



———— 2023 ————

US RUGBY FOUNDATION YEAR IN REVIEW

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Celebrating six decades of lasting change



Letter from the President and CEO

Dear Friends,

2023 was another banner year for the US Rugby Foundation in our continued mission of growing the sport of rugby in the US. As the sport continues to grow, especially at the grassroots level, so too are the number of grant requests we receive. These grant requests come from players, coaches, referees, teams, schools, organizations, and community programs from across the country.

And I'm happy to report that last year we provided \$267,000 in grants, the most we've ever provided since the creation of the US Rugby Foundation in 1963.

Last year, in tandem with your generous support, we were able to continue providing size 3, 4, and 5 rugby balls to youth and high school teams, schools and community programs across the country through our popular "A Ball 4 All" program; awarded 22 college scholarships through 10 different scholarship programs bringing the total number of scholarships to 178 since we awarded our first college scholarship in 2008; and provided 10 Match Day Tents to youth and high school teams throughout the US.

A core strategy for how USRF contributes to the growth of rugby in America at the grassroots level is awarding grants. A few of the grants we provided in 2023 went to: USA Youth & High School Rugby for the formation of new high school rugby clubs, and for their coaching platform; Girls Rugby, Inc. to expand their reach to girls from 2nd thru 8th grade; USA Rugby for its U20 Men's Team in their quest to qualify for the U20 World Trophy Tournament; and to Thomas Jefferson University and Dr. Katie Hunzinger for a concussion study at the club level.

We know we couldn't do what we do without the support of so many of you in the US rugby community. With your continued support, 2024 will set another record high in grants provided.

On behalf of the entire United States Rugby Foundation, thank you from the bottom of my heart in helping grow the sport we all love.

Sincerely,



Brian Vizard

PRESIDENT & CEO
US RUGBY FOUNDATION

Our Impact

Since 1963, the US Rugby Foundation has raised millions of dollars and awarded thousands of grants to support the growth of grassroots rugby.

\$267,000

2023 Total Grant Funding Provided

In 2023		All Time
1,300	A Ball 4 All Rugby Balls	18,300
10	Match Day Tents	40
22	College Scholarships	178
2	Pathways Of Excellence	23
1	Coaching	350
0	Referee	15
1	Health & Safety	2
9	Additional Awarded Grants	73

60th Anniversary



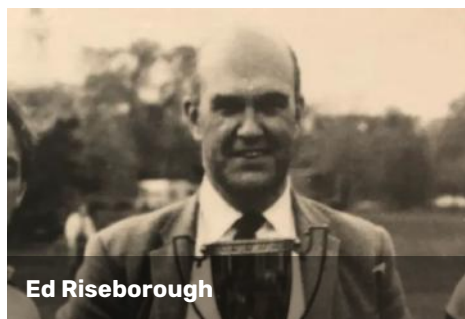
Celebrating Six Decades of Lasting Change

The US Rugby Foundation is proud to celebrate its 60th anniversary, marking six decades of supporting the growth and development of youth rugby in the United States. Since its inception in 1963, the US Rugby Foundation has been a leader in promoting the sport of rugby, from youth and high school programs, to coaches and referees.



Three men of vision – Fritz Grunebaum, Ed Riseborough, and Bob Lemire – established the Bay State Rugby Foundation in Boston in 1963.

In 1981, the name was changed to the United States Rugby Foundation as the organization took on a national presence.



From its origins, the Foundation grew under Grunebaum's guidance and the leadership of Dick Poulson of the Washington Rugby Club and Joe Walsh of the Boston and M.I.T. Rugby Clubs.

The US Rugby Foundation preceded the formation of USA Rugby (the governing body of the sport in the U.S.) by twelve years. While the Foundation is completely independent of USA Rugby, its programs generally complement and support those of USA Rugby.



The US Rugby Foundation would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for playing a tremendous role in its successes and invites supporters and friends of rugby to join in the celebration of its 60th anniversary. With your continued support, the Foundation will reach new heights this year. For more information on the organization and how to get involved, explore our website at usrugbyfoundation.org →

LEARN MORE →

Pillars of Support



Youth & Development

From Ball Grants and Match Day Tents that provide basic equipment teams need to be successful, to supporting youth & high school organizations and launching new programs, we are helping to grow the game from the ground up.



