

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA RUGBY UNION

TOUR POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

I. INTRODUCTION

The rugby tour is an integral part of a player's career and in the development and improvement of the game in the United States. Properly organized and conducted, it contributes to both the abilities of players as well as the unification of a team/club into a cohesive body on and off the pitch. It is a strong morale builder and offers an opportunity for travel and friendship. If not properly planned, though, a tour can product unwanted friction and problems for players, the club/team, the EPRU, and United States rugby.

The EPRU Tours Committee maintains these guidelines for the following purposes:

1. To allocate resources so as to balance the needs and abilities of all clubs with the needs of representative sides and tourists in order to both improve playing skills and gain recognition for rugby in the EPRU.
2. To coordinate communication between the participating clubs and the Union.
3. To ensure the supervision and administration of social arrangements for visiting teams.
4. To ensure effective outfitting of Union representative teams.
5. To manage the supervision and integration of administrative arrangements for visiting teams.

It is imperative that the club recognize that touring brings your team and our union under the spotlight of many more people; this spotlight is more of a factor when the tour involves international players. Whether the tour is abroad or you are hosting a traveling team, you will be evaluated against the most exacting standards of play and social behavior.

Of course, you will be judged by your peers as well, as poorly organized tours (both hosting & traveling) leave a legacy which will be borne by all other clubs in the EPRU.

The following notes have been assembled to give you guidelines and checklists on issues that you will need to be aware of and responsible for in order to have a successful tour; whether this is an outgoing or hosting tour.

II. OUTGOING TOURS

A. Rules and Procedures

1. Teams from the EPRU planning to tour outside the jurisdiction of the Mid Atlantic RFU must secure the approval of the EPRU Tours Committee. Failure to

receive approval may result in cancellation of matches by the EPRU. Additionally, for many international unions, if you fail to tour with the necessary letters of approval, you may find yourselves in a foreign country with no team to play.

2. Each touring club shall have a central source of communication - one person in charge, usually known as a Tour Organizer. For select sides, this position can also be the Select Side Manager. All itinerary and financial arrangements for outgoing tours should be directed by the Tour Manager.

3. No collegiate club will be allowed to tour outside the continental United States unless accompanied by a responsible adult appointed by their university administration.

4. Generally USA Rugby, MARFU and the EPRU Tours Committee need **one year** prior to the tour to process tour applications. Final review and approval will occur within the last two months prior to departure. This time is necessary, as after your club receives approval, you should send a copy of this letter to each team or club you are playing, prior to your traveling. The following information, as a minimum, must be submitted to the EPRU Tours Committee Chairman initially in order to process the application:

- a. Travel itinerary; ie, dates of departure and arrival, opposing club names and addresses, match dates, and travel dates (from one fixture to another) while on tour.

- b. The number of people in the touring party.

- c. Name, address, etc. of your club/team Tour Coordinator and the name and address of the travel agent or coordinator.

- d. Name, address, telephone numbers of the host clubs.

- e. Collegiate teams must provide the name, address, telephone number and position at the college of the adult appointed by the college accompanying the team on tour.

- f. A summary of the finances for the tour, including the estimated expenses and the means by which these expenses will be paid (ie., method of funding; individual funding, and fund-raising events, etc.)

Included in this document is a Tour Application Form. Please use the form to provide the above information.

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5. In order for your club or team to travel with permission of MARFU & USA Rugby, the EPRU Tours Committee Chairman must notify the MARFU Tours Committee; approval or disapproval may come from either.

6. As mentioned above, you should send a copy of the final approval by MARFU and the EPRU to your host clubs. It is also a sound recommendation that you travel with a copy of the approval form.

7. Finally, after your tour we ask that you complete a Tour Report so that we can all learn more of the clubs that you played.

B. General Organization

1. The three key individuals involved in running a tour are the Tour Organizer, the Tour Manager, and the Team Captain. The combination of any of these functions places increased burdens and responsibilities on any individual, and may result in problems. Generally, the duty of each is as follows:

a. **Tour Organizer** - This person is responsible for planning every facet of the tour off the field, whether he assumes the details himself or delegates them to assistants or travel agencies. This includes communication with hosts, airlines, hotels, etc. It is vital that all commitments be in writing, well in advance. During the tour the Tour Organizer should be able to maintain continued contacts regarding all travel and lodging arrangements; however this should not extend to the daily functioning of the tour, as this is primarily the purpose of the Tour Manager.

b. **Tour Manager** - is in charge of overseeing the well-being of the members of the touring party, from departure to return. All facets of the tour are included; discipline, equipment, and even making sure all teammates are assembled before each game.

c. **Team Captain** - is the person responsible for the team on the field. It is suggested that the Captain be included in the selection process. Finally, both the Captain and Tour Manager should be expected to speak at public functions after games, etc., so both must be prepared!

