

Minutes, Virginia Rugby Union Annual General Meeting
January 24, 2004; Richmond, Virginia.

The AGM was called to order at 10:25am by Kris Kabza, President.

Mr. Kabza introduced the 2003 VRU Officers in attendance: Greg Markham, Secretary; Bill Lucas, Treasurer; David Chapman, USA/VRU Representative; Carl Schmitt, College Men's Coordinator; Julie Comer, College Women's Coordinator; Tony Ferguson, Men's Coordinator; George Durocher, Disciplinary Chair; Jeff Anderson, Newsletter Editor, Referee Society President.

Mr. Kabza's opening comments mentioned USA Rugby's change to providing CIPP forms online only. Mr. Kabza had printed off copies of current CIPP forms, and were made available to any club at the roll call. Previously the VRU collected Club CIPP forms and dues to forward to USA Rugby. Individual clubs are now responsible for their own submission.

Roll call was made by Mr. Markham, Secretary. Absent were: Christopher Newport University, Longwood Men, University of Virginia Men, Virginia Tech Men, Virginia Tech Women, and Washington & Lee.

Mr. Kabza presented to President's Report (see Appendix).

Jeff Anderson, Referee Society Representative, stated that Referees should be contacted by Wednesday Evening.

There were no other comments.

Mr. Kabza presented the Vice President's Report (see Appendix) for Jamie Jones, who was unable to attend.

Mr. Markham asked a question about the required number of CIPP Registered Players required. Mr. Kabza stated that the VRU had previously pushed for 17 players as a borderline case, but the USA Rugby minimum was 15.

A question about the Coaching Clinic was asked. Mr. Kabza directed the petitioner back to the President's Report.

Representatives from Longwood Men, University of Virginia Men, Virginia Tech Men, Virginia Tech Women, and Washington & Lee checked in with the Secretary.

Mr. Markham presented the Secretary's Report.

Mr. Lucas presented the Treasurer's Report

Before ceding the floor, Mr. Kabza commented that MARFU had made a \$35 per club increase in club dues, and this increase would be passed along to each of the VRU clubs.

Mr. Schmitt asked a question about disciplinary actions toward chronically late clubs. Mr. Kabza stated this would be discussed and action taken at the summer EC meeting.

A question about the 2003 spending for Coaching Coordinator was raised. This was explained by a sudden influx of VRU candidates enrolling in the coaching course (one representative per year per club is paid by the Union) due to the MARFU mandate of a Level I coach for each club.

A question was raised about what constituted "Grants to Teams." This was explained as a \$500 grant to any club that competes in the USA Rugby championship round of 16 (or higher). Higher round competition does NOT get additional money.

Mr. Markham asked about the \$35 increase by MARFU, and asked the VRU to not pass along this fee increase to the constituent clubs as the VRU traditionally underperforms its budget. Mr. Chapman, Mr. Kabza, Mr. Schmitt, Mr. Durocher, all made comments that the \$35 was not a great burden and should be passed along to the clubs, and that the VRU should not budget an additional deficit for this item.

The motion was made and seconded to pass the current budget as presented in the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed.

Explanation of the Don Bridges Fund was made by Mr. Chapman.

A representative from Christopher Newport University checked in with the Secretary. A representative from each member club was then in attendance.

Mr. Chapman presented the USA/MARFU Representative's Report

The Radford University Representative asked where MARFU Playoffs will be held. Mr. Kabza stated at this point, no venue had been selected.

Mr. Ferguson presented the Men's Coordinator's Report.

There were no comments.

The Women's Coordinator's Report was presented by Mr. Kabza in Stephanie Edwards' absence.

There were no comments.

Mr. Schmitt presented the College Men's Coordinator's Report

Mr. Schmitt recognized Radford University as the College Division II National Champions.

Mr. Schmitt also recognized University of Virginia's achievement, being excluded from the final rounds of play by being defeated by Radford U.

Longwood University plans to petition for readmission. Randolph-Macon College plans to petition for admittance to the Union.

A question was raised by Radford University about the changing the seeding method for the MARFU tournament. The question was tabled.

Tom Lovell (Coach, W&L) raised the question about the growing size of Division III, and if the Division were to be divided again in conferences? Mr. Schmitt stated this decision would be made at a later time.

Ms. Comer presented the College Women's Coordinator's Report.

