
2025

ANNUAL REPORT

TRUSTED LEADERSHIP IN YOUTH
RUGBY

Mission, Vision & Values

Our Purpose

Mission

The Foundation promotes the rugby tradition for youth in Indiana as a vehicle for personal growth.

Vision

Continue to develop rugby as a recognized youth sport option by providing opportunities for physical and mental growth through the global spirit and ethos of the sport.

Core Values

- **Safety** – Continue A Culture Of Safety By Providing Safe Environments; and an Intentional Focus on Education, Rugby Laws, And Player Techniques
- **Sportsmanship** – Continue The Culture Of Respect For Self, Teammates, Opponents, Coaches, Officials, Parents, and Fans
- **Inclusive** – Rugby For All
- **Fun** – It's A Game
- **Competition** – It's A Sport
- **Culture** – In the Spirit of Sportsmanship Preserving the Culture of Global Rugby With Perseverance, Intensity, Passion, Patience, Mindfulness, and Adaptability
- **Pathway Opportunities** – Total Engagement By Encouraging Involvement With Cognate Rugby Organizations Like Adult Teams, Teams, Referees, Coaches, and Administrators

Message from Our Leadership

In 2025, Rugby Indiana celebrated its 35th year of service to youth and high school rugby. This milestone year was remarkable not just for what we achieved numerically, but for how we deepened our commitment to the values that define us.

We welcomed 2,397 youth and high school players – a very strong year. But the number we're most proud of is 82: our Net Promoter Score. This exceptional score reflects what families are telling us: "This sport is so inclusive. It feels like a family where they are genuinely out to support each other inside and outside the game."

This year, we took bold steps forward. We launched Unified Rugby, bringing the sport to young people with neurodivergent differences. We partnered with the Sideline Project to address a problem every youth sport faces: sideline behavior. We brought our disciplinary process into alignment with World Rugby standards and we trained community judicial officers to ensure fair play and accountability. We introduced digital ticketing to make tournaments more accessible. And we trained community judicial officers to ensure fair play and accountability.

Our coaches completed new certifications. Our clubs adopted coaching mindset resources. Our girls' high school players competed in more tournaments than ever. Our commitment to scholarship access meant 23 families could participate who might otherwise not have been able to afford it.

Rugby Indiana works because of you: coaches who mentor our players week after week, parents who build community in the stands, referees who uphold fair play, club leaders who innovate in their regions, and sponsors who believe in our mission.

2026 will bring new challenges and new opportunities. We'll continue expanding access, strengthening coaching, and building rugby in every corner of Indiana. We're grateful for your partnership in making that possible.

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Section 1 - By The Numbers

Impact at a Glance

2,397

Youth & High School Players in 2025

This represents a very strong season for us, continued growth since Covid, and reflects our unwavering commitment to making rugby accessible to every young person in Indiana.

Key Metrics

1,592

Boys (66%)

803

Girls (33%)

Girls' Participation Growth

2024: 719 girls (33%)

2025: 803 girls (33%)

Growth: +84 girls (+11.7% YoY)

Club & Team Growth

Clubs: 27 (operating year-round across Indiana)

Spring Teams: 97

Fall Teams: 36

New Clubs in 2025: 1

Geographic Reach

Greater Indianapolis: 1,434 players (60% of total)

Greater Ft. Wayne: 298 players (12%)

North-Central Indiana: 181 players (8%)

Southern Indiana: 62 players (3%)

Player Participation by Age Category

Spring Season

Category	2023	2024	2025	Change
Boys High School	690	671	706	+5.2%
Girls High School	276	316	295	-6.6%
Boys Grades 7/8	181	199	222	+11.6%
Girls Grades 7/8	63	58	84	+44.8%
Coed Grades 5/6	136	105	164	+56.2%
Flag Grades 2/3/4	99	119	122	+2.5%
Unified Rugby	N/A	N/A	14	<i>New Program</i>

Fall Season

Category	2023	2024	2025	Change
Boys High School	240	252	252	0%
Girls High School	259	254	224	-11.8%

Key Insights

- 2025 was the first year of a 3-year pilot program removing Rugby Indiana player fees for Flag Grades 2/3/4 and Coed Grades 5/6 to help reduce barriers at early entry points to rugby.
- Girls' middle school (Grades 7/8) participation surged 44.8%, reflecting successful expansion of competitive opportunities

- Elementary participation (Grades 5/6, Flag) grew significantly, indicating strong development pipeline
- Launch of Unified Rugby program demonstrated community appetite for inclusive sports

What These Numbers Mean

Our 2025 numbers tell a story of strategic growth and deepening community trust. The 9.7% player increase outpaced typical youth sports growth (3-5% annually). Girls' participation grew 11.7% – faster than boys, indicating we're successfully removing barriers that historically kept girls out of rugby.

