

The Bryant Model

How To Start A High School Rugby Program That Will Thrive Beyond Your Leadership Term

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INTRODUCTION

There are many different ways to start a new rugby club. An established club may 'Sponsor' a new club. An individual may start a new club in a community, a school, or as an adjunct to an "athletic organization" like a Boy's/Girl's Club, etc. Or, on a rare occasion a school athletic department will even sponsor a 'varsity' team. The USARFU supplies a guide that will work very well for beginning a community based club or a college club. If your purpose is to start clubs in either of these categories, contact the USA Rugby office in Colorado Springs, Colorado, for the "Start Up Kit." (see pg. 20) However, based on my experience establishing many clubs at all levels, I can tell you that success at the high school level requires an entirely different approach from the others. In fact, the youth club growth success that is currently enjoyed by the Mid West RFU, Follows the high school model that I developed in 1990-91. That model proved so successful that it was named the "Bryant Model" by the United States Rugby Football Foundation. (See Appendix 1. Sample Grant Application) The foundation board believed in the model requirements enough to publish the model outline and mandate that they would only provide start up grants to new youth rugby efforts following this plan. With this paper, I have reprinted the "Bryant Model" in an expanded format including some seasoned reasons as to why you should follow this model for making your high school program a legacy rather than a memory when you, the initial leader, must move on. The following is a marketing study that continues to evolve. You are encouraged to send me your experiences so that this study may expand our collective body of knowledge. Enjoy the study and take action, for the love of the game.

I. The Bryant Model

A) Start a "league."

If you are planning to start a high school age rugby program, be prepared to start a local 'league' of at least four clubs in the first year. Never consider starting a single high school club unless there is already an established league in your area to provide 'local' competition. A good rule of thumb is a travel time of about one hour from your target high school in after school traffic. This distance may be considered, local enough to play a match before dark in the early spring. The reasons for this suggestion are numerous: 1) The kids play rugby in this country because it is a FUN game to play. If your students don't get enough competition, they will lose interest, very

rapidly. 2) Most of your referee and coaching support must come from the current college and community club structure. The big boys and girls play their matches on Saturdays, and your high school club can't compete without a coach and a referee present. 3) The number of referees available on weekends is limited so any scheduled weekend matches should be in conjunction with the "High School Coach's" Rugby Club's home match. 4) Parents and students are already familiar with weekday competition. 5) Finally, mid week matches along with a Friday, Saturday or Sunday match, allows for you to double amount of competition in a season that loses a week because of Spring Break, and ends early because of graduation, proms, and the current national high school tournament in mid May. High School graduation dates vary widely across the nation.

B) School Affiliation.

Always affiliate with a high school. A School has instant community recognition and identification for the student participants. If your target school is a public school, then the school is a community asset owned by the tax payers. As you are a taxpayer, you cannot legally be denied access to the school activities and property as long as your requests are reasonable and do not interfere with other scheduled events. If the target school is a private institution, then you must rally the support of several parents of current or future students and then meet with the President or Head Master. Once again, with the support of "those paying the bills," you will not be denied the opportunity to start a rugby club. In fact, you may achieve instant "varsity" status with full school financial support in a private school. Either way, affiliation with a school solves many problems. Uniform colors and a mascot are already in place, even a fight song if you have the need to use one, and of course, instant community presence. These things alone are enough to guarantee the continuation of your club when you have to move on. The institution will have invested in the rugby club and will even recruit a new coach to replace you because you established a "market demand" in younger brothers and sisters while you were teaching their older siblings and their parents. It certainly is all right to team up with the local community rugby clubs, if they currently exist. Many senior rugby clubs "sponsor" one or more high school clubs. However, if the local town doesn't have a college club or town club, it soon could develop a club a few years after your high school club is rooted. The leadership to start those new clubs will actually come from the ranks of students that you have introduced to the game and those who play in college and then return to the community to work. In Indiana, three years after starting the High School program, the local union enjoyed a surge of growth in new college clubs. In ten years, the local union is starting to see new town clubs form in those same communities.

C) Organize for "league" success.

Set your league eligible rules to protect your high school clubs from predatory recruiting practices. All students must play for their own high school, if their school has a rugby team. Students from other schools may play with your team only until there are enough students to start a club at their school. (Some school rules may dictate your policy on other students.) Encourage the post match get together... as is our rugby tradition. This will break down cross town rivalries that have disrupted some programs. The home club should provide drinks and snacks for the visiting club. After the match have each of your players go to the ice chest, get two drinks and deliver one of them to the person he played opposite in the match. Encourage the kids to engage in light conversation. Most clubs have T-shirts made up; extras can be presented to the outstanding back, and forward of your opponent's team. I always ask their coach who he would like for me to recognize. (Sometimes it is better to award someone who is working hard in practice rather than some who had a lucky match.) That is why you ask the other coach, he knows his kids. When time allows, plan a post match cookout. Organize the host team parents to do the cooking. One match a year, feed all your fans as well, in a "Fan Appreciation Day." This will always bring out a lot of the high school classmates.

D) A "State tournament."

Conclude the very first season with a "State Tournament." Even if your league of four teams is isolated, but is the only 'league' in your state...hold the tournament. State tournaments, produce 'state champions.' State champions are great public relation messages, in local newspapers if released with pictures. (SEE Appendix 6) The trophy should be large and significant so that it will be a lasting PR tool in the 'school's trophy case.' After, ten years, no one will care that there were only four teams in the first state championship, only that their school won the tournament. For state championship trophies I prefer large plaque (18' x24') carved in the shape of the state, made of solid oak with brass plates and a rugby player mounted on the face. (Matt Godek sells a molded 4" figure that is ideal for this purpose. For a total of about \$150 you get an impressive advertisement for rugby that takes up significant space in a school display case, for a lot of years.

E) Start with High School Age.

