

For Immediate Release
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USA Rugby Announces its 2009 All-American Selection Details

BOULDER, Colo. – USA Rugby has officially confirmed the Men's Collegiate All-American staff, selection venue and selection panel for its 2009 All-American program.

"Since its inception, the All-American Program has set the bar high for players and coaches," USA All-American Manager, John McNamara said. "Jack Clark's vision in restarting the program more than a decade ago continues to guide its process and progress. Tom Billups served as coach and as a National Team Advisor and truly linked the All-Americans to a National Team pathway. More recently David Smyth worked to solidify this pathway with a transparent selection process during our Unions most recent evolution to the High Performance Model. The 2009 All-American program directly reflects the passion for the game that these men and the rest of the past program staff have brought to the All-Americans."

Just as in 2008, the primary selection venue for the 2009 All-American Team will center around the National Collegiate All-Star Championships in Glendale, Colo. The National Collegiate All-Stars will be a three day event this year in response to last year's Territorial Union (TU) coaches' roundtable recommendation of providing a rest day between the first and second rounds of competition. The Championships have been set for June 11 and 13, and are intended to showcase the best collegiate players in the country to a panel of All-American Selectors.

The 2009 Selection Panel, which includes Kevin Battle, Blake Burdette, Craig Coates, Curt Huckaby, Don Ferrell and Bill Sexton, are already at work tracking players in all of the territories throughout the Union. Testing processes and performance criteria have been developed exclusively for the collegiate player pool and will be made available to all the TU All-Star coaching staff along with training guidelines for elite collegiate players.

The All-American program will again look to tour internationally in 2009, but will be led this time around by Head Coach Alex Magleby, and Assistants Kimball Kjar and Dan Payne, while John McNamara will continue in his role as the All-American Team Manager.

USA Rugby's CEO and President of Operations Nigel Melville served as the All-American Coach during their tour to New Zealand in 2008 and is confident that Magleby will fill the role as head coach well.

"I worked closely with Alex in New Zealand and am excited to see him developing into one of the USA's leading young college coaches," Melville said.

"The All-American program is one of our most valuable assets," he added. "Last season I spent a significant amount of time looking at the possible development and impact of this program. I have little doubt that it will play a significant role in identifying future Eagles players."

In fact, many of this last year's All-American squad stepped up to a higher level when they returned from the New Zealand tour. Kevin Swiryn (St. Mary's College) is currently on the Eagles Sevens squad, while Joe Welch (Cal) and Hayden Smith (Saracens) represented the Eagles in their recent international tests.

USA Rugby is also ensuring that increased resources from its High Performance staff are made available to the Territorial Unions in order to produce the best possible competition in June and the most competitive All-American Team to date.

"Across the board we have to continue to raise the fitness and skill thresholds of collegiate rugby athletes, which is an area that we can all really control," said Coach Magleby. "At last year's NASC there was a marked improvement in athleticism, fitness, and skill from the previous year. Hats off to the TU coaches and players for those advances and we are looking forward to seeing another big increase in standards this year."

For more information on the USA Collegiate All-American Program, please visit www.usarugby.org/goto/allamericans. For more information on the Collegiate National All-Star Championships, visit www.usarugby.org/goto/collegiate_men_as_15.