Pathways to Excellence

We provide opportunities for promising players to improve their skills through scholarships, awards, and Pathways Grants for domestic and international courses and academies



Coaches

We offer grants for coaches at all levels to attend domestic and international coaching courses and academies, as we believe they are the key to developing youth rugby and an investment in our future.



Referees

We provide grants to USA referees for domestic and international training courses and to take part in competition opportunities. We look for applicants with a passion for improving their skills so they can referee at the highest possible level.



Health & Safety

We support and continuously look for Health & Safety initiatives in order to make rugby safer for all. We provide grants to organizations and studies that focus on reducing risk and increasing the safety of players.

\$60 for 60 Years

We're Proud of Our Community

Community support is the cornerstone of change. Our community has helped us raise thousands of dollars for many athletes and clubs in need through the 60 for 60 campaign. With these donations, we have been able to donate hundreds of balls to youth & high school clubs across the country.



350 Balls

Provided to Teams In Need

\$3,500+

Raised in Donations

The US Rugby Foundation's A Ball 4 All Program provides up to 2,000 balls annually to youth rugby organizations who apply for the grant. Through the program, youth and high school clubs, schools, and community programs have been able to bring the sport of rugby to America's youth.

The Directors and Governors of the US Rugby Foundation believe that the success of the United States in international rugby is contingent upon the development of the sport at an early age.

[Apply for a Ball 4 All Grant →](#)

Thank you Rugby Imports for supplying our rugby balls so that the Foundation can provide 2,000 balls per year to teams across the United States.



A Ball 4 All Grant Recipients



Anchor Bay High School
New Baltimore, MI

Brighton Youth Rugby Association
Brighton, CO

Bromfield School
Harvard, MA

Brother Martin High School Rugby
New Orleans, LA

Brunswick Rugby Club
Brunswick, OH

Cape Cod Rugby
Forestdale, MA

Carmel Dad's Club Youth Rugby
Carmel, IN

City of Bridgeport Rugby Alliance
Fairfield, CT

City of Rio Rancho Rugby Club
Albuquerque, NM

Cleveland Middle School
Albuquerque, NM

CM Rugby Academy
New York, NY

Concord-Carlisle High School
Concord, MA

Denver East High School Women's Rugby
Denver, CO

Falcon Youth Rugby Club
Spring, TX

Faulconer-Chapman School
Sheridan, OR

Fort Lauderdale Youth Rugby Club
Oakland Park, FL

Fox Cities Iron Maidens
Appleton, WI

Frisco Youth Rugby
Little Elm, TX

Hammers Rugby Club
Loveland, CO

Harlequins Girls Rugby
West Sacramento, CA

HCYA Raptors Rugby
Houston, TX

HUB Sports Center
Liberty Lake, WA

Kitsap Youth Rugby
Bremerton, WA

Liberty Lake Rugby Club
Liberty Lake, WA

Marion County Parks and Rec
Fairmont, WV

Marvin Ridge Rugby Club
Waxhaw, NC

Maryland Exiles Youth Rugby
Annandale, VA

Memphis Inner City Rugby
Memphis, TN

Motley Rugby
Sacramento, CA

Mudsock Youth Rugby
Fishers, IN

New Rochelle High School Rugby Club
New Rochelle, NY

Noblesville High School Rugby Club
Noblesville, IN

Oakland Rugby Club
Emeryville, CA

Okaloosa RFC
Ft Walton Beach, FL

Raleigh Redhawks
Pittsboro, NC

Ridgefield High School Girls Rugby
Bethel, CT

Ritch Middle School
Dallas, GA

Riverton Rugby Club (HS) and Riverton Silverwolves (U14)
South Jordan, UT

Scio Middle School
Scio, OR

Sky Ranch Academy Eagles
Watkins, CO

South Jr. High School
Boise, ID

South Shore Sharks Youth Rugby
Marshfield, MA

Southern Pines Youth Rugby
Aberdeen, NC

Stamford Rugby Club
Norwalk, CT

SWFL Sharks Rugby
Englewood, FL

Taggart Elementary School
Audubon, NJ

TC Fusion Rugby
Tooele, UT

Trumbull Youth Rugby
Trumbull, CT

Villa Park High School Rugby
Tustin, CA

Wilkes Barre Breakers RFC
Ashley, PA

Match Day Tent Grant Recipients

We provided 10 Match Day Tent Grants to the following clubs:



**Blackthorn Barbarians
Inclusive RFC**
Wycombe, PA



Pasefika Rugby Club
Hauula, HI



Capital High Rugby Club
Eagle, ID



Scottsdale Rugby
Scottsdale, AZ



East County Grackles
Portland, OR



Stamford Rugby Club
Norwalk, CT



Great Falls Youth Rugby
Great Falls, VA



Tacoma Tsunami
Olympia, WA



Orchard Park Rugby Club
Orchard Park, NY



**Westfield Shamrocks
Rugby Club**
Westfield, IN

Testimonials From Past Recipients



"We are excited to bring our tent with us to all of our tournaments this upcoming season around the US. This will be a great hub for our teams, coaches, and parents to gather in between games, stay out of the sun, and hydrate!"

Alaska Youth Rugby Club



"We wanted to thank you for your generous donation. Now we take our tent everywhere and everyone will know the name of our club as well as the US Rugby Foundation."

Okapi Wanderers Rugby Club

USA Youth & High School Grants



USA Youth & High School Rugby, in partnership with US Rugby Foundation, established a national program to provide seed funding to new high school programs in an effort to increase the number of high school rugby programs throughout the United States. These new programs must be on campus programs via full varsity status or an adopted club sport by the school's athletic department.

To date, there have been a total of 14 new high school rugby programs selected to receive the seed funding.

USRF has dedicated \$100,000 of funding to the program. The goal is to reach 20 schools over a two-year period.



Hudson Catholic HS
NJ



Scotland Chapel
PA



Cumberland Valley
PA



Loyola HS
CA



Canton HS
MA



Ascend Leadership Academy
NC



Warren Easton
LA



Orange Lutheran
CA



Grove City
OH



Madison Exiles
WI



St. John's College
DC



Worcester HS
MA



Serra HS
CA



San Juan RFC
NM

Additional Awarded Grants



Girls Rugby Grant Program

The US Rugby Foundation awarded a \$10,000 grant to Girls Rugby, a non-profit dedicated to making a difference in the lives of young female athletes through rugby. This funding has helped play a vital role in empowering young women through the sport and supporting the organization's growth nationwide.



Rookie Rugby Cleveland

In June of 2023, the US Rugby Foundation had the opportunity to provide Rookie Rugby Cleveland with a \$5,000 dollar grant to help spur the organization's growth. Through the dedication of the Rookie Rugby Cleveland staff, they've used this grant to help galvanize young athletes in the Cleveland area through social media.



Ellensburg Youth Rugby

In 2023, a grant was awarded to Ellensburg Youth Rugby to help fund a state-of-the-art electronic scoreboard to complement the field. This grant, focusing on innovation and inclusivity, has helped further foster a thriving rugby culture in Ellensburg.



Pacific Northwest Rugby

Provided a \$5,000 grant to Pacific Northwest Rugby to fund the expansion of website features on their website. These features will include a build-out of their Hall of Fame, an e-commerce shop, and other content additions.



Rugby Washington

The US Rugby Foundation provided Rugby Washington with a \$10,000 grant. This grant will spread through the 2023 and 2024 seasons and aims at funding a variety of support services to Rugby Washington.

Additional Awarded Grants



Urban Rugby Championships

An event dedicated exclusively for minority students born in under-resourced communities across the country to connect, compete and grow into the bright future we are all building together. The US Rugby Foundation is proud to support the 3rd Annual Urban Rugby Championship with a \$6,667 grant to ensure minority student-athletes from under-resourced communities can access premier rugby competition on American soil.



Memphis Inner City Rugby

Memphis Inner City Rugby is relentlessly committed to their teammates and believes in the power of long-term relationships and support. The US Rugby Foundation is honored to continue our support with a \$5,000 grant to further support their mission.



Boys High School Club and Single School National Championships

For the second year in a row, US Rugby Foundation is proud to support this high school championships both through financial grants but also appearing in person at the event. We supported the next generation of rugby players through a \$4,000 grant to help with the success of the tournament.



Play Rugby USA

The mission of Play Rugby USA is to use the unique power of rugby to empower and inspire youth, primarily from underserved communities, to go forward and realize their true potential. The US Rugby Foundation has provided \$12,000 to help with this mission and further support all the great work from Play Rugby USA.

