



Empire Rugby Football Union Geographical Union Policy Handbook & Guidelines

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Empire Rugby Football Union Geographical Union, also known as Empire GU. The Empire GU manages and fosters rugby for men's and women's teams in New York State, Northern New Jersey and Fairfield County, Connecticut. It was created in July 2012 and is comprised of the former Northeast Rugby Union, New York State Rugby Conference and Metropolitan New York RFU. Empire RFU is one of four original pilot Geographical Unions (GUs) that were developed by USA Rugby to create a more streamlined structure, effectively support growth in the game and provide increased member services. At the USA Rugby Congress meeting held in Houston, Texas, in June 2013, the pilot GU program was made permanent and GUs were approved as the operating structure going forward.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the most up to date information on how the Union operates with regards to the rules, regulations and performance standards required of all member clubs and players.

Administratively, the Empire GU is managed through a Board of Directors comprised of an Executive Committee and a Director for each of the competitive leagues. Should you have any questions at any time, you should always consult with your Division Director first. The names and relevant contact information for all Board Members is available on our website: empiregurugby.com.

The Empire GU is one of the most progressive and competitive Unions in the United States. We pride ourselves on making sure both Clubs and players have every opportunity to advance their knowledge of the Game and every opportunity to advance their level of competitiveness.

The Empire GU is not only committed to continually elevating the level of the Game, but also our organization. We encourage member clubs, coaches and athletes to be actively involved with this organization, providing feedback, concepts or ideas on ways to improve services.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT

EMPIRE GU expects all of its teams and their members to abide by the following code of conduct:

Empire GU strives to provide meaningful experiences to enhance the development of the game of Rugby. Our programming shall be conducted in accordance with existing GU, USA Rugby and IRB rules and regulations. At all times, member clubs, athletes, team officials and referees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner befitting the game of Rugby. Actions or behavior considered detrimental to the Game of Rugby will not be tolerated.

3. BENEFITS OF EMPIRE GU MEMBERSHIP

Membership in Empire GU includes:

- Ability to become a USA Rugby member
- Participation in League play and Empire GU and USA Rugby Championships
- Access to Rugby matches and events within the Empire GU/area, such as tours and tournaments
- Access to competition against incoming touring sides
- Access to Referees through the Rugby Referee Society of New York (RRSNY) or NYS Rugby Referees Society (NYSRRS)
- Access to and participation in coach, player and referee clinics
- Access to Select Side play for qualified team members
- Disciplinary support from the Empire GU Disciplinary Committee and the Empire GU Referees Society
- Eligibility to host tournaments, as approved by Empire GU
- Eligibility to bid on / host Empire GU and USA Rugby events
- Eligibility to tour outside of the Empire GU

- One (1) vote per CIPP-registered team at the Annual General Meeting
- Ability to nominate team members for Empire GU Officer, Director and Committee positions
- Ability to serve as an Empire GU Officer, Director or Committee Member, as elected by the members of the Empire GU

4. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

To be a member in good standing with Empire GU, every club must be compliant with the following items.

4.1 UNION DUES – Senior Rugby

The Empire GU dues are applied on an individual basis. As of January 1, 2013, the GU dues are currently assessed at \$45 for the year running from September 1 through August 31 (in accordance with the USA Rugby CIPP registration requirements, discussed in further detail below). These Empire GU dues are in addition to any dues assessed by USA Rugby and go directly into the Empire GU bank account (after a service charge is applied to use the registration software).

4.2 CIPP REGISTRATION

Prior to participation in any rugby practice, match or competition, all member clubs, players and coaches must be USA Rugby CIPP registered. Clubs, players and coaches not CIPPd will be penalized per a decision made by the Disciplinary Committee. (See Section 13).

4.3 COACHING POLICY

As of September 1, 2014, each team is required to have a Level 200 USA Rugby-certified coach (as of September 1, 2013, each team was required to have a Level 100 USA Rugby-certified coach). Certification will be granted by USA Rugby after completion of appropriate training sessions. Teams without a certified coach are subject to exclusion from league play. A schedule of certification courses may be found on USA Rugby's website.

4.4 FACILITATING COMMUNICATION

Clubs are solely responsible for actively maintaining current contact information of their club and officers on the Empire GU Website and with the Empire GU Administrator. Empire GU considers information on the website to be current at all times and cannot be responsible for any issues resulting from incorrect or outdated contact information.

