

# **Parental Involvement in the High School Rugby Club**

## ***A best practice for creating a sustainable organizational structure to continue the tradition of Rugby past the first season***

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### **Executive Summary -**

It is imperative for Parents to take ownership of the High School club in order to create and preserve continuity within the program. This best practice serves to provide the following:

- Describe the reasons parents are important for the high school program
- Describe organizational model
- Provide roles and responsibilities for members
- Provide appendix of administrative forms, intent and purpose that can be modified for each club

### **When You Want a Strong Club, You Need to Recruit Strong Parents.**

It has been my experience that Ruggerers, by nature, are leaders and feel strongly responsible, individually, for the success of their club. As these Ruggerers transition into Coaching, they are often reluctant to ask for help or to delegate out tasks. This is the first reason to petition parental involvement. As parents take on roles and responsibilities for the club, they not only share this wonderful sport with their children, they additionally assist in educating the players on delegation of tasks and organizational skills that are necessary for smooth operation of the club.

Please note that Rugby is still a club sport. Individual High Schools partner with the club, but do not necessarily assist in managing it; which leads to the second point for the importance of parental involvement. This is efficient team management. With the dedication of loving parents, the club can and will run smoothly.

The limited number of qualified Referees and Coaches is crippling the growth of youth rugby in the USA. I believe that coaches want to coach. These volunteers enjoy teaching the players the skills necessary to be successful and devising strategies to beat their opponents. Too many candidates decline this position, however, because the tedious, administrative tasks coupled with the coaching responsibilities are too demanding. The third reason for petitioning parental involvement is to give the volunteer coaches the ability to focus on coaching by taking over the administrative aspect of the club. With interest in Rugby growing and more players joining in the Rugby community, providing coaches this freedom is increasingly important.

These ideas and practices were developed and modified due to an extremely disappointing event that I experienced in 2004. I will share the catalyst with you now.

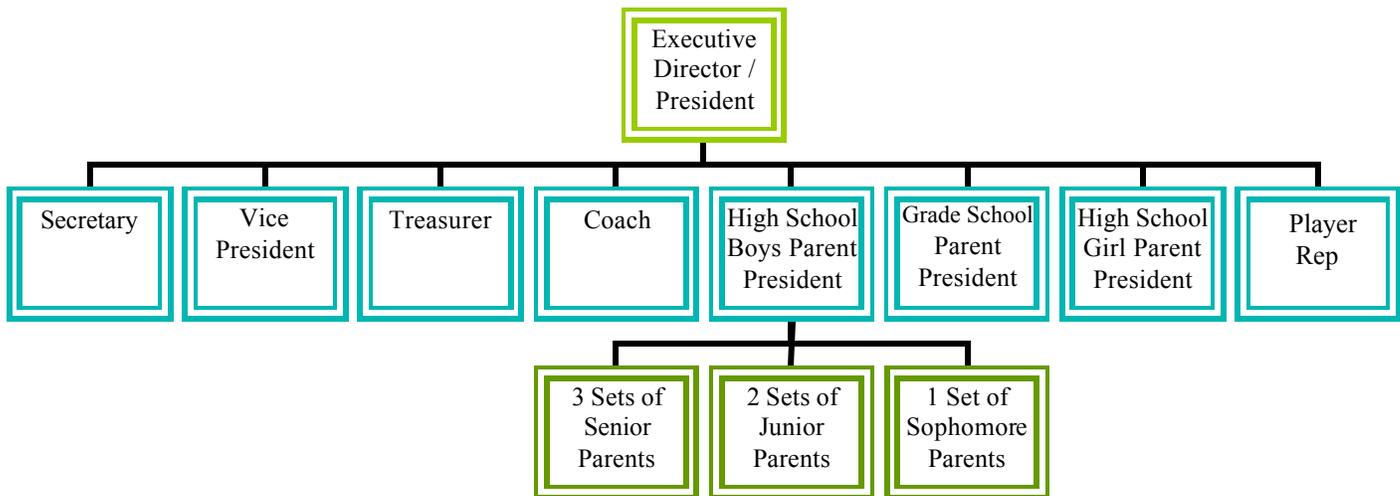
*In 2004, my Alma Mater was disqualified from the state tournament due to an administrative error. The team as a whole had exceptional talent and excellent athletes. (Well, not as good as I was, but that is a different story . . .) As an officer of the Union, I delivered the news that the team was disqualified due to its non-compliance and could not participate. As an alumnus, it made me very sad. It was at that point I promised the coach that I would help him take care of the administration of the club to aid in eliminating future administrative errs.*

