

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Rugby Development Committee

Competitions Sub Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Competitions Committee held on Wednesday 31st October 2018 at 117 Slag Lane, Haydock, St Helens starting at 7.00 pm

Present: K.Andrews (Chairman & Schools), Helen Duggan (W & G) B. Hurst (Senior), I Spivey (Junior), Alan Whalley (Junior)

Apologies: A Bower (Junior), A.James (Colts)
It was noted that A James had resigned from the Colts Committee. It is hoped that Colts Section would have a representative at the next meeting.

Minute 63 Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5th July 2018 were read and accepted

Minute 64 **Matters arising:**
There were no matters arising.

Minute 65 **Section Reports:**
65.1 Lancashire Leagues

HH reported on the successes of the Lancashire Leagues. There have been seven games in the league programme and one cup fixture. So far 2000 points have been scored in the Premiership and 1700 points in the 1st Division. With players not under pressure to perform it has become apparent that they are enjoying the experience. Also club members and spectators are now able to support their teams locally that has had an effect on crowd numbers and subsequently on increased bar takings. Some club have also reported increased number of players returning to the game. It is apparent that clubs are enjoying the experience of less travel and time.

HH also reported on the meeting at PGH RFC called by the RFU Review Group to look at the future structure of the game in the North West. Those clubs who remained in the RFU Leagues expressed their preference of playing in local leagues with less travel and time. Clubs from the Lancashire Leagues reported their positive experiences of local fixtures and less league games.

It was reported that “one” Club was feeling excluded and not part of the County because they stayed within the RFU League structure. They felt there was a lot of emphasis being put on the County Leagues by the County? That view was countered that by saying that the County League has its own Social Media & Website presence and that the County (LCRFU Website & Social Media) has not been promoting the County League in any direct fashion.

The County Social Media avoided directly supporting/promoting the County Leagues to ensure we didn't get a “them and us” complex forming. The County Leagues are a separately organised competition with a League Management Committee which includes one member from a Club not in the County League.

If it is the case that Clubs remaining in the RFU Leagues are feeling left out in the promotion of their games maybe we need to encourage the RFU to push the RFU League games on Social Media?

65.1 Senior Competition:

BH reported that there has been the biggest entry for the 2018-19 and so far the cup games have been going well.

John Burgess Lancashire Cup

Semi finals: Rochdale v Broughton Park, Burnage v Blackburn

Brain Leigh Lancashire Trophy

Semi-finals: Trafford MV v Tyldesley, Aldwinians v Widnes

Lancashire Plate

Semi-finals: Didsbury Toch H v Eccles, Aspull v Heaton Moor

Alan Stone Lancashire Bowl

Garstang v Bye

Thornton Cleveleys v Eagle or Mossley Hill

Manchester Medics or Old Bedians v Bye

Newton le Willows or Birchfield v Ormskirk

65.2 Colts:

There was no official report from the Colts Section.

However HH reported that thirteen games have been called off so far this season and the Colts Committee have decided to restructure the Leagues from the weekend 3rd/4th November.

BH stated that Littleborough had been put in a position of paying a £600 coach bill for game that will not be played.

The meeting agreed that a review is need to have a player led review of the Colts game in Lancashire. This will be taken to the Lancashire Board for discussion.

65.3 Clubs- Mini/Junior:

IS reported that the Min/Junior Competitions are going well and that after a record number of entries only a small number have unfortunately had to drop out.

65.4 Schools:

KA reported on the Lancashire Schools Cup Competition so far this season.

- Combining the Cup Competition with the Emerging Schools Competition has been a little problematic so far. The original idea was for schools to opt into either the Cup or the Vase Competitions. For some schools this has been a little confusing and with a number of schools wanting to join the competitions late has not helped. However, the Committee was in agreement that we want to be seen to promote schools rugby and so schools have been allowed to enter.
- Uptake into the Cup Competition has been positive.
- The number of walkovers continues to be a problem.

- The dates for the finals remain on schedule however it was agreed that the U18 finals would be moved from January 23rd to January 30th 2019.
 - U13 Festivals: Mon 28th January & Tues 29th January 2019*
 - U14 Finals: Mon 3rd December 2018*
 - U16 Finals: Wed 5th Dec 2018*
 - U15 Finals: Mon 21st January 2019*
 - U18 Finals: Wed 30th January 2019*

Finals to start at 12.00 continuing until 5.00 pm

KA reported that it has been difficult to book the AGP at PGH with the opportunity to do so being only one month in advance. HH commented that RUGBY 365 should be contacted so that events can be booked well in advance.

JO'R raised the point about what the RDO role is now in regard to Emerging Schools Competition. There is need for greater dialogue with the RDOs and a possible revamp of the Emerging Schools events that the professional staff organise.

There is a scheduled meeting with the RDOs in November and this issue would be raised. He also mentioned that a key target for the Lancashire Board is to support the game within schools and this area could be something that those leading the initiative could look at.

Medals: KA mentioned that the medals for the finals will be the same colour for both winners and finalists with the inscribed plaque indicating winners and finalists.

- **Half game rule:** Lancashire Schools Cup Competitions will be adhering to the half game rule. This is as yet not mandatory but it is felt it is something that should be promoted. It will become regulation in the 2019-20 season.

Issues:

 - Concerns were about the rule stating that schools with larger squads could be disadvantaged against those schools that choose not to have replacements.
 - Also raised was the issue about away games when the squad is restricted to a minimum of 15 due to availability of seats on the school minibus when two members of staff are required to travel. This raised problems with front row replacements and none contested scrums.
 - It was stated that he felt the Half Game rule suited club rather than school rugby because players can be transported to venues by parents.
 - The possibility of both sides agreeing the number of replacements for their game was considered. This really applied to games that are more competitive ie Cup games rather than friendlies.
 - The idea of having different rules for the different tiers of competition was considered.
 - It was agreed to go with the regulation for this 2018-19 season but consider the situation for 2019-20 when there will be a directive from Twickenham.
 - Trials in New Zealand and Wales have been looked at. It would be good to know what has been best practice.
 - The Committee agreed that is important that as many youngsters as possible should be given the opportunity to play rugby and not stand on touchlines for most of the game.

- It was agreed to take these concerns to the relevant RFU/ ERFU Committees.

65.5 Women & Girls:

HD reported that the Merit Leagues are going well. A number of developing clubs improving standards in North Lancashire and Manchester. There are not enough clubs in the Merseyside area so it is proposed to work with Cheshire for a cross border initiative.

Girls: There is an Area 5 competition- starting locally and the final games within the region. Looking at different regulations for different levels.

Within Lancashire looking at an U13 U15 & U18 review for Festival style competition.

W & G Committee is still functioning but looking for new volunteers to help.

John O’Ryan will be the W & G representative on the Schools Committee.

Minute 66 **Date of next meeting-** Tuesday 15th January 2019 at Aldwinians RUFC

Minute 67 **Any other business.**

67.1 Age Grade Playing Calendar

IS informed the meeting that the template for Age Grade Playing Calendar 2019-20 had arrived and this has to be completed by 3rd February 2019 at LSH FC

It was agreed to have a meeting of interested parties consisting of School, Mini/Junior, Colts, Representative U15 to U18 and DPP. Peter Taylor, North Regional Player Pathway Officer to be invited.

Bill Nichol has been asked to Chair the meeting and inform all interested parties of the date.

Meeting closed at 9.00 pm

KA 05.11.18