To ensure consistent communication throughout the year, member clubs should:

1. Have its website directory information updated as of September 1 of every year.
2. Establish a permanent physical (i.e. PO Box) and email address (i.e. empiregurugby@gmail.com)
3. Update club page on GU website and keep Empire GU Administrator informed of officers' email and phone number changes.
4. Conduct annual officer elections within two (2) months of the Empire GU AGM

4.5 MEMBER CLUB PARTICIPATION IN EGU MEETINGS, DISCUSSIONS

Each Empire GU-member club is expected to participate in Empire GU Board calls, AGMs and other interactions with the Empire GU Board. The club President (or the club's functional equivalent) is strongly encouraged to directly participate in all appropriate EGU matters, as they serve as the chief officer of their respective club. Should the club President not be available, another person may be designated. If a club chooses to have another individual other than its President (or functional equivalent) speak on its behalf, that other person (including their name, CIPP number and club title) must be communicated to the Empire GU Board, in advance of the respective meeting, by reply to the EGU VP of Communications and/or EGU Administrator. It will be strongly encouraged that each club President represents their club at each EGU Board meeting, AGM or other applicable function, but communication of the intent to have another named individual act

in their place can be done for one-off scenarios or on a consistent basis, where applicable.

4.6 CLUB REQUIREMENTS TO PROVIDE REFEREES

Each senior club must supply at least one new* referee each year to their respective referee society to participate in the Club Referee Program.

To complete the requirement for their club, the participant must:

1. Become certified by completing the Level 1 Referee course (Referee certification courses are usually offered over the winter and occasionally some other times during the rugby season);
2. Provide dates of availability to the referee society;
3. Fulfill at least three (3) referee assignments and complete match reports to the referee society before the end of the competitive year on August 31 of each year. Assignments may be fulfilled by refereeing matches as assigned by the referee society, including college or high school matches which may be played on Sundays, or serving as an Assistant Referee assigned by the referee society. Refereeing the B-side match will only count if the individual is assigned by the referee society to referee that match in advance.

• Individuals who have previously completed the Level 1 referee certification are eligible to fulfill this requirement for their club. Individuals are not eligible to fulfill this requirement for their club if they have:

- Previously fulfilled this requirement for a senior club;
- Previously served more than 15 referee assignments for the referee society

Participants are encouraged to continue activity as a referee after fulfilling the requirement for their club. Clubs that compete with both a men's and women's team are required to have a participant each year fulfill the requirement for each team (the gender of the participant does not have to be the same as the gender of the team they represent in fulfilling this requirement).

5. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS for 15s RUGBY

1. To apply for membership in the Empire GU, complete the "Empire GU New Club Application" form found in the Union Info section of the Empire GU website. Submit an electronic copy to the appropriate Executive Director, Empire GU Secretary and the Empire GU Administrator.
2. New clubs, or clubs reforming after a two-plus year layoff will begin play during their first year in the union in the following divisions unless a social status is requested.
 1. Men's Club – Division IV
 2. Women's Club – Division III
3. Clubs transferring from another union will be placed in a division determined by the Executive Committee.
4. Teams returning from suspension will be placed in a division determined by the Executive Committee.

6. CLUB DRESS GUIDELINES

Empire GU abides by the standards set by the International Rugby Board in Law 4 and Regulation 12 for padding and other equipment. Uniforms that do not meet the minimum standards outlined here are a potential safety issue for players and portray a less than favorable image of the Game. Player clothing and equipment not specifically described in IRB Law 4 and Regulation 12 is not allowed. Particularly note laws:

4.4.(c) A player must not wear any items containing buckles, clips, rings, hinges, zippers, screws, bolts or rigid material or projection not otherwise permitted under this Law.

4.5(b) The referee has power to decide at any time, before or during the match, that part of a player's clothing is dangerous or illegal. If the referee decides that clothing is dangerous or illegal the referee must order the player to remove it. The player must not take part in the match until the items of clothing are removed.