*Realizing the weight of the role I took on, I organized a group of 'Old Boys' to help facilitate the creation of an administrative arm of the club. We were still without player parental involvement and were intending to manage it all. After many meetings, we had carefully crafted a budget and presentation to recruit players. We held a call-out meeting with parents and explained what we were trying to accomplish. After the meeting, a few parents said they would be interested in helping.*

*The parents were awaiting instruction, unbeknownst to the 'old boys'; and the 'old boys', unwilling to delegate tasks to the parents, continued attempting to manage everything. One night, in a moment of revelation, a parent said, "Just assign parents tasks." I was amazed that it could be so easy!*

Having parental involvement serves many purposes. First, it unites the players and parents in this wonderful sport and educates the players how to maintain an efficient club. Second, it provides dependable and efficient club management. Third, it relieves the coach of an excessive amount of work and allows freedom to focus on coaching. Fourth, it brings a new skill set into the mix and tasks are done quite differently than the coach would expect, sometimes with incredible results. Fifth, it gives the parents an opportunity to network and make friends. Finally, it promotes Rugby as the community game it is and can help to dissolve the negative image surrounding the sport. Through teamwork parents and coaches together can provide a great Rugby experience.

## Organizational Model



There are several models that can be successful. It is important to choose one that fits the local conditions.

In the organizational model presented above, there are two levels. The Vision Tier is responsible for ensuring that the club is continually taking actions to provide an opportunity for players to participate in Rugby. The Action Tier is responsible for carrying out the tasks required to accomplish this goal.

### Vision Tier

The Vision Tier is comprised of the following:

Executive Director/President - responsible for running the meetings and ensuring that everything was completed.

Vice-President - responsible for assisting the president and running the meetings when the President is unavailable.

Secretary - responsible for communication of the club between parents, players, coaches, fans, school admin.

Treasurer – responsible for money and equipment.

Coaching Rep - responsible for the coaching staff and player development.  
(Typically the head coach or someone from the coaching staff.)

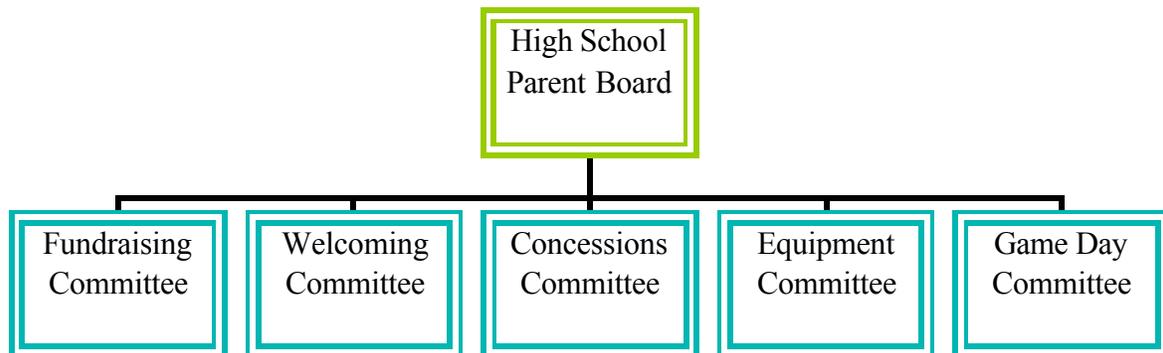
Parent Rep - responsible for the Parent Board.

Player Rep - responsible for providing a voice for the team. (often Captain of the Club)  
Also responsible for taking the organizational skills of running a club on to College.

## Action Tier

The Action Tier is comprised of three Senior Parent Teams, two Junior Parent Teams and one Sophomore Parent Team. A parent team includes both parents providing the Parent Board with a total of 12 members.

This Parent Board is responsible for organizing the following committees:



Fundraising Committee – responsible for reducing the cost burden on players and their parents.

Welcoming Committee – responsible for helping to recruit new players and welcoming new parents by hosting “Get to Know Rugby” nights.

Concessions Committee – responsible for the food and drinks during matches and tournaments. (Following the match the players, refs and coaches eat for free. Food is available for purchase to parents, etc. during the match as a fundraising mechanism.)

Equipment Committee – responsible for ensuring that the team has uniforms, match equipment, and practice equipment. Responsible for maintaining the equipment.

Game Day Committee – responsible for Securing Referee, Securing Field Location, Line Fields, Goals, Flags & Pads, Clean Uniforms, Water/Ice, Medical Kit, Video Taping, Keeping Stats, Touch Judge. The committee should delegate responsibilities to ALL parents. Just assign them to do it. See attached Spreadsheet.