

# Southeastern Rugby, Inc.

Annual General Meeting  
Tuesday, May 16th, 2023

Open: 8:00 PM EST  
Closed: 9:30 PM EST

## Roll Call

Commissioner – Marty Bradley  
Secretary/Treasurer – James Farrar  
Referees – Dave Haines

Alabama – Matthew Colson\*  
Auburn – Dale Hartmann\*  
Clemson – Troy Hall\* / Cole Frank / Owen Tucker  
Georgia – Luke Spotts\* / Joey McLane  
Georgia Tech – Will Bartlett\*  
Kennesaw State – Randall Joseph\* / Matt Heaton / Xavier Anderson  
Lee – **Absent**  
Louisiana State – Chris Reidel\* / Jeremy Howat  
Memphis – Richard Cole\*  
Mississippi – Kai Nihira\* / Race Davis / Pat Towery

Mississippi State – Jason Posey\* / Ethan Ruiz  
North Alabama – Eddie Roberts\*  
Sewanee – Charlie Rosemeyer\*  
South Carolina – John Roberts\* / Grant Howard  
Tennessee – Steven Harris\* / Scott Tungay / Luke Mathis  
Tennessee Tech – Cody Lindsey\*  
Valdosta State – Alejandro Otero\*  
Vanderbilt – Mitchell Finkelstein\* / Jim Snell / Nolan Connerty

## Opening remarks

Overview of agenda provided by Commissioner Marty Bradley

## SCRC 15s Year in Review

- DIAA Fall 15s
  - SCRC Final – Tennessee 27 vs South Carolina 22
  - NCR Playoffs – Tennessee 34 vs Virginia Tech 38/ South Carolina 5 vs Louisville 27
- DII Fall 15s
  - SCRC Final – Auburn 36 vs Memphis 12
  - NCR Playoffs – Auburn 15 vs Loyola 49
- Goff Rugby Report Fall 15s National Rankings
  - DIAA/All DI
    - Tennessee (4<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup>)
    - South Carolina (10<sup>th</sup>/42<sup>nd</sup>)
    - Clemson (11<sup>th</sup>/43<sup>rd</sup>)
    - Alabama (24<sup>th</sup>/NR)
  - DII
    - Auburn (12<sup>th</sup>)
    - Memphis (24<sup>th</sup>)
    - Georgia Tech (36<sup>th</sup>)

## SCRC 7s Year in Review

- DIAA Spring 7s
  - SCRC Semifinals – (2) Tennessee 17 vs (1) Georgia 14 / (2) South Carolina 19 vs (1) Clemson 10
  - SCRC Final – South Carolina 26 vs Tennessee 24
  - Collegiate Rugby 7s National Championship - April 28-30 in Washington, DC
    - South Carolina (1-2) DI Premier - Consolation Bracket
    - Tennessee (1-2) DI Premier - Consolation Bracket
    - Clemson (4-1) DI Club - Championship Finalist
- DII Spring 7s
  - SCRC Semifinals – (1) Memphis 59 vs (2) Vanderbilt 0 / (1) Auburn 45 vs (2) Georgia Tech 7
  - SCRC Final – Memphis 19 vs Auburn 14

- Collegiate Rugby 7s National Championship - April 28-30 in Washington, DC
  - Memphis (2-2) DII - Championship Quarterfinalist
  - Auburn (1-3) DII - Consolation Finalist

## Membership

- Using an extensive vetting process that ensures compatibility and competitiveness, the following programs requested full membership into the SCRC for the 2023/2024 season:
  - DI
    - University of Kentucky
  - DII / DIII
    - University of Louisiana Lafayette
    - Louisiana Tech University
    - Southeastern Louisiana University
    - Spring Hill College
    - Tulane University
    - Southern University (Developing Club)
- Commissioner Bradley fielded questions while providing a recent review of the applicants:
  - Q – Jim Snell (V) – Will there be a crossover/championship match between the DIII North and South divisions?
  - A – Yes, Nov 4, 2023.
  - Q – John Roberts (SC) – Who has the final say in which division a team competes?
  - A – It’s a conversation held between SCRC officials and individual member programs, taking into consideration what is best for the team and the overall competition, while also acknowledging the new NCR enrollment requirements and their effect on postseason play. Initial conversations have been positive, with most teams requesting to align along traditional lines.
- Membership Decision
  - Luke Spotts (GA) motioned to close the floor of further discussion and accept the full slate of pending applications to the SCRC as full members by unanimous consent
  - Dale Hartmann (Aub) seconded the motion
  - With no objections, the motion is approved
  - Commissioner Bradley will follow up with each program
- Contact Information
  - All teams are asked to send their contact information (Head Coach / Officers / Alumni / School Rep) to the Commissioner by the end of this week so that all updates may be reflected. A new contact list PDF will be available on the website (SoutheasternRugby.org) going forward.

## Administrative Review

- **Eligibility** – The SCRC is responsible for forming and maintaining its own policies and guidelines for competition, discipline, and team expectations, though since joining NCR, the SCRC policy handbook is currently at odds regarding player eligibility.
  - Proposal – Update the conference handbook to align our eligibility standards with NCR’s, to be maintained and adjudicated by NCR officials.
- **Membership Fees** – NCR will continue to offer two payment options, with Plan 1 representing the best value for teams with rosters of 35 or more players, and Plan 2 representing the best value for teams with fewer than 35 players. The coaches fee will remain at \$63, which includes SafeSport training. The membership fees include General Liability and Participant Accident insurance for players, coaches, referees, and volunteers while engaged in NCR rugby activities. Registration opens on August 1, 2023.
  - Proposal – Transition the SCRC annual team fee (currently \$1100) to a \$15 per player fee, utilizing the existing NCR registration process for processing and collection. Per last year’s registration #s, teams can expect to pay, on average, \$500.
    - Plan 1 – \$1750 Club / \$30 Player + \$15 SCRC
    - Plan 2 – \$200 Club / \$75 Player + \$15 SCRC

- **All Stars** – NCR has eight state-based regions, to include the Southeast Bears, that compete in its mid-January All Star tournament. Referred to as the Shield Challenge, the three-day national 15s tournament features the best NCR rugby players from across the country, held in major league rugby’s Houston Sabercats stadium, in front of MLR scouts and coaches. Each All Star team forms over the fall season and includes players from diverse schools and all divisions. In addition to the All Star teams, each region may also form a Rising Stars team that includes emerging all star-calibre players. The Southeast Bears are coached by Nick Whitrow (Belmont Abbey College), Tyree Reed (Queens University of Charlotte), and Scott Tunga (University of Tennessee).
  - Proposal – The SCRC commits to supporting this venture and its member players who participate.
- **Financials** –
 

<u>2022-2023 Fiscal Season</u>	<u>2023-2024 Fiscal Proposal</u>
○ Beginning Balance = \$32,050	○ Beginning Balance = \$34,900
○ Revenue = <b>\$14,300</b>	○ Revenue = <b>\$12,000</b>
▪ 13 member teams @ \$1,100ea	▪ 800 participants @ \$15ea
○ Expenses = <b>\$11,450</b>	○ Expenses = <b>\$12,900</b>
▪ \$1,000 – 15s Championship	▪ \$4,300 – 15s Championship
▪ \$3,000 – 15s Nationals	▪ \$1,500 – 15s Nationals
▪ \$2,100 – 7s Championship	▪ \$4,000 – 7s Championship
▪ \$5,000 – 7s Nationals	▪ \$1,500 – 7s Nationals
▪ \$350 – Administrative	▪ \$1,000 – NCR SE All Stars
○ Ending Balance = \$34,900	▪ \$600 – Administrative
	○ Ending Balance = \$34,000
- Commissioner Bradley fielded questions/comments regarding the proposed changes:
  - Q – John Roberts (SC) – \$15/pp via NCR, how does that work? Is it simpler administratively?
  - A – SCRC player fees collected via NCR registration will be deposited directly into the SCRC account on a reoccurring (weekly) basis. Collecting team fees internally over the years has become a challenge, especially with more entities involved (e.g., alumni, foundations, universities, etc). Increasing to 25 teams will only compound the issue.
  - Q – Jason Posey (MSt) – Where did the ‘800’ participants figure come from?
  - A – Following the earlier membership vote, the conference now stands at 25 member teams with roughly 800 participants based on the 2022/2023 season.
  - Q – Jim Snell (V) – What happens if a player/team does not register with NCR? Is there a deadline?
  - A – Teams who fail to register will not receive referees and their matches will be forfeited. Players who participate in a match without registering will be subject to eligibility/disciplinary action. Match rosters and NCR registration will be cross-verified each week to ensure compliance. All team and player fees should be paid before the start of SCRC competition. Liability wise, all players should be registered before engaging in contact.
  - Q – Matthew Colson (AL) – Is the \$30+\$15 player fee collected when players register annually via NCR? Do we now administer that at the club level?
  - A – Yes, under plan 1, \$30 goes to NCR and \$15 goes to the SCRC. Teams may choose to administer as a bulk order, paying for all their players at one time, or leave it to the individual players to complete/purchase.
- **Membership Decision**
  - Richard Cole (Memp) motioned to close the floor of further discussion and approve all 4 proposals by unanimous consent
  - Alejandro Otero (ValSt) seconded the motion
  - With no objections, the motion is approved