2. **Planning** is absolutely essential for a successful tour. Outlined are common issues important to all tours.

a. **Evaluation:** Before traveling, three general issues should be assessed: (1) can the necessary funds be raised in time; (2) can a strong and fit team be ready to travel for what may be an extended period of time; and finally, (3) are there enough responsible people available to share in the duties that are required to take on the considerable organization and efforts involved with travel?

Only when you are satisfied on all points should you approach the EPRU Tours Committee.

b. **Notification:** The Tour Organizer should notify the EPRU Tours Committee Chairman of the team's plan to tour. The EPRU Tours Committee must advise MARFU and USA Rugby that the proposed touring team (and match opponents) are in good standing, and in return MARFU and USA Rugby provide the EPRU with the necessary permission for the outgoing tour.

Overseas unions do not tolerate touring sides who have not received proper approval. Sanctions can be placed on sub-unions who allow sides to tour without having received proper approval. Sanctions will be placed on clubs who tour without having received proper approval.

c. **Finance:** A party of 30, going to Europe for two weeks will, without any difficulty, tally expenditures in excess of \$20,000. Most of this will have to be borne by the touring club and its' supporters. You may be able to reduce this with contributions, arrangement of private accommodations, host meals, etc. Assess your needs at the very beginning and bear in mind that bills will have to be paid during the tour. In addition, extra funds should be taken for use in emergencies. Be liberal in your estimates of expenses!

d. **Travel:** Consult a reputable travel agent whom you trust. For internal travel in European countries, public transportation is generally of a high standard and there are often incentives for foreign travelers. Cost and reservations can and should be obtained in advance. Many clubs also use a hired bus for the duration of their stay in a particular country.

e. **Accommodations:** There are a variety of sources, ranging from private homes to student hostels or inexpensive hotels. Confirm reservations and cost in advance. You may also consult with your hosts or your travel agent for other sources.

f. **Fixtures:** Mismatching of strengths in fixtures can ruin a tour. Some overseas unions have expressed concern about the scheduling of games that resulted in lopsided scores. There is no reason why games cannot be arranged with teams of comparable playing abilities. It is easy to overestimate one's own strength, particularly by overlooking normal tour attrition during a heavy program of matches and hospitality. While on the tour, seek advice after each game from your hosts and, if necessary, telephone ahead to your next hosts and let them know if you do not think you are strong enough to cope with the team they are putting out against you.

g. **Relaxation:** There is invariably a tendency to be too venturesome in planning fixtures. Playing on and off the field takes a considerable toll, with even minor

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injuries and late nights sapping playing strength. Five matches in two weeks for a party of 25 players should be the absolute maximum, particularly when there is travel between fixtures. Rest days, therefore, are of great importance. Some sightseeing can be planned in advance, particularly as rest stops on long bus trips. Ask your hosts for suggestions.

h. Kit: A clean, well turned out team builds confidence, spirit and reputations. Take at least one full set plus five spares (jerseys, shorts, socks) for each team. Training kits (old jerseys, track suits, etc.) are the individual player's responsibilities. Take along black boot polish, brushes, spare laces, etc. Off the field, there will be official functions to which blazer, sportcoats, nonjeans, shirt and tie should be worn.

i. Tour Brochure: This is an excellent promotional piece that need not be too elaborate. Basically it should contain profiles of your club and each player, with photographs. Local advertisers should be vigorously canvassed with a view to recovering much of the costs before leaving. Some host clubs will allow you to sell copies at a nominal amount. Messages of good will from local rugby and community dignitaries should be included.

j. Mementos: It is customary to offer some record of your visit to each host club, the most common being a club or college crest in plaque form. Additional items can be badges, ties, etc. for those who play against you and for their officials. Gifts should also be given to families who host individual players. No cash, though!

k. Insurance: Some countries have national health programs under which visitors would be eligible for medical treatment. Despite this, it is vital that you carry adequate protection. Baggage and personal effects insurance can also be useful.

l. Medical Kit: This need not be too elaborate, but can save many minor irritations. Aspirin, ACE bandages, tape, Vaseline, gauze pads, disinfectant for cuts are obvious items. A complete list is available in the EPRU Handbook (see "*Being Prepared for Game Injuries*"). All items should be kept sealed to avoid difficulty in Customs clearance.

m. Travelers Checks: For protection, funds should be in the form of travelers checks. Checks in the local currency should be purchased prior to departure.

