

# NOTES ON THE RFU COUNCIL MEETING

## Held at Twickenham - 13<sup>th</sup> February 2015

The meeting was chaired by the President, Jonathan Dance.

### 1. Nominations Standing Committee Report

(David Martin - Member of the Nominations Standing Committee)

- i. Council approved the Presidential Nominations for the 2015/16 season:  
President Jason Leonard  
Senior Vice President Peter Baines  
Junior Vice President John Spencer
- ii. Council also approved the recommendation that Geoff Simpson be appointed Chairman of the Compensation Advisory Panel (CAP). CAP makes recommendations to Council on the levels of compensation that Council members serving on the Board of Directors and those holding other senior offices may claim.

### 2. Rule Changes

(Jeff Blackett - Chairman of Governance Standing Committee)

- i. Council approved the Rule Changes to be included in the AGM Calling Notice. The Rule Changes will be considered at the 2015 AGM.
- ii. The principle changes are:
  - a. Inclusion of a Major and Senior Officers Rule, which restricts the number of offices that one person may hold;
  - b. Express provision for electronic voting at Council meetings;
  - c. Posts to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August each year instead of from the AGM; and
  - d. Changing reference from IRB to World Rugby.

### 3. Regulation Changes

(Jeff Blackett - Chairman of Governance Standing Committee)

- i. Council approved changes to the National Under 17s Competition Regulations. The principle changes being to replace the goal kicking competition in the event of a draw with a provision determining the winner based on number of tries scored and the eligibility of AASE players to play in the competition.
- ii. Council approved a change to the County Championship Regulations relating to the eligibility of players at Levels 1 and 2.
- iii. Council also agreed to delegate the final drafting of the above regulations to the Governance Standing Committee.

### 4. International Ticket Prices

(Sophie Goldschmidt - Commercial Director)

Council decided not to increase ticket prices for the QBE RWC warm up games at Twickenham in the summer.

### 5. Appointment of RAF Representative for 2015/16

(Jeff Blackett - Chairman of Governance Standing Committee)

Council approved a recommendation from the Governance Standing Committee that the RAF Representative should be selected by the Executive Committee of the RAF Rugby Union. This proposal was necessary as the RAF currently has no Clubs that comply with the RFU membership requirements and thus are unable to comply with the current Rules as to how their representative should be elected.

### 6. Chief Executive's Report

(Ian Ritchie - Chief Executive)

#### i. Senior England Squad

Internal QBE Autumn International reviews took place in early December with coaches and senior RFU Management Group.

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- ii. **International Player Development**
  - a. The Women's team received Team of the Year at the BBC's Sports Personality awards, the Sports Journalist Association, the Sunday Times and Sky Sports.
  - b. England Women's Head Coach Gary Street received a number of personal and team related accolades.
  - c. Following a review of the England Women's team post the WRWC, Gary Street and Assistant Coach will be leaving the RFU. Nicky Ponsford will oversee the team during the Six Nations, whilst a recruitment process is undertaken.
  - d. The Men's 7s squad came seventh in both the Dubai and South Africa 7s tournament and are currently sixth in the series. A new 7s strategy was presented to the January Board meeting.
  - e. The Women's 7s squad came fourth in Dubai.
- iii. **Professional Rugby**
  - a. All 1,469 professional (Premiership, Championship and England representative teams) players over the age of 18, coaches and referees completed the mandatory online concussion awareness by the 11<sup>th</sup> December deadline.
  - b. A framework for the PRL Heads of Agreement negotiations has been agreed and initial meetings have taken place with more scheduled.
  - c. Discussions continue with PRL over a longer term funding agreement for the RPA to cover a range of player development and player welfare initiatives.
  - d. Discussions are continuing with the Championship Clubs on future funding.
  - e. The Rugby Europe Grand Prix 7s series will be hosted at Sandy Park, Exeter, on 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> July 2015.
  - f. A presentation on the proposed National Performance Centre project was made to the Board in December. A formal proposal will be made to the Board later in 2015.
- iv. **Rugby Development**
  - a. The latest Active Player Survey (APS) showed year on year growth. Initial analysis of matches between September and December shows a marginal (0.67%) increase in the number of matches planned and a similar increase in the number of matches played. Significant concerns remain about the large number of unfulfilled matches.
  - b. Work continues on implementation of the Adult Competition Review recommendations. An implementation group, with John Douglas as Chairman, is addressing the four key areas:
    - ~ League competition;
    - ~ Cup competition;
    - ~ Second XV and below competition; and
    - ~ Student/age grade interface.
  - c. 50 projects have been awarded grants totalling £1,374m (total project value of £4.2m) from the final year of the Sport England funded capital support programme. 86 Clubs have received awards totalling £860k for social spaces projects under the 2013/14 lead up and legacy funding programme. To date this year 24 interest free loans with a value of £1.36m have been made by the Rugby Football Foundation (RFF) and 74 small grants awarded with a combined value of £262k.
  - d. The Match Officials blueprint working group have concluded their deliberations and will shortly report to the CGB.
  - e. Half year figures on coach and referee training are very encouraging, 17,723 attendances recorded from July to December, 300 up on the same period last year and 3,000 up on 2012. The majority of coach and referee training courses will be suspended during the RWC, provision being brought forward into the Summer months.
  - f. Ben Lowe commenced as Head of Rugby Growth on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2014.
  - g. Work continues on the implementation of the lead up and legacy strategy along with a significant uplift in activation work around the Trophy Tour, Fanzones and Team welcome ceremonies.
  - h. The Festival of Rugby was launched on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015.
  - i. The RFU has been awarded a £750k grant from the Spirit of 2012 trust to deliver a project focussed on 16-24 year olds in fifteen communities across the Country.
- v. **QBE Internationals/RWC Operations**

The QBE internationals on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015 and 5<sup>th</sup> September