

**LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LTD**  
**General Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019**  
**RFU Representatives Report**  
**Headlines**

**RWC 2019**

Although there was huge disappointment with the defeat to South Africa in the RWC Final, the consensus was that England had performed really well throughout the tournament. Congratulations to Eddie Jones, the team and support staff for an excellent campaign.

**The RFU Grand Draw**

The RFU Grand Draw has been paused for the 19/20 season. RFU are looking at options to help clubs fundraise in the longer term, we have created a short 'how to' guide for clubs, schools and colleges to run their own raffles or lotteries.

**GMS**

Ongoing work to improve the efficiency of GMS continues and the problems with GMS earlier this season have been investigated and hopefully these have now been solved.

**Saracens RFC- Salary Cap Investigations**

The power for PRL to put in place salary cap regulations derives from the Premiership Regulations, which are approved annually by the RFU Council. The salary cap regulations themselves, however, are determined solely by PRL and this has been agreed to the position since the salary cap regulations were put in place. The case against Saracens was brought under the 2018/19 regulations,

The investigation and prosecution was done by PRL. The case was heard by an independent panel appointed by Sport Resolutions (i.e. not an RFU-appointed panel).

As has been reported, the panel consisted of Lord Dyson (former Master of the Rolls), Aidan Robertson QC (a leading competition law silk) and Jeremy Summers, a lawyer who sits on a number of rugby cases for the RFU, World Rugby and EPCR. There was a five day hearing, dealing both with the competition law aspects of the salary cap mechanism and the nature of the charges.

The salary cap regulations set out a clear process for sanction, both in terms of fine and the points deduction. The judgment itself will not be publicly available. Saracens' right of appeal is limited – it is more akin to a judicial review, with the only grounds for appeal being an error of law, procedural irregularity, or the panel coming to an irrational decision.

**Age Grade Playing Calendar 2020-21**

The Age Grade Playing Calendar becoming embedded within CB's and used as a tool facilitate conversations to support those players at risk of over and under playing. The calendar for the 2020-21 season is now being planned by a group organising CB rugby in clubs, schools, academy and representative pathways.

**Payment of Players**

Over 90% of Clubs successfully completed the Payment of Players declaration. There are a number of irregularities are currently being investigated. The process will be reviewed ahead of the declarations for 2020-2021 season. The RFU are looking for any feedback from clubs on the process and the regulation in general.

## **Notes from the RFU Council Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019.**

### **Welcome**

Peter Wheeler in his first meeting as President welcomed Council to the first meeting of the season, and the following new Council Members to their first meeting in official capacity: Paula Carter (Surrey), Steve Miles (East Midlands) and Darren Childs (PRL).

### **Matters arising from minutes of the last meeting**

Angus Bujalski noted that he had not received a response to his letter to Francis Baron outlining Council's reaffirmation to remove his title of "Privilege Member" (now "Distinguished Member") and associated benefits.

### **Chairman's Report**

Andy Cosslett reported - Board of Directors had their first Board meeting of the season the prior week at Blaydon RFC prior to the England v Italy game at St James' Park .

Key items at the Board meeting:

- Specific attention was drawn towards the Health and Safety Working Group being set up to understand the role of the game in protecting players.
- 750th school has now been signed up for the CBRE All Schools programme.

### **CEO Report**

Bill Sweeney talked through the competing issues taking place in the game and noted that once Project Union is complete and changes to the international landscape have been agreed, the Union have a unique opportunity to establish a leadership position in the game, resulting in a new era for rugby. He provided a short update, drawing attention to:

- The success and value of the warm up game in Newcastle,
- Insolvency Regulations Review being undertaken
- Review of the Union's CSR and Charity Strategy
- Project Union (new RFU Strategic Plan)

### **Finance Update**

Sue Day noted that the RFU had over performed against budget in Q4, primarily due to budgeting prudently. Day added that the RFU is in line with budget expectations for month one.

### **International Rugby and Broadcast Strategy**

Simon Massie-Taylor provided an update on the International Rugby and Broadcast Strategy. Project Light – the consolidation of northern hemisphere (Six Nations) international rugby media rights and other union-owned broadcast assets.

It was reiterated that any agreement made must protect the welfare of players and the integrity of the game.

### **Professional Game Competition Structure**

Nigel Melville noted that a consensus was unable to be reached in time for the deadline around the proposal to change the structure of the Premiership to 13 teams commencing in 20/21. Thus this season will remain as it is and discussions will continue with PRL, the RPA and the Championship.

### **Project Union (RFU Strategic Plan)**

Sue Day updated Council on the process undertaken to date to set the new RFU Strategy (vision, mission, guiding principles and objectives);

Day emphasised the importance in being able to measure what and how the RFU achieves its objectives. Regarding next steps, it was noted that once the KPIs are set, work will be undertaken to understand how they feed into Business Planning for 20-21.

The importance of communicating this to the game clearly and regularly was noted.