For a complete outline of the International Rugby Board (IRB) Laws and Guidelines and regarding equipment and padding visit the following websites:

<http://www.irblaws.com/index.php?law=4>

http://www.irbplayerwelfare.com/pdfs/IRB_Regulation_12_EN.pdf

In addition, for Empire GU competition:

1. Kits must match and be clean with no tears in shirts, shorts, and socks. Short or cut sleeves must be hemmed and must at least cover the player's biceps.
2. Numbers on jerseys are mandatory.
3. In the event of a lack of contrast of color jerseys, the *Home Team* is responsible for providing alternate jerseys to the satisfaction of the referee. The match is liable to cancellation, at the referee's discretion, if contrast of jerseys is unacceptable to the referee.

7. MEDICAL GUIDELINES

1. It is the recommendation of the Empire GU that each Club develops and maintains a risk management program at each practice and contest.
2. Each Club is required to comply with USA Rugby medical guidelines: <http://www.usarugby.org/medical-and-safety/#SfPLyVvWwDGP8A48.97>
3. Empire GU recommends that each home team have an Emergency Medical Technician ("EMT"), Certified Trainer ("ATC"), or other medically qualified individual to cover the match. Senior Clubs hosting a College match or tournament are **required** to have either an EMT or ATC present who is permitted to treat players for the duration of all matches.
4. Each Rugby player should understand the need to stay fit in order to ensure maximum physical performance while avoiding unnecessary injury. Although paramount to play, proper training alone cannot preclude all Rugby injuries. Sports Medicine Physiologists agree that most injuries are best avoided by keeping fit, performing an adequate warm-up and by all-around safe play. When the unavoidable injury does occur, however, the seasoned athlete recognizes the need for quick on-site treatment in order to minimize the extent of the immediate trauma and its possible long-term effects.
5. Ensuring access to a properly equipped medical kit during play is as essential as a correct personal kit to the knowledgeable Rugby player. A first aid kit can be created at a minimal expense and may someday prove valuable to the player suffering injury on an isolated field.
6. Should an injured player require more treatment than can be provided by on-site trainers or professionals, transport to the nearest emergency facility will be necessary. Under these circumstances, it is important for someone from the home team to be familiar with directions to the closest hospital equipped with an emergency room. Emergency phone numbers for professional medical transport companies should be in the medical kit and the following information to the nearest hospital:
 1. Name
 2. Address
 3. Phone Number
 4. Directions from the field being used
7. Clubs are encouraged to comply with USA Rugby concussion guidelines: <http://www.usarugby.org/concussions>

8. ALCOHOL & REGULATED SUBSTANCE POLICIES

EMPIRE GU WILL RECOGNIZE AND ADHERE TO USA RUGBY GUIDELINES AND ANY AND ALL APPLICABLE LOCAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

1. At Rugby matches/events held on high school or college campus settings or involving youth, high school, and/or collegiate teams, the serving or selling of alcoholic beverages is forbidden for one hour before the match/event, during the match/event, and for one hour after the match/event. Campus policy on alcoholic beverages must be adhered to strictly. Alcohol may not be sold and served at Senior Club tournaments in which there is youth, high school, or college division brackets, but a college team may enter a side into a club division bracket (exceptions involve Randall's Island, detailed below). Alcohol may be served at Senior Club tournaments where only senior division brackets are entered. If a college side enters a Senior division bracket, the above policy still applies, but all measures must be taken to ensure that no members of a college side purchase or consume alcoholic beverages at the event, regardless of age.
2. It is the ultimate responsibility of colleges and local officials to ensure that their own regulations and laws are enforced.
3. Disciplinary action will be utilized to censure clubs, event hosts, and others who fail to take the necessary action to enforce these regulations.
4. Clubs competing at Randall's Island (a highly-utilized site within Empire GU) should be aware that the use of illegal drugs or alcohol is strictly prohibited. In the event that Randall's Island vendors provides alcoholic beverages for purchase, only the consumption of such alcoholic beverages will be allowed. No outside alcoholic beverages will be allowed, in accordance with Randall's Island park policy. Additional parks throughout Empire GU will have specific rules and regulations. Clubs are required to understand and follow site-specific regulations.

9. FIELD REQUIREMENTS

Matches must be played on adequately sized and properly lined fields (See "IRB field specs" in the USA Rugby field specification located on their website).

