

## Massman Steps Down as Cal Poly Coach

Written by

Thursday, 16 June 2011 19:34

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Cal Poly Head Coach Nick Massman has announced he is stepping down.

Massman, who started coaching the team in 2003 and took over as head coach for good after the 2004-05 season as other coaches left or were dismissed, told RUGBYMag.com that the strain of organizing the program was getting too much given the uncooperative nature of the Cal Poly facilities and club sports departments, and the difficulties he had encountered in finding others to help in the organizational and logistics aspects of running a rugby team.

Massman said his contribution to the club, both financially and in time away from his young family, would be worth it if others helped the program raise funds, plan travel, and secure facilities (Massman said the Cal Poly rugby team is 5<sup>th</sup> in the pecking order for practice fields, behind intramural softball).

“To continue to operate at the highest level and ultimately win a national championship, the club needs significant support from the university (facility access, admissions influence, cooperation), Alumni directors (Visionary leadership, accountability, commitment) and the ability to finance a full time coaching and management staff with student athletes that are truly committed, accountable and believe it is a privilege to be associated with the program,” Massman wrote in his resignation letter.

Cal Poly made the national DI final in 2004, led by a group of talented and dedicated players. But with the graduation of several of those players – Tony Petruzzella, Ron Rosser, Brian Barnard, Ed Pitts and John Kollerer, especially – and the loss of coaches such as Tony Bloom and Phil Northcraft, the team, while performing well, did not return to those lofty heights.

Massman said it's been a struggle to spell out to alumni, players and everyone else associated with the team the type of commitment required to play in the College Premier Division.

Oddly, though, Massman's departure may well be the kick in the pants the program needs. Already others are moving to try to fill the hole he is leaving. In addition, Massman said that Cal Poly could well stay in the CPD in part because their 2012 schedule is not an onerous one. They host many of their most distant opponents, and their three away games are all within a

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four-hour drive.

Massman had already installed some 7s coaches at Cal Poly and those coaches will help the transition for the club.

“It’s a bittersweet decision for me,” said Massman. “I feel as if a weight is off my shoulders, but at the same time, I know I will miss it. When the team was all working together and playing together, it was a really enjoyable experience.”

And he added in his letter: “My vision for the program has always been to return to the national championship final match and prevail by building a sustainable, nationally recognized program, not dependent on one individual, but a committed team of alumni, university ... However, at this point, I no longer believe my approach and expectations for achieving this vision are in alignment with the alumni leadership, university administration and returning players.”