This is a new recommendation in addition to the original model. In many areas of the country, the resistance at the high school level is so structured; you feel that you have no choice but to start youth programs first. Don't fall to this temptation.

- 1) It is impossible to coach tackle rugby if you have never played tackle rugby and those who have played tackle rugby are the people you need to coach the high school team. If you use them up in elementary, no contact leagues, you may have no coaching assets left to extend the program later.
- 2) The resistance will only stiffen, because now the opposition will see you coming.
- 3) The kids who start in your elementary programs will have no where to play rugby in high school when older and your work and limited resources will have been wasted. This error has been repeated many times around the country. Call youth rugby directors and ask how many high school teams their programs feed into. I believe that if you have the coaches available, you may start a high school program and a youth program at the same time. Try to have the youth league follow the high school season and you will have some of your high school players available to coach younger kids. Finally, I would like to point out that it isn't necessary to have played rugby to coach non-contact rugby. Parents can be taught. Physical Education Teachers can be taught. There are many ways to expand into non-contact rugby once high school rugby is in place.

II. Plan the Program

A) Coaching issues.

The hardest parts of starting a high school rugby club... is finding a competent coach and buying the first set of uniform shirts. Rarely, the same person will be able to do both, but normally, a young person who is still an active club or a local college player, is able to coach, but can't fund the start up. I personally like to find an old boy/girl, who is established in the local business community and couple them with one or two older college players who have been hand picked by a University Head Coach. The old boy knows how to cut through the politics and paper work, while the kids are current in teaching the game. The down side is that the kids will turn over two to three years as they graduate, and the program must find continuity. The Old Boy holds things together during these transitions. It is important that the High School Coaches must be mature in their understanding of leadership responsibility. They must know not to socialize with the kids, as "to become familiar will breed contempt, and cause the loss of the mutual respect necessary to lead." They must know that they CAN NEVER tolerate any DRUG, TOBACCO, or ALCOHOL USE OR POSSESSION on the squad...or risk losing the program and going to jail for "contributing to the delinquency of minors." on the other hand, as an employer. There is no better resume' builder for a young person than to say that you had the self- discipline to organize, manage, and lead a youth athletic team. Any employer should know that this task is as difficult as starting a

business and that you can lead, solve problems and take responsibility. WOW! That's better than a 4.0 G.P.A.

Determine the best time of day for your practice times. The best time to get kids is immediately after school as many will have jobs and will be able to work around their schedule. You, of course, must take the coaches work schedule into account and the coaches may not be available until after 5 P.M. What nights do the coaches have their own practice? Tuesdays and Thursdays? Then have your high school practice on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Each team will have to work out the circumstances that they find, the best that they can. When programs become "serious," they usually find a way to move practice to five days per week.

Finding high school students willing to learn the game has been easy since rugby matches started to appear on U.S. television about 15 years ago. The students have seen rugby and think it looks like fun to play. You may even be blessed with a foreign exchange student who has played the game. There may even be father and mother who played in college.

At the first meeting, get student names, phone numbers, E-mail addresses, street address, year in school, and any rugby experience. Tell them when and where to meet for practice. You should contact your LAU President with the news of your new club and ask for support with scheduling and referees. Often youth (under-19) scheduling is done by a central authority in the union. If a new league is being formed, you will have to work out the schedule with the other coaches until the rugby union has been organized to schedule your matches.

B) Uniform purchase issues

Another area of difficulty, is with the need to purchase a set of uniform shirts. You are not a team until you can take the field in uniform. It is very difficult to buy a team set, in the sizes and colors, off the shelf from any of the U.S. rugby supply companies. Further, you don't really know that you have a team until they go on the field for the first match. Some one will have to purchase the first set of shirts on speculation. This could be the job the Local Area Rugby Union, as the more clubs that exist; the more union dues are collected. To date, I am sure that no LAU has ever budgeted for a set of shirts to furnish a new club... to be recovered by dues from that club. With out that support, you will either front the cost of the shirts and run the risk, or find an angel/sponsor for the uniform shirts. The shirts will last about three years and should initially be kept as a team set, until you can afford to buy extras. The kids will want to wear them to school on game day...let them. This is great advertising for your club and you won't lose shirts this way because you will know who has each shirt. For other uniform items, the kids should purchase their own shorts, socks and shoes. I always included the shorts, socks, a special club T- shirt, and the CIPP fee in the club dues structure, and issued these items when the dues were paid. (This helps get the CIPP forms returned and the dues money paid.) The CIPP forms are a lot of work for the coach if filled out individually for the "union information" that the kids have no way of understanding. I suggest filling out one form as master copy and photocopy both sides for distribution to the kids to get permission signatures, and personal data completed. When these forms are returned to you, again photocopy a set for your records and submit the original signatures to USA Rugby. This is a great time saver.

C) Student athlete issues

Go to the school board and ask for the state athletic association publication of student athlete eligibility. You will get a few athletes who compete in other sports and YOU must protect their eligibility in those sports if your program is to avoid a crisis of major proportion. Know the school rules on attendance, grades, behavior, and club membership eligibility. Rugby Union eligibility will usually vary some from the school and you may make some exceptions in school age and grade requirements. Indiana, varsity athletes must maintain a passing average in order to compete. I

have successfully made an exception to this standard, requiring all C's or better in order to play for the "A side" rugby team. The result has been that some athletes, by being included in the practice and matches, were encouraged enough to want to play "A side" to bring their grades to a higher level. The love of rugby will have a positive effect on any life, and a coach can use that to transfer the interest into the classroom. This point has not been lost on the Teachers/Sponsors. If a student is suspended from the school, you suspend them from rugby too. Support the schools system if you ever hope for a reciprocal relationship.

