

# Florida Youth Rugby Union

Annual General Meeting  
2024-2025





# Agenda

## Time

- |     |  |         |
|-----|--|---------|
| 1.  | Board Members & Other FYRU Contributors  | 5 mins  |
| 2.  | 2024 Financials & 2025 Budget  | 10mins  |
| 3.  | New Clubs & Outreach Plan (Growth)   | 30 mins |
| 4.  | Disciplinary Process Review– Yellow and Red Card Overview & Level Setting            | 10 mins |
| 5.  | General Rule Reminders – Code of Conduct & Behavior Towards Referees                 | 10 mins |
| 6.  | Age, Grade & Eligibility, New Roster Process for HS and Youth Player/Coach ID Badges | 20 mins |
| 7.  | HS Standings Process Review  | 20 mins |
| 8.  | Registration System Update for 2024 - 2025   | 20 mins |
| 9.  | Festival & Tournament Requests   | 20 mins |
| 10. | Preview 2024-205 Game Schedule (Discussion involving Zoom Meetings)                  | 5 mins  |
| 11. | FYRU & USAR Sanctioned Events – Camps, Clinics, Tryouts & Matches                    | 10 mins |
| 12. | Referee Management   | 20 mins |
| 13. | OPEN for Comment & Discussion  | 30 mins |



# 1. FYRU Board 2023-2024

- **Alan Lawson, Chairman**
  - President of Wellington Wizards Rugby Club
- **Garth Duff-Gray, Board**
  - President of Boca Raton Youth Rugby Club
- **Aaron Church, Board & Community Outreach Advisor**
  - President & Founder of Jacksonville HS Rugby Club
- **Victoria Sweet, Board & Treasurer**
  - President of Hammerheads Rugby Club
- **Joe Hilbush, Board**
  - President of Tampa Youth Rugby Club
- **Cristian Krossler, Board (Discipline Officer)**
  - Treasurer of Key Biscayne Rugby Club
- **Maria Vanegas, Board & Secretary**
  - Secretary/Treasurer of Okapi Rugby Club & Florida Jaguares All-Stars
- **Christopher Vassel, Director of Boys Community Outreach & National Representative**
  - Board - Member of Boca Raton Youth Rugby Club
- **Helen Archer, Director of Girls Community Outreach & National Representative**
  - Board - Wellington Wizards Rugby Club

# FLORIDA YOUTH RUGBY UNION BOARD

<u>Seats</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>	<u>Terms</u>
1	Alan Lawson	Chairman/President (Exec. Board)	March 4, 2022	March 3, 2026	Four
2	Victoria Sweet	CFO/Controller (Exec. Board)	July 3, 2022	July 2, 2026	Four
3	Garth Duff-Gray	1st Vice President (Exec. Board)	July 3, 2022	July 2, 2026	Four
4	Aaron Church	2nd Vice President (Exec. Board)	July 3, 2022	July 2, 2026	Four
5	Joe Hilbush	General Board	July 3, 2024	July 3, 2026	Two
6	Cristian Krossler	Disciplinary Chair/General Board	July 3, 2022	July 2, 2025	Three
7	Maria Venagas	General Board	July 3, 2024	July 3, 2026	Two
<b>Recruiting</b>					
	Helen Archer	Director of Girls Rugby Recruiting	November 1, 2022	October 31, 2026	Four
	Chris Vassel	Director of Boys Rugby Recruiting	November 1, 2022	October 31, 2026	Four



# Board Contributors 2022-2023

- **Christie Lawson**
  - RX registration assistance and weekly roster for players and coaches administrator
  - Assist Helen Archer in girls rugby events
- **Carlos “Charlee” Velazquez**
  - Rugby FL main social media mogul
  - FYRU website contributor and administrator