C. Checklist

1. **Confirmation**, in writing of the following:
 - a. EPRU, MARFU & USARFU permission to tour (carry letter with you on the tour!).
 - b. Host clubs confirm fixtures and permission from their own Unions.
 - c. Air transportation - payment dates.
 - d. Ground transportation on tour, costs and payment dates.

- e. Accommodations and costs.
- f. Follow up your letters to hosts with a phone call just prior to departure.

2. Funds Available for:

- a. Transportation costs - air and ground.
- b. Accommodation costs.
- c. Meal costs.
- d. Emergency fund - individually and as a team.
- e. Personal pocket money, in traveler's checks.

3. Kit:

- a. Matching uniforms.
- b. Training kit.
- c. Blazer and tie.

4. Tour Brochure:

- a. Program due dates, advertising copy.
- b. Incoming funds due date & payment of printer due date.
- c. Arrange delivery well before departure.

5. Mementos:

- a. For clubs/players/officials.
- b. Design, payment, and collection.

6. Passports, visas and vaccinations as required.

7. Insurance

8. Medical Kit

D. Post-Tour Report

Within 30 days of the completion of the tour, a report must be sent to the EPRU Tours Chairman. This report should discuss the tour, give highlights and any problems or recommendations. This report will also serve to help others who tour this same area in the future.

III. INCOMING TOURS

A. General Rules

1. Union teams bidding on a touring team game must indicate to the EPRU Tours Committee what they are prepared to do in hosting a match with a touring team, ie. reception committee on arrival, providing of directions to practice field, assistance in transportation to the match, and appropriate post-game festivities. The EPRU Tours Committee decisions of approval/disapproval is final. Failure to receive permission may result in cancellation of referees or the match.

2. Visiting teams must get permission to tour within the EPRU jurisdiction from the EPRU Tours Chairman.

3. The Tours Committee shall communicate approval or denial along with other pertinent details to teams wishing to tour within the jurisdiction of the Union.

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4. Any team wishing to tour within the jurisdiction of the Union must present evidence to the Tours Committee of sanction to tour from their home Union. Deviation from this rule can result in game cancellation.

5. The Tours Committee determines who the opponents of touring teams shall be. In cases where a touring team requests a specific opponent and the Tours Committee deems that opponent to be unsuitable, the Committee may designate another opponent or withhold match approval, or both.

6. The Union shall assume no financial or other level obligations relative to touring teams unless (a) a Union team is playing the visitor; (b) a specific request from a member club is put to the Tours Committee. In both cases, or in any other case, the Executive Committee must approve by a majority vote.

7. Copies of all correspondence initiated by union teams relative to inviting touring teams to the EPRU should be sent to the Union Secretary and the EPRU Tours Committee as a matter of record.

8. The Tours Committee, when informed of an internal tour arranged between an EPRU team and a touring team may, if it feels it is necessary in order to avoid misunderstandings, communicate to the visitor's home Union any doubts which may exist as to the EPRU's host club's ability to provide: (a) adequate competition; and (b) accommodations, transportation, financial arrangements, etc.

9. When the Union Select Side is acting as a host to a touring side, the President or Select Side Representative shall appoint a Match Organizer and a Team Manager. Their respective duties are:

a. **Match Organizer** - Arranges a venue, referees, and other duties pertinent and ancillary to the match and not covered in the nomenclature of the Team Manager's functions. Also includes fund raising duties in collaboration with the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

b. **Team Manager** - Issues and collects uniforms, secures a team trainer and physician, training supplies, and injury contingencies.

B. General Procedures

1. Incoming clubs and Select Sides must submit their itinerary including dates of matches, dates on which they move from one host to another, to the EPRU Tours Committee for approval.

2. Provide the name, address and telephone number of the Tour Coordinator.

C. Pre-Tour Communication

1. One member of the host club should be appointed the Tour Coordinator. It shall be their function to handle all arrangements with the touring side.

2. It shall be the duty of the Tour Coordinator to secure a copy of the itinerary of the touring team and work around that.