Field Safety and Size Requirements: Playing fields must be safe surfaces for Rugby and must be free of hazards. This requirement includes the playing enclosure, including both the playing area and perimeter, which extends at least five (5) meters from the touch, touch in goal, and dead ball lines. Goal posts must be padded up to a height of six (6) feet. Any supporting elements to goal posts within the playing area including the in goal area, must be directly behind the goal post uprights and be padded up to a height of six (6) feet.

Field Width: Minimum field width between the touch lines is at least 60 meters (65 yards). Fields narrower than this are deemed unsafe and the field may be declared unplayable.

Technical Zones: EGU requires the implementation of Technical Zones for all EGU matches. The safety and integrity of the games paramount to a professional atmosphere and allowing our games to be played as intended. The Technical Zone is the area specified for teams and coaches to be around the field during a rugby match. Using these zones is an absolute for organization of the field and safety of players, coaches, referees and spectators. The Technical Zone (TZ) is a space for coaches and players to be staged near the field. It is defined as space in front of the rope/barrier between the 10m line and 22m line. Team benches should be between the 10m line and 22m line but "behind the rope" and behind the actual technical zone.

A complete overview and schematic of Technical Zone requirements can be found at:
http://empiregurugby.com/contentPage/365604/technical_zones

Sideline Barriers: Barriers are required for all matches. Barriers such as ropes must control non-players on both sidelines and keep reserve players and non-players back at least five (5) meters from the touch lines. If the barrier is not fixed or is elastic, then the home team should have a person monitor the barrier and keep all non-players back five (5) meters. Medical staff and up to three (3) coaches are permitted inside the barrier provided they do not interfere with the match, opposing players or the referee in any way, including interfering with the ball in touch. Coaches inside the barrier should stay between the 22 meter lines. Only medical staff may enter the playing area. Reserve players should be behind the barrier except just prior to them being substituted into the match. The referee can require players or others on the sidelines who are interfering verbally or physically with the game or the referee to be removed from the playing enclosure or further from the playing area before continuing the game.

Reserve players may enter the playing area as water carriers during conversion kicks or during time off for injury. Water carriers must return to behind the barrier as play resumes. Coaches may enter the playing area to talk to their teams at half time, however that does not imply permission to talk to the referee.

10. MATCH PLAY REQUIREMENTS

Empire GU teams may not play any team not recognized by Empire GU, USA Rugby or the IRB.

Empire GU enforces all the laws and rules of the game as stipulated by the IRB and by USA Rugby unless otherwise stipulated in this handbook.

All "A-side" league matches must play 40-minute halves. Each club side is not permitted to play more than one league match in a day, or more than two matches in a weekend.

At each contest, all players, coaches and referees must be CIPP registered (including proof) through USA Rugby and present a Photo ID.

Prior to each match, each club should enter its full roster into the USA Rugby Competition Management System (CMS).

For all Empire GU matches, each club must undergo a complete ID and roster check - to be completed no later than 20 minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff time. This is in addition to clubs fulfilling their requirements under USA Rugby CMS. Both teams must present two (2) copies of the official Match Roster Form – one (1) set should be presented to the referee and one (1) set should be presented to the opposing side. Should an approved EGU official be present (and such person has been communicated to both clubs prior to game day), the designated EGU representative shall perform the ID and roster checks of both clubs. If no such individual is available, each club will be responsible for checking its opposition's ID and roster. Each rostered player shall provide a government-issued form of identification (driver's license, passport or other official picture ID), to include name and DOB.

Following the match, both clubs should enter participating players and scores into CMS. In addition, the Home team is responsible for reporting the score to Empire GU via "Score Reporting via Text" feature, to include scores and tries for each club. The scores should be submitted immediately after the game, but no later than 6 P.M. on SUNDAY (for Saturday matches, otherwise by 6PM the day following the match). Results and standings will be posted on the Empire GU's website and available to all clubs during the following week.

11. REFEREE ASSIGNMENT, CONFIRMATION & COVERAGE REQUIREMENTS

The Home or Host club must review the assignments posted by the referee society and confirm coverage with the assigned referee (or referees if assigned to a B match or if Assistant Referees are assigned) according to the respective referee society.

The Home Team must confirm with the referee by the deadline or the referee may be reassigned to another match. If an email or voice message was left with the referee but there has been no response from that referee within 24 hours, the referee confirmation is not complete and the Home Team should contact the referee society assignor immediately.

