

NOTES ON THE RFU COUNCIL MEETING

Held at Twickenham - 14th November 2014

The meeting was chaired by the President, Jonathan Dance.

The meeting held a minute's silence in memory of Graham Thompson, the representative for Sussex RFU on the RFU Council, who had died the previous day.

1. **Nominations Committee Review**

(Andy Cosslett - Chairman of the Nominations Review Group)

- i. Council approved the proposed Terms of Reference of the Nominations Committee to take effect from the 2015 AGM.
- ii. Council also approved the proposed Major and Senior Offices Rule for inclusion within the calling notice for the 2015 AGM.

2. **Regulation Changes**

(Jeff Blakett – Chairman of the Governance Committee)

i. **AASE Regulations**

- a. Council agreed the proposed amendments to the AASE regulations and delegated authority to the Governance Committee to finalise the Regulations.
- b. The amendments relate to the structure of the competition.

ii. **Googles Dispensation**

- a. The RFU introduced a goggles trial in April 2014 covering Under 13 and below. This trial is ongoing.
- b. If the trial is successful and the goggles shown to be safe for both the wearer and other players, then the trial will be expanded to include older age groups.
- c. The RFU has become aware of a case where an Under 15 player who has been advised not to play unless he wears goggles. As this age grade is not covered by the trial he is currently not permitted to wear goggles.
- d. Council therefore agreed that a Governance sub-group be granted the power to grant dispensations for goggles to be worn by players over the age of U13 in exceptional and limited circumstances and that the trial conditions be amended accordingly.
- e. This dispensation covers adult players.

iii. **IRB Law and Regulation Changes**

- a. The IRB Council is meeting on 19th November 2014 to consider a number of regulation and law changes.
 - b. The principle regulation issues are:
 1. Introduction of guidelines/regulation changes to close the loophole of players exploiting the Olympic exception to switch from one Union to another for the purposes of playing Fifteen-a-Side rugby.
 2. The delegating to Unions of the flexibility to determine their own age grade sanctions table.
 3. The adoption of a One Turf Criteria.
 - c. The principle Law issues are:
 1. The adoption into Law of the current scrum engagement trial.
 2. Extending the Head Injury Assessment (previously the Pitch Side Concussion Assessment (PSCA) until 31st December 2015.
 3. The adoption of the amended TMO protocol.
 4. Confirmation of the adoption of the four year Law amendment cycle.
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- d. Council delegated authority to the IRB representatives to determine the RFU's stance on all of these matters together with any IRB matters that may arise prior to the IRB Council meeting in November, in consultation with Chris Cuthbertson on Laws and Jeff Blackett on Governance with the assistance of the Legal & Governance Department.
3. **2015 AGM**
(Jeff Blackett – Chairman of the Governance Committee)
Council agreed that the 2015 AGM will be held at 5.00pm on Friday 12th June 2015 at a Central London location.
4. **Appointment of New Non-Executive Director**
(Bill Beaumont – Chairman of the Board)
 - i. Council approved a recommendation from the Board that Helen Weir CBE be appointed as a Non-Executive Director in place of Miles Templeman, who has stood down.
 - ii. Helen Weir is currently the Group Finance Director at John Lewis Partnership. She was previously Group Executive Director for the UK Retail Banking business of Lloyds Banking Group, *[Post meeting note: Helen Weir is leaving the John Lewis Partnership to become the Chief Financial Officer at Marks & Spencer.]*
5. **Nominations Committee Report – Extension of Term**
(Jim Coulson – Chairman of the Nominations Committee)
 - i. Under the new Rules, which were passed by the game at the 2014 AGM, members of the Board may serve for a maximum aggregate term of six year unless the Board member is promoted to a more senior position when the member may serve a maximum of nine years.
 - ii. Under transitional provisions, any Board member who was on the Board immediately prior to the 2014 AGM and who becomes time served before the 2017 AGM, can serve an additional three years if Council agrees that such extension would be in the best interests of the Union.
 - iii. Bill Beaumont, the current Chairman of the Board, will have served nine years on the Board at the end of the 2014/15 season and would thus have to stand down.
 - iv. Council agreed that it is the best interests of the Union that Bill Beaumont serves an additional three year term as Chairman of the Board from the 2015 AGM to 2018 AGM.
6. **Chief Executives Report**
(Ian Ritchie – Chief Executive Officer)
 - i. **Senior England Squad**
 - a. The EPS squad for the QBE Autumn internationals was announced on 22nd October 2014. A squad of 22, under the Captaincy of Chris Robshaw has been selected. An additional nine players were brought in for the first game to cover injuries.
 - b. Nigel Jones, who has worked with many of the players through his work with the England age-grade teams, has been appointed as team doctor in succession Phil Batter who has completed his tenure.
 - ii. **International Player Development**
 - a. As part of the National Development Academy, Under 16 skills clinics have taken place with 211 players attending across 5 locations.
 - b. The Under 20s 2015 Six Nations campaign will start at Plymouth Albion against Italy on 13th February 2015. They then play Scotland in a double header with England's Women at Darlington Mowden Park on 15th March 2015. They will then play France at the Brighton American Express Community Stadium on 20th March 2015.
 - c. The England 7s finished third in the first World Sevens Series of the new season in Australia. At the end of the series the top four teams will qualify for the Rio Olympics with England attempting to qualify GB as the lead home nation.
 - d. Tony Roques has joined the England 7s coaching staff as assistant coach to Simon Amor.
 - e. The England Women's team met David Cameron at Downing Street to celebrate winning the Women's Rugby World Cup.
 - f. The England Women's World Cup 10,000 Mile Trophy Tour, which aims to help inspire 10,000 new females into the game, was launched at the Houses of Parliament in September. The tour will finish in May 2015.
 - iii. **Professional Rugby**
 - a. With the new WADA code coming into force on 1st January 2015 educational material has been circulated to every Premiership, Championship and National 1 Club and their affiliated academies.
 - b. The 2014/15 RFU Annual Doping Report has been published.

