and to tap into funders
5. Challenges to Overcome:
- a. Time is running out; we need five more varsity teams by the end of 2012 or rugby will be removed forever from the NCAA Emerging Sports List  
<http://www.ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/ncaa/NCAA/About+The+NCAA/Diversity+and+Inclusion/Gender+Equity+and+Title+IX/New+Emerging+Sports+for+Women?pageDesign=Printer+Friendly+General+Content+Layout>
  - b. Competition from other well-organized emerging sport (beach volleyball, equestrian)
  - c. Budgetary constraints and lack of existing varsity teams against which to compete within established athletic conferences are major reasons given by athletic directors for not promoting rugby teams to NCAA varsity status
6. The NCAA is unique in the world. NCAA sports are proven to develop athletes and coaches, and to promote the growth of sport. The opportunity to become an NCAA sport is finite and while there has been some progress made in moving university programs to varsity status (can hand out the evidence) it is clear we need greater support from USA Rugby, the governing body of the sport.