

EMPIRE RFU GU
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
August 9, 2025

Empire GU met for its Annual General Meeting via web meeting on Saturday, August 9, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m.

ROLL CALL - ATTENDANCE

Voting Members: Bayonne Men, Binghamton Men, Brooklyn Men, Brooklyn Women, Buffalo Men, Central Jersey Men, Danbury Men, Danbury Women, Fairfield Men, Fairfield Women, Genesee Men, Gotham Men, Hudson Valley Men, Hudson Valley Women, Ken-Ton Men, Long Island Men, Long Island Women, Montclair Men, Morris Men, Morris Women, NYRC Men, NYRC Women, Queens Men, Rochester Aardvarks, Rochester Colonials, Saratoga Men, South Buffalo Men, Syracuse Men, Union Men, Union Women, Village Lions Women, White Plains Men

There are (45) total clubs in EGU and 25% is required for a quorum (12 clubs). A quorum is in place with (32) clubs present.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dannish Patel welcomed all member clubs and representatives to the meeting.

Membership

Clubs: 42

Membership: 2025: 2276 | 2024: 2336 | 2023: 2367 | 2022: 2258 | 2021: 1709 members | 2020: 2250; EGU remains the second largest in the country

New programming in 2024-25: webinars established for coaching and referees which does to strengthen rugby in the region. There will also be a coaching course upcoming in August.

Growing game and giving back: donated rugby balls to youth programs; supporting upcoming clubs (12th Rock Rugby); sponsoring ROOTS Rugby on a tour;

Financial Report

A full review of the financials took place. EGU currently has \$118K in the bank. At start of the year, that total was \$130K. Taxes are current, worked again with Pearlson accounting to file.

EGU again paid for all referee fees for all league qualifying matches (no friendlies or B-side) last year. This will continue in 2025-26.

The proposed [FY25-26 Budget](#) is posted on the EGU website under Info > Financials

Website / Communications

JC Whipple provided a quick look at the new Empire website, which will operate on the Rugby Xplorer platform. All competition, player and club information will seamlessly integrate to the website.

DIRECTOR OF RUGBY REPORT

Lex Maccubbin, provided an overview of the 2023-24 season. He thanked Bob Figuriedo (Men), Kara Kaliowski (Women) and Lane Wang (Sevens) for their work as Directors this past year.

Lex reported as follows:

Women's Leagues

- * D2 Champion was New Haven
- * D3 Champion was Union County

Men's Leagues / Super Regional Representatives

- * D1 Champion was Old Blue
- * D2 Champion was New York Rugby Club
- * D3 Champion was Syracuse
- * D4 Champion was Queens

EGU 7s series

- * The Series went through a change this year, with a Championship weekend held to conclude the competition. Clubs were required to play in at least one qualifying event through the series.

High Performance

- * Dean Hottum has taken the lead for Metro / NYC and done a nice job
- * Upstate Men's and Empire Women Selects competed in NYC Selects
- * The program will continue to grow in the coming year - looking for CT / NJ admins and coaches

Referees

- * Clubs are required to provide all necessary contact information and field location / directions to their respective referee societies in advance of the season. This streamlines securing referees during the season.

GOVERNANCE / DISCIPLINE

Gary Heavner was not available as Old Blue was at 7s Nationals. Dannish Patel said that Gary is a great resource and all matters are being handled accordingly.

REFEREES

Jon Morgan encouraged all clubs to enter information in Match Facts as soon as possible. Communication with the assigned referee is very important (should be contacted no later than Tuesday of match week).

Referee abuse is a growing issue. There is zero tolerance for any abuse and respect is warranted to all involved. Dannish Patel echoed this and said Empire has zero tolerance for any abuse.

A Law seminar is being discussed and may be scheduled prior to the season.

ELECTIONS

Vice President: Ed Panzella (Incumbent) is running unopposed

Director of Governance: Gary Heavner (Incumbent) is running unopposed

* Danbury Rugby (motion); Syracuse Chargers (second). Ed Panzella and Gary Heavner are elected to two-year terms.

2026 ASR HOSTING OPPORTUNITY

It is Empire's turn to host the ASR again in 2026 (May 2-3). Clubs are encouraged to step forward to apply. There is MOU between Empire, EPRU, Capital and NERFU. A document outlining what is required for the host bid (four fields, back-up fields, streaming, hotels, etc.) will be sent out by Aug 18.

PROPOSED / PENDING EGU POLICIES / DISCUSSION ITEMS

There are no current proposed or pending changes to EGU Bylaws or Policy.

NEW BUSINESS

No other new business.

Being no other business, Dannish Patel motioned to close the meeting. Tim Skennion (Bayonne) seconded. There was no opposition. The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
JC Whipple
EGU Administrator