- c. The online concussion awareness education module was launched on 15th October 2014. Completion of the module will be compulsory for all registered players, academy players aged over 18, coaches, medical staff and referees in the Premiership and the Championship.
- iv. **European Rugby Competition**
The IRB has now approved the new European Rugby Competition.
- v. **Rugby Development**
 - a. The third annual playing census has just closed and will shortly be analysed.
 - b. 40 projects have been awarded grants totalling £1.15m (total project value £4.1m) as part of the 2014/15 Sport England funding. A further 18 projects have been identified for awards over the next two months. 75 Clubs have received awards totalling £750k for social spaces projects.
 - c. NatWest has agreed to expand the Rugby Force project in 2015. This will be linked to RWC activation in local Clubs and was announced on 8th October 2014.
 - d. The match officials' development group continues to make good progress towards the production of a blueprint. The group will report to the Community Game Board in January 2015.
 - e. 100 new schools have commenced their involvement in the All Schools programme taking the total number of schools in the programme to 304.
 - f. The "One Year to Go" lead up and legacy report was published on 31st October 2014.
 - g. The Legacy Oversight Group has met for the third time.
 - h. A second edition of the "Club Benefits Guide" has been produced and circulated to the Clubs.
- vi. **Commercial**
 - a. Agreement has been reached with Sky to broadcast the Autumn internationals (plus other games) for a further five years.
 - b. The 2014/15 kit has been launched. There has been some negative reaction around the grip detail, which takes inspiration from the Victoria Cross. A public apology was issued and the RFU is working closely with the Victoria Cross and George Cross Organisation and the Victoria Cross Trust to determine ways of working together. Both organisations have been supportive and were misrepresented in the media.
 - c. 700 new screens have been installed in the stadium as part of a new partnership with Samsung.
 - d. The executive boxes are sold out for the three major Autumn internationals.
 - e. The new Game Management System (GMS), CRM and EnglandRugby.com platform were launched in August and were positively received. Following feedback from the game improvements have been made and will continue to be made as new issues are identified. Training for all users will continue throughout the season.
 - f. Phase two of the CRM project is scheduled for launch on 24th November 2014, which will integrate data from the tickets, merchandise and hospitality systems.
 - g. A ten minute animation explaining the game to new players and supporters has been launched.
- vii. **Public Affairs**
 - a. The Consumer Rights Bill is going through the House of Lords. The RFU has been working on an amendment, which would require sellers to provide identifying ticket information.
 - b. Draft CASC regulations have been published alongside a short technical consultation on the proposed changes. Despite significant work from the major sports, the scheme will be more prescriptive than before.
 - c. The Royal British Legion has been appointed as the RFU's commemoration Partner for 2014/15.
- viii. **Discipline**
As of 31st October 2014 the Discipline Department has heard 48 cases, which includes two anti-doping cases and one relating to criminal activity (theft).
- ix. **General**
 - a. Negotiations have commenced with PRL and the Championship over new long term agreements.
 - b. The new stadium entry system failed at 2.10pm on the day of the New Zealand game. This caused problems at some of the gates and delayed entry into the ground for a large number of spectators. The Control Room was immediately aware of the problem and additional gates were opened in order to safeguard spectators. The problem has been identified and rectified.