2022-2023 College Scholarships

Scholarships are open to incoming college freshmen who are pursuing their rugby career while continuing their education at the collegiate level.



Judd Berman

The Kevin Higgins College
Scholarship Program

Erik Rosenmeier

The Kevin Higgins College
Scholarship Program

Jack Martin

Jeff Lombard Eagle
Scholarship
WWU SCHOLARSHIP

Thomas Byrnes

William V. Campbell
Memorial Scholarship

Cormac Saint

Terry O'Reilly Memorial
Scholarship Program

Joe Merlino

Preston Worth Rugby
Scholarship
WWU SCHOLARSHIP

Seth Catchpole

The Kevin Higgins College
Scholarship Program

Zachary Smith

The Kevin Higgins College
Scholarship Program

Ned O'Brien

Preston Worth Rugby
Scholarship
WWU SCHOLARSHIP

Caden Crist

The Kevin Higgins College
Scholarship Program

Brad Kissinger

The Kevin Higgins College
Scholarship Program

Sosaia Pongi

Kaler Family
Rugby Scholarship

Zachary Herrington

The Kevin Higgins College
Scholarship Program

James Sullivan

The Kevin Higgins College
Scholarship Program

Katana Provost

Kaler Family
Rugby Scholarship

Gibbs Kell

The Kevin Higgins College
Scholarship Program

Kaylen Thomas

Meg Votta Memorial
Scholarship Program

Max Stone

Don Burgess
International Scholarship
WWU SCHOLARSHIP

Oliver Kelleher

Paul Horne Out-Of-State
Resident Scholarship
WWU SCHOLARSHIP

Mason Walker

The Kevin Higgins College
Scholarship Program

Harry Moore

Preston Worth Rugby
Scholarship
WWU SCHOLARSHIP

Aiden Pavlek

Richard A. Donelli
Scholarship

Nelson College Scholarship



The US Rugby Foundation's Nelson College Rugby Scholarship sends 2 high school students to Nelson College in New Zealand for four and a half months over the spring and summer. The goal is to advance the personal, cultural, and academic development of the scholar athletes while also giving them the opportunity to become better rugby players and use their experience in New Zealand to influence and help elevate the play of their high school teammates when they return.

2022 Recipients



Max Doerfler
Overland Park, KS



Oliver Kirk
Chicago, IL

2023 Recipients



Connor Bender
Cleveland, OH



**Joseph Walter
"JW" Sarkees**
Central, SC

Testimonial



It has certainly changed my life on and off the field. Besides the experiences I had and friendships I developed in Nelson itself, the growth it facilitated in me as a player has really boosted my rugby career.

Oliver Kirk
2022 Recipient



Oliver Kirk & Max Doerfler

USA Rugby Men's U20 National Team



The Foundation is honored to have provided \$20,000 in support of the USA Men's U20s team as they looked to earn qualification to the 2023 World Rugby U20s Trophy in Kenya.



We are also encouraged to highlight 3 US Rugby Foundation college scholarship recipients from 2022 who are on the traveling roster for these games against Canada.



Caden Crist

Recipient of The Kevin Higgins
College Scholarship

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - BERKELEY



Cormac Saint

Recipient of The Terry O'Reilly
Memorial Scholarship

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - BERKELEY



Sosaia Pongi

Recipient of The Kaler Family
Rugby Scholarship

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA

COACHES

USA Youth & High School Coaching Platform



In March 2023 at the USRF AGM, USA Youth & High School Rugby presented a cohesive plan around their coaching platform development. The US Rugby Foundation provided Youth & High School Rugby with a \$10,000 grant in order to build out the Imagine Rugby programming into the coaching platform.



The PE teachers delivering the programming at various schools will have access to specific coaching prompts and a designed curriculum to enhance the experience for newcomers to the game. The USA Youth & High School Coaching Platform offers coaches a chance to grow their skills in the art of rugby. This project has expanded to incorporate other major North American rugby organizations, such as Major League Rugby, as presenting partners.

PARTNERSHIP

USA Rugby Eagle Alumni Association



The Eagle Alumni Association, composed of former USA Rugby Eagles, serves to provide lifelong engagement and connectivity, create an environment for meaningful player engagement, and opportunities for post playing careers. The US Rugby Foundation, in partnership with USA Rugby, has created a database composed of past Men's & Women's 15s & 7s USA Rugby Eagles.



