

Dear fellow members of the Red River Rugby Conference, my name is Dave Dodge, and I'd appreciate your vote for one of the two USA Rugby Congress seats representing this conference.

I am certainly not as experienced on the USA Rugby national stage, or even within the TRU, as some of the other candidates. However, I'd suggest to you that allows me to approach both persistent problems and new challenges from a fresh perspective.

I am presently the President of the Dallas Rugby Football Club (a/k/a the "Reds"). This competitive cycle we are competing in the Men's Division 1 and 1b (Division 2) pathways. Prior to becoming President, I served as DRFC Treasurer for 2 years, and participated in planning and hosting the USA Rugby Western Round of 16 last year. I've been with the Reds since 2007. (Our D-1 side only won one match that year).

However, I haven't always been a member of a large, fairly well-organized club. I started playing rugby while in law school in Georgia. I played with a D-3 club called Cadillac RFC. Unfortunately, there were not enough players in Macon, GA to field a side, so Cadillac Rugby was actually comprised of players from 3 different cities (Macon, Albany, and Americus). We only saw each other on Saturdays, but we had a lot of fun, and were actually fairly competitive.

The point here is that the person you elect to Congress should have a broad perspective and experience from different sizes of clubs. I think I can bring that to the table.

I am a lawyer by trade, and recently gained some experience with the USA Rugby Bylaws and organizational structure by virtue of leading a challenge to the competitive restructuring that was adopted for the 2013-14 competitive cycle and beyond. My personal, principal objection to the restructuring is that it is a one-size-fits all solution to the problem of the unsatisfactory competitiveness of USA Rugby on the international stage. I don't think there was sufficient input into the changes from the club level--something that I'd like to try and remedy, if elected to Congress.

I also believe educating member clubs on best management practices would actually do more to raise the level of competitiveness than the current restructuring initiatives will. After all, if you don't know how to raise money, its difficult to afford your kit or travel. Similarly, if you aren't effectively recruiting, you can't maintain your club. And if you can't do these things, its very difficult to play competitive rugby, much less raise the level of competition across the country.

If elected, I'd seek to have USA Rugby survey the clubs and develop a set of best management practices for Clubs at all levels, then encourage the GUs to educate their members on the availability of those guidelines and their implementation. Technology is making this sort of initiative easier to undertake each day.

In conclusion, I appreciate your consideration of my candidacy, and would very much appreciate your vote. I look forward to seeing you all at the TRU AGM on Sunday and answering any questions you may have then.