***Disclaimer**: Sean Horan, NRU 7s director mentioned in this article, disputes Brackenridge's take chronicled in the words below.*

The Club Strategic Committee's eligibility committee unveiled new eligibility rules for the club 7s competition in May. They announced the changes via a press release, which did not include all of the amendments to the old eligibility standards.

Consequently, several clubs were unaware of a new rule (9.1 d) prohibiting them from advancing more than one team to the National Championships, despite the new rules being posted comprehensively and immediately on USA Rugby's website.

Multiple clubs have voiced their displeasure with the rule, but only one club, Boston, has applied for a waiver and been approved, thus making their second side eligible for advancement to the National Championships.

"There was a situation where a TU 7s director did not seek clarification or read the rules and sent to his member clubs incorrect information about how they could enter a side," said Eligibility Committee chair Tam Brackenridge, referring to Northeast 7s director Sean Horan.

"The NRU director basically admitted he had passed on the information incorrectly and asked what can he do for his clubs, and we took an individual waiver that was presented from that territory and did approve it as a one-time exception, based on there's a reasonable expectation that information you receive from your administrative rugby officers will be correct and accurate, and the club had planned to operate by the new rules, got the information and operated according to the information they got from the TU 7s director."

Though Boston's waiver was approved, due to the mistake of a territorial executive, it was done so under a unique circumstance, says Brackenridge.

"I can't say across the board that no waivers will be entertained, but this was a very rare and exceptional case.

"We did not feel that the club itself, if they'd known the rule, they would have split their players off. They would have operated within the rule, they're that kind of club, so we approved it."

Brackenridge says Boston's rosters will be sealed after the NRU Championship, July 23rd hosted by the Village Lions, meaning they cannot transfer players between teams.

"With a sealed roster, based on exactly what they present and compete at the NRUs, they will be the one exception, yes," she said of Boston, "and it's not something we wanted or planned or hope to see repeated anywhere else.

“It happens in the NCAA, everybody has the best intention, sometimes there’s a mistake, and if it’s an administrative (mistake), the team in the college ranks isn’t sanctioned, there’s educational components added and requirements of the staff afterwards, but there’s no punishment to the team, and we felt that fell in those guidelines.”

Brackenridge says the press release was not meant to be an all-encompassing announcement of the rule changes, but rather an announcement that rules had been changed to prompt interested parties to visit USA Rugby’s site to find the full list of regulations.

“The whole point of that was to get people fired up to go look at the rules, to understand the rationale for the rules, and that’s all it was. It was just a brief, getting it out there quickly and trying to get everything done before people really organized and set up for 7s,” she said.

“We did learn. We’re going to always include a written disclaimer at the very top so there’s absolutely no question that (teams and administrators should) go to the website and look at that website. And there is responsibility at all levels, but there’s special responsibility on territorial directors, to know the full body of the rules and to make sure their members do comply with that.”