

MAJOR LEAGUE RUGBY

PRESS RELEASE



New England Free Jacks Win Major League Rugby Championship Final in Chicago



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CHICAGO (July 8, 2023) – Major League Rugby (MLR) today crowned New England victorious in the quest for the 2023 Championship Shield, as the Free Jacks defeated the San Diego Legion 25-24 in MLR’s Championship Final.

New England overcame a 13-17 halftime deficit and took a one-point lead with two minutes left on the clock after Le Roux Malan's second try of the match. The No. 1 seeds in their respective conferences, New England entered the match on an 11-game winning streak, while San Diego arrived having won a league-record 14 in a row.

“The league extends its congratulations to the Free Jacks’ athletes, coaches, front office, and city of New England for taking home their first-ever MLR Championship Shield,” said MLR CEO Nic Benson. “We are thrilled to see the Free Jacks’ hard work throughout the season culminate with a win at the 2023 Championship Final and lifting the MLR Shield for the first time.”

SeatGeek Stadium, the home of the league’s newest expansion team - the Chicago Hounds, welcomed more than 10,000 fans to Bridgeview, IL on Saturday. Festivities surrounding championship weekend featured youth rugby tournaments and

performances by DJ Diesel (Shaquille O'Neal) and American Celtic Band Dropkick Murphys.

At halftime, MLR recognized Daniel Kriel as the recipient of the 2023 S. Marcus Calloway Award presented by Fastenal at halftime, presenting the Seattle Seawolves center with a commemorative trophy and donation to his nonprofit of choice.

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About Major League Rugby:

Major League Rugby is a professional sports league in its sixth season that represents the highest level of rugby competition in North America. The League evolved from seven teams in 2018 to 12 teams in 2023, featuring 11 from the United States and one from Canada. Matches are televised on Fox Sports, among other national and local market platforms. Select matches are available to stream live in North America on The Rugby Network, and all matches are available on The Rugby Network for international fans. MLR prides itself in fostering intense and high-stakes competition, while bringing together a passionate community built on the values of Respect, Inclusivity, and Tradition. For more information about MLR, visit www.MajorLeague.Rugby.

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