

**United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee
Certification Review Group**



**Certification Renewal Follow-Up Report for USA Rugby
April 16, 2025**



**UNITED STATES
OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC
COMMITTEE**

USA Rugby Certification Renewal Follow-Up Report Executive Summary

In June 2024, the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) Board of Directors renewed the certification of USA Rugby as a National Governing Body (NGB) with a status of Renewal with Conditions. In accordance with the USOPC's NGB Certification Policy, and ratified by the USOPC Board of Directors, USA Rugby had until December 16, 2024, to resolve the remaining deficiencies and fulfill the conditions outlined in the report issued June 2024. Upon the deadline, the Certification Review Group would then evaluate the NGB's progress and deliver an updated recommendation to the USOPC Board of Directors.

The CRG's initial certification review of USA Rugby found that the organization was meeting most of the USOPC's NGB Compliance Standards in the five core areas of evaluation for certification: Governance and Compliance, Financial Standards and Reporting Practices, Athlete Protections and Rights, Sport Performance, and Operational Performance. However, at the close of the initial certification review period, USA Rugby's management of conflicts of interest, athlete representation, financial stability, and managerial capability, were still deficient, and the CRG determined that demonstrating improved managerial capability and completing required updates to certain policies to be conditions of USA Rugby's certification.

During the remediation period, USA Rugby approved and published revised bylaws and policies that incorporated required elements to comply with the NGB Compliance Standards. USA Rugby worked with its International Athlete Council to seat additional athletes on committees that were originally found to be lacking adequate athlete representation. Moreover, USA Rugby enhanced its tracking of athlete voting eligibility during that process. USA Rugby also showed financial stability with reported positive net assets in 2023 and positive net change of assets since 2019 sufficient to support operational needs and committed to implementing controls, processes, and improving its compliance efforts. USA Rugby demonstrated improved managerial capability by meeting all conditions of certification issued in the June 2024 report, and by hiring additional staff responsible for compliance and business operations.

As a result of USA Rugby's timely action to meet the conditions of its initial Renewal with Conditions certification, the CRG recommends that USA Rugby's certification status be upgraded to Renewal in Good Standing for its certification term ending in 2028.

Certification History

The CRG completed a certification renewal review of USA Rugby in 2024 based on the USOPC's quadrennial certification renewal schedule. As a result of this review, the CRG recommended that USA Rugby be certified with a status of Renewal with Conditions. The USOPC Board of Directors accepted this recommendation on June 19, 2024.

The ratification of the Renewal with Conditions status began a remediation period for USA Rugby to resolve the conditions the CRG put in place for the certification. USA Rugby's remediation period ran through December 16, 2024.

Certification Conditions

USA Rugby's Renewal with Conditions certification status was contingent on the completion of the following conditions:

- USA Rugby must finalize, approve, and publish revised bylaws that incorporate required elements to comply with the NGB Compliance Standards.
- USA Rugby must demonstrate that it is conducting a timely annual conflict of interest disclosure review process in accordance with the USA Rugby Conflict of Interest Policy.
- USA Rugby's International Athlete Council (IAC) must demonstrate compliance with the NGB Compliance Standards' requirements for internal Athletes' Advisory Councils, including its members completing conflict of interest disclosures and ensuring compliant member composition that matches the IAC's Terms of Reference.
- USA Rugby must address athlete representation findings and ensure that all Designated Committees have 33.3% qualified athlete representation.
- USA Rugby must continue to demonstrate improved financial stability, which will be assessed through its audited financial statements for 2023.
- USA Rugby must demonstrate its managerial capability by addressing all outstanding audit findings in a timely manner, including those which are repeat findings from the 2019 audit.

Remediation Actions

In accordance with its audit management action plan, USA Rugby finalized, approved, and published revised bylaws that incorporated required elements to comply with NGB Compliance Standards.

USA Rugby made substantial progress since its 2022 Compliance Audit by enforcing a conflicts of interest policy that meets all required elements of the Standard. During the remediation period, USA Rugby provided all completed conflict of interest disclosure forms that were requested for testing, as well as provided evidence that the responsible parties conducted a formal review of completed forms.

Additionally, USA Rugby worked with its International Athlete Council to update its Terms of Reference, which now incorporate all required elements that pertain to athlete representation. USA Rugby improved its tracking of athlete voting eligibility, which has subsequently enhanced its ability to seat eligible athlete representatives to meet the minimum athlete representation requirements for all committees.

In accordance with its audit management action plan, USA Rugby submitted 2023 audited financial statements on time to the USOPC, which indicate significant progress in meeting the requirement to demonstrate a positive net asset balance for the most recent financial year. As indicated previously, USA Rugby has improved its financial operational capability after emerging from bankruptcy in 2020. USA Rugby is committed to transparent financial operations and management through consistent budget approval by the board and updated financial policies and procedures to uphold financial standards. Overall, USA Rugby continues to strengthen its net positive cash flow and reduce long-term debt.

Finally, throughout the remediation period, USA Rugby demonstrated its managerial capability to successfully administer its operations and its sport. USA Rugby remediated most audit findings, indicated financial stability, and has shown a dedication to implementing controls, processes, and improving its compliance efforts. In addition, USA Rugby hired additional staff responsible for compliance and business operations to sustain positive organizational changes.

While USA Rugby made required revisions to its conflict of interest policy and has demonstrated significant progress in the execution of its policy, the audit finding remains open. The CRG determined that USA Rugby submitted sufficient evidence to mitigate risk associated with this Standard, and that it does not affect its certification status at this time. During the remediation period, USA Rugby provided all requested evidence to support its policy execution; however, the NGB's review of conflicts of interest disclosure forms must be improved to fully address and mitigate potential conflicts, specifically. USA Rugby is aware of this issue and continues to make progress towards a fully compliant execution of its conflict of interest disclosure and review process.

Conclusion

Based on USA Rugby's timely action to address conditions of certification outlined in its June 2024 report, the CRG recommends that USA Rugby's certification status be upgraded from Renewal with Conditions to Renewal in Good Standing for its current certification term ending in 2028.