



AGM Meeting - December 6, 2025 – 1000 – 1200

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 10:03

Present:

Mark Tilles, Chris Cooke, Sandy Nesbitt, Steph Hovdestad, Aaron Freund, Alanna Fittes, Amanda Costley, Andrew Hull, Andrew Petti, Brian Conway, Caroline Tindall, Christi-Sue Nesbitt, Dan Preteau, Darren Andruko, Darren Todd, Doug Laird, Erika Green, Helen Wright, Jack Mager, James Lord, Jo Reinbold, John McDonald, John Vavrek, Kim Endicott, Luke Demeter, Matt Bourdot, Matt Jarvis, Matt Parrish, Matt Suter, Michelle Mullane, Robin Kaluzniak, Stephen Mullen, Nikki Cloutier, Paul Looker, Rhys Jones, Peter Rowe, Josh Portier, Shab Hirji, Shane Tevelein, Tara Godfrey, Terri-Lynn Hamilton, Danielle Weran

Online log-in/registration from 9:45am **Via Teams**

Agenda

1. **AGM Call to Order** Chris Cooke (10:03)
2. **Land Acknowledgement** Sandy Nesbitt (10:08)
3. **AGM Clarification of Voting Structure / Quorum** Chris Cooke (10:10)
4. **AGM Changes to the Agenda** Chris Cooke (10:11)  
*Shane Tevelein motioned to accept, Erika Green seconded*
5. **AGM Motion to Adopt Agenda** Chris Cooke (10:11)  
*Erika Green motioned to accept, Josh Portier seconded*
6. **AGM Adoption of the 2024 AGM Minutes** Chris Cooke (10:11)
7. **Board of Directors Reports**
  - o **President** Chris Cooke (10:12)
  - o C. Cooke provided an overview of the new Rugby Alberta 2025-2030 Strategic Plan and key accomplishments in 2026 tied to the new strategic plan. Board made a new strategic plan for 2025-2030 this year.
    - o Pillar 1: Grow the community game
      - o *Expanding the reach of the sport:*
        - o Continued to leverage Rookie Rugby via the Alberta Junior Rugby Association (AJRA) and Rugby Alberta's Rugby Development Officer (RDO)
        - o Worked with Rugby Canada to align with their national growth plan
        - o T1 rugby showcases
        - o Targeted small communities through work of RDO and other technical resources
        - o Partnered with Veo as our official video provider

- Partnered with Rugby Canada to hold 'Let's Play Rugby' sessions in conjunction with Rugby Canada matches
- *Coach & match official development:*
  - Partnered with Rugby Canada to begin discussing a match official pathway.
  - Worked with Rugby Alberta Match Officials Association (RAMOA), Edmonton Rugby Union (ERU), and Calgary Rugby Union (CRU) to deliver courses
- *Indigenous and Diverse Communities:*
  - Started the Brave rugby program, this is in part supported by some Indigenous funding grants
  - Delivered rookie rugby and 'Let's play Rugby' sessions in Indigenous nations
- 2026 focus:
  - Partner with ERU and CRU to deliver coach development conferences in spring 2026
  - Utilize the Brave rugby program to increase visibility in Indigenous nations
  - Execute Rugby Canada's national growth plan in conjunction with sub unions and clubs
  - Continue to partner with Rugby Canada to host national team matches
- Pillar 2: Support our teams to develop and win:
  - *Technical Blueprint & Development:*
    - Began the introduction of Rugby Canada's technical blueprint with Wolf Pack coaches
    - Partnered with Rugby Canada to hold coach development sessions in conjunction with Rugby Canada matches
  - *Meaningful High Performance (HP) Competition:*
    - Continue to evolve Alberta Cup (AC) and Alberta Women's Premier (AWP) competitions to showcase talent
    - Executed the largest Alberta Regional Championship (ARC) competitions in both 7s and 15s ever
    - Re-established the Wolf Pack 7s program to ensure year-round HP opportunities for age grade players
    - Re-established the Wolf Pack senior men's program and expanded on Wolf Pack senior women competition

- Continued discussions with other provincial unions on inter-provincial HP opportunities especially at the senior level
- Started a High-Performance committee
- Implemented a provincial discipline committee to ensure a consistent application of discipline procedures
- *High Performance Academies:*
  - Ongoing discussions with Rugby Canada and other partners on establishing a rugby Canada regional training centre (RTC) in Alberta
- 2026 focus:
  - Expand Rugby Canada's technical blueprint material availability to coaches across the province
  - Partner with Rugby Canada to clearly establish HP pathways for all rugby participants (athletes, coaches and match officials)
  - Develop a business case for a Wolf Pack Academy to ensure consistent skill development for HP athletes
- Pillar 3: Be a leading Provincial Sports Organization:
  - *Safe Sport:*
    - Participated in discussions on the new Alberta Safe Sport Mechanism being launched in 2026
    - Continued to raise awareness on concussion safety and protocols (building on the blue card program established in 2024)
  - *Board Governance:*
    - Established governance committees like the Provincial Discipline Committee and the HP Committee to expand opportunities for involvement and input from various stakeholder groups
    - Expanded processes to increase collaboration between Rugby Alberta and all sub unions
    - Increased communication methods (social media, monthly newsletters etc.) to improve connectivity between Rugby Alberta and community stakeholders
    - Increased focus on accountability and responsiveness amongst Rugby Alberta staff
  - *Equity Diversity and Inclusion:*
    - Initiative the Brave Rugby program to deliver programs to indigenous youth
  - *Celebrate our Successes:*

- Increased focus on recognizing Rugby Alberta athletes performing at national or professional levels
  - 2026 focus:
    - Implement Alberta Safe Sport Complaint Mechanism
    - Continue to enhance collaboration between Rugby Alberta and all sub-unions to ensure we have a unified provincial rugby system
    - Re-initiate the Rugby Alberta Hall of Fame with a consistent nomination & review process
    - Establish a provincial Referee Abuse Policy
    - Explore opportunities & initiatives to ensure rugby remains a safe & inclusive sport in our province
  - Pillar 4: Expand Financial Capacity:
    - *Sponsorship:*
      - Partnered with a sponsorship consultant to develop consistent and sustainable sponsorship levels, assets, etc.
      - Implemented a consistent and repeatable process to seek out possible sponsors throughout the year
    - *Fundraising:*
      - Established the Rugby Alberta Endowment fund through the Canadian Rugby Foundation to increase opportunities for investment in our sport
    - *Government relations:*
      - Maintained regular communications with government stakeholders & partners to advocate for our sport
      - Maintained positive and healthy relationships with municipal tourism bodies to develop relations required for financial investment
    - 2026 focus:
      - Continue to focus on establishing partnerships with corporate sponsors to support Wolf Pack rugby and other Rugby Alberta initiatives
      - Establish consistent and repeatable processes to increase visibility of the Rugby Endowment fund
      - Increase advocacy to our provincial government for increased funding to increase membership numbers and expand initiatives
- C. Cooke provided an overview of the Alberta safe sport complaint mechanism:

- In 2025 the Alberta Sport Leadership Association (ASLA) was established. They are funded by the provincial government. Their first mandate was to establish a consistent safe sport mechanism across the province.
- Through 2023-2025 we have had 7 safe sport complaints. These are confidential but fall into category of maltreatment as defined by the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS).
- The new complaint mechanism will allow for one consistent method to submit complaints. All safe sport complaints will go through Allias Solutions, an independent 3rd-party case management team to investigate these situations.
- The Goal is to encourage reporting, ensure fair and consistent reporting process, and ensure resources are available when these situations come up. This does *not* include non-maltreatment complaints (i.e., complaints to our sport like athlete selection, match discipline, etc.).
- We want to ensure we are taking advantage of opportunities to reduce our financial risk.
- The current goal is to have this done by January and launch in early 2026
- C. Cooke provided an overview of Bill 29 – Fairness and Safety in Sport Act and how Rugby Alberta is responding to the requirements of the new Act:
  - Purpose of this discussion is to introduce the approach that Rugby Alberta will be taking, not to discuss opinions/views about the act itself.
  - The Act requires limitations on female divisions to include only biologically female athletes. Rugby Alberta is to adopt this policy starting January 1, 2026, to ensure we are aligned with the requirements that have been imposed on us.
  - How this will work: we will have a new declaration on our registration system for individuals that are 12+ years of age and registering for a Female-only division
  - Rugby Alberta believes all individuals deserve respectful and inclusive environments to participate in our sport that value the individual's gender identity and gender expression, and our goal is to ensure all participants have access to programming and facilities in which they feel comfortable and safe. Our ongoing focus will be to explore opportunities to continue to make our sport an inclusive space for all members of our community.



- **Director of Finance/Administration** Darren Andruko (10:47)
  - Full report is posted on the [Rugby Alberta website](#).
  - Another significant year of investment and strategic improvement. Dropped down our financial resources from 592K → 500K. We had a net loss of 126K, this has improved consider the loss was 156K the previous year. We had some conscious decisions that resulted in our deficit, including hiring a consultant to improve sponsorship materials. There were things out of our control included Rugby Canada changing some aspects of funding, Safe Sport costs increasing, and a higher level of activity of sport in the province.
  - During the year we obtained grants and fundraising of 150K to specifically support our programs, and our board approved further direct support by an additional 50K. Resulting in 200K directly supporting to our programs.

*Andrew Petti motioned to accept the audited financial report, Erika Green seconded.*

No one opposed. Motion passed.

- **Other Directors**
- **Edmonton Rugby Union** Dave Logan (10:57)
  - Full report is posted on the [Rugby Alberta website](#).
  - Dave Logan is on our vacation, Helen Wright gave some notes.
  - ERU AGM was this past weekend, the ERU Strategic Plan is similar and aligned with Rugby Alberta. Trying to determine how to improve upon retention of numbers. Rep rugby included Gold (Edmonton) and Warrior (Northern AB) programs. The response is going well and is measured by the response of volunteer coaches. Want to continue to adjust strategic plan to ensure it is aligned with Rugby Canada.
- **Calgary Rugby Union** Peter Rowe (11:00)
  - Work with clubs to showcase what they need and what they want, meet post- and pre-season, and try to continue the growth. Have seen great numbers so far.
  - Continue to see growth in membership (mini rugby up by 40 members, junior up by another 100). Over 3K members growth up from last year. More growth is needed in senior divisions.
  - Try Rugby and watch party hosted for the Rugby World Cup Final.
  - This season was the best communication done between sub-unions.
  - AGM is coming up in January.
- **Alberta Junior Rugby Association** Helen Wright (11:06)

- Took over this year to rectify the gaming issues that put AJRA into a deficit. Working with the CRA for tax filing and returns as this hasn't been done in 20 years, AJRA may be exempt but still in progress to rectify this.
- Operating with sufficient funds to employ Rookie Rugby Manager.
- Casino on December 26 to generate funds to deliver introductory rugby.
- Delivery increased for Rookie Rugby this year. Got training sessions for teachers and staff to increase further participation in the game. Resource guide was provided to teachers with a 5-day practice plan for students.
- Sent out Government of Canada job applications to clubs in Alberta and youth development template to encourage hiring of people to fulfill these roles.
- AGM in January.
- **Rugby Alberta Match Officials Association** Andrew Petti (11:14)
- It was another busy year in Alberta, with over 1600 matches played. Registrations were up by 108 members, bringing us back to pre-COVID numbers, and we continue to see a 40/60 north-south split between members. We trained 30 new officials this year. Although membership has increased, the number of games has risen even more, so we've had to work hard to keep up with demand. There were a few allocation hiccups, and as we transition into the new system, we will all need time to learn and adjust.
- Late game cancellations, particularly in AWP, continue to be a challenge, and we need to stay ahead of them. We also experienced some technology-related issues with card reporting and had several instances of clubs not completing game sheets. While we added 108 new registrations, some were dual-registered players, so we are still pulling heavily from the community base.
- Questions and Discussions:
  - *Radio Sets:* Luke Demeter asked about the ideal number of radio sets required for the province for teams of three (referee and 2 ARs) every weekend for AC, AWP, and Division 2 Senior games. Petti responded that typically, radios come in sets of four, though there is no exact ideal number. Calgary finds radio sharing easier, while Edmonton faces logistical challenges due to dispersed field locations. Each radio set costs between \$2,000–\$2,500, making them a significant investment. Radios are purchased on a 3-4 year cycle due to both cost and logistical management needs.
  - *Match Official Reports:* John McDonald raised the question about paper-based match official reports. Petti responded technology

works well when it's functioning properly, the plan is to continue using the online system.

8. **Executive Director Report**

Sandy Nesbitt (11:29)

- Full ED Slidedeck is posted on the [Rugby Alberta website](#).
- Highlights and recaps of the past year.
- Play HQ will be the new registration system and is due to launch in January.

*Erika Green motioned to accept all reports, John Vavrek seconded.*

10. **Elections**

Chris Cooke (11:46)

- **President** - 2 Year Term
- Election process for the role of President was conducted by Darren Andruko
- Chris Cooke indicated he would allow his name to stand. A board member must be part of the board for at least 1 year in order to be eligible for nomination. Chris Cooke is the only member up for a vote, and no other board members expressed interest in the position.
- No one opposed
- Chris Cooke elected as the Rugby Alberta president for the next 2 year term.
- **Director** (2 positions available) - 2 Year Term.
- Two nominations were received for individuals continuing or joining the board.
- Caroline Tindall has finished her first two-year term and wishes to continue.
- Doug Laird was nominated by the Calgary Saints.
- With two spots open and two people nominated, and no opposition to either individual nomination, both are confirmed as board members.
- Alexa Fleming's term has ended and she has stepped away from the board after completing 4 consecutive terms. C. Cooke thanked Alexa for her dedicated service to Rugby Alberta during her time on the board.

11. **Vote on Auditor**

Metrix Group LLP

Chris Cooke

*Paul Looker motioned to accept Metrix Group LLP as Rugby Alberta's auditor for 2026, Shane Televein seconded.*

No one opposed. Motion passed.

12. **New Business**

Chris Cooke (11:54)

- No New Business was brought forward so this time was allocated for a Q&A period. Various questions were brought forward, and a summary of comments are below:

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- There is a desire for more high-performance roles and opportunities for athletes.
- There will be an increased focus will be on improving AC rugby next year.
- No increase in Rugby Alberta membership dues in 2026.
- Considerations of the schedule to include representative and international games alongside work schedules.
- The endowment fund was established in 2025, and Rugby Alberta does not yet have direct visibility to it as it is run by the Canadian Rugby Foundation. What is known that donations have been received, and a quarterly report will be provided at the end of December 2025
- BC Rugby invited a second U18 Wolf Pack team to attend the Vancouver 7s, this was declined. This request was provided with a short time frame. The decision not to send a second team was due to the tight turnaround for planning, as well as consideration of cost.
- While Rugby Alberta may be in a stable financial situation, operations still require funding and player dues are not able to be decreased. Player dues are lower compared to other provinces, and additional complexity arises from working with sub-unions. Efforts have been made to increase advocacy with the provincial government; however, there have been no funding increases in the past decade, and funding has been reduced while membership continues to grow.

C. Cooke wrapped up the 2025 Rugby Alberta AGM by thanking all club representatives for their hard work to make our sport a success this past calendar year, and encouraged everyone to work collaboratively to ensure the success of our sport in the future.

### 13. Adjournment

Chris Cooke (12:06)