3. The Tour Coordinator should make clear to the touring side what the limits are of the host club's liabilities.

4. The Tour Coordinator should make clear to the touring side the extent to the host club's financial resources so that there are no misunderstandings of what the touring team can expect in the way of hospitality.

5. The Tour Coordinator should notify the EPRU Tours Committee of the club's plans to host. As the EPRU Tours Committee interacts with the MARFU Tours Committee, the EPRU Tours Committee must advise MARFU and USARFU that the proposed hosting team (and match opponents) are in good standing, and in return MARFU & USARFU provide the EPRU with: (a) notice that the touring club is in good standing with its home Union and has permission to tour; and (b) the touring side has received USARFU approval to tour. Sanctions will be placed on clubs who allow incoming tours without having received proper approval.

D. Welcome

1. A committee of the club members (the more the better) should meet the tourists at their arrival point, i.e., bus station, train station or air terminal.

2. The host club should be prepared to offer the tour party a small reception with refreshments and snacks, etc. on the eve of their arrival.

3. A formal reception is appropriate for touring sides from outside the United States.

E. Transportation

1. For touring sides without their own transportation, the host club shall make every effort to get the tourists to training sessions, the match, after-match socials, etc.

2. For touring sides with their own transportation, the Tour Coordinator shall see that the tourists have maps and directions to all functions and, if possible, have a host club guide.

F. Accommodations

1. If at all possible, and especially with the touring sides from outside the U.S., the host club should provide lodging in the club members' homes. The

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Tour Coordinator should have a list prepared in advance, matching the hosts with the tourists.

2. The host club, through the Secretary or Tour Coordinator, should be prepared to communicate hotel and motel rates to the tourists so they may obtain the best possible accommodations dependent on their financial resources.

3. This list should be made available to the Tour Manager so that in emergencies they may be able to contact quickly a player or players.

G. Match

1. The Tour Coordinator should show the match field to the Coach and Tour Manager well in advance of the game.

2. The pitch must be properly marked and well-lined with appropriate flags or cones.

3. If possible, there should be separate dressing rooms with showers, or arrangements for shower facilities.

4. One person should be appointed to make sure that the dressing rooms are locked during the match.

5. The touring side should have a choice of a maximum of 3 balls for the match. Both sides should agree on the selection; any disagreement to be settled with a decision by the referee.

6. The arrangement of the referee's arrival should be such that he will be available before the game with enough time for questions or laws interpretations.

7. Without exception, the referee should be invited to the post-game festivities.

8. A trainer and physician should be available, along with transportation in the event of emergencies.

H. After-Match Functions

1. Social arrangements are a matter of style, but no touring side should be ignored following a match - win or lose! Both liquid and food should be provided.

2. Token gifts are usually exchanged, and the host team should be prepared to exchange pins, ties, t-shirts, etc.

3. Mounted crests, banners, plaques, etc. are usually considered to be necessary and appropriate, and the host team should be prepared to offer any of these to the Tour Manager, Captain, Coach, or club President. Other items that might be presented or exchanged are a rugby ball (autographed & with the score of the game), suitable touch-flags or a club jersey.

I. Extras To Be Considered

1. A match brochure of your game with names of players is good, especially for touring sides from outside the U.S.

2. A sightseeing trip to points of local interest and/or to meet local dignitaries (a trip to the local Chamber of Commerce should be able to produce a tourist information packet that is usually much appreciated).

3. A key to the city.

J. Post-Tour Report

Within 30 days of the completion of the tour, a report must be sent to the EPRU Tours Chairman. This report should discuss the tour, give highlights and any problems or recommendations. This report will also serve to help others who may play the same club.

III. FORMS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

A. Tour Application Form (Incoming & Outgoing)

Included in this section is the form that outgoing teams and hosts of incoming touring teams must submit to the EPRU Tours Chairman. Outgoing is due at least six months in advance, incoming at least three months in advance. Please complete the form and submit it with any other pertinent information to EPRU, PO Box 393, Exton, PA 19341. As a reminder, USA Rugby requires that all outgoing clubs and players be current CIPP members and that all clubs have current club liability insurance coverage.

B. Touring Side Questionnaire (Incoming Tours)

For incoming tours: Please see to it that this form is given to the incoming team. We are interested in knowing what your opinions are of our Union, and what can be done to improve any problems. Mail completed form to EPRU, PO Box 393, Exton, PA 19341.