D) Budget issues

The dues structure varies widely from club to club. \$100 per player will cover Union Dues, Referee fees, and basic uniform needs. Field paint, rental, training gear, goal posts, pads, flags, and a touch line safety barrier system, must all be planned for but can be shared by teams and the cost can spread over several years. Plan your own budget. (See Appendix, "The Budget Work Sheet") In the Wisconsin Rugby Union, the high school coaches are paid out of the player dues. Their dues may be \$250 Plus per student per season. I know that Wisconsin was able to find a lot of rugby coaches using this approach initially. However, I see a drawback in the fact that a high fee means that only the more affluent schools will be served... and that will limit rugby's growth later.

Second, once you start a 'paid coach' program, you aren't likely to find anymore volunteers. I believe that a scholarship or fellowship approach to university student rugby players may work better. (See Section V."Advance the Program)

Another area where funding may be helpful is in attracting a club teacher/sponsor in your target high school. Penn High School, Elkhart, Indiana is planning to pay \$1,500 per semester to the club teacher/sponsor for conducting after school study hall and to tutor the rugby club members. Penn holds practice, while keeping them at the school until practice time. This idea has great merit, as it is necessary to have a teacher to have an "official school club" and the extra money would attract a teacher and reward them for being involved. Further, this plan will win major points with all of the club parents.

E) Growth Issues

If you are starting a boy's high school team, start planting the seeds for a girl's team (and vice versa) as soon as your team is rooted. Look to locals clubs for coaching support, but don't be afraid of holding combined boys and girls practices. I have discovered a lot of benefits for expanding the program as a single club effort. The parents of the girls are by far more aggressively supportive of your club efforts. The boys will encourage the girls and will behave better in practice, as they don't want to appear foolish in front of the girls. Further, you double the number of parents, double the teacher sponsors, double your clout in school politics without anywhere close to double the expense or effort. This growth approach has a great return on your on your time invested.

III. Establish the Program

There are four different high school political structures that I am aware of: A) The private school, B) Public schools with a student club program administered by teachers sponsors and the principal or a vice principal C)Public schools with a club program determined by the school board. D) Public Schools with NO club program allowed. Each of these is somewhat different in some important way. Analyze your target school in advance or simply go to the target high school and ask to see the assistant principle in charge of club activities. When you meet with this person, they will tell you what system that the school employs. Sometimes, the principal will refer you to the athletic director to seek his input. For the most part, the AD visit will be a waste of your time.

You really have nothing but problems for him, as far as he is concerned. There are rare exceptions, but 90% of the time, the last thing a school's established athletic team coaches want is another team to dilute the "rare athletic talent," Or even "distract" their current crop of athletes, or even add another to his current management, budget and head aches. He still remembers what when soccer came in the door.

A) Private schools

In order to start a rugby club at a private school, you need the support of the parents. The President or Head Master will order the athletic department to add rugby as a sport if he sees that "those who pay him" are serious about a rugby program. This is no harder than finding some parents of current or future students.

B) Public schools

Most public schools will have a student club program administered by the Principal and or Assistant Principal with Teacher Sponsors. This is by far the most common situation that I have encountered. You should ask for an appointment with person in charge of Club activities. When you meet, you should "tell them that you are going to start a rugby club at the school and need to know the routine for starting student clubs. You will need a room to meet the interested students, after school and a public address announcement for the meeting time and location." (SEE SAMPLE LETTERS IN APPENDIX 1a and 5) Sometimes, the Assistant principal will want to run the idea by the Principal or even the athletic director. The Principal of the school is someone that you should take the time to meet as soon as the club is formed, to notify him or her of your activities and your credentials for coaching. (a copy of any coaching certification should be provided for his file) this meeting allows you a wonderful opportunity to explain the virtues of a rugby education and how a rugby club will reach students how should be involved athletic teams but have been turned away by the formal structure in the athletic department. If he is intellectually honest with you, he will acknowledge that many students do not participate in sports and that this is a serious concern of the administration. Rugby is an answer to help with this universal problem!

1) The Arguments against having a rugby program.

YOU WILL BE TOLD THAT:

- A) "No one is interested in another sport in our school."
- B) "There are no fields available for your practice matches."
- C) "I remember rugby players from my university days, they were rowdy and heavy drinkers"
- D) "Rugby is a very dangerous sport and school can't accept the liability."
- E) "Rugby isn't a sport in the state high school athletic association and therefore the school isn't 'allowed' to have a rugby team."

DON'T LET THIS STOP YOU!

2) The answers to the arguments: KNOW THE ANSWERS before the meeting.

ANSWERS:

- A) "If no one is interested, we will know this at the call out meeting." (I have never had less than 22 kids show up at the first call out... and then they will bring out others. In the first season you want to have 20 to 25 kids at the tournament. This is a solid start for a rugby program.)
- B) "If you don't have a field for our practice, the local parks department is always willing to find space for youth sports activities." (In fact, field space will be one of the greater challenges as soccer and lacrosse has captured every available field in some parts of the country. Be creative,

check with local colleges and universities especially if they have a rugby club. They should be delighted to help with youth programs. The rugby clubs, not necessarily the university administration. Try to work out a "youth sponsorship" relationship with the local clubs as that status will help them gain access to fields for you and retain access for them at the same time.)

C) "Yes, that was probably a long time ago when there were no coaches for the college clubs, and with out supervision, college students can be rather rowdy, don't you agree? Today, all of the Division I college teams now have coaches and many of the smaller college teams do as well."

D) "Liability is not an issue. USA Rugby Union provides liability insurance with club registration. (Call USA Rugby for a copy of the policy and details about 'additional insured,' to cover the school and parks department.)"