## Florida Youth Rugby Union Profit and Loss (Cash Basis)

August 2023 - July 2024

## 2. Annual Report & Budget Discussion for 2024

<b>Registration &amp; Donations</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>43,921</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>48,313</b>	
FYRU Gear & Marketing	\$	224	\$	250	
Bank Fees (Intuit)	\$	266	\$	300	
Referee Fees	\$	9,617	\$	8,000	(\$1717 carry over from 2022-2023)
Professional Services	\$	-	\$	-	
Festival Meals & Fees	\$	5,032	\$	5,032	Youth Festivals Reimbursement
Meals & Entertainment	\$	518	\$	500	
Supplies	\$	202	\$	250	
Insurance, Dues & Subscriptions	\$	889	\$	900	Board Insurance
Accounting Fees (2023)	\$	1,320	\$	-	(2022 Taxes - 2023 Alan Filed)
Web Fess & Design	\$	2,165	\$	2,500	
States Finals & Playoffs	\$	1,144	\$	1,000	
Team Meals & Hotel	\$	7,469	\$	7,500	
Travel Vehicles (HS)	\$	5,002	\$	5,500	
Rugby Balls	\$	2,600	\$	-	Not needed in 2025
Registration Fees	\$	528	\$	500	
Allstars	\$	5,000	\$	5,000	Jags Donation
Nationals Donation	\$	1,500	\$	3,000	National & Placeholder for Holding 2025
Medical			\$	1,500	
Evan Haigh	\$	700	\$	-	Audit required
		<b>\$ 44,176</b>		<b>\$ 41,732</b>	
<b>Net Cash</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>(255)</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>6,581</b>	<b>Growth Discusson Needed</b>
Checks not cleared					
Medical	\$	1,500			