- RRSNY – confirmation by Noon on Tuesday prior to the scheduled match (or 1 week prior for matches scheduled on Monday- Thursday).
- NYSRRS – confirmation by 9PM Sunday prior to the match.

Information provided to the referee must include:

1. Confirm home and visiting team
2. Colors for each team
3. Start time
4. Directions to venue
5. Emergency contact information – cell phone

Cancellations and Changes: Teams must notify the assigned referee of match cancellation or changes immediately. Significant changes, such as a kickoff time change of more than an hour from original start time, or moving to a more distant location, may result in the originally-assigned referee not being able to accommodate that change. If a match is cancelled and the assigned referee is not notified in advance causing that referee to travel to the match location, the home team must pay the referee's match fee and travel costs.

Weather Cancellations: If it is reasonable that the home team could know their match location is unplayable in advance, it is advised they notify the referee and away team to cancel or reschedule the match rather than have unneeded travel. If the referee arrives and a match location must be declared unplayable, the home team must pay the referee's match fee and travel costs.

Playoff Selection / Assignments: For all EGU Playoff matches, the selection and assignment of match referees will be agreed upon by the ED Referees and, where applicable, the ED Men or ED Women.

12. REFEREE SIDELINE ABUSE

Referee sideline abuse will not be tolerated. Referee sideline abuse is defined as acts by spectators of deliberately hounding the referee through the course of the game by yelling, presence on the field, and specifically the use of obscene, derogatory language. This is particularly characterized over time and not isolated outbursts of disagreement or displeasure. The referee can require players or others on the sidelines who are interfering verbally or physically with the game or the referee to be removed from the playing enclosure or further from the playing area before continuing the game.

Teams must provide a safe environment for our Referee members. While we hope leagues, teams, players, coaches and spectators will take their own actions to prevent referee abuse, the respective Referee Societies, RRSNY and NYSRRS, in conjunction with Empire GU, may take action to include suspension of referee services to offending teams, entire clubs or leagues for single matches or lengthy periods of time.

Please recognize that coaches who yell or demonstratively complain about the Referee's decisions portray to players and spectators alike that they are permitted to do the same. This creates a disrespectful atmosphere towards the Referee.

Effective Immediately and going forward:

1. Sideline barriers are required to be in place for every match (see Section 9). Referees will be instructed to not start a match without sideline barriers. See the Empire GU sideline barrier policy below which RRSNY / NYSRRS will use at this time for all matches

and all leagues.

2. All referees will be instructed to first ask, through the team captain, for verbal abuse or sideline barrier violations to cease. The Referee may talk to the coach directly at the Referee's option. Additional abuse will result in offenders being sent further away from the field or to the parking lot. Play will be stopped until compliance is reached, or the match will be ended if compliance cannot be achieved. Coaches may be sent behind the sideline barrier as an interim measure, at the discretion of the Referee.

3. The Referee Societies and EGU recommend teams have a person appointed as a sideline monitor. This person should not be a coach or active player. The role of the sideline monitor is to caution coaches, players and spectators before things rise to the level where the Referee takes action.

4. Coaches and players must give the Referee a 10-minute cooling off period after the match before requesting a conversation with the Referee. The Referee can cite teams or individuals for Referee abuse after the match if the conversation becomes abusive.

5. Clubs are encouraged, via the captain or coach, to complete an online referee match evaluation form: RRSNY: <http://www.RugbyRefsNY.com> > Coaches/Administrators > Referee Match Evaluation NYSRRS: <http://www.nysrrs.net/feedback.php>

This evaluation helps provide constructive feedback whether the perception of the referee performance was good, bad or mixed.

13. LEAGUE PLAY REQUIREMENTS

13.1 SEASON

Empire GU's competitive league season runs from September through June for 15s and from June through July for 7s. When available, League match schedules are approved by the Empire GU Board.

13.2 SCHEDULES

League schedules are created by the Men's and Women's Directors and distribution will commence once schedules are complete. The Directors will make best-efforts to complete schedules as soon as possible. Members should understand that outside forces, including other territories, promotion/relegation, etc. influence the timeline for schedule completion.

All games will start at their scheduled day and time unless both teams and the Division Director agree on a change, in writing, via electronic mail.

