



## PLAYERS DENOUNCE 2025 MAJOR LEAGUE RUGBY SCHEDULE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The United States Rugby Players Association (**USRPA**) and its newly formed **MLRPA** bargaining unit, strongly condemn the unilateral decision by Major League Rugby (**MLR**) to schedule midweek games and reduce some teams' number of bye weeks for the 2025 season. The Players were not consulted in making these decisions which drastically negate player welfare by unsafely reducing recovery time between matches (where some teams will be forced to play 3 games in 9 days) and cutting into much needed bye-week rest periods.

Under World Rugby's match recovery [Player Welfare Guidelines](#), players should be afforded at least four "clear days" to recover from the toll of a professional rugby match. Multiple research studies cited in the Guidelines have shown that players bear evidence of muscle damage for 4-5 days after a match and that their power output and neuromuscular function remain impaired for at least 60 hours and up to five days. Adequate rest is necessary to ensure physical recovery and reduce the risk of injury.

For 2025, MLR has scheduled nearly all its teams to either lose a bye week or play midweek games on 4 or fewer days of clear rest, falling dangerously short of World Rugby standards. Other games have been scheduled early in the week following a team's bye week. In these instances, team training expectations will likely now cut short the much-needed rest time players would otherwise have to spend with their families or return home during a bye week.

MLPRA asks the league to prioritize player welfare and work together with us to remedy these serious issues for the upcoming 2025 season.