Ms. Comer mentioned that Jaime Burke of UVa was award the Woodley Award as National Female Collegiate Player of the Year.

Mr. Markham suggested to the VRU and EC members that the VRU take a more proactive role in promoting and announcing to the non-rugby community the outstanding achievements of our member clubs and individuals.

Mr. Kabza spoke of Youth activities, in the absence of Scott Ruby.

A question was asked about a template or guideline for starting a youth program. Reyn Kinzey (VCU/United) commented that on the broad range of supplies available from USA Rugby especially for this, and commented on where to acquire these supplies.

Mr. Durocher presented the Disciplinary Chair's Report

There were no major violations this year.

Mr. Durocher cannot know of violations unless reported by the Referee. Mr. Durocher commented that the referees are not always vigilant in submitting the details of violations.

Mr. Anderson presented the Newsletter Chair's Report and called for submissions.

Mr. Anderson presented the Referee Society's Representative's Report.

Mr. Anderson made a roll call of outstanding fees by clubs. There were a surprising number of clubs (almost all) owing fees to the Referee Society.

Mr. Anderson asked UVa Men to provide a \$75 payment for the Level I Referee Certification that was to be sent to USA Rugby for one of their members.

Mr. Anderson pointed out to the Blue Ridge Women that an invoice submitted to the address on file with the VRU was returned as undeliverable. Mr. Markham commented that Blue Ridge had updated their information two days before the AGM (but well after the invoice had been mailed out), and should be correct now.

A SHORT RECESS WAS CALLED

Mr. Kabza made a statement that the agenda would be slightly modified, and the New Clubs business would be moved up, in deference to the representative from Charlotte. Charlotte is petitioning for admission to the VRU, and the representative was also expected in attendance at the Charlotte RFC annual banquet later in the afternoon.

Shawn O'Brien (President, Charlotte RFC) was given the floor to present his petition to join the Virginia Rugby Union. Mr. O'Brien stated the reasons for Charlotte wishing to join the VRU and MARFU. Mr. O'Brien presented what he felt Charlotte would bring to the VRU. Mr. O'Brien concluded that it is of mutual benefit. Mr. O'Brien fielded questions concerning the difficulties that may exist. Mr. Kabza presented the questions that the EC had prepared. Mr. O'Brien fielded these questions. The only major sticking point that either side perceived was the availability of referees. Reyn Kinzey (VCU/United, former MARFU President, and former VRU EC Member) commented that though there were a number of challenges, most were not unsolvable. Mr. Kinzey stated that the benefits were far to great to let the dearth of Referees hold back this potential admission.

Mr. Kinzey made a motion to admit Charlotte RFC as a Full Member, beginning competition in the Fall Season. Motion was seconded by Mr. Markham. The motion passed by majority vote.

The University of Richmond Women's RFC was ceded the floor to present their petition for admission to the Union as an Associate Member. The University of Richmond Women had played scrimmages against VRU Members. These VRU Members all recommended acceptance. The University of Richmond Women's RFC was accepted into the VRU as associate members with no objection.

Randolph-Macon College representatives were ceded the floor to present their petition for admission to the Union as Associate Member. The club has not fully formed at this time, as the organizers preferred to have approval by the VRU to go ahead with their plans. The club was accepted with no objection as associate members.

Virginia Beach Falcons RFC was ceded the floor to present their petition for readmission to the Union. There were no major issues, and the previous incorporation of the club was not in arrears for any dues. Virginia Beach RFC was readmitted to the Union as full members with no objection.

Mr. Kabza presented the case for moving the Ed & Sandy Lee tournament and opened the floor to discussion of the merits. Discussion ensued on a number of issues. Some comment was made by some representatives that moving the tournament would unnecessarily increase the length of their season. Mr. Chapman motioned that the tournament be moved back 1 week for 2004 (from the last weekend of October to the first weekend of November). The motion was seconded by Mr. Schmitt. The motion passed by majority vote.

Mr. Kabza called for bids for the E/SL tournament. James River submitted a bid. Mr. Markham asked if additional time would be granted for clubs with the change in date. Mr. Kabza stated that one additional week would be granted for the submission of bids.

Mr. Lucas presented the VRU Sportsmanship awards:
Men – Blacksburg
College Men – Virginia Tech
College Women/Women – Raleigh Venom

Mr. Schmitt presented the awards for 2003 college men standings.

