

## Some Irked at Venue Switch in Buffalo

Written by  
Wednesday, 27 April 2011 13:00

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USA Rugby has been forced to move the venue for the Buffalo bracket of the Men's and Women's DI College Playoffs after heavy rains made the original venue unplayable.

A letter from Lindsay Tiernan at USA Rugby was sent out to participating teams on Tuesday informing them that the University of Buffalo fields cannot be used, and the venue has moved to Kunz Stadium, a turf venue at the UB campus.

The problem with Kunz is that it is short – only 91 meters long – and it being a football stadium, the posts will be at the dead ball line, not on the tryline. The field is also narrow, just under 55 meters wide. The field also has football and soccer markings on the field. Rugby markings in the same color (yellow) as the soccer markings will be put on the turf field.

Stanford women's Head Coach Jonathan Griffin sent a scathing letter back to USA Rugby calling the venue unacceptable, blaming the venue on USA Rugby ignoring college rugby outside of the Men's College Premiership.

"This Buffalo situation is a farce," wrote Griffin, saying this was "a return to the 80's and the amateurism that pervaded the sport. A field that is 55m wide and 91m long with no lines - not acceptable. In addition there is a running track right next to the field which raises serious safety concerns. This is a national championship round, we have parents coming, alumni coming, invested huge sums of money simply to get here, had to take an healthy amount of time away from school to get here about on budget, for what .... a 55m wide field, that is 91m long and has

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no lines.”

Griffins said he has nothing against the city of Buffalo and said the local community is working hard to make the venue work, but he said USA Rugby should have had a better backup plan.

Buffalo has had over five inches of rain in April, the most in at least 75 years, according to local match commissioner Fred Bressette.

“It’s way more rain than anyone is used to here,” he told RUGBYMag.com. “Fields all over the city are closed. USA Rugby consulted with officials and a variety of people and concluded that the original fields would not hold up.”

Eight full-length rugby games were to be played on the field over the course of three days. Bressette said the conventional wisdom was that the field would turn into a quagmire after the first match.

That isn’t quite the issue, said Griffin.

“The teams all deserve better. The game deserves better. The game is run on the back of the students paying for all aspects of the game,” he said. “This is why the game must be taken away from USA Rugby and put in the hands of those who care about the students and the game they play.”

Weather systems from La Nina have played havoc with rugby all over the country. Spring has not fully arrived in many areas of the country and Buffalo, situated as it is directly east of Lake Erie, has born the brunt of that type of weather.

Griffin also mentioned safety, adding that the sidelines are about 1 ½ meters from the stadium’s running track. Bressette disputed this number, saying it was more like three meters (most guidelines ask for 5 meters buffer). Unscientific measurements by RUGBYMag.com on the photo accompanying this article show the distance from the yellow sidelines to the track to be about 5 yards (4.5 meters).

**College Playoffs Match Schedule for Buffalo, NY  
Friday, April 29, 2011**

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1 10:00 Stanford (8) Dartmouth (9) Women's

2 12:00 Penn State University (1) Univ. N Iowa (16) Women's

3 3:00 Harvard Northeastern Men's

4 5:00 Buffalo Southern Connecticut Men's

### **Saturday, April 30, 2011**

5 10:00 Loser 1 Loser 2 Women's

6 12:00 Winner 1 Winner 2 Women's

### **Sunday, May 1, 2011**

#### **Match Field Time Team 1 Team 2 Men's/Women's Result**

7 12:00 Loser 3 Loser 3 Men's

8 2:00 Winner 4 Winner 4 Men's

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