## Competition Structure

- Effective for the Fall 2023 season, National Collegiate Rugby (NCR) announced new enrollment maximums for schools participating in men's DII and DIII (Small College). In Men's DII, the enrollment limit will be reduced to 10,000 male students, providing greater delineation between DII and DI-AA programs. In Men's DIII, the enrollment limit will be reduced to 3,500 male students, aligning the men's eligibility rules with the women's enrollment requirements. This restructure does not require any conference reorganization, as NCR has always recognized hybrid leagues, though conferences are encouraged to realign their competitive structures to account for the new policy. All school enrollments are sourced from the U.S. Department of Education Equity in Athletics Data Analysis (EADA).
- The following divisional realignment would be necessary to accommodate the new enrollment policy and each team's preferred competitive level:
  - Division I
    - Alabama
    - Clemson
    - Georgia
    - Kennesaw State
    - Kentucky
    - Louisiana State
    - South Carolina
    - Tennessee
  - Division II
    - Auburn \*
    - Georgia Tech
    - Ole Miss
    - Memphis
    - Mississippi State
    - Tennessee Tech
    - Valdosta State \*\*
  - Division SC (North)
    - Lee
    - North Alabama
    - Sewanee
    - Vanderbilt
  - Division II/SC (South)
    - Southeastern LA
    - Spring Hill
    - LA Lafayette
    - LA Tech
    - Southern
    - Tulane

\* Competing **below** the NCR required divisional level – Not eligible for postseason play

\*\* Competing **above** the NCR required divisional level – Eligible for postseason play

## Competition Concerns

- **Reserve Sides** – Teams low on reserves must be more realistic and sincere regarding their player numbers. This goes for both the host and the visiting side. Teams may choose to bring in another program (a local senior men's or college side) to give their reserve players an opportunity for quality playing time. Communication should be early in the week, not Friday night. Three member teams have already notified the conference that they expect to field three sides on a given weekend, so they will be taking the initiative to contact opponents early on to arrange/host enough competition.
- **Player Registration** – The conference will strictly adhere to the policy of "Not Registered = Can't Play." Players and/or teams who participate in a match without registering will be subject to eligibility/disciplinary action.
- **Referees** – The SCRC struggled to receive the necessary number of referees for this year's 7s Championship. Alabama did a great job hosting, though their referees society (Deep South) does not have enough referees to cover an event of that size, let alone the usual spread of matches on any given weekend. Unfortunately, the other neighboring societies did not have a sense of obligation to assist, even with their member teams competing. SCRC members are paying annual fees to support their societies, so we should expect support even when an event is not held within their territory, especially for a national qualifying event. The ongoing NCR/USA conflict is making the matter worse, as USAR is using insurance coverage as a wedge to restrict referees from covering outside events, denying them appointments. USAR is even unselecting players from the national level due to participating in the CRC. In the end, the SCRC may have to find/create its own solution, though in the meantime, the conference will take a more assertive role in organizing and investing in securing and training referees, if a long-term commitment can be made.

## 2023 Fall 15s Season Proposal

- **DIAA** – 8 teams divided into 2 brackets of 4 → play each within your bracket +2 crossovers → top 2 in each bracket play in SCRC DI Semi-Finals (W1 vs E2 & E1 vs W2) with the winners advancing to the Final → winner crowned SCRC DI Champion
- **DII** – 7 teams play each other in a round-robin format → top finishing team crowned SCRC DII Champion
- **DIII** – 10 teams divided into 2 brackets of 6 & 4 → play each within your bracket → top team in each bracket plays in SCRC DIII Final → winner crowned SCRC DIII Champion
- Allows for home & away, crossovers, & friendlies → home football weekends are avoided → each team receives their #1 open date, though some are not as lucky with their #2 open date
- Teams that want to attempt to reschedule, move, or adjust matches are free to do so with the agreement of the opponent. Please keep the conference notified of changes
- Survey for dates needs to be returned ASAP – ONLY ONE submission per team
- Key dates to remember:
  - First Weekend – September 16 (some on the 9<sup>th</sup>)
  - Last Weekend – October 28
  - SCRC Semis – November 4
  - SCRC Finals – November 11
  - NCR Postseason – November 18

## 2024 Spring 7s Season Proposal

- One two-day championship tournament open to all member teams
  - Event to take place on TBD at a site TBA based on a formal bidding process
  - 3 divisions of competition, live streaming the primary field
  - Seeding based on 2023 championship results
  - Each divisional winner advances to the NCR Collegiate Rugby Championship (Washington, DC)
  - If winner defers, finalist may apply/be considered for an At-Large bid. Divisional status will also be considered for At-large bids, regardless of results.
- Members are encouraged to host/attend regional invitational events as preparation for the championship

## Officer Elections

- Membership Decision
  - Richard Cole (Memp) motioned to close the floor of further discussion and renominate the current leadership (Commissioner Marty Bradley & Treasurer/Secretary James Farrar) by unanimous consent
  - Dale Hartmann (Aub) seconded the motion
  - With no objections, Marty Bradley & James Farrar retained their current positions
- Both men will serve a term of 1 year
- The Commissioner shall have the authority to appoint additional personnel or advisers to serve as directors and on committees to support the operations of the conference. Current personnel include:
  - Charles Dube – Discipline
  - Dave Haines – Referees
  - Scott Tungay – DI Competitions
  - Dr. Richard Cole – DII Competitions
  - Eddie Roberts – DIII Competitions (North)
  - Rory Roussett – DIII Competitions (South)

**Being no further business before the group, the meeting was closed at 9:30 PM EST.**