# 3. Where are clubs are today!



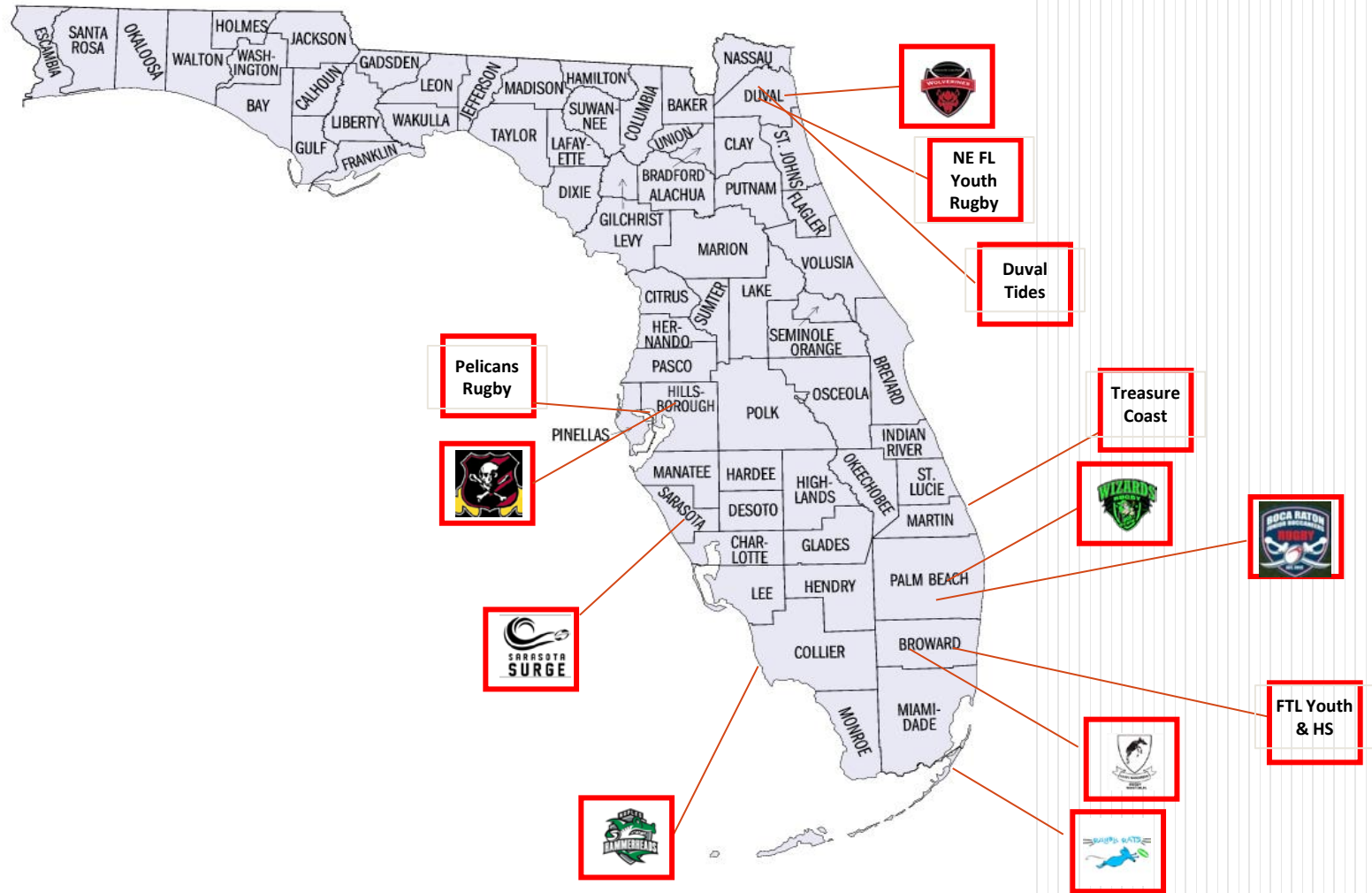
= existing youth programs



= existing adult rugby club in large catchment area that could grow youth section



= potential areas of future growth



### 3. Growth Discussion - Open



# 3. Growth Discussion – KB Recommendation

Type	Idea	Description & Objectives
Players & Coaches	<b>Coaching Clinics &amp; Workshops</b>	Request the Sharks to organize regular coaching clinics and workshops for players and coaches, especially addressing specific topics such as sport safety. This can help improve the skills and knowledge of coaches and young players.
Players	<b>Youth Pre-Match Games</b>	Propose that select youth rugby games be scheduled to take place before Miami Sharks' home matches. This can provide young players with the exciting experience of playing in a professional stadium environment, increase visibility for youth rugby, and engage the community by showcasing local talent.
Players	<b>Joint Training Sessions</b>	Propose joint training sessions where your youth team can train alongside the Sharks. This can provide invaluable experience and inspiration for young players.
Players	<b>Annual Youth Rugby Finals</b>	Propose that the Miami Sharks organize or participate in the yearly youth rugby finals. This involvement can elevate the event's profile, provide young players with a memorable experience, and strengthen the connection between the Sharks and the local rugby community.
Players	<b>Player Mentorship Programs</b>	Ask if professional players from the Sharks can mentor youth players. This could include one-on-one sessions, group training, or even virtual Q&A sessions where young players can learn from the pros.
Players	<b>Scholarship Programs</b>	Ask if the Sharks can establish scholarship programs for talented young players to help them pursue higher levels of training and competition.
Players	<b>Youth Rugby Camps</b>	Organize seasonal rugby camps during school holidays where Sharks players and coaches can provide intensive training and skill development sessions.
Players	<b>Match Day Experiences</b>	Arrange for your youth players to attend Miami Sharks' home games, including opportunities to meet the players, participate in halftime activities, or even serve as ball boys/girls.
Players	<b>Rugby Tournaments</b>	Collaborate with the Sharks to host youth rugby tournaments, inviting teams from across the region. This can provide competitive experience and foster a sense of community among young players.
Players	<b>Fitness &amp; Nutrition Workshops</b>	Request the Sharks' fitness trainers and nutritionists to conduct workshops for players, focusing on the importance of fitness, diet, and overall health in sports.
Community	<b>Rugby Clinics for Parents</b>	Offer clinics for parents to educate them about the sport, its rules, and how they can support their children in rugby. This can help build a supportive community around FYRU rugby programs.
Clubs	<b>Promotional Support</b>	Request the Sharks to help promote youth rugby programs through their social media channels, website, and at their games. This can help attract more participants and support for FYRU.
Clubs	<b>Equipment Donations</b>	Inquire if the Sharks can donate or help secure rugby equipment for your youth program. This can include balls, training gear, and safety equipment.



