



February 14, 2013

To The Florida Membership:

In the past several months I have been accumulating information to pass along to everyone regarding the present state of rugby in general.

If you have been on the USA Rugby Website then you have noticed that there has been a very big push and acceptance of sponsors to the USA National players. It is very evident that USAR plans to turn rugby into a professional league ~ pro- rugby.

With money comes MORE money and USAR has begun the process of turning their main operations into big business. If I receive Nigel Melville's 3 year strategic plan prior to the meeting I will have it for you to read.

The operative in all of my report is *business*. USAR South continues to "manage" Florida and Georgia because as long as clubs enter the USA National Tournament (at the present time) USARS is the governing body responsible for overseeing all events leading to National Title in ALL categories. The budget set by USARS deals with mandated activities which are required by USAR.

As long as Florida and Georgia are NOT Geographical Unions, we have no choice but to stay with USARS. This does not mean that we MUST unite with Georgia; but it does mean that it would take all 3000 members playing, refereeing and coaching to pay enough money into a business entity to qualify as an independent GU.

A Geographical Union is just another name for a state which is solvent and has 3 and 5 year plans to expand its business.

I realize that 90% of our memberships just want to PLAY rugby with little or no costs; but in reality everything costs money and rugby is no different.

In my opinion it would be in everyone's best interest to unite all of the revenue streams into one general account and have executive board members elected by their own membership to sit and govern the sport of rugby in Florida. If 3000 people paid \$100 yr 1 and \$200 yr 2 I think that type of money could be used to promote rugby in a big way!

I realize a great percentage of players claim they cannot afford "that kind of money". Paying \$25 a quarter to their club and passing it on to the general account would then allow each "group" to have its share of funds available to promote rugby.

If we could think of the FRU as a "homeowners association" or "condo association" which is responsible for maintaining the grounds, paying regular expenses "shared" by everyone, and accumulating "reserve" funds to use for "special purposes", then perhaps it may be easier to see why "pooling" our resources makes better sense. In other words making the FRU into a business would benefit everyone.

By this time everyone must be aware of the new website which has effectively taken over the FRU Website as an information stream. The feedback from most everyone is excellent! It takes a full-time worker to make this site valuable. This is just one more step to becoming a GU.

While rugby competition and business continues to evolve, Florida as a STATE must focus on the future.

What incentive do we offer as senior stewards to our youngest players? At the moment we offer rugby programs into state and private colleges. Once these players are graduated, what benefits are there for them as working people?

I think if you ask any player, he or she would love to become the best player they can be. Ask them if they would play against a Welsh side or an Australian side ~ we know the answer ~ hell yeah!

Ask a senior player, would he or she like to travel to Freeport Bahamas and play their select players? Again the answer ~ absolutely.

Unless we put together a "mandated" program of player selection, one to take the place of the player who has the money to travel, we will continue to see our elite players move on the better opportunities.

The choices are tough for our college students because they see no further benefit to paying money they feel they will never benefit from. Can you blame them?

Perhaps if they knew they could participate in Senior Rugby as an elite player, maybe they would pay the extra money.

I ask everyone to consider carefully the path you vote for. The new officers have NO CHOICE but to perform as you vote. Give them a working business with teeth in it and we all will benefit. If we continue with our present organizational structure of separate groups, it defeats the purpose of the FRU's Charter ~ To promote and foster the growth of rugby. Vote wisely.

Respectfully Submitted,

Franklyn Williams
President, FRU