## **Project Union**

### ***The Purpose, Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles***

#### **Purpose - *Why we exist***

To enrich lives, introduce more people to rugby union and develop the sport for future generations.

#### **Vision - *What we will achieve***

A successful and thriving game across England

#### **Mission - *How we will achieve it***

Strengthen and unite rugby union in England and produce consistently winning England teams

#### **Underpinned by three guiding principles:**

- Player first,
- Open to all; and
- Financially strong

#### **Underpinned by the Core Values**

#### ***Objectives:***

**Enjoyment** - Positive player experiences on and off the field

**Winning England** – Create the best high performing system for England rugby

**Welfare** – Enhance player welfare to protect and support the wellbeing of players

**Flourishing rugby communities** – Support clubs to sustain and grow themselves and be reflective of society

**Understand** – Build a deep understanding of players, volunteers and fans to shape the future of the game

**Connect** – Connect with the rugby community and grow engagement

**Commercial and operational excellence**- Ensure a sustainable business model through growth and efficiency.

The majority of the changes will be seen by the game in 2020-2021.

#### **Yorkshire Carnegie Update and Insolvency Regulations review.**

Angus Bujalski provided an update on Yorkshire Carnegie

The club signed a company voluntary agreement, they have received a points reduction, but as the insolvency practitioners had confirmed that all creditors had agreed to this arrangement, the points were required to be returned. The club had met further conditions imposed, including payment of a significant bond, and have been permitted to remain in the Championship next season.

Governance have appointed a task and finish group to review the regulatory framework that applies to clubs in financial difficulty, including its objectives, whether the current framework is fit for purpose and what changes are necessary.

#### **RFU Ticket Policy Proposal**

**Council APPROVED** the IRTSC recommendation that there be the following amendment to the RFU ticket terms & conditions, to take effect from the beginning of the 2020 Six Nations: Clubs will no longer be able to sell international match ticket and food and beverage hospitality packages to their members.

It was stressed that club ticket allocations were unaffected.

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#### **Illicit Drugs Policy**

In 2008 a policy and process for testing for recreational drugs in the Premiership was put in place. As part of good governance, the policy and process was reviewed by a group involving RFU, PRL and RPA representatives;

It concluded that the objectives of the policy remained correct (namely the welfare of players and the integrity of the game) but there were some proposed changes to certain operational elements of the policy.

**Council APPROVED** the draft revised Illicit Drugs Policy. Subject to minor rewording,

### **Powers of Council Working Group**

Roger Clarke (Kent) gave an update on the Powers of Council Working Group:

A review of the powers of council and prioritisation of actions and recommendations; investigation into best practice for holding board to account; and exploration of strategies and policies to aid communication and understanding.

### **Pitch Side Minimum Requirements**

Nigel Orton (ERFSU) gave an update on a proposal to achieving the minimum operating standards over the next four seasons in support of RFU's commitment to prioritise the welfare of players. It was noted that injury is a high concern amongst players and volunteers based on survey feedback. Need to ensure clubs were compliant with the standards centred around more resource and training to clubs and better use of technology to monitor compliance.

### **Professional Game Board Report**

Phil de Glanville (Students RFU and Senior PGB representative) which included changes to the composition of the PGB and using data from quarterly reviews of the player performance management group. PGB will aim to explore methods to develop the game such as Women's rugby, in addition to monitoring the professional game agreement.

### **Community Game Board Report**

Rob Briers (Lancashire) provided an update on key matters discussed by the CGB which included: developing the player programme; approving the Adult Male Structural Review Group Terms of Reference; reviewing the Grand Draw; and an update on knowledge sharing Steve Grainger undertook following a recent visit to New Zealand and Australia.

### **Governance Report**

It was highlighted that the committee had approved a revised supplements statement and discussed the results of the payment of players policy.

### **Council Standing Nominations Committee Report**

Mike Waplinton (Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire) noted that the Council Support Group was now set up. It was also noted that there were various Board nominations which needed to be considered this season including RFU Chairman, the Chair of Governance and World Rugby representative. In addition, it was noted that the Insolvency Regulations Working Group had now appointed two Council Members.

### **AOB**

**World Rugby** - Jonathan Webb (World Rugby Representative), Deborah Griffin (World Rugby Representative) reported on meeting topics centred around player welfare, professional referees and Sevens.

**Rugby Europe** - Rob Udwin (Middlesex and Rugby Europe Representative).

noted that a new CEO had been appointed who is focusing on the competition structure.

### **The next meeting of the RFU Council will be on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019.**

**RFU Representatives** continue to be fully involved in committee work at Twickenham.

RTJ Briers: RFU Management Board  
Chairman of Community Game Board  
NCA Executive  
Championship Clubs Committee  
TEL Board

K.Andrews Education and Age Grade Sub Committee  
Nominations Standing Committee  
RFU Representative on England Rugby Football Schools' Union (ERFSU)  
Chair of North West Regional Player Pathway Group.