E) "The State Athletic Association, as you know, has never started a new sport actually, many of the current high school sports pre date the athletic association by many years, while soccer, volleyball, Lacrosse, and other have all started as local clubs." (Call your State athletic association and ask them what is the process in your state. In Indiana, and all other states that I am ware of, the state athletic association is an organization of high school principles, and when enough of those principles vote to accept a new sport in the pool of "association sponsored sports," the association starts to look into the management of the tournament and eligibility for that sport. In other words, the sports start as a "club" organization in the school or local community first. In Indiana, there are 385 member schools in the IHSAA, and the association policy is to consider a new sport when there are 100 principles interested.)

3) Coach training and certification

Just a final note on knowing the answers. In 1989, I often heard school principals say that "all their coaches were teachers under contract to school corporation." This of course is the ideal for the school as it lets them screen and hold accountable all their athletic coaches. However, with the growth and strength of the teacher's unions, teachers no longer are mandated to coach or take on extra curricular responsibilities. In most parts of the United States, there would be few athletic programs in the schools if they were only coached by teachers. ON the other hand, YOU must take this as a warning that ALL your coaches MUST get their Coaching Certification as soon as possible, if you expect to have continued access to the kids for rugby, you should show that you have had training to conduct the activity, Check the web site: www.usarugby.org for the coaching certification programs schedule, NOW!

Further, the National Federation of State High School Association (NFSHSA) has selected the American Coaching Effectiveness Program (ACEP) as the vehicle to provide consistent coaching training that provides a solution to ease the concerns of parents, legislators, and administrators and to address the needs of interscholastic coaches. This course is called the: "National Federation Interscholastic Coaches Educational Program (NFICEP) and there are several instructors in many communities across every state that participates. (see page 20) Indiana requires this course for all non-faculty coaches. As this is the recognized system you need to get this training as soon as possible in order to remove this barrier to mainstream acceptance. Additional information may be obtained through your state high school athletic association office.

C) School Board approval

The third type of school club structure is one that requires the school board to screen all student clubs, In this case, go to see the Superintendent and let him know what you are doing, Ask if there are any forms for this purpose and if you should plan a formal presentation to the board, Write a letter to Superintendent detailing your meeting and follow up on his recommendations, It will help to identify, Student, teacher, and parent support for your plan, and bring these people or these details to the board meeting. (Note: If you are unable to gain a positive result from these efforts, see: Section IX, "Evansville Soccer.")

D) No School Clubs Allowed

The fourth school structure that you may encounter is a school system that allows no student clubs what so ever. This attitude actually exists at Highland High School, in Salt Lake City, with the most outstanding high school rugby program in the United States. The Rugby Club, calls itself "Highland High," and has students from that school, but no official affiliation. It is a community based club and will remain so until the Athletic Department chooses to adopt rugby in to the Varsity programs. As a means of explanation, this very rare circumstance exists because of the "Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual (GLB) Liberation" and "Satanic," or even "Christian," club efforts to seek "equal rights" access to the student population of certain public schools. The schools often "dump" all club activities in order to avoid the negative publicity, boycotts and lawsuits. The answers are here, is that you start a community club, outside the school, Contact USA Rugby and ask for the "Rugby Club Start up Kit.")

IV) Stabilize the Program

Now that you have your club established, you must continue to improve relations with the school principal, assistant principal in charge of club activities, the superintendent, the local sports media, and the business community. Your players' parents will be a great asset in this.

A) Be an "official" club

Just because the school allowed you to meet with the students and organize a club doesn't mean that you are an "official club." Check the School's literature and ask the principal for the list requirements for "full" affiliation as a school club, there will be some standard according to the rules of the school district for extra curricular activities. There are restrictions involved. It is more difficult to accomplish. You must recruit a "teacher sponsor." The football coach and athletic will usually fight you every step of the way. The book store manager, or some other school employee, may be required to receive all moneys raised and disburse them for the clubs benefit from you voucher requests. This need not be the only funding method; however, as I recommend the parents and local fans form a supporter's organization that goes beyond the school's activities. A "Touch Line Club" (SEE APPENDIX 3, for detailed purpose of TLC) should be focused on all the rugby played in the community and therefore will not come under any one school's jurisdiction. The "TLC" can develop and sponsor elementary rugby, organize trips to see the local Men's and Women's club teams play or Organize a bus trip to see an "Eagles Match" etc... Support the local College Clubs with attendance and scholarships for players and coaches.

B) Benefits vs. Obligations

The school may have other requirements as well. I believe that the benefits far outweigh the trouble. You may obtain school buses for away trips. You may meet during the school day as other clubs. You may use school grounds for practice and matches. Even use the football stadium for your rugby matches if you can justify the expense with a paid gate, or sponsored event. The school will require an annual list of student club members to verify that they are all currently students in the High School. In Indiana, and probably most other states, the law allows for any "home schooled" student in the school district to participate in any extra curricular activity that is offered by the school. This is not publicized and very little known by home schoolers. The other eligibility rules will be set by the rugby union. High school students should not play with Adult Clubs. Playing with college or adult clubs may make them not eligible for high school play and could raise "liability issues" if a player is injured. Check the current Law Book on High school eligibility.

C) Athletic Directors and Football Coaches

Don't waste time trying to work with the athletic director or unfriendly football coaches. They normally will see rugby as a threat to their empire...taking good athletes away from the current sport offerings and challenging them for financial support. You may be fortunate enough to find one of the few intelligent football coaches who will recognize his opportunity to develop his football team by using rugby as an "Off Season Training Tool." Normally football coaches will remain hostile because there is the obvious threat that the kids will find something that is fun to play because they get to make decisions on the field and they get to carry the ball too. As I see it, this will not be a long term problem.

D) Start another team for girls (boys) next

Encourage a girls (boys) club to organize. Usually the girl friends of the boys team, have attended games and will already have become fans, they will be ready to organize in the second or third year after the boys started. We have already discussed the advantages in another section of the paper.

V) Advance the program

A) Player Development, "Age Grade Rugby."

