

**EMPIRE RFU GU**  
**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
April 20, 2026

The Executive Board met via conference call on Monday, April 20, 2026, at 9:00 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE**

Voting Board Members: Dannish Patel (President), Lex Maccubbin (Director of Rugby)

Non-Voting Members: Bob Figueiredo (Men), Kara Kalinowski (Women), Jon Morgan (Referees), Dean Hot-tum (HP Director), Derek Lipscomb (Community Engagement)

Ad-Hoc: JC Whipple (Administrator)

Membership: None

Absent: Ed Panzella (Vice President), Gary Heavner (Director of Governance)

Others: None

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 p.m. A quorum is in place. The meeting is being recorded.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Dannish Patel said Nomad is the new Official Kit Provider of Empire Rugby. All member clubs will be eligible for a 10% discount on kits and product. All information has been announced on the website and socials.

Dannish said Steve Lewis will be holding an upcoming webinar for 7s play. Information will be distributed when available.

**ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

JC Whipple said there is \$128,075.40 currently in the bank account. He reported that the typical uptick in USA Rugby dues has been coming over the past several weeks.

All expenditures for the Atlantic Super Regional have been paid accordingly. There was a discussion around other upcoming vendor fees, including food for referees, etc. JC Whipple and Lex Maccubbin will coordinate.

**DIRECTOR OF RUGBY REPORT**

Lex Maccubbin presented an overview of the ASR. He asked if Empire would consider supporting member clubs traveling to the ASR from outside the Western NY region. JC Whipple confirmed that in 2025, supported clubs participating in ASR at \$1500 per club. Since there is not a quorum, Dannish Patel said this matter / Board vote can be handled over email.

**SEVENS REPORT**

Lex said that Ed Panzella has done a nice job putting together the 7s Series for this summer. There will be four tournaments, concluding with the Championship at Saratoga. All information is currently posted on the website and socials, and will be updated accordingly.

**GOVERNANCE REPORT**

Gary Heavner was not present to report.

**REFEREES REPORT**

Jon Morgan said there is not much of note. Some weekends have been very tight, but coverage has been solid. There have been a number of cards coming through, but nothing really of note.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Dannish Patel welcoming Dean Hottum, Empire's Director of High Performance. Dean said the new HP program has been operating for just over a year now, and the Men's and Women's teams have been assembling once a month. Over 100 players have been engaged in that time, with an even split between Men's and Women's. A match against the Exiles was held yesterday.

Chris Lynch is the new CT Director of HP. He plays and coaches in CT. Next up will summer fixtures, with a round robin Upstate, Metro, CT and NJ. The hope is to assemble a representative teams to play another GU later in the summer. A discussion took place on filling the gap between club rugby and the national pathway, and possibility of having a capstone event at Danbury 7s.

Dannish then welcomed Derek Lipscomb, Empire's Community Engagement & Outreach Coordinator. Derek said that he will be hosting a meeting on April 29 to engage with clubs and learn more about their needs to help drive growth and build a true community.

Being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JC Whipple  
EGU Administrator