



To whom it may concern,

Over the past few weeks, we as an organization, Westside Rugby Football Club, have been in contact with SOK Global Sports regarding bringing Professional Rugby to Indianapolis and working with the City of Indianapolis Parks and Recreation department to rehabilitate the Kuntz Sports Complex on West 16<sup>th</sup> Street as a home facility.

- Westside Rugby Club:
  - We were founded in 2009, by former Avon police officer Joe Ramsbey, as the Avon Rugby Club (youth) and the Westside Outcasts (adult men's) to provide rugby to a segment of the population that was, otherwise, restricted to "traditional" American sports
  - As our club involved multiple players from outside of the Avon, In area (specifically the Center Grove, Mooresville, Plainfield, Danville, Brownsburg, Traders Point, and Wayne Township school districts) the decision was made to re-name the program to the "Westside Rugby Football Club)
  - Our teams range from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade through high school (both boys and girls) and into the adult leagues as well.
    - Our expected registration numbers for the Spring of 2023 will exceed 150 total players.
    - We are completely independent from any school district and provide any/all of our funding via registration (which we offer at a very low or reduced cost to accommodate our under-privileged players), fundraising, or sponsorships/partnerships.
  - Our club has achieved national recognition (ranking as high as 28<sup>th</sup> in the country) and has consistently placed in the top 4 teams in the State of Indiana for all but 3 of our years of existence (including a recent undefeated Fall boys' season in 2022 winning the State Championship and a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish for our girls' team).
  - In the Fall/Winter of 2021, we announced that we are forming North America's first Inclusive Rugby League for middle and high school athletes with developmental disabilities that will launch its inaugural season in the Spring of 2023.
  - All our teams are recognized throughout the country as being the most "culturally diverse" with the highest ratio of ethnic backgrounds.
  - In the past 4 years alone, our high school programs have produced over 15, graduated seniors, that have played or are currently playing rugby in college at either a varsity (scholarship) or club level.

- Potential relationship with a professional team:
  - Many of our athletes come from under-served or under-privileged households and have not/will not have the means to interact with any professional athlete or organization outside of the rugby community.
    - These young athletes desperately look for potential role-models outside of the high school, college, or club-level adult teams.
    - The addition of a professional organization would provide much-needed/desired networking opportunities to our coaching staff to further develop our skills and abilities with high-caliber and world-class athletes and administrative staff.
    - Exposure of a professional rugby team in our community would greatly assist our staff in recruiting new players resulting in getting them exposed to colleges that may offer scholarship opportunities.
- Special Needs Rugby:
  - We have been seeking additional partnerships with local sports organizations and schools regarding our upcoming inclusive rugby teams.
    - We have already been in contact with Indiana Special Olympics, Rugby Indiana, USA Rugby, World Rugby, the Indianapolis Colts, Damar Services, and MANY other organizations
      - The addition of a professional team to partner with would provide the same benefits that sports like football, baseball, and basketball enjoy with their respective professional analogues.
    - SOK Global has expressed an interest in partnering with us regarding inclusive rugby and we are excited to use their host facility for our matches.
      - Currently, our matches will be held at Sycamore Elementary School in Avon, IN without any access to A.D.A. accessible or adequate facilities (the use of our fields has been provided to us at no cost by the Avon Community School Corporation).
      - We are anticipating over 40 special needs athletes this spring for our inaugural season with plans to grow that number to over 200 within the mid-west in the upcoming years.
        - Our current field situation will not be adequate to host many more athletes that we are anticipating for our first season.

Subject to the proposed plans becoming a reality, and the facility operating with world class facilities, we would love to program matches and tournaments at the Kuntz Sports Complex in 2023/24 subject to the costs associated with rental. Indiana is nationally known to provide some of the best youth rugby in the United States, as well as producing World-Class and Olympic-level players, and we are looking forward to the expansion into Major League Rugby as our next step.

We offer our full support to SOK Global and the City of Indianapolis in bringing this project to life.

Respectfully submitted,

*Aaron Poland*

Aaron Poland – Commissioner  
Westside Rugby Football Club