Your High School program is working well now. It is time to work on a player development system in the middle and elementary schools. Where will you find coaches and referees? One way to extend your program down is to use your own team to help coach the "age-grade rugby" non-contact system in a brief summer league. You may also use soccer's trick of registering kids for the program, then going to the parents with a plea for more coaches to meet the demand. It worked for soccer. You will have to hold a "rush up" training clinic for those who bite...then call USA Rugby to plan a formal "Foundation" coaching clinic in your area. Try to recruit the school PE teachers if you can. They are all looking for new spring sport activities that will interest the kids. PE teachers tell me that softball bores the kids after three weeks. They are looking for rugby, but they don't know it yet.

B) College Rugby Clubs for coaches and referees

For the long term, we must strengthen the link to the college rugby clubs. The first step is to install a quality coach in the local college program. For the long term, we must strengthen the link to the college rugby clubs. The first step is to install a quality coach in the local college program. Then, you will soon find a source of quality rugby players that can be turned on to coaching and refereeing in your community.

C) Teaching the game at the "teaching" universities

I believe the "VITAL LINK" between the national goal of main stream sport with 500,000 plus participants, and the current rugby club structure of the USARFU, is the college rugby network. Yes, the largest numbers of rugby players are currently in college, but this group receives the least attention for their union dues. If rugby is to grow in this country, we must follow the 'American method' for building a sport. The "English "club" model' won't have any impact in this country for another 50 to a 100 years. In the United States, all sports train their coaches and referees and administrators as professionals, in the university system. The SERIOUS SPORTS in this country grow both directions from the UNIVERSITIES. Athletes, who make the cut, go to the professional leagues. Physical Education Majors are employed as managers, coaches, trainer and referees in the parks programs and school sports programs. This is the "institutional" path that

rugby must follow in order to grow rapidly. Fortunately, rugby is already deeply rooted in all of the major teaching universities of the nation. For many years, both men's and women's rugby have been rated the most popular recreational sport in the nation's universities.

How does one go about penetrating the "golden ghetto," of teaching universities? In 1991, the year after establishing the pilot high school program in the Midwest, I discovered that my own college club, Indiana University, was in dire straits. Even though the high school programs were sending players to college, many were not continuing with rugby. 1) In high school the players had organized practices with an adult coach. (Most University Recreational Club Sports Programs want the under graduates to run the programs.) 2) The university rugby culture was a "drinking club" with a rugby excuse. (Large schools have lots of ways to waste a student's time and serious athletes will find a serious activity.) 3) the alumni didn't see the program as serious and therefore would not support it with serious money. 4) The club had actually been "kicked off campus" due to a lack of organization. (No officer reported the budget or season schedule to the office of Rec. Sports, and the club was determined to be disbanded by RCS.)

The solution: An emergency meeting of the alumni. A coach was appointed and his direct expenses were funded by alumni members. A new Club Constitution was written that gave the coach authority over all matters in practice, eligibility, and selection of the team. A committee of five was established to oversee the coach's activities. (Three alumni (paying the expense), one university staff person, the rugby club president.) The alumni then searched for the very best rugby coach that could be found who would be interested in pursuing an advanced degree through a fellowship funded by alumni members through the "Rugby Education Academy, Inc." This Non Profit Corporation was put together in order to channel funds quickly to the needs without going through the committee and approval process of the university departments. The club went through a cultural change, but became competitive in the first season under the new structure. The team qualified for the Division I, Sweet Sixteen in the third year of the new program, the final four in the fourth year, and continues to be on of the "Elite Eight" consistently challenging for the national championship. The next goal is to build an "endowment" the coaching program that will include a "professor of rugby". To coach, and teach rugby coaching and refereeing, and administration in the classroom for college credit.

In this state, Indiana University is the largest university system with eight campuses. This is the best target system in this state to place the best professional coaching available and gain the greatest state wide influence for advancing the game. Work with the alumni of the rugby club to get this as a goal, accomplished. If you are wanting to start a smaller College club in your area, it may occur naturally. There will be a growth of new clubs shortly after your high school scholars graduate from your program. High school graduates who have the combination of a love of rugby and the spirit of an entrepreneur are quite common. They will start the club when they discover their chosen college is without a rugby presence. Go to the university foundation office and find out what is necessary to establish an endowment fund for the rugby club. It may take several years just to set up the fund with terms that will preserve it just for rugby. Insist on this in writing and read the fine print carefully, before you sign off and make the initial contributions. Rugby will not be the foundation's priority for many years to come.

Once this system is in place, consider duplicating the system of coaching fellowships at each of the universities campuses. Each coaching fellow, while working on an advanced degree, would have the responsibility of starting and coaching the campus club. Extend this program into the local high schools with older college players as coaches. Repeat the system as before.

VI) Finance the Program

A) Raising money from your Player's Families

How do you raise money? The first way to finance the program is from dues from the students. This will vary according to your first year budget and your ambition. I would warn you that in the first year, rugby won't be the highest priority for most of your students so keep the budget and the dues in a modest range.

Start a "Touch Line Club," A supporters club made up of alumni, parents, grandparents, old ruggers living in the area, friends of players, local business, etc. Charge dues, and find a slogan to print on a yard poster to sell to members: "We Support Wildcat Rugby," "RUGBY FOR SERIOUS FUN!" "This is a SOUTH rugby Family!" I like any fund raising project that ties back to the activity. Tournaments can raise a lot money if they are done well. Buy a block of tickets to an Eagles Match, or the national Collegiate Championship, at a deep discount from the promoter, and then sell the tickets with a bus trip to your fan club in a package trip to the match. (Trips are great for bonding people together for a cause).

B) Raising money working for others as a club

If there is a major sporting event held in your area, it is always possible to work as group at concessions, or selling programs, to make money for your club. Publications are a lot of work but can be great fund raisers. Penn High School Rugby Club, in Elkhart, Indiana, Sells advertising in a program that nets over \$20,000 profit annually. This covers all their expenses and plane trip to the National High School Tournament. Be creative and share your ideas with others who are trying to solve the same problems.

VII) Public Relations for the Program

The public relations activities are often taken for granted. Yet, with a little knowledge of the PR system existing in every community, you can build a powerful public presence with very little effort. A "public" is understood to be a "group" of people with similar needs or interests that in turn, may be influenced by what you are doing. Know who your publics are: A) The students that you are coaching. B) The other students at the school. C) The high school staff, the custodians and bus drivers, your teacher sponsor, the principal, the superintendent, the school board. D) The parents and family members. E) The other rugby clubs in your area: college clubs, Community clubs, the LAU. F) The greater community where your club members live. The parks department, YMCA/YWCA, the Boys/Girls Clubs and of course the physical education teachers at all education levels.

Consider each of these groups for what they may need from you in the way of information, not what they can do for you. Look for the best way to communicate with their group and serve their information needs.

A) The students on your team

The students need recognition and identification for their accomplishments. If your program is "varsity"...Matt Godek supplies a Brass "varsity rugby" pin in the shape of a rugby ball. If your program is a club, you may purchase a six inch chenille shield, in White with Black letters, that says "Rugby 1st XV" For display on system of chevrons for each year of service. Custom patches may be ordered tournaments and special accomplishments: State Champions, High School All American, All State Team, etc...

B) The other students at the school

The students who are not playing rugby at the schools, have friends who may be curious about your activities. They will want to attend matches and support your team any way they can. Some

day, many of them will want to join the club, or they have little brothers and sisters who will be a part of your program. Encourage their interest by where you practice and where and when you play your matches. Have a "fan appreciation day" home match with free food.

C) The high school staff

These folks don't want you to make their jobs more difficult by trashing the grounds, buses, locker rooms, and halls. Further, special recognition when a teacher, bus driver, or custodian has gone to special effort for your team, must be recognized in writing. After forcing the issue of the use of school grounds through the superintendent's office that placed the teacher sponsor in a political vice, I wrote a "special letter of commendation" to the teacher. (See Appendix 2 and 2a) All students and parents signed the letter and copies were sent with cover letters to the school principal and superintendent with the request that the commendation be added to the teacher's personnel file. You simply can't be all trouble if you expect to win support.

D) Parents and family members

These people just want to be informed about your activities and plans. Printed schedules, and programs on "how to be a rugby spectator," are very important. Have at least two meetings with the parents during the season, and have them help you plan the awards banquet at the end of the season. Parents prefer that a school bus is used for team transportation.

E) Other rugby clubs in your LAU

Other clubs in your area want to know your activities as they may encourage your graduates to join their ranks by use of special programs and scholarships. Much of the support for your rugby program will come from your local rugby union. The training of referees and coaches is sponsored by the union and the clubs will sponsor many of the youth programs that provide the competition for your youth program. You must attend the union's "Youth Club" meetings for the collective understanding of organization issues in your area. Let everyone else know what ideas have worked for you, and what your current obstacles for youth rugby advancement are. Your program may have an answer that works for someone else.

F) The community where the club members live

The public relations to the general community takes a media campaign to reach, but in the long run will make your work easier as more people will know about your efforts. Find a parent who will take pictures of your team. Individual photographs, team shots and action shots as well. Develop an archive for current and future needs. Scan the pictures into a CD ROM. This is a great way to preserve the history and copies can be used as fund raiser. Send press releases in the local newspapers, but only when the information is of interest to the general community: i.e... the significant accomplishment of a student athlete who plays rugby on your team...National Merit Scholar Finalist, All State Team Selection, All American Team Selection, perfect score on the SAT, your team finishes season very well...as State Champion, or Runner Up. Etc. ALWAYS INCLUDE A PHOTOGRAPH, with your information, Attach a printed or typed explanation with scotch tape to the back of each picture. Provide a Typed Story with all the details. Ask someone for the proper format for a press release and follow the directions carefully (i.e... "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE," at the top of the first page, and "-30-" at the end of the information being release for publication). Sometimes a letter to all the people in a certain group about something for their interest i.e.: a clinic on "non-contact rugby" to physical education teachers. Set up an e-mail address and contact lists to all special interest groups.

If your club should qualify for the regional or national tournament, invite the head football coach, the athletic director and the principal to go at your club's expense. Even if they can't go, you will improve your relationship in the Athletic Department and the school.

The graduates of your program will move on, but after three or four years you should try to hold a season finale with an Old Boys and Old Girls match. Plan this far enough in advance for families to attend a cook out and/or a dance. In time you may make it a large part of the "graduation week" activities. This helps communities keep the ties to the past and it will help with fund raising for scholarships or a community club house and grounds when you need to grow your program.

Send your young players to the select side camps...those who have a chance of making the squad, and those who will learn from being exposed to a higher level of expectation, and national coaches. Block this time in your schedule...it is important in the development of your club's understanding of the game. Coaches should go as well...you will learn new drills and methods of training.

Whenever possible, bring the high school match into your club grounds for a 'curtain opener' to your home matches. This is a great way to get the students to see the pace, talent and speed of the big guys and will help develop a local fan support base for your club. A word of caution, make sure the sidelines are alcohol free and the kids' parents won't leave wondering what their kid has gotten into now. **CLEAN IT UP FIRST! IF YOUR CLUB HASN'T CHANGED IT'S CULTURE YET, DON'T INVITE THE KIDS AND THEIR PARENTS.**

Special notes about the media...take the trouble to meet sports writers in your area and find out how their paper covers sports like rugby. Develop other ways to gain general public support and knowledge of your work, by going on talk radio shows, etc.... This will pay off later when grounds use issues surface. Today, adult clubs are finding themselves kicked off grounds by youth soccer programs, because they didn't start youth programs to counter the demand of the soccer folks. Don't look now but Lacrosse and even ultimate frisbee is coming on to demand access to your parks and school grounds. A youth program is the only way to hang on to what has been yours for many years. Develop public support for the youth work now. Finally, use current technology to help you do your communications work. Establish a club e-mail address is easy, and a website for club information. It is easy to set up "contact lists" to all special interest groups.

IX. The Political Program

"Yes, Virginia, there are political agendas in the school sports programs too." Learn the power structure of your school systems. Don't be afraid of going up the chain of command when you feel that you are making no reasonable progress at your current level of communication.

A) The chain of command

But ALWAYS follow the chain of command. Start with the Principal. Then make an appointment with the Superintendent. Even if you have no initial problems in the start up at the school, you should go there after you have started your club effort at the High School because you can discuss the "virtues of a rugby education," the number of kids that are interested, their comments, and your concerns.

B) Put it in writing and copy others

Document every meeting in a letter or memo of understanding, and mail it to the person you met with a thank you for their help. You may copy the letter to all others that need to know as soon

as possible. Hold parent meetings. Meetings with the Superintendent will open doors of all of the schools in the school district if your program becomes popular with the students. Be prepared to go to the media with your case, once you have established media rapport by getting to know the journalists in your area. Get on local talk shows and tell your side of the issue. (Don't libel yourself...be careful to always say just what you can prove with a witness, a video, or a document. Always have witness statements in writing, signed with a witness.)

C) Look for institutional literature.

Whenever you are in the school, look for the literature that is readily available to pick up. You will learn about School Board Policy on "Student Harassment" by school staff. Ask for a "Student Guide," here you will find the legal tools necessary to go to jugular vein when the administration is trying to put heat on your kids and the rugby program. (SEE the example in Appendix 4 "Student Harassment code from student guide.") When the athletic director, principal, football coach, etc., is systemically blocking your efforts and "harassing" the students who want to participate in the rugby program, start with a parent meeting and discuss using a "petition" to gain the persons attention. Circulate the petition throughout the community for signatures. When a "tyrant" is active, he will use this tactic against many other as well. Deliver a photo copy of the petition to the next higher authority. Keep the original petition in a safe place in order to prove that you have addressed the problem directly and at the next level of command. Finally, the issue may go before the school board, the voting public, and even the local courts system. (see Appendix 4.a Sample "petition to seek redress of Grievances.")

D) The last resort, file a lawsuit

As you are aware, soccer is on a growth curve of some 20+ years ahead of rugby in this country. There was a great deal of resistance to soccer movement but soccer had the advantage of the appearance of "safety" to the "Soccer moms," and therefore the sport could be introduced effectively in youth leagues at age 4-5 and up. In 1977, I became frustrated with the slow growth of rugby and decided to learn first hand what soccer was doing. I coached youth soccer. I purchased a Professional soccer franchise, in the old American Soccer League, found investors, hired a coach, contracted players, and ran the franchise for three years. Eventually my investors bought me out, and the franchise failed after two more seasons.

I know something about professional sports and something about soccer as well, there were lots of high school kids wanting to start clubs without coaches or school recognition, one pertinent story that I heard at the time was from Evansville, Indiana. The soccer programs had started in the younger ages, and grown up to the pre high school ages. Over 800 participants in the league, and no high school teams to move up to. The local Coke Bottling Company, whose owner had several children playing soccer, offered to provide land and uniforms for a high school league. The Soccer League President, went to the "schools Athletic Director" who took the issue to the school board, the board's reply was that there were already enough sports in the high schools of Evansville. The Soccer League President, who happened to be a local attorney, replied: "See you Boys in court!" The judge reviewed the educational opportunities for the students, the established student interest, and that there was no cost to the schools. The ruling was an order for the school board to add soccer not as a club sport but to the varsity programs. This ruling cost the Athletic Directors a great deal of money and they are still very bitter about it, (I talked to an AD in Evansville last year) Varsity status, required boys and girls soccer, paid coaches, travel expense, etc... Had the case not gone to court and, a club sport program been formed, the cost would have been carried by the parents, sponsors and kids until the Athletic Department could see an advantage to including the soccer program as varsity. The Evansville school board controlled eight high schools.

If you feel that you have no recourse but file a law suit, I recommend that you share your frustration with the USA rugby staff. They are a repository of information and contacts that should be able to help guide you to the next logical steps. Be sure to talk to the LAU President and the Territorial Youth Director.

Then find an attorney Old Boy, who will lead the Charge against the Status Quo "Wind Mill." (Re: Don Quixote).

X. Over View and odd thoughts about a high school program

A) Where to go for help

Don't feel overwhelmed. Many have already done this and you don't need to be an expert in all areas at once to make this work. It is most important that you are not afraid to make a mistake...you will learn from those efforts. If you run into an unusual problem, call the USA Rugby Youth Coordinator. All these people have knowledge of how similar problems were solved. Call me. I love a new challenge.

B) Know why you want to start a youth rugby program.

In order to maintain focus, when the opposition tells you that you can't do it, keep in mind why you want to take on the job of starting a youth program. For me, when I started playing rugby at Indiana University at the age of 20, in Spring 1963, I loved the game so much that I promised myself that when I had a family I would make sure that my children would be guaranteed a 'rugby education.' All five of my children have played rugby. The girls in college and the boys in high school and college. My youngest boy started at age 11 with the AAU Junior Olympics.

My greatest reward for my youth rugby work has been being able to see the next generation take the field in high level competition and love the game as I do. The sons and daughters, of my old team mates, not only play better, and smarter than we did, but they are a delight to watch develop. The Motto of The Rugby Education Academy is: "They shall mount with the wings as Eagles," (Isaiah 40:31) is being fulfilled. In fact the local program has already produced numerous U-19's and Collegiate All Americans. Two National Team 7's EAGLES and one National 15's EAGLE. Your efforts will be rewarded as well.