[Meet the Alumni →](#)

[Join the Alumni Network →](#)

REFEREES

Shanagher-Morrison Referee Development Fund

The Shanagher-Morrison Referee Development Fund provides grants to USA referees for domestic and international training courses and competition opportunities, focusing on those applicants with a passion for improving their skills and refereeing at the highest possible levels.

The fund is named after two of the most celebrated referees in the history of USA Rugby, Denis Shanagher Sr. and Don Morrison, both members of the US Rugby Hall of Fame.



"The Foundation helped me fundraise for a trip to Ireland where I was able to challenge myself. The Shanagher-Morrison Referee Development Fund matched the grant, which would never have happened without the Foundation."

Haylee Slaughter
Referee Grant Recipient



"I think the trip really helped me grow as a ref because I had experienced referees from all around the world helping me to get better. I look forward to more trips like this. Thank you for the experience!"

Cole Bevilacqua (Age 15)
North America Youth Rugby
Referee Program Grant Recipient

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health & Safety Study



In late 2023, the US Rugby Foundation provided a \$7,500 grant for a study entitled "The Implications of the Lack of Sports Medicine Care in Community-Level American Rugby". This study, led by Dr. Katie Hunzinger, PhD, ACSM-CEP, CPT. aims to better understand concussion knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions among American rugby stakeholders. Additionally, it seeks to better understand injury history and sports medicine utilization among teams across all levels of play and geographic areas in the United States.

THE CLUBHOUSE

The Clubhouse is an annual giving membership comprised of individuals who are taking a personal responsibility to grow grassroots rugby in America.

CLUBHOUSE MEMBERS

Anthony Forbes-Roberts	Kim Smith
Art Garland	Krista Grigg
Byron & Alli Deeter	Leversee Insurance Services, Inc.
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Chris Davis	Lucas Haan
Dan Larsen	Mark Pidcock
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Gareth Giles Knopp	Ray Green
Gent Agency	Richard Ederle
Grant Cole	Richard Rudolph
Hardwood Floors of Lancaster	Robby Butler
Harry Clever	Robert Knoepfel
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International Athletic	Sarah Watson
J Douglas French	Scott MacDonald
James Bain	Stephen McPhail
James Dierker	Steven Hernandez
James Herschlein	Stuart Levine
Jeanne and Jerry Gallion	Tancred Agius
Jeffrey Edmeades	Thomas "Tank" O'Brien
Jim Johnson	Timothy O'Brien
John Dacey	William Brewington
John Hickey	William Keller
Jon Hinkin	William Leversee
Kevin Ballard	William Moore

2023 US Rugby Hall of Fame

Presented by Major League Rugby

Celebrate the history, honor the heroes, inspire the youth,
and preserve the legacy of rugby in the United States.



**Mike
Flanagan**
2023 Inductee



**Roy
Helu**
2023 Inductee



**Bob
Latham**
2023 Inductee



**Dr. Julia
McCoy**
2023 Inductee



**Chris
O'Brien**
2023 Inductee



**Mike
Petri**
2023 Inductee



**Peter
Watson**
2023 Inductee

Special Award Recipients



**Dr. John
Fowler**
Chairman's Award



**Dr. Dale
Toohey**
Lifetime Achievement Award



**Susan
Adegoke**
Prusmack Award



**Orrin
Bizer**
Prusmack Award



**Brian
Hightower**
Sweeney Award

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Thank You!

The Foundation had its **most impactful year ever as we provided more grant dollars in 2023 than in any other year in our 60-year history.**

We couldn't provide the opportunities we do without the generous support of the rugby community. Thank you to all of those who have made this year the best one yet! If you want to make a contribution, that would be great! If you want to volunteer to help, that would be great too!

Contact & Follow Us!

 404 Euclid Avenue, Suite 302, San Diego, CA 92114

 619-233-0765

 bvizard@usrugbyfoundation.com

 www.usrugbyfoundation.org

 @United States Rugby Foundation

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*The US Rugby Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization (EIN: 81-5187776).
Our latest Form 990 is available for review on our website at usrugbyfoundation.org*



Our mission is to grow the game of rugby in America by providing grants to support youth rugby, safety, coaching, refereeing, and pathways to future excellence and by honoring those who exemplify the best of American rugby.



Celebrating six decades of lasting change