

Hello Rugby Families,

There have been some exciting developments at the high school level this preseason. I know many of you have heard rumors of "this or that" happening...well, now we have a clearer picture and would like to lay it out for you.

CJRA invited all the high school teams in the greater Charlotte area to join with us, all under one umbrella. At almost the same time, on the boys side of things, school-based teams changed their season dates – they will now be playing in the Winter instead of the Spring. So, in effect, it is theoretically possible for players to play for their high school team (if their school has a team) in Winter and then to move on to the Charlotte Tigers team (or another club team) for the Spring. There would still be some overlap though with Carolina Ruggernaut and with Tigers regional matches that happen in January and February – so we did our best to sort all this out. Here's where we landed on all this:

- We are VERY happy to announce the following teams are now part of CJRA!
 - - Providence HS Boys
 - South Meck HS Boys
 - Hough HS Boys
 - Hough HS Girls
 - Myers Park HS Girls
 - East Meck HS Boys
- This means all of these teams will work TOGETHER and are now a part of one big rugby family! Players that play for these school teams will still be able to participate in regional matches even while they are in-season for their school as long as game dates don't overlap. This is huge, allowing players easily to not have to choose one team or the other and to be able to do both.

While remaining independent, it is worth noting that Charlotte Catholic will continue its long tradition of working closely with CJRA and will have BOTH a Winter team and a team in the Spring in the Club Open League – so the changes just don't impact them all that much.

Registration for all CJRA high school teams is NOW OPEN and all consolidated on the CJRA website – making the process online, paperless, and simple. Registration for all of our 2nd-8th grade teams as well as the Tigers is already open. If you do not have HS rugby at your school or are unsure, simply register for the Tigers (note: Tigers registration fee covers all of Winter AND all of Spring season).

Here is the link to our information and registration page: <https://charlotte-junior-rugby-association.siplay.com/site/>

So, how will this impact players who do not have a team at their high school? Well, the short answer is, they will get more rugby. They will be able to join the Tigers as normal and play all of our Winter preseason and Spring matches both in the state and in the regional league – we will have a full JV, B-side and A-side team – so plenty of playing time for all. In addition to that, these players that don't have rugby at their high schools but are on the Tigers will be able to become guest players and help fill out the rosters on the CJRA school teams during the Winter – so, for example, we might have a few of our boys that go to Butler help grow the East Meck team by joining them for Winter – it is exciting the synergy and growth that the new CJRA expansion can make happen!

Will the schools that didn't opt in to the CJRA expansion be able to later? We are passionate about growing the game and respect each team's decision to join or not join CJRA. The window for teams to join has closed for this season so we can have time to organize, plan, and get going. That said, we will

open it up again this Summer when we have the time to do it right and at a logical point in the rugby year. Players, however, can join any club team they wish, including the Tigers, for Spring season.

There are some other exciting components to this expansion worth noting:

- Shortly, we will begin a CJRA Academy program – players from ALL of our teams will be eligible for this – The academy will be by try-out or head coach invitation only. Players that are selected will be able to attend weekly high performance session for free. (Likely will be on Sundays). From this pool of academy player we will create tournament teams for big regional and national 7s and 15s events (Vegas 7s, CRC 7s, RCT 15s, etc...) Clearly, if selected for any of the tournament teams – there WILL be a cost involved, but attending the weekly academy sessions will be free for those players that EARN the right to be there.
- Weekly Return To Play sessions – players that have injuries throughout CJRA (and Charlotte Catholic HS) will be able to go to a once-per-week session with a certified athletic trainer to complete return to play protocols and to all be given the attention they need – we will begin this program soon and it will also be CJRA-wide and open to injured players from any age group and will be held at a central location (much like the academy)

Having so many teams under one "roof" enables us to do awesome things like the two initiatives listed above. We will also be able to hopefully improve schedule issues (one child playing here while the other plays elsewhere) by having more consolidated "big" game days at one location for various age groups.

Other things like fundraising for specific events and overall communication should also improve as more of us will be on the same page.

Each team within CJRA will absolutely try to win on game day – that won't change. What is changing is that when we aren't playing each other, more of us are now part of the same fantastic CJRA family. And in CJRA, you will never walk alone.

I'm sure many of you will have questions, we will try to respond to emails in a timely manner and want everyone to understand the changes. As with any transition, there will likely be a few bumps and hurdles at first – but overall this is a very positive development for the entire Charlotte youth rugby community and we are excited to be part of this and hope you are too!

Don't forget – registration for ALL youth rugby is now open – 2nd grade through high school!

Warm Regards,

Coach Saxon