



Youth/HS Club Promotions Guide

PROMOTE YOUR COLLEGE OR HIGH SCHOOL CLUB

Every Rugby club can greatly benefit from a solid promotions program. Your promotions plan needn't be time-consuming or complex, as even organized work-of-mouth campaigns can be highly effective. However, taking the time to assemble a strategy for generating information and club news to the proper channels can pay huge dividends in community/media awareness for your club, financial support and the recognition of your school and/or college.

As you create a plan to promote your Rugby club, consider developing relationships with the following groups:

- 1- Your college's Sports Information Department (if applicable)
- 2- Local media, including newspapers, radio and television stations
- 3- Other Rugby clubs in your community

Make sure to inform your club sports administrator of your promotions activities. There may be university or high school rules that apply to club promotions to which you must adhere. For example, you may need to clearly identify your program as a club sport (not "team") in all forms of communication (newspaper articles, posters, banners, press releases, etc.) in order to avoid confusion or misrepresentation between Club and Varsity sports (this applies to college Rugby clubs only).

You may want to appoint a member of your team to serve as the Team Promotions Manager. This person – or group of people – can be responsible for initiating the media and public awareness campaigns for your team and events. The ideas presented below can serve as a starting point from which you can develop your own, unique team promotions campaign.

Building Media Relationships and Developing Team Information

1- Pay a visit to your university's Sports Information Department (SID). The Sports Information Department is responsible for developing and distributing information on collegiate sport programs, promoting the Varsity teams and athletes, developing relationships with national and local media, serving as media liaisons between your college's athlete department and the media, and providing overall sport information and media management support for the Varsity sport programs.

While the majority of Sports Information Departments focus their energies on Varsity sports, many are more than willing to assist club sports, such as Rugby, by providing guidance and media contacts. Ask them for access to their local media database, so that you will have a reference of media in your local area to which you can send information on your team and events.

2- Invite members of the local media to a team training session or special event. As you make the effort to develop relationships with the media in your area, they will become interested in your team's development and performance. Make sure to provide the media with a press kit on your team, which can include the following elements (be creative and add as many interesting information pieces as you like):

Historical Team Information Team Rosters and Athlete Biographies An Explanation of the Sport of Rugby Records of Past Team Performances and Statistics

3- Pay a visit to the sports department of your school newspaper and broadcast departments. Develop relationships with the journalism and public relations students at your university or high school who can help your club by writing press releases for your team and developing promotional materials such as team fact sheets, athlete biographies and game announcements – these are fantastic class projects for many journalism students!

4- Reach out to the local Rugby clubs in your area or territory. Oftentimes, the local senior Rugby clubs in your community will have already established relationships with local/regional media, and can be very useful in helping you establish media relationships. Consider ways in which you can work together with the other local clubs in your area to promote your events and generate excitement and strong attendance.

The local senior clubs may have business connections in your area that can possibly be of assistance to your club. For instance, a local Rugby player may have connections to a printing company in town, which would consider offering you a discount on the printing of your media materials and event posters and flyers.

5- Keep Meticulous Records. Statistical information on your team's performance year to year is very important when developing team information materials. Develop a system for tracking match results, scorers and team squads for each year. Over time, you will also develop a tremendous alumni database, to which you can possibly turn for financial support (please see the information presented under "Fundraising" in the College Rugby and Playing the Games sections of the website).

6- Work with local media to post your matches in the Community Events Calendars. This is a tremendous resource, as people in your community will often check these calendars when planning their weekend or evening activities. This is often a free service provided by most local area papers.