### 3. New Clubs in Florida, Outreach Planning & Club Division Verification

- **Ft. Lauderdale Youth & HS Combined**
- **St. Augustine Middle School teams (internal matches)**
- **Little Swans Rugby – Daniel Swan**

[Start a Rugby Club | Florida Youth Rugby Union \(fyru.org\)](http://fyru.org)

- Divisions by Club Discussion



## 4. Disciplinary Process (2 Phases – Assessment & Appeals)

- Refer to the Disciplinary Full Document

**Discussion needed regarding fighting and explaining the full red cards**



## 5. Rule, Rule Reminders and Proposal

### **Agreement in 2024-2025 by the Union Presidents**

- **Team leading by 42 Points**, the game is officially called. No exceptions. In the interest of safety for both teams, the game is to be stopped and Referee has full control of next steps. The only allowed going forward is a “development game”. Winning team must do a field roster change and free subs rule must be utilized.



## 5. USAR Rule Changes for 2025

### Changes:

- Tackles above the base of the sternum are liable to penalty, and ball carriers must not lead with their head into a tackler. The wording of the new Law specifically refers to players 'running in open field play', which is designed to exclude 'pick and drive' scenarios around the ruck and maul, and especially play around the try line where the ball-carrier's height is usually low by design. Collisions in these aspects of the game are not at high speed and are rarely dangerous, so the new Law will not apply. Link: [https://mail.usa.rugby/c/AQiDkREQuMtCGITG5M0BIN2shxJ9nnJWwlkbj4sawshB\\_iEJEcopYIMVuSameitwF3Y8pQ](https://mail.usa.rugby/c/AQiDkREQuMtCGITG5M0BIN2shxJ9nnJWwlkbj4sawshB_iEJEcopYIMVuSameitwF3Y8pQ)
- On kicks, players of the kicking team ahead of the kicker may not loiter, but must actively retreat until onside, even if they are more than 10 meters from where the ball is expected to land. Additionally, players are NOT put onside by an opponent running 5 meters with the ball, or passing the ball. This is a significant change; teams should ensure that all players understand it.
- The so-called "gator" or "crocodile" roll, where a player uses their own body weight to laterally roll/twist/pull a jackler to ground, is considered dangerous play. A player may still be levered out of the contest or driven back - but not pulled forward.
- When awarded a free kick, a team may NOT opt for a scrummage.

### WR has also released the following Clarifications this year:

- At scrummage, some hookers have used a "semi/half brake foot". The brake foot must be in position to serve as a brake taking pressure off the head and necks of the front row until the call of "set". See further info [HERE](#).
- On conversion kicks, once a kicker is "finally settled", that indicates to everyone that the next time the player steps, or lifts a foot off the ground to step, that will be the start of their "approach to kick" as per law 8.14. See further info [HERE](#).



# 5. Rule, Rule Reminders and Updates

- **Players playing down:** There is to be NO players playing down a level i.e. U16s playing in U14s, U14s playing U12 etc. If rule is broken and verified; the head coach of that club's division will be suspended for 1 game. There are exceptions made at the u16 level only and discussed by the coaches before the game and the Referee is to be notified. Note age cut-off is 9/1/2024 for age groups...meaning, a player who turns 14 before 9/1/2024 is **ineligible** to play u14s, must play u16s in their age appropriate division. The "u" means "under" i.e. u14s = under 14, u16s = under 16
  - Only exception to this rule: a player with special needs where it is deemed a risk to play in their age bracket, can play down but only "in-year age" cap. Meaning, the player is 12 and can play U12, missed the cutoff, not a 13 year old
- **Players playing up (Covered more in Dept in Section 6):** Club and parent decision but a waiver must be signed and sent to the FYRU @ [FloridaYouthRugby@yahoo.com](mailto:FloridaYouthRugby@yahoo.com) This should not be considered until the player is in High School
  - It is the prerogative of the club make this decision, a word of caution...please note that if a player has played all year for u14s and come State Championship time, that player can play in their age-appropriate division. The club will need to be prepared to deal with upset parents when this occurs.
- **Forfeits:** It is the obligation of the team who missed the original game to take the lead to make the game happen. If this team is not proactive; FYRU Chairman will have a conference call with both teams and make a determination. Forfeits are worth 42-0 Win for Standings purposes
- **Medical Professionals @ All Games:** It is a requirement in order to host a rugby match at any youth level, there must be a registered medical professional. Failure to do so, will require home games to be moved to a new site