Our true retention rate of 51.42% requires context: when high school seniors graduate, they age out of our system. Adjusting for this natural attrition, our retention among continuing-eligible players is substantially higher than the youth sports average of 65-70% retention (which does not adjust for graduation ineligibility). While there is still room to improve in this area, this signals high-quality programs and satisfied families.

Section 2 - Player Experience & Safety

**Quality Experience. Competitive Programs.
Safety First.**

A. Building Champions On and Off the Field

Rugby Indiana is committed to developing not just skilled athletes, but young people of character. Our competitive pathway creates opportunities for every player to grow.

The Rugby Development Pathway

Young people join Rugby Indiana at different starting points:

- **Flag Rugby (Grades 2-4):** Introduction to rugby with no tackling, building foundational skills and love of the game
- **Youth Competitive (Grades 5-8):** Progressive skill development through structured age categories
- **High School (9-12):** Competitive teams competing for spring and fall state championships

Quality of Experience: Net Promoter Score 82

In 2025, we surveyed families using a Net Promoter Score methodology – a gold-standard measure of loyalty and satisfaction. Our 2025 score of **82** is exceptional.

To put this in context: scores above 50 indicate "excellent" performance in youth sports. Scores above 80 are considered world-class in most industries. Our 82 represents our families saying they would enthusiastically recommend Rugby Indiana to others.

Our Initial NPS (pilot year) score of 80+ based on early adopters and a small response base; this indicates strong loyalty among engaged families but is not yet statistically stable. Our focus for Year 2 is increasing response volume and representativeness so we can track trends reliably.

What Families Are Telling Us

"This sport is so inclusive. It feels like a family where they are genuinely out to support each other inside and outside the game."

"The club, the leaders, the coach all have safety of the kids first."

"Our club is developing and teaching young men and women not only a sport but life skills, how to deal with adversity, how to think quickly, how to work as a team, respect for authority, etc."

"The coaches are welcoming and supportive of all players and abilities from the first time player to the experienced player and strive to ensure that children are learning a new sport that can give them big opportunities and keep it exciting to them."

B. Commitment to Safety

We take our responsibility to keep young people safe seriously. Every policy, every training, every system is designed with one principle: your child's safety comes first.

Safety Infrastructure

- ✓ **100% of coaches** completed USA Rugby SafeSport training in 2025, addressing abuse prevention and misconduct reporting
- ✓ **100% of coaches, referees, and administrators** completed annual background checks

- ✓ **Concussion Protocols:** All players returning from suspected concussions follow World Rugby and USA Rugby return-to-play protocols, managed through the Rugby Xplorer system
- ✓ **Injury Reporting:** All reportable injuries are logged in our tracking system, ensuring we understand injury patterns and can continuously improve prevention
- ✓ **Disciplinary Alignment:** In 2025, we brought our disciplinary process into alignment with World Rugby and USA Rugby standards, including trained community judicial officers who ensure fair and consistent enforcement
- ✓ **SafeSport 18+:** All players 18 years and older completed the U.S. Center for SafeSport training requirement in 2025

What This Means: Rugby is a contact sport, and injuries happen. What sets Rugby Indiana apart is our proactive approach: we prevent what we can, we respond appropriately when incidents occur, and we learn from every situation to improve.

C. Accessibility & Inclusion

We believe rugby should be for every family, regardless of background or finances. In 2025, we demonstrated that commitment through scholarships and innovative programs.

Scholarship Program

Through our scholarship program, **23 families received financial assistance** in 2025. These families might otherwise not have been able to afford participation. By removing the financial barrier, we ensure that a child's ability to play rugby depends on their interest and effort – not their family's income.

New: Unified Rugby

In 2025, Rugby Indiana launched Unified Rugby, welcoming young people with neurodivergent differences to participate alongside peer partners. Unified Rugby participants competed in the Spring Tournament for the first time—**14 players participated (including their partner players)**, with one club offering the program.

This expansion reflects our value of inclusion: rugby is for every young person.

Indy Speed: Girls' Competitive Opportunity

Rugby Indiana continues to facilitate competitive pathways for high school girls. Indy Speed provides select girls with additional coaching, tournament exposure, and direct access to college coaches and U.S. National Team pathway scouts. In 2025, 33 girls participated in Indy Speed.

Gender Equity Progress

Girls now represent 33% of Rugby Indiana's participants. This growth didn't happen by accident. It reflects:

- Intentional addition of girls' teams at every age level
- Marketing directly to girls and families
- Coaching certification and development opportunities for girls' programs
- Tournament structures that provide equal competitive opportunities

Section 3 - Community Leadership

Built by Coaches, Volunteers & Community

A. Coaching Excellence

The quality of our coaches is the single largest factor determining whether children have great rugby experiences. We invest heavily in coach development.

