



# **Panthers Handbook**

2014-2015

# Why the Panthers Exist

USA Rugby South wants to provide the highest level of rugby development and success through competitions for its players, coaches and supporters within the southeast United States.

In this endeavor, USA Rugby South is proud to provide a World Rugby sanctioned international competition for all.

## **Panthers Objectives**

- To provide an atmosphere of safety and enjoyment for all
- To ensure all players are treated fairly and equally
- To develop player skills, abilities and confidence to enable each player the capacity to reach their full potential
- To develop and improve management and coaching expertise
- To have clear and open communication with the players, management and staff
- To provide an environment which is conducive to enjoyable and successful Rugby
- To provide regular feedback to all players regarding their progress and development

# Code of Conduct

All players, coaches, staff and supporters are considered to be ambassadors of the sport of rugby. They are viewed by members of the general public and media as examples of the sport and those who play it. As such, all are expected to behave with dignity both on and off the playing field.

Rude, profane, threatening or anti-social behavior of any sort which would reflect negatively on the image of the player, their club, USA Rugby South, USA Rugby or the sport of rugby in general is unacceptable.

## Code of Conduct - Player

Players are encouraged to:

- Recognize and appreciate the efforts made by coaches, match officials and administrators in providing the opportunity for you to play and enjoy the game of rugby. Most are volunteers.
- Understand the values of loyalty and commitment to the Panthers.
- Recognize that every player has a right to expect their involvement in rugby to be safe and free from all types of harassment or abuse.
- Listen and act on any instructions given to you by managers or coaches responsible for any activity you may be involved.
- Recognize that feedback to coaches and management is just as important as their feedback to you. Everyone benefits from honest dialog.
- Be responsible and safety conscious at all times.
- Safeguard your health; don't use any illegal or unhealthy substances.
- Recognize superior fitness as a primary asset to your rugby success.
- Respect other people and their possessions.
- Respect the opposition, its facilities and its traditions.

When Playing:

- Participate for your own enjoyment and benefit.
- Remember that skill development, fun and enjoyment are the most important parts of the game.
- Work equally hard for yourself and your team – both will then benefit.
- Recognize good play by ALL players on your team and by your opponents.
- Honor both the spirit and letter of the competition rules and live up to the highest ideals of ethics and sportsmanship.
- Play to the Laws of the Game and accept, without question, all the referee's decisions.
- Control your emotions. Verbal or physical abuse of teammates, opponents, match officials or spectators IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. Treat all as you would like to be treated.

## **Code of Conduct - Coach**

- Seek to maximize the participation and enjoyment of all players regardless of ability; treat all players as equals, regardless of their talent.
- Actively discourage foul play and/or unsportsmanlike behavior by players.
- Show concern and caution towards all sick and injured players.
- Follow the advice of a physician and/or sports trainer to the letter when determining when an injured player is ready to recommence training or playing.
- Teach players that an honest effort and competing to the best of their ability is as important as victory.
- Maintain appropriate, professional relationships with players at all times.
- Maintain a thorough knowledge of the Laws of the Game and keep abreast of current coaching methods; maintain or improve your current accreditation level.
- Always consider the health, safety and welfare of the players.
- As coach, conduct yourself at all times in a manner, and in all situations, that shows leadership, respect for the game of Rugby and respect for all those that are involved in the game.

# Finances

When the local unions within the old USA Rugby South Territory became Geographic Unions (GU's), they took their share of the assets of USARS out of the corporation leaving the organization basically without any funds. The Georgia Rugby Union and the Florida Rugby Union did leave some funds so the organization could continue to have some ability to provide playing opportunities for the Panthers.

During the 2013 campaign, USARS was able to budget moneys within its budget to the Panthers.

During the 2014 campaign, the Panthers received some financial support from the Georgia Rugby Union and both the old Deep South Rugby Union and the old Mid-South Rugby Union (now the True South GU.)

Through this generosity, USARS has been able to provide limited financial support to the Men and U19 Panthers. NACRA has also provided limited support for games in which the Panthers traveled to play other nations and even less support for Panthers home games. There is significant cost that outside support does not pay however and a large portion of the costs of the Panthers program(s) is borne by the players, coaches and staff.

It is uncertain how much financial support will be available to the Panthers at any time.

Each year all participants selected into the Panthers are required to post a deposit to create the necessary funds for the programs to operate (working capital). Additionally, there may be camp fees and others items to be paid. All program costs are funded by players, coaches and staff but any additional sources of funds will be used to offset costs to the players, coaches and staff.

Persons that do not exhaust their deposit through costs paid on their behalf (kit, motel, tournament fees, etc) can expect to be refunded at the end of each year's campaign.

# Selection Policy

Selection into the Panthers program is available to all men at least 18 years of age who reside in what was previously the USA Rugby South territory. Additionally, anyone previously associated with the Panther program will always be welcome. Once a Panther, always a Panther!

The coaching staff is entrusted and empowered to select teams having the best chance of success. The coaching staff will use a defined group of players to provide input into the selection process.

Some areas of consideration in no particular order for selectors are:

- Player skill set for a particular game
- Overall player fitness
- Overall player commitment to the entire Panther schedule

Specifically for the 2014-2015 playing cycle, there are four opportunities for players to demonstrate their abilities and commitment to the selectors at this time.

- October 18/19            Player Camp
- November 8/9           Battleship Tournament
- January 24                Player Camp
- February 21/22          Ruggerfest Tournament

To be eligible for selection for the first NACRA game against Mexico a player must participate in at least one of the following:

- Player Camp on October 18
- Battleship Tournament on November 8
- Player Camp on January 24

After participating in at least one of these venues, the player must then attend the Fort Lauderdale Ruggerfest. A team of 23 will be selected from the Ruggerfest for our game against the Mexican National Team two weeks later. If selected for the game in Mexico, the player will have three days in which to purchase their flight to Mexico. The player will be told the exact itinerary he must follow with respect to flights.

Selection into subsequent games is available to all players and different players will likely be selected into other games because of injury, availability or as required with respect to an opponents strengths/weaknesses.