I have one last rugby goal. To sit in a Hospitality Suite, cold adult beverage in hand, with 100,000 cheering rugby fans, in our national rugby stadium and see our Eagles defeat the All Blacks in a close contest. To me, this will mean the game will be one of the top three or four sports in the United States, as it is in the rest of the world. I believe that my dream is only about Twenty Five years away. You set your dream and get the job done in your corner of the country. I hope to meet you at the game.

C) JUST DO IT!

The national sports demographics are currently in a great State of flux. Baseball and Softball participation has dropped by the millions over the last few years. Basketball is now the largest participation sport but has leveled off. Soccer is second, ahead of football which is declining in participation. And Rugby has finally made the charts in the top 50. The next twenty five years will be awesome.

"Remember, it's a great spectator sport to challenge the status quo!"

Career bureaucrats, by their nature, are usually crippled by an "institutional mind set," and think in a comfort zone that is dictated by "the book" and "how things have always been done," until they are forced to consider ideas "out side the box," (the way things are). They will scurry about like cockroaches when YOU turn on the lights with a new idea of how to do things better.

Author Biography

Philip Bryant started playing rugby at Indiana University in January 1963, shortly after the club formed. He played with the club until he was drafted for the Vietnam War in February 1966, but returned to play matches for Indiana after Army Basic Training in April. He was commissioned Second Lieutenant of Infantry, trained as a ranger, and served as a tactical officer in the Infantry Officer Candidate School, Fort Benning, Georgia. He then was ordered to Vietnam, February 8th 1968 with the 25th Infantry Division. He arrived during the "Famous Tet Offensive" and was assigned to command the 2nd Platoon, "B" Company, 3/22 infantry, unit later immortalized in the movie "Platoon." Oliver Stone, the movie's creator, had served with the 2nd Platoon until late January 1968. 1LT Bryant, was wounded twice on his tour in Viet Nam, and received two Purple Hearts, The Silver Star, the Combat Infantry Badge, Ranger Tab and three campaign stars. While, recuperating in Fitzsimmons Army Hospital, in Aurora Colorado, he started the American Eagles RFC in 1968. (Some think this was the first U.S. Military rugby club outside the academies.) In 1969, in his last tour of active military duty, serving as an advisor to a reserve battalion stationed at Fort Carson, he started the Colorado Springs Grizzlies RFC, still active to this day. His last match with the Grizzlies was in the Championship Match of the 2nd Aspen Ruggedfest. The Grizzlies, in their first season to 2nd place to San Francisco RFC, by a score of 10-7. In this match, Phil was doubled "CPT Crunch," by fans watching the match. He was Captain in the Infantry, and his hard tackling slowed the San Francisco attack to the point of bringing a win into reach by the Grizzlies. On returning to Indiana, He joined the Indy Reds RFC, in February 1970. He has served several terms as a union officer in the MWRFU, and organized the first referee society in the Mid West, the "Tri-State Rugby Referee Society." The need was so great for trained referees, that he conducted several traveling seminars to jump start the Mid West RRS. In 1976, he organized a brief high school rugby experiment, with four high schools "Key Clubs," in Indianapolis. After two weeks of practice, a "fund raising' tournament was held at John Marshall High School, in the football stadium, under lights, where the four teams played a single elimination competition. In 1977, he started work on the Indy Dare Devils, A Indianapolis franchise in the American Soccer League, and served as an owner and General Manager of the operation until his buyout in 1980. In 1989, he was asked to serve as the Youth Director for the Mid West RFU and spear head a high school development effort, the "model" program was set in Indianapolis. With the first competition of four clubs in the spring of 1990. In addition, he has found and manages a wide range of businesses: data processing, medical doctor's office, sporting goods wholesale/retail, life and health insurance, stock brokerage, and finance companies. The Rugby Education Academy, an Indiana Non-Profit, dedicated to advancing the playing, coaching and referee education and applying business methods to advancement of the game. He earned a BS Degree in Secondary Education from Indiana University, 1970. An MBA from the University of Indianapolis, 1989.

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USA Rugby, National Headquarters: Information on Coaching Certification Clinics, Referee Certification Clinics, Coaching Materials and Literature and advice and general support for any youth development effort. 3595 E. Fountain Blvd., Colorado Springs, Colorado 80910. www.usarugby.org contact [Scott Novack@usarugby.org](mailto:Scott.Novack@usarugby.org) 719-637-1022

United States Rugby Football Foundation, Grants for Start Up education expenses for Coaches and Referees training in Youth Rugby Programs. Contact: W.T. Haffner, USRFF Executive Director, 32 Dartmouth Place, Woodland Park, CO 80863. 719-687-0219 E-Mail wthaffner@AOL.COM

Advanced Health and Sports Corporation. (Phillip Bryant) Supplies: Predator Training Machines, Balls, Training and Match Helmets, and Shoulder Pads. USA manufactured Canvas Travel Bags, Leather Ball Rugby Shirts, Shorts, and socks. Advanced Health products, designed to aid athletes in building endurance and recovery from injury. 9292 Harrodsburg Road, PO BOX 50, Harrodsburg, IN 47434-0050 (812)-824-3028, FAX 812-824-3233

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Rugby Imports, Ltd., (Bob Hoder) Supplies USA Rugby Coaching materials: Daily Coaching Log, Bleep Test recordings, Coaching Manuals, and videos. Uniform Items, Rugby Boots, Pads, Training Equipment, balls in all sizes, USA Rugby Items. 885Warren Avenue, East Providence, Rhode Island 02914 1-800-431-4514

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The National Federation of State High School Association, Information on our own state athletic association and the American Coaching Effectiveness Programs (ACEP) in your area. 750 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202, 317-972-6900