



Alberta Rugby Union

11759 Groat Road
Edmonton, AB T5M 3K6

Alberta Rugby Union
Harassment Policy & Procedures

Revised: October 15, 2018
Board Approved:





Policy Objective

Rugby Alberta is committed to providing a sport and work environment which promotes equal opportunity and prohibits discriminatory practices. Harassment is a form of discrimination which is prohibited by human rights legislation in Canada. Rugby Alberta supports the rights of all its members, whether athletes, coaches, match officials, volunteers, or staff, to participate in all Rugby Alberta activities free from any form of harassment.

This policy is in addition to and not in substitution for such rights as an individual may have under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, as amended.

Policy Statement

Rugby Alberta will make every effort to promote awareness of the problem of harassment among all of its members, and to respond swiftly and effectively to complaints or disclosures of harassment. It is Rugby Alberta's policy to:

- Maintain an environment that is free from harassment;
- Set out the types of behavior that may be considered objectionable, abusive, or offensive;
- To establish a mechanism for receiving complaints of harassment and to provide a procedure by which Rugby Alberta will deal with these complaints; and
- Provide an example of the steps that can be taken towards maintaining an environment in which members treat each other with mutual respect.

Definition of Harassment

Harassment is defined as conduct, gestures, or comments which are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, malicious, degrading or otherwise offensive to an individual or group on individuals, and which create a hostile or intimidating environment for work or sports activities, or which negatively affects the individual or group. Any of the different forms of harassment may be based on the grounds prohibited in human rights legislation, such as race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation and religion. Harassment may occur between peers (e.g. athlete to athlete, parent to official, coach to coach) or between someone in a position of power or authority and someone in a subordinate position (e.g. coach to athlete).

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of harassment:

- Unwelcome jokes, innuendo or teasing about a person's body, looks, race, sexual orientation etc;





- Condescending, patronizing, threatening or punishing actions which undermine self-esteem;
- Practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, or may endanger a person's safety;
- Any form of hazing;
- Unwanted or unnecessary physical conduct including touching, patting, pinching;
- Unwanted conduct, comments, gestures, or invitations of a sexual nature which are likely to cause offence or humiliation, or which might on reasonable grounds be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature; and
- Sexual assault or physical assault.

Included Behavior and Locations

For the purposes of this policy the types of behavior which constitute harassment include, but are not limited to: verbal abuse or threats, offensive comments and actions which demeans, belittles or humiliates and individual or group, and physical assault. These behaviors can occur:

- At the rugby pitch, sidelines or clubhouse;
- At rugby-related social functions;
- At rugby-related conferences or training sessions;
- During rugby-related travel;
- Over telephone, e-mail or social networks; or
- Elsewhere if the person harassed is there as a result of rugby-related responsibilities or a rugby-related relationship.

Response & Remedies

Rugby Alberta recognizes the serious negative impact of all types of harassment on personal dignity, individual and group development and performance, enjoyment of the sport and personal safety, and will not be tolerated.

At the same time, Rugby Alberta recognizes that not all incidents of harassment are equally serious in their consequences. The process of investigation and settlement of any complaint of harassment must be fair to all parties, allowing adequate opportunity for the presentation of a defense to the charges.





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Every member of Rugby Alberta has a responsibility to play a part in ensuring that the environment is free from harassment. This responsibility can only be met if every member ensures that his or her conduct avoids even the suggestion that it might constitute harassment.

Minor incidents of harassment (e.g. inappropriate jokes) should be corrected promptly and informally, taking a constructive approach and with the aim of bringing about a change in negative attitudes and behavior.

More serious incidents (e.g. a course of repeated taunting, any form of sexual or physical assault) should be dealt with according to the Rugby Alberta Harassment Complaint Procedures. Complaints should be handled in a timely, sensitive, responsible and confidential manner. There shall be no tolerance of reprisals taken against any party to a complaint.

Anyone making a complaint which is found to be clearly unfounded, false, malicious or frivolous will be subject to discipline.

Procedures for the handling of complaints brought against all members, staff and volunteers of Rugby Alberta are detailed below in the *Rugby Alberta Harassment Complaint Procedures* section.





Rugby Alberta Harassment Complaint Procedures

Note: For convenience, this policy uses the term “Complainant” to refer to the person who is experiencing harassment, even though not all persons who experience harassment will make a formal complaint. The term “Respondent” refers to the person against whom a complaint is made.

Application

This policy applies to all Rugby Alberta members, volunteers and staff. It applies to harassment that may occur during the course of all Rugby Alberta business, activities and events.

This policy does not prevent an appropriate person having authority from taking immediate, informal, corrective disciplinary action in response to behavior that, in their view, constitutes a minor incident of harassment.

Reporting Harassment

A person who experiences harassment is encouraged to make it known to the harasser that the behavior is unwelcome, offensive and contrary to the policies of Rugby Alberta.

If confronting the harasser is not possible, or if after confronting the harasser the harassment continues, the Complainant should request a meeting with a Harassment Officer of Rugby Alberta.

A Harassment Officer is a male and female appointed by the Rugby Alberta President, and shall preside over these procedures. The Harassment Officer shall advise the President of Rugby Alberta, or designate, whether an investigation under this policy is required.

Once contacted by a Complainant the role of the Harassment Officer is to serve in a neutral, unbiased capacity in receiving the complaint and assisting in its informal resolution. If the Harassment Officer considers that he or she is unable to act in this capacity, the Complainant will be referred to the President of Rugby Alberta, or designate.

Where a volunteer, staff or member of Rugby Alberta has experienced or is experiencing harassment and reports this belief to a Harassment Officer, the Harassment Officer will meet





with the person said to have experienced harassment and proceed in accordance with these procedures.

Where a Harassment Officer believes there is sufficient evidence to warrant laying a formal complaint but the Complainant does not wish to do so, the Harassment Officer may lay a formal complaint and proceed in accordance with these procedures.

Complaint Procedure

There are three possible outcomes to a meeting of the Complainant and Harassment Officer:

1. It may be determined that the conduct does not constitute harassment as defined in this policy, in which case the matter will be closed;
2. The Complainant may decide to pursue an informal resolution of the complaint in which case a mediator as agreed to by both the Complainant and Respondent will assist the two parties to negotiate or mediate an acceptable resolution of the complaint; or
3. The Complainant may decide to lay a formal written complaint, in which case the Harassment Officer will receive the written complaint and will advise the President of Rugby Alberta, or designate, and the Harassment Officer will conduct an investigation of the complaint.