13.3 PROTEST PROCEDURE

If applicable, the Team Captain must advise the Referee **BEFORE KICKOFF** that their team wishes to register a protest and provide the reason. The Team Captain must also notify the opposing Team Captain that the game is going to be played "under protest" and for what reason. The Referee should give the offending team a reasonable amount of time to correct the circumstances of the protest. If the circumstances are not corrected, the protesting team **MUST** notify their Disciplinary Chair via electronic mail within 24 hours with the circumstances of the protest. The Disciplinary Chair will review the protest and the teams involved will be notified of the decision.

13.4 CANCELLATIONS

Teams may cancel or postpone league fixtures, if agreed upon by both teams, subject to approval by the Men's, Women's or Collegiate Director (whichever is appropriate). If a league fixture is cancelled, it must be re-scheduled and played within the same league season. Should a team cancel or postpone a league fixture and the match cannot be made up, the Men's, Women's or Collegiate Directors shall be responsible for reviewing the reasons for cancellation and determining the outcome, which may result in one team forfeiting the match.

13.5 FORFEITS

The Empire GU has set out competition schedules with the intent that all matches are played and results on the field count in league standings. Forfeited matches are unfair to the competition and cause imbalances in the league structure. For purposes of this policy, the penalties outlined are for teams that refuse to play a match as scheduled or on an agreed date as modified by both teams in agreement with the Empire GU Board. The penalties below shall not apply if a match is played but a team has been ruled to have used an ineligible player or other cause to void the results of the match. Under circumstances where the result of the match is voided, the Empire GU board shall decide on any additional sanctions.

Under certain circumstances, matches may have to be postponed due to weather or other unforeseen purposes (other circumstances are expected to be extremely rare and late decisions of a club not to travel will be viewed unfavorably by the board). Postponements other than weather related circumstances must be approved by the Empire GU board prior to the scheduled match date.

13.5.1 Penalty for Forfeit of One Match

A team forfeiting one match shall receive up to negative five (-5) points in the league table. In addition, a team that has forfeited one match shall be ineligible to be declared the league champion and ineligible for advancement in Empire GU or USAR playoffs. If a team that has forfeited one match ends the season in last place in the league standings, and the team in first place in the next lower division elects to move up, the last place team will be relegated without a challenge match against the promoted team from the lower division. In addition, the club may be subject to a fine to the Empire GU of up to \$500 and to the other club of the same amount as well as payment to the non-forfeiting club for its actual costs incurred in anticipation of the scheduled match. In the event there are actual costs incurred by the non-forfeiting club, approval of such reimbursements to the non-forfeiting club will be made by the Executive Committee.

13.5.2 Penalty for Forfeit of Two or More Matches in One Season

A team that forfeits a second match within the same season may be automatically relegated to the next lower division in the following season. In addition, the team may be subject to a fine to the Empire GU of up to \$500 and to the other club of the same amount as well as payment to the non-forfeiting club for its actual costs incurred in anticipation of the scheduled match.

13.5.3 Mutual Agreement to Forfeit

If both teams agree to forfeit a scheduled match without prior Empire GU board approval to postpone or cancel the match, both teams may be penalized for forfeiting the match as described above.

13.5.4 League Points Awarded to the Opposing Team

The non-forfeiting team will receive credit equal to a win plus a bonus point (5 points total) in the league standings, as described further below.

13.6 STANDINGS

a. Division points for Senior Clubs will be awarded as follows:

- * 4 points for a win
- * 2 points for a tie
- * 0 points for a loss
- * 1 point for scoring 4 tries or more in a match
- * 1 point for losing by 7 points or less in a match

Forfeits are recorded to the team not responsible for the forfeit as a 20-0 win with a bonus point (5 points total). Forfeiting Team shall receive up to negative five (-5) points

13.7 OVERTIME

There is no overtime in league play. When there is a drawn match and extra time is required for a playoff match, after a break of two (2) minutes, two (2) 10-minute periods of overtime are played to completion with all scores accumulating over the two (2) 10-minute periods. If the score is still equal after the completion of the first two (2) 10-minute periods, the teams will play successive 10-minute periods with the team that scores points first immediately declared the winner and the match complete.

Prior to the first overtime period, the referee will organize a coin toss with the two captains. The winner of the toss decides whether to kick off or to choose an end. If the winner of the toss decides to choose an end, the opponents must kick off and vice versa. At the start of each successive overtime period, the teams will switch ends and the team which did not kick off in the previous period will kick off to start the overtime period. After each period, the teams change ends without an interval. There is no further coin toss beyond the first overtime period.

8. PLAYOFF / TIE-BREAKING PROCEDURE

Women's Divisions

- a. If, at the end of league play, two teams are tied in the standings with the same number of division points, the match result between the two teams will determine the finishing order. Should three or more teams be tied in the league standings, net points (points scored minus points against) from the matches among the teams tied shall determine the finishing order until only two tied teams remain. The match result between the remaining two teams will determine their finishing order.
- b. If the above criteria is insufficient to determine the order, point differential (points scored minus points against) against the highest ranked common opponent (excluding teams that forfeited against one or more of the tied teams) will be used to determine the final standings. If the tie still remains then the point differential against the next highest common opponent and so on will break the tie.
- c. Division Directors have the final decision if all three methods above have been exhausted.

Men's Division 2

The top two teams, after league play, from Upstate, NYC, and NJ plus the number 3 team from NYC get "automatic" play-off spots. The 8th team (wild card) will be the next best team chosen from 3rd place team from either NJ or Upstate or the 4th place team of NYC.

Determination of seeding and the wild card team will use the weighted value of points. Total points determined as the sum of match points (wins and ties) plus bonus points divided by the total number of league games played provides the weighted value. If teams have the same weighted value, then the team with the greater positive difference between points for and points against will be the higher seed.

Teams will be seeded as follows:

- * Winners of each conference will be seeded 1, 2, 3
- * Second-place teams of each conference will be seeded 4, 5, 6
- * Number 3 team from NYC will be the 7th seed
- * Wild card will be the 8th seed.

A complete schedule with current dates can be found on empiregurugby.com > Playoffs

Men's Division 3

The top two teams, after league play, from Upstate, NYC, NY, and NJ each get play-off spots. Determination of seeding of teams will use the weighted value of points. Total points determined as the sum of match points (wins and ties) plus bonus points divided by the total number of league games played provides the weighted value. If teams have the same weighted value, then the team with the greater positive difference between points for and points against will be the higher seed.

Teams will be seeded as follows:

* Winners of each conference will be seeded 1, 2, 3, 4

* Second place teams of each conference will be seeded 5, 6, 7, 8

A complete schedule with current dates can be found on empiregurugby.com > Playoffs

13.9 PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

For Senior Clubs:

1. A Challenge Match entails the champion of a lower division challenging the last-place team of the next highest division to a match.
2. If the last-place team loses the Challenge Match, or declines the Challenge Match, they shall be relegated to the next lower division.
3. If the league division champion wins the Challenge Match, they shall be promoted to the next higher division.
4. The Empire GU Board reserves the right, if in the interests of improving competition, to deviate from this policy and promote/relegate multiple teams, abandon promotion/relegation for particular teams, or alter entire league structures.
5. Challenge Matches shall be scheduled within two weeks of the conclusion of the regular league season. Challenge Matches shall be played at the higher division's team pitch within six weeks of the conclusion of the regular league season. If match details cannot be agreed upon by the two teams, the director of league will determine the match details.
6. Eligibility for the Challenge Match shall be the same as the eligibility guidelines for a USA Rugby Championship (e.g., CIPP deadline, in country date, minimum qualifying matches, etc.). Illustrations: Between D4 and D3 there will be 2 entrants; one each for the North and South. From D3, only the overall league champion will be given the opportunity to be promoted. In D2, the Northeast representative who will be in the USAR play-offs will be given the promotion option, and this may be either an Empire team, or a New England team, based on the results of their playoff.

13.10 CONTINGENCIES

The Empire GU Executive Directors, with agreement by the Empire GU Division Directors, reserves the right to add new teams and to adjust divisions and these regulations, as it may become necessary.

13.11 ROSTERS

Empire GU enforces compliance with the minimum roster levels required by USA Rugby roster. To the extent those levels change, Empire GU will adjust its minimum requirements accordingly.

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13.12 ELIGIBILITY

All Empire GU league games are required to be played under the same eligibility rules that USA Rugby employs for playoff games. Empire GU enforces compliance with the USA Rugby eligibility policies: <http://usarugby.org/documentation/membership/eligibility-regulations.pdf>

14. TOURNAMENT SANCTIONING

All tournaments must be sanctioned by USA Rugby. <http://usarugby.org/event-sanctioning>

15. TOUR APPROVAL & REQUIREMENTS

This measure is required to ensure that all Clubs participating in a tour receive appropriate approvals from their host and receiving Unions and that all participating clubs are properly covered by their respective insurances.

1. Touring/hosting team, which includes Empire GU teams touring outside the USA and to Empire GU teams hosting teams from outside the USA, must get approval from USA Rugby. All information and forms can be found on the USA Rugby website.
2. All touring teams (outgoing or incoming) must have liability insurance coverage for the event.
3. All touring teams (outgoing or incoming) must have medical coverage on all participants.
4. Touring or hosting teams must be in "good standing" with Empire GU.

16. DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

Overview

The Disciplinary Committee is responsible for reviewing and administering disciplinary action within the Empire GU. Empire GU adheres to the *USA Rugby Disciplinary Regulations and Procedures* set by USA Rugby.

The Empire GU Disciplinary Chair is approved in accordance with the Empire GU By-Laws, which set forth the guidelines for the Disciplinary Committee. The Empire GU Disciplinary Committee reviews all referee send-offs, referee sin bins, and written complaints from the community at large regarding the behavior, on or off the field, of Empire GU Clubs and its members. To the extent any of the information below conflicts with the Empire GU By-Laws and/or USA Rugby disciplinary procedures or suspension guidance and sentencing, the below will be disregarded until such time that this document is amended to be in accord with the Empire GU By-Laws and USA Rugby guidelines.

Disciplinary Action upon Infraction:

1. Immediately following a send-off (red card), a player is suspended with a minimum suspension of eight (8) days or one match (whichever is greater) for any sendoff.
2. The receipt of two yellow cards in a game by a player is equivalent to receiving a red card. The player will be ejected from the game and will receive an automatic minimum suspension of eight (8) days or one match (whichever is greater).
3. The receipt of three or more yellow cards in a competitive league season is equivalent to receiving a red card. The player will receive an automatic minimum suspension of eight (8) days or one match (whichever is greater).
4. Detailed rules and regulations regarding receipt of multiple yellow cards are located in the USA Rugby Disciplinary policy.
5. Empire GU Policy and USA Rugby Policy do not allow the appeal of a minimum suspension for red and yellow cards unless there is irrefutable evidence, such as video, that the ruling by the referee on the field was clearly in error.

Empire GU 7s Tournaments - Disciplinary Action and Review

1. At all Empire GU-hosted 7s tournaments, any player receiving a red card will be suspended until the Empire GU Disciplinary Committee can convene to review the matter.

Incident Review and Disciplinary Action:

1. Complaints must be filed with the Disciplinary Chair under the guidelines outlined in the Empire GU By-Laws.
2. The written complaint must be received within forty-eight (48) hours of the incident.
3. The Committee is responsible for notifying all affected parties and gathering all relevant and available data.

4. Upon receipt of all available data, the Committee will review, discuss and render a decision of action or no action.
5. Disciplinary Action taken by the Committee will be in accordance with the guidelines established in the USA Rugby Disciplinary Regulations and Procedures.
6. The Committee's written decision is then sent, as applicable, to the involved Club(s), Player(s) and the Referee Society.
7. The Committee has a standard to complete the investigation and issue a decision within ten days of receipt of the written complaint, unless the incident is of an unusual nature that requires more investigation into the facts.

Disciplinary Committee Decision Appeal Process:

1. Players and clubs may appeal a suspension by responding in writing to the Disciplinary Committee within one week of receiving the Disciplinary action notification.
2. The Disciplinary Committee will hear initial Appeals.
3. Players and clubs may appeal the Disciplinary Committee's initial and subsequent appeal decisions to the Executive Committee of the Empire GU by written request to the VP - Communications of the Empire GU within one week of the Disciplinary Committee decision or appeal.
4. Players and clubs have the right to appeal the decisions of Empire GU to the appropriate USA Rugby disciplinary committee as outlined in the USA Rugby Disciplinary Regulations and Procedures.