- c. The RFU is investigating the case of spectator abuse that was highlighted in a letter to The Guardian. The RFU is in contact with the writer of the letter with a view to confirming who was involved and exactly what the abuse was with a view to taking action against those found to be responsible. Stewards have been asked to be proactive if they hear any abuse.
- d. Discussions have restarted at the IRB over the possibility of establishing a global season.
- e. The refurbishment of the stadium has progressed well, but many of the public areas are not yet complete.

7. Chairman's Report

(Bill Beaumont – Chairman of the Board)

- i. Consideration is being given to succession planning for the Chairman of the Professional Game Board. A job description has been produced and an open application process will be overseen by the Chairman, the Chief Executive and the current PGB Chairman. The Nominations Committee will be involved in the process.
- ii. The Chairman informed Council that he had written to Nigel Owens following allegations that he had been abused during the New Zealand game.

8. IRTSC – Allocation of International Tickets to Clubs

(Mike Cordell – Chairman of the International Rugby Ticket Sub Committee)

- i. At a recent meeting of the IRTSC the Director of Community Rugby raised the subject of the new GMS system and the importance of Clubs being encouraged to ensure that their data is accurate. The link between this data and Club's ticket allocation is perceived as a disadvantage to Clubs undertaking this work. To counter this, the IRTSC has agreed that the number of international tickets allocated to Clubs for seasons 2015/16 and 2016/17 will remain the same as were allocated in the 2014/15 season.
- ii. During this period the IRTSC will undertake a full review of the current system of allocation for all areas of the game to assess the fairest way to ensure that Clubs are rewarded for the amount of rugby actually being played. Any changes will not take effect until the 2017/18 season with any required audit taking place during the 2016/17 season.

9. Optimal Hospitality and Ticketing Assessment

(Sophie Goldschmidt – Commercial Director)

- i. Council received a presentation on the Optimal Hospitality and Ticketing Assessment that is being undertaken by the Commercial Department.
- ii. The RFU plan to undertake a full review and strategic assessment of the optimal hospitality and ticketing strategy. This will not affect the codified constitution whereby Council is responsible for determining "all policy relating to the distribution and pricing" for tickets at Twickenham.
- iii. The fundamental purpose of the assessment is to provide the Board and Council with recommendations for a strategy which will deliver the optimal return on match days from both revenue and brand perspective while remaining true to the traditions and ethos of the game.
- iv. The strategy must be based on the collection and analysis of detailed information from the RFU's key stakeholders (Clubs, Club members, debenture holders, Twickenham Experience, box-holders, the IRTSC and Council members).
- v. The review will provide a clear understanding of:
 - a. The "market" including a detailed understanding of the desires and behaviour of all categories of consumer based on extensive research and data collection.
 - b. The amenities that should be made available as part of each hospitality package and debenture offering, and which seats should be included within those packages.
 - c. The optimal mix of seating and hospitality products and packages.
 - d. The best sales approach and structure.
 - e. The optimal structure to ensure delivery of the best experience for all in the stadium.
- vi. At the end of the review the Board and Council will be presented with
 - a. Clear evidence based reasons for any proposed change.
 - b. Optimal scenarios.
 - c. A flexible business plan model on which the scenarios can be tested.
 - d. A clear implementation road map – implementation is likely to take 2 to 3 years.

10. RWC 2015

(Andy Cosslett – Chairman ER2015)

- i. Planning is on track.
- ii. Work is currently focussed on
 - a. Opening ceremony
 - b. Welcoming ceremonies at team bases
 - c. Security at all venues
 - d. Recruitment of volunteers

- e. Finalising and producing volunteer uniforms
 - f. The trophy tour (in conjunction with the CBs)
 - iii. Ticket sales are going well, but work needs to be done to boost sales for the games in Cardiff, Leeds and Leicester.
 - iv. On 24th November 2014 the remaining tickets will be offered to those who were unsuccessful in the initial public ballot.
 - v. On 28th November 2014 all remaining tickets will be put on general sale.
 - vi. Tickets handed back by the IRB will go on sale in March 2015.
 - vii. A further meeting of the team managers will be held shortly.
 - viii. Work is progressing on the “Festival of Rugby” concept. This will be the umbrella brand for all non-RWC activity that will take place during the RWC and will be available for use by Clubs and others in rugby.
11. **Activation & Legacy**
(Steve Grainger – Director of Rugby Development)
- i. Steve Grainger gave a presentation on the RWC Activation & Legacy Work currently being undertaken (See Appendix 1).
 - ii. A “One Year to Go” report has been published and distributed to the Clubs.
12. **Financial Report**
(Steve Brown – Chief Financial Officer)
- i. **Annual Report**
 - a. Steve Brown reported to Council that the 2013/14 Annual Report had been published.
 - b. Group turnover is in excess of £150m.
 - c. The loss in the year is directly attributable to the match profile and the increased investment in the game.
 - e. Investment in the game has increased for the fourth consecutive year.
 - ii. **Quarter 1 Report**
 - a. Due to the match profile the year is expected to be profitable.
 - b. Quarter 1 results are ahead of budget
 - c. The overheads are tracking to the plan.
 - d. The RFU will shortly, for the first time in eight years, be debt free.
13. **Professional Game Board (PGB) Report**
(Ian Metcalf – Chairman of the Professional Game Board)
- i. **European Competition**
 - a. The competition has got off to a good start on the pitch.
 - b. More work needs to be done on the commercial side of the competition, but it is still early days.
 - ii. **PRL Heads of Agreement**
 - a. The current HoA has 18 months to run of its eight year term.
 - b. Negotiations have started on a new agreement that will be better suited to the rapidly changing professional environment.
 - iii. **Wasps Move to Coventry**
 - a. Wasps have announced that they will be playing their home matches at the Ricoh Stadium in Coventry with effect from 21st December 2014. The last game at Adams Park will be on 14th December 2014.
 - b. The RFU currently has no power to stop a Club changing its home ground.
 - c. Discussions are taking place with the Legal & Governance Department as to whether it is legal/desirable to be able to restrict Clubs moving grounds.
14. **Community Game Board (CGB) Report**
(Malcolm Wharton – Chairman of Community Game Board)
- i. The Player Payment Task Group has held its final meeting. Its recommendations will now be considered by the CGB before being brought to Council.
 - ii. The CB Treasurers’ Conference will be held in December.
 - iii. Discussions are continuing with CBs following the review of CB Roles and Responsibilities
 - iv. The RFU’s volunteer recognition and reward schemes are being reviewed.
 - v. A CB Leaders conference is being planned for the new year.
 - vi. An implementation plan is being prepared for the recommendations from the Age Grade Review.
 - vii. Offshore travel funding is being revisited. This review will include the Clubs on the Isle of Wight.
 - viii. Terms of Reference are being drawn up for the National Youth Council.
 - ix. A 7s strategy is being devised.
 - x. Coach registration and licencing is being considered with a view to raising coaching standards at all

levels of the game.

- xi. Work has started in drawing up the priorities for the 2015/16 season.
- xii. A position paper is being considered on student leagues.
- xiii. The Kids First programme will be rolled out on a national basis.
- xiv. The CGB is monitoring the implementation of the agreed actions arising from the Adult Competition Review.

15. **Game Development Update**

Nigel Gillingham – Chairman of the Game Development Sub Committee

Nigel Gillingham gave a presentation on the work of the Game development Sub Committee (see Appendix 3).

16. **Male Fifteen-a-Side Game Strategy**

(Steve Grainger – Development Rugby Director)

- i. Steve Grainger presented the Male Fifteen-a-Side Strategy to Council.
- ii. The strategy, which has taken 12 months to produce, is designed to ensure that the RFU remains focussed on the core format of the game.
- iii. The core of the strategy is outlined in Appendix 2.
- iv. The Community Game Board will regularly monitor performance against the targets contained within the strategy.
- v. Council endorsed the strategy.
- vi. The strategy document will now be circulated to the game.

17. **Pennyhill Park – England Training Facility**

(Richard Knight – Stadium Director)

- i. The work on the England training facility at Pennyhill Park has now been completed.
- ii. A full size Desso pitch (the same as at the stadium) has been installed.
- iii. An artificial training area has been provided for the forwards.
- iv. A new building has been constructed that comprises:
 - ~ Indoor artificial grass training area
 - ~ An extensive up to date gym
 - ~ Changing rooms
 - ~ Medical facility
 - ~ Offices

Pictures are included in Appendix 4.

The next Council meeting is on 13th February 2015.

APPENDIX 1

RWC ACTIVATION & LEGACY

1. **Local Activity**

Clubs, CBs, Schools, Colleges & Universities

2. **National activity**

Increasing Participation

- Lapsed/Returning Players
 - “Keep your Boots on” campaign
 - Aiding transition from playing to coaching or refereeing
 - Touch Rugby
 - 234 O₂ Centres & 8k players
 - Other Nations
 - Unity Project
 - 30 CBs linked to 17 European Counties
 - Mutual learning
 - Cultural Engagement
 - Posts in the Park
 - Schools Resource Pack
 - A million voices

Building Capacity

- Better Facilities
 - Increased investment in social spaces
- Investing in People
- More Schools - All Schools Programme
 - 304 schools currently involved
 - 400 schools to be involved by RWC 2015
 - 750 schools to be involved by RWC 2019

3. **Added value - Regional legacy groups**

- Sharing & adding value to CB plans

- Value added work – Touch, All Schools funding, Volunteer development
- Business links and fundraising
- Trophy Tour Advisory Groups
- Volunteer deployment/development

4. **Tournament activation**

- Team base welcome ceremonies
- Team base community outreach
- Trophy Tour
- Fanzones
- Volunteer deployment
- Festival of Rugby

APPENDIX 2

MALE FIFTEEN-A-SIDE STRATEGY

A. IMPROVING THE PIPELINE OF PLAYERS INTO CLUBS

- Implementation of All Schools – growing the base of secondary schools playing rugby
- Targeted growth work in identified colleges and universities
- Deploying Rugby Development Officers and Community Rugby Coaches to support rugby clubs in growing their playing base and number of teams.

B. IMPROVING PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES

- Developing and growing playing opportunities for second, third and other teams.
- Developing and growing playing opportunities at Under 17 and Under 18 levels.
- Creating new playing opportunities at Under 19 to Under 23 levels.

C. IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE IN OUR CLUBS

- Investing in improvement of Club facilities.
- Improving the quality & quantity of coaches working with Under 14 and above players
- Improving the quantity and quality of referees working at Under 14 and above.
- Investing in player safety to create a safe and confident environment in which to play.

The overall aspiration it to have:

- 1000 additional teams at Under 18/senior level in Clubs.
- 450 additional teams at Under 17 and above in colleges and universities
- 700 additional teams at Under 14, Under 15 and Under 16 levels in Clubs
- 300- additional teams at Under 14, Under 15 and Under 16 levels in schools
- 30,000 more matches played annually at Under 14 and above
- 45,000 more players from Under 14 to senior.