Mr. Kabza presented the awards for 2003 college women standings.

Mr. Kabza presented the awards for 2003 women standings.

Mr. Ferguson presented the awards for 2003 men standings.

Radford University was ceded the floor for New Business. The Radford representative proposed that seedings for the MARFU tournament be based on the VRU Matrix Season, rather than from E/SL Tournament finish. The representative cited the case in the 2003 season where competition between divisions in the first round of the tournament caused a major shakeup of MARFU seedings. A great deal of discussion ensued, with the discussion going off in the direction of the structure of the E/SL tournament numerous times. Several representatives made calls to order to consider the motion on the floor. It was suggested that the VRU could come up with a different structure for the E/SL tournament, that may address the concerns of Radford University. A friendly amendment motion was made, seconded, and passed that any E/SL change would not take effect until 2005. The RU Representative withdrew his original motion from the floor.

Mr. Kabza was nominated for President 2004. Mr. Kabza accepted. Mr. Schmitt was nominated. Mr. Schmitt declined. Mr. Kabza was elected by acclamation.

Mr. Durocher was nominated for Vice President 2004. Mr. Durocher accepted. Shannon Plum (James River Women's RFC) was nominated. Ms. Plum accepted. The floor was closed to nominations. The nominees exited the room, and their petitioners presented the candidate's strengths. Ms. Plum was elected by majority vote. The candidates were admitted back to the assembly, and Ms. Plum was announced as Vice President.

Mr. Markham was nominated for Secretary 2004. Mr. Markham accepted. Mr. Markham was elected by acclamation.

Mr. Lucas was nominated for Treasurer 2004. Mr. Lucas. Mr. Lucas was elected by acclamation.

Mr. Chapman was nominated for USA/MARFU Representative 2004. Mr. Chapman accepted. Mr. Chapman was elected by acclamation.

Mr. Ferguson was nominated for Men's Club Coordinator 2004. Mr. Ferguson accepted the nomination. Mr. Durocher was nominated. Mr. Durocher accepted. Bruce Northrop (Blackwater Men) was nominated. Mr. Northrop accepted. The floor was closed to additional nominations. The nominees exited the room, and their petitioners presented the candidate's strengths. Mr. Ferguson was elected by majority vote. The candidates were admitted back to the assembly, and Mr. Ferguson was announced as Men's Club Coordinator.

Marsha Durocher (James River Women) was nominated for Women's Club Coordinator. Ms. Durocher accepted the nomination. Kristen Smith (unknown) was nominated. Ms. Smith accepted. The floor was closed to additional nominations. The nominees exited the room, and their petitioners presented the candidate's strengths. The vote was very close, and a recall vote was called, with representatives reminded that each club was allowed only one vote. The recall vote ended in a tie. Mr. Kabza cast the

deciding vote, stating his personal familiarity of Ms. Durocher's work at the past Ed and Sandy Lee Tournament, and Ms. Durocher was elected. The candidates were admitted back to the assembly, and Ms. Durocher was announced as Women's Club Coordinator.

Mr. Schmitt was nominated as College Men's Coordinator. Mr. Schmitt accepted. Mr. Schmitt was elected by acclamation.

Ms. Comer was nominated as College Women's Coordinator. Ms. Comer accepted. Ms. Comer was elected by acclamation.

Molly Blanton (James River Women) was nominated as Youth Coordinator. Ms. Blanton accepted. Noel Lowenson was nominated. Mr. Lowenson accepted. The floor was closed to additional nominations. The nominees exited the room, and their petitioners presented the candidate's strengths. Mr. Lowenson was elected by majority vote. The candidates were admitted back to the assembly, and Mr. Lowenson was announced as Youth Coordinator.

Mr. Durocher was nominated as Disciplinary Chair. Mr. Durocher accepted. Mr. Durocher was elected by acclamation.

Mr. Anderson was nominated as Newsletter Editor. Mr. Anderson accepted. All other candidates feared challenging Mr. Anderson's millennium of service, and Mr. Anderson was elected by acclamation.

Mr. Schmitt was nominated as the VRU's MARFU at-large Representative. Mr. Schmitt accepted. Shawn Smith (unknown) was nominated. Mr. Smith accepted. Mr. Durocher was nominated. Mr. Durocher accepted. The floor was closed to additional nominations. Mr. Schmitt was elected by majority vote.

Mr. Kabza adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm.