



BUFFALO LATE FORFEIT IN DII PLAYOFFS (UPDATED)

By Alex Goff | 04.19.13

The Buffalo Rugby Club has forfeited its Empire GU DII club playoff to the Princeton Athletic Club.

Buffalo club match secretary and Empire GU officer Steve Mohar notified the Princeton AC team this Friday afternoon to say they would not be able to make the trip to New Jersey Saturday for their playoff game.

This comes a week after Buffalo's DI team attended the Empire/New England DI crossover playoffs, going 0-2 and finishing 4th. Buffalo reportedly took only 20 players to the DI playoffs, and indications are that the club is struggling to find the players for both levels of playoffs.

(Update - in fact this is the case: Buffalo lacked sufficient players for their DI playoff, and several players from their DII team pitched up last weekend. As a result, by playing in a playoff match in one division, they lost their eligibility to play in the other division. Now the DII team does not have enough eligible players, and has had to forfeit.)

Members of the Princeton club are upset at the late notice of the forfeiture, and club official Paul Silverman sent an email to a variety of Empire and USA Rugby officials pointing out that Buffalo also backed out of a seeding match with Old Blue in the DI level (Buffalo rescheduled that game a couple of times and were ultimately allowed to not have that game, and retain their #1 seed out of the Empire. That ruling had major ramifications as Old Blue, the Empire #2, lost to Boston 23-20, and based on all the scores from last week's DI playoffs, were clearly the second-best team, and yet finish 3rd.)

(Update. The extra match with Old Blue was ultimately canceled by the Empire GU because it was deemed not to be necessary.)

The ramifications of this forfeiture are greater than just a game not being played. Players must log a minimum number of qualifying matches before playing in a USA Rugby playoff. If a team forfeits one of those matches, a player is in danger of not being eligible. This is a problem for Old Blue, which was counting on that seeding DI match in March, and is a problem for Princeton AC, which might have to find a new game for some players.

Silverman is calling for a sanction on the entire Buffalo club, *but that is unlikely. According to Empire GU sources, Princeton AC's players will get credit for the forfeited game if they need it.*