APPENDIX 3

GAME DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

STRATEGIC AIMS AND ORGANISATION OF SUB-COMMITTEE

Strategic Aims:

- > Develop player safety and a "well-being" framework to create the conditions that reduce the risk of injury and the "fear of injury".
- > Establish a system that ensures all players are coached by suitably skilled and effective coaches.
- > Establish a system that ensures all matches are officiated by suitably skilled and effective match officials.

CONTRIBUTE TO AND ENCOURAGE MORE PEOPLE TO PLAY AND REMAIN WITHIN THE GAME OF RUGBY

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STRATEGIC AIMS AND ORGANISATION OF SUB-COMMITTEE

Membership:

- > Practising Club & School Coach.
- > Practising Club Medic.
- > Chairman of the RFRU.
- > Representative from UK Sport.
- > RFU's Head of Game Development (John Lawn).
- > Seven RFU Council Members.

Supporting Structures:

- > Medical & Sports Science Technical Advisory Group.
- > Coaching Technical Advisory Group.
- > Match Officials Technical Advisory Group.

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PLAYER SAFETY & WELFARE MATTERS

Strategic Aim: Develop player safety and a "well-being" framework to create the conditions that reduce the risk of injury and the "fear of injury".

Recent Initiatives / Work:

- > "HEADCASE" Concussion Initiative, Guidelines on Return to Play.
- > First Aid & Immediate Care Provision Guidelines.



Future Work:

- > Safe Rugby Scheme.

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COACHING MATTERS

Strategic Aim: Establish a system that ensures all players are coached by suitably skilled and effective coaches.

Recent Initiatives / Work:

- > The Tackle and Improving Technique.
- > Coach Registration (& Licensing / Membership of a Coaching Association).



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THE MATCH OFFICIALS' CHALLENGE

Strategic Aim: Establish a system that ensures all matches are officiated by suitably skilled and effective match officials

Vision:

- > Every XV a side game from U13 upwards officiated by a trained and qualified referee.
- > Trained and qualified assistant referees at every first XV game from Level 4 upwards.
- > All games below U13 refereed by a suitably qualified person.

Some Facts & Figures:

- > By 2016/17 there will be about 100,000 fifteen-a-side matches per season with about 1,400 requiring "teams of 3".
- > In last few years, about 2,000 individuals per annum undertake the referee qualification to officiate in 15-a-side games.
- > Currently, about 2,900 active referees who are members of a referees society.
 - ❖ Those refereeing down to about Level 7 officials, on average, 19 games per season.
 - ❖ Those refereeing below that level officiate, on average, 11 games per season.
 - ❖ About 28% of referee society members referee less than 5 games per season!!
- > We believe there are no more than 4,000 active and qualified "club" or "teacher" referees, who we believe may referee, on average, 10 games per season.

RFU

THE MATCH OFFICIALS' CHALLENGE

Strategic Aim: Establish a system that ensures all matches are officiated by suitably skilled and effective match officials

Recent Initiatives / Work:

- > Review of the RFU's Governance of Referees Organisations.
- > Whether all match officials should receive a match fee.
- > The operational costs expended by societies to provide referees.
- > Match Officials "Blueprint" Working Group.
 - ❖ Recruitment
 - ❖ Initial training & ongoing development
 - ❖ Match officials pathways.
 - ❖ Support structures.
 - ❖ Deployment of match officials.
 - ❖ Future referee organisations.
 - ❖ Co-ordination of the other studies / reviews.



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SUMMARY

- > Develop player safety and a "well-being" framework to create the conditions that reduce the risk of injury and the "fear of injury".
- > Establish a system that ensures all players are coached by suitably skilled and effective coaches.
- > Establish a system that ensures all matches are officiated by suitably skilled and effective match officials.

CONTRIBUTE TO AND ENCOURAGE MORE PEOPLE TO PLAY AND REMAIN WITHIN THE GAME OF RUGBY

APPENDIX 4

PENNYHILL PARK



New Building and Forwards Training Area



New Desso Pitch