202

Coaches certified at USA Rugby Level 1 or higher

35+

New coaches trained in 2025

Coach Development Pathway

Rugby Indiana supports coaches at every level:

1. **USA Rugby Level 1:** Coaches advance to recognized USA Rugby Level 1 certification, meeting national standards. Rugby Indiana hosts at least two of these clinics in Indiana annually.
2. **USA Rugby Level 2:** Advanced coaches pursue Level 2 certification, specializing in competitive coaching. Rugby Indiana strives to provide this clinic every other year in Indiana.
3. **Specialty Development:** Coaching resources including the new Champion Mindset Cards help coaches develop player leadership and resilience

New in 2025: Champion Mindset Cards

Rugby Indiana created and launched Champion Mindset Cards – an optional resource clubs can use to help coaches develop player psychology alongside technical skills. This tool reflects our commitment to developing the whole player.

"When I started coaching, I learned not just about rugby but about myself. These young people teach me something every practice."

B. Volunteer Impact

Coaches are just one piece. Rugby Indiana operates because of a community of volunteers—referees, administrators, tournament staff, and club leaders who dedicate their time.

Volunteer Force

Volunteer Administrators: 122 (managing clubs, communications, logistics)

Volunteer Coaches: 202

Estimated Total Volunteer Hours in 2025: 53,766

Dollar Equivalent Value: \$1,075,320 (Calculated at \$20/hour standard volunteer rate)

This means that our community members value this sport and the children that participate by contributing value through their time and expertise.

Referee Development

The Indiana Rugby Referees Society, an independent group, provides certified referees to uphold the laws of the game and ensure player safety. In 2025, we assisted the Indiana Rugby Referee Society by hosting two Level 1 referee certification clinics that were attended by 22+ new referees.

We also brought our disciplinary process into alignment with World Rugby standards, ensuring fair and consistent treatment across all competitions.

C. Strategic Partnerships

Rugby Indiana doesn't work alone. We partner with USA Rugby, schools, community organizations, and local businesses to expand our reach and impact.

USA Rugby Partnership

Rugby Indiana is part of the USA Rugby governance structure. We participate in the USA Youth & High School Council, helping shape national youth rugby policy and competing in national championships.

Scan to access financial documents

School Partnerships

In 2025, we continued developing the School PE Rugby Grants, introducing rugby to young people through physical education classes in Indiana schools. This "try rugby before you join a club" model is an effective pathway to recruitment.

Community Partnerships

- **Sideline Project:** Partnered to provide training and resources to clubs and parents on sideline behavior, addressing a challenge every youth sport faces
- **USA Rugby Pilot Programs:** Participated in Black Card pilot program to standardize discipline processes

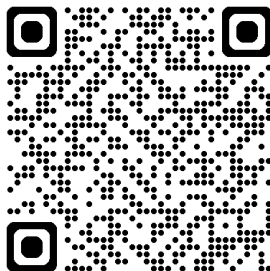
Section 4 - Financial Health & Sustainability

Financial Transparency & Stewardship

Rugby Indiana is committed to financial transparency and strong stewardship of the resources entrusted to us. For our annual reports, we choose not to include a detailed financial section because our year-end statements are still undergoing review and refinement in preparation for independent CPA review, and we do not want to present preliminary figures that may change. Instead, in keeping with best practices for nonprofit accountability, we make our IRS Form 990 and other key financial documents publicly available on our website, where stakeholders can always access the most accurate, up-to-date information about our finances.

Access Our Financial Documents

rugbyindiana.com/documents



Scan to access financial documents

Our Commitment to Financial Stewardship

Rugby Indiana operates as a mission-driven nonprofit. Every dollar received is reinvested in youth rugby programs, coach development, and safety infrastructure. We maintain diverse revenue streams to ensure long-term sustainability.



Candid Gold Level Transparency 2025

Sponsorship Partners

Rugby Indiana is grateful for the support of businesses and organizations who invest in youth rugby:

Gatorade – Over 13 years of partnership, supporting athlete nutrition and hydration at tournaments and events

The Architecture Studio – Supporting Rugby Indiana operations and community programming

Section 5 - Special Programs & Community Impact

Innovation. Inclusion. Impact.

A. Tournaments & Community Events

6,200+

2025 Spring Championships Spectators

7% increase from 2024

1,200+

2025 Fall 7s Championships Spectators

17% increase from 2024

2025 Spring Championships Tournament – Record-breaking attendance showcasing boys and girls middle school and high school competition

2025 Fall 7s State Championships Tournament – High school boys and girls competing in 7s format

B. Special Programs & Initiatives

Get Into Rugby Days

Get Into Rugby is a zero-barrier, introduction program allowing clubs to showcase rugby in their communities for free. This minimal-impact model reduces barriers to trying the sport.