# 5.Code of Conduct & Abuse of Referees

**Reminders (World Rugby Code of Conduct to be Followed by All)** Click on link <https://laws.worldrugby.org/?law=9>

- **Spirit of Rugby Needs to Stay Alive in All of US:** In an age in which many traditional sporting qualities are being diluted or even challenged, rugby is rightly proud of its ability to retain high standards of sportsmanship, ethical behavior and fair play. We all need to start doing our part and maintaining the charter. 1<sup>st</sup> Step in this charter is our interactions with the Referees.

## Florida Rugby Referees Interaction with Clubs

- **Abuse of Referees:** Coaches and Administrators are to take the high road in dealing with Referees, and if there is documented abuse of a referee by a team's players, parents or club staff, it will result in a Head Coach's suspension for a least one game and will follow the Disciplinary Process from the preceding pages. Multiple offenses in a season could lead to full expulsion. **Clubs are responsible for the safety of all referees. We own it!**
- **Coaches Interacting with Referees:** Interaction with referees should be minimal, not wrong with pointing out issues with the appropriate..."Sir, please help with the offsidess", "Sir, that is another high tackle". This should be extent of the contact during a game.
  - Players and Parents feed off Administrators and Coaches
  - No one is perfect
  - If we ever want more referees, the future refs are on the field and sidelines. Who wants to be a referee when they see the abuse they receive every week for \$1 per Hour
- **Relationship Improved between FRRRA in 2024 (Florida Rugby Referee Association):** This new board is in the process of developing a new relationship with the referees of this state to help grow numbers. Main focus is how we treat referees.



# 6. Age & Grade Discussion

## U6 Division

- Touch Rugby or Flag – should have a discussion about non-contact (Flag?)

## U8s & U10s

- Age requirements need to be strictly enforced

## U12s

- Probably our strongest division in the state in 2023

## U14s

- Probably our 2<sup>nd</sup> strongest division in the state

## High School Eligibility – (no longer are U19s allowed by USA Rugby in 2024 season)

- No Player who has played for a College team and is home for the weekend is eligible to play for a FYRU Club. This has college eligibility issues attached to it as well
- No Player who goes to college where they have a Rugby Team or Club etc is eligible to play for a FYRU Club i.e. Player goes to FAU and plays for the Wellington Wizards is not allowed
- Player must be 18 years of age as of 8/31/2024 or still enrolled in High School to be eligible to play U19s. Player is eligible to play if he/she fit the age requirements and goes to a college where there is no Rugby Team or Club i.e. Palm Beach State (looking for clarification from USA Rugby)
- Only HS enrolled athletes will be eligible to play and all home schooled players will be scrutinized by USA Rugby and FYRU





## 6. Roster Process

### Roster Communication Process for 2025

- Two separate files will be sent globally Thursday night the week of games to all clubs
  1. HS Rosters sent with game day roster sheet that must be presented and given to the opposing team
  2. Youth Roster U14s and down will be sent to the same administrators

**(Note: Coaches and Admins will be on both Rosters)**

### **HS Game Day**

- Roster Must be exchanged with the other team
  - No Player can be on the roster if they are not registered – Discussion on Exception by the Union



## 6. Coach Badges and Players ID - ??

### **2025 Registration Requirements from USA Rugby & FYRU**

- All registered players will be required to upload proof of age (going back to the old system)
- All Coaches will need to have badges with a lanyard and recommend that all administrators do as well



## 6. Eligibility (cont'd)

### **Additional Clarification for High School Boys and Girls:**

- **Age-appropriate play still needs to be enforced**
- **Adult or Professional Play** – Any high school boy or girl who plays in a Collegiate, Adult or Professional League immediately becomes ineligible for the rest of the season. Any team caught with a collegiate, adult or professional player on their roster and/or played in a game for a club, this club will immediately forfeit all games that specific player participated in during the season. This is a guideline per USA Rugby
- **PLEASE NOTE** – this does not exclude non-contact or THUD practices... Meaning if an Adult or Professional player goes to a practice, it does not make them ineligible or if reverse happens. ALL HS players are not allowed to participate in contact games, scrimmages or contact drills vs Adults or Professional players. Evidence of such an infraction could lead to game suspensions and ineligibility



