

Major League Rugby Officially Recognizes the Players Association

United States Rugby Players Association (USRPA) Becomes the Official Union of MLR

Chicago, Illinois Jan 31, 2024 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - After almost three years of organizing, the United States Rugby Players Association (USRPA) has been officially recognized by Major League Rugby and will become the players' collective bargaining representative.

USRPA is an independent players' union established by and operated for the benefit of professional rugby players in America. It has served as the recognized collective bargaining representative for the Players on the United States National Teams (both Men's and Women's 7s and 15s). With this week's announcement, USRPA grows to include a separate bargaining unit for the nearly 500 Major League Rugby players who now gain a meaningful role in shaping the future of the sport and how it is played professionally.

"Today marks a historic step forward in North American professional rugby," said Nick Civetta, USRPA player board chair. "It is the first time MLR players will be at the center of the decisions."

In the spring of 2023, MLR players launched the #RugbyUnionNow campaign to raise awareness of player concerns and push for recognition. They then petitioned the National Labor Relations Board, seeking to certify the USRPA to represent them in collective bargaining.

"This effort has been building for the last few years as players are becoming increasingly concerned with viability to play professional rugby as a career option," Mason Pederson, 7-year MLR veteran, stated. "This agreement is the first step toward developing the long-term contractual stabilization of the sport,

Today's landmark agreement would not have happened without the players before us working with the league to evolve safety protocols and all the current players pushing for voluntary recognition," said Chris Mattina, USA Eagle in both 7s and 15s, and 7-season MLR veteran. "Players will now have a seat at the table and help set a new direction to help make professional rugby safer and more secure."

Today's agreement now solidifies USRPA as the players' collective representative under the National Labor Relations Act.

"We look forward to working with the league in a good faith effort to grow the sport through a player-centric lens for all future generations," Michael Young, USRPA's executive director and general counsel, stated.

For more information about the United States Rugby Players Association, visit USARugbyPlayers.org

For press inquiries, contact Scott Goodstein at 202-256-8320 / Scott@CatalystCampaigns.com

Media Contact

Scott Goodstein

Scott@CatalystCampaigns.com

202-256-8320

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