Events in 2025: 17 events across Indiana

Participants: 201 young people

Significance: This program directly correlates with club growth. Clubs using Get Into Rugby extensively (like Homestead Rugby Club) reported adding new teams

Winter Clinic 2025

Participants: 74 players

Purpose: Off-season skill development and player development

Unified Rugby Launch

In 2025, Rugby Indiana launched Unified Rugby, developed to align with the Unified Sports model. Unified Rugby welcomes young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to participate alongside peer partners.

First Season: 14 players (including partners) in one club

Tournament Participation: Unified players competed in the Spring Championship Tournament for the first time

Community Response: Exceptional – families described it as transformative

Indy Speed (Girls' High School Competitive Opportunity)

This second year of Indy Speed rebirth provides elite female high school rugby players with:

- Additional coaching and skill development
- Regional tournament opportunities
- Direct exposure to college coaches and U.S. National Team pathway scouts

Participants: 33 girls

Coaching Development: Champion Mindset Cards

Rugby Indiana created Champion Mindset Cards—an optional coaching resource helping coaches develop player psychology, resilience, and leadership alongside technical rugby skills.

Rugby Leadership Academy

Rugby Indiana launched a new Rugby Leadership Academy, offering clubs a structured pathway for developing young leaders through rugby participation.

New Infrastructure: Digital Ticketing System

Tested in the fall of 2024, in 2025 we implemented a new online digital ticketing system for tournaments, improving fan experience and streamlining event management.

Disciplinary Process Alignment

Brought our disciplinary process into full alignment with World Rugby and USA Rugby standards, including trained community judicial officers ensuring fair and consistent enforcement.

C. Recognition & External Validation

Rugby Indiana's commitment to excellence and accountability is recognized by nonprofit watchdog organizations:

Gold

Candid Nonprofit Rating (2025)

4 Star

Charity Navigator Rating (2025)

These ratings reflect our financial health, governance transparency, and mission execution.

Section 6 - Looking Forward: 2026-2027 Vision

Our Roadmap for Growth

Strategic Goals for 2026-2027

In 2025, Rugby Indiana successfully completed a significant governance transition to align our board structure with new youth and high school rugby requirements. With this organizational work now in place, we are returning to the strategic planning process we began prior to these mandated changes and will be outlining new goals that align with the needs of our stakeholders.

Infrastructure & Awareness Goals

Increase Parent Awareness of SafeSport App

The U.S. Center for SafeSport app helps parents and young people understand abuse prevention and reporting. We will increase awareness and adoption among our families.

Increase Parent Awareness of Next Phase Rugby

Next Phase Rugby is a college rugby recruiting tool. We will increase awareness among high school families of this resource.

Increase Parent Awareness of Sideline Project

The Sideline Project is a movement with tools designed to improve sideline behavior in youth sports by promoting supportive actions among parents, coaches, referees, and spectators, while reducing distracting and hostile conduct.

Our Governance

In 2025, Rugby Indiana transitioned to a membership-based governance model in alignment with new Youth & High School Rugby governance requirements.

Board of Directors (Elected September 2025)

Term Ending December 2026:

- Bryce Campbell

Term Ending December 2027:

- Keith Huehls
- David Toth
- Taylor Badal

Term Ending December 2028:

- Sam Hatlem
- Jay Hinkle
- Joey Hamby

High School Commissioners

Term Ending in 2025:

- Taylor Serres
- Trecor Cracknell
- Karlencia Johnson

Term Ending in 2026:

- Chris Ballard
- Austin Robbins

How You Can Get Involved

Rugby Indiana thrives because of our community. There are many ways to participate:

Play Rugby

Register your child for spring or fall season. Visit www.RugbyIndiana.com to find clubs near you.

Volunteer

Become a coach, referee, or administrator. Visit www.RugbyIndiana.com

Support Rugby

- **Sponsor:** Partner with Rugby Indiana and reach thousands of rugby families. Contact Wayne Eells | WEells@RugbyIndiana.com
- **Donate:** Every contribution supports youth rugby access and coach development. Visit www.RugbyIndiana.com/Give

Contact Rugby Indiana

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Thank You

To our players—you inspire us every day with your courage, effort, and character.

To our parents—you make it possible by supporting our mission and building community.

To our coaches—you shape young lives and demonstrate what leadership means.

To our volunteers and referees—you are the backbone of Rugby Indiana.

To our sponsors and donors—you invest in the next generation.

To our board and staff—you guide our mission with integrity and passion.

**Together, we're building a stronger rugby community
in Indiana.**