## 7. HS Standings Process

**Aaron Church and Charlee to discuss the standings process**

**Shift to other documents**



## 8. Registration System Update for 2025 from USAR

No update of roll over. Communication to follow



## 9. Festival & Tournaments 2024-2025

This is a working document section at the AGM

- **January 2025 - Beach 5s (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of 2025)**
- **Start of the Season Date?**
- **Jan ?? – North Kickoff Festival Tampa Area**
- **Spring Break:**
  - **Tamp Area Schools & JAX 3/17**
  - **Broward & Palm Beach 3/24**
- **April 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> – Easter Weekend and Tropical 7s**

**Playoff and States – need to discuss the who and where's?**



## 10. Youth Draft of Schedule 2023

**NEED Draft**

*Will work with clubs starting new divisions to make sure we have an inclusive schedule*



## 10. HS Draft of Schedule 2023

**Draft Meetings will  
start in September**

*Will work with clubs starting new divisions to make sure we have an inclusive schedule*





## 10. General Calendar Dates

- **November - January** -- Pre-Season – 1-2x Festivals set over these two months plus other tournaments
- **February & March** -- League Season - league season to be split north and south . Each league champions will be determined by league play only
- **April & May** – Playoffs & State Tournament
- **May & June** – State, FIT & All Star Rugby



## 12. Referee Management

- Open to Roy to make comments about 2024 and expectations into 2025
- FYRU to work with Roy to fund referee clinics
- Coaches should no longer be ref'ing games at all level



# 11. Sanctioned Events (Camps & Clinics)

- All FYRU Camps, Clinics and Tryouts should be free to players
  - Need to finalize Referee Training dates and locations
  - Need to finalize clinics across the state – Who, What, When and Wheres?
- Must be a USAR or FYRU sanctioned Club with certified Coaches
- USA South, Tiger Rugby, USA 10s, EIRA or any other camp or tryout must be approved by the FYRU Board
  - Careful consideration will be given regarding fees and location, as well as, any risk of eligibility for players especially High School
- International Matches or out of State Team Matches – it is required by USAR that these events have applied for insurance and are approved by USAR for insurance purposes i.e. France U14 team that played @ States
- This excludes existing clubs having their free rugby clinics to draw attention to sports. Operate as normal
- New rugby groups who are not a part of the FYRU need to be careful about free clinics and player contact drills for insurance purposes and coaching certification. There should be no match play or contact drills for these situations



## 12. Next Steps, Public Comment & Discussion

- Zoom Meetings:
  - Coaches information for 2025 and level setting on exceptions for sidelines etc
  - Schedule alignment for youth and high school (meetings to be separate)
  - RX registration education (multiple series)



# New Changes Agreed Upon by Clubs for 2025

- Forfeit is now equal to 42-0 equal to the called game point spread
  - In addition, if a team is unable to play for the rest of the season, all previous games will count in the standings and all forward games will be 42-0 forfeits
- Games that hit the 42 point differential, are called and play can continue. No games should be reported greater than 42 points except in those instances where the next score exceeds that amount but the game will be called.
- Xplorer will be used for match reporting and will be required by all clubs
- Red cards – if a player receives a red card prior to other national tournaments like Tropical 7s they are ineligible for that tournament. If it is a 15s tournament, they will need to sit out the required games to fulfill the red penalty
  - Only scheduled games count for red, no friendlies etc could towards red card time served
- Verbal abuse Red Card of any kind, player to player, player to ref, player to coach, coach to ref, coach to coach etc is a minimum 3 game Red
- Red cards will be on the registration weekly send out for those players that are ineligible
- Red cards must be issued at match play by the Referee. No longer will the FYRU accept a red after the fact from Referee via email etc because of an extenuating circumstance. Match Play reds must be issued on field
  - Note this does not include a review of a Red card situation where other Red cards can be issued through the review process by the discipline committee



# Happy Hour

## **Funky Buddha Brewery**

- 1201 NE 38th St, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334