

USA RUGBY ANNOUNCES PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR RUGBY DEVELOPMENT ALONGSIDE RUGBY WORLD CUP BIDS TO LEAVE LASTING LEGACY BEFORE AND AFTER THE EVENTS

U.S.-hosted Men's and Women's Rugby World Cups would transform the sport for the long term and create opportunities in rugby for youth across the country

GLENDALE, Colo. (May 4, 2022) - Today, the United States Rugby World Cup Bid Committee in conjunction with USA Rugby, announced a proposed framework for ensuring that hosting the Men's and Women's Rugby World Cup tournaments in 2031 and 2033 respectively would create sustainable long-term growth of the sport in the United States. Should the United States be chosen to host the 2031 and 2033 Rugby World Cups, these legacy and pre-legacy efforts would focus on expanding access to participation in youth rugby programs, engaging support of scholastic institutions at the high school and college level and driving USA Rugby membership by increasing connectivity from the youth level through the senior club level and continuing into the professional and international ranks.

"We've seen glimpses of rugby's potential in the United States," said **Johnathan Atkeison**, Chief Operating Officer of USA Rugby. "The USA women winning the Rugby World Cup in 1991; 60,000 fans packing Soldier Field in 2014; players who started with programs like ICEF Rugby in Los Angeles going on to represent their country in the Olympic games; thousands of fans turning out to watch college rugby rivalries; Perry Baker twice being named World Sevens Player of the Year, and so on. Hosting the 2031 and 2033 Rugby World Cups in the United States would offer us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to turn those glimpses of potential into a sustainable and concrete reality."

The nine-year and eleven-year leadups to 2031 and 2033 would allow ample time to grow the game in anticipation of Rugby World Cups on U.S. soil. Improvements to the sport's national infrastructure made during the leadup to these tournaments would not only bolster the success of Rugby World Cup events but would also set the stage for the future of the game in America.

"With the United States being home to the world's largest sports market and with rugby already being one of the fastest growing sports in the country, rugby has incredible potential in the United States over the next decade and beyond," said USA Rugby World Cup Bid Chair **Jim Brown**. "Our goal is to use the sport's most prestigious global event to galvanize rugby in the American sporting landscape by growing the game at the youth, high school, college, senior club and professional levels to the benefit of young people and communities across the country."

One of the most important aspects of sport is the opportunities it creates for young people, especially those from low-income communities. From the chance to experience

teamwork, leadership and inclusivity on the pitch, to the opportunity to earn college scholarships, sports are a pathway to possibility. As such, the 2031 and 2033 Rugby World Cups have the potential to be a true force for good in the United States and around the world.

USA Rugby and the United States' Rugby World Cup Bid Committee will look to partner with groups from around the country to design and deliver these proposed legacy efforts. Discussions are underway with stakeholders including Major League Rugby (MLR); USA Rugby's Youth, College and Senior Club councils; USA Youth and High School Rugby; the NCAA and school districts across the country. The proposed plan will align programming across age groups and organizations to create an integrated and sustainable sport ecosystem to facilitate organic growth for years to come.

Preliminary goals of the United States' Rugby World Cup legacy efforts include:

- Driving **significant investment in the game at the youth level** to create sustainable structures that endure long after Rugby World Cup events conclude. Youth programming will be focused on making it easy for kids to start playing rugby and to stay in the game.
- **Diversifying and increasing access to rugby** by taking the game to locations and populations that have been previously underrepresented in rugby, providing the resources necessary to run programming, instilling a love for the game and providing pathways to success.
- Taking rugby to the **next level at the high school and college levels** for both men and women through collaboration with the NCAA, the NAIA, state high school athletic associations, as well as schools and universities across the country.
- **Growing USA Rugby membership** to 450,000 members by 2031 when the United States hosts the 2031 Men's Rugby World Cup, up from the 109,000 currently registered members.

These proposed legacy efforts will continue to be developed should the USA officially be awarded the 2031 and 2033 hosting rights by World Rugby on May 12, and their effects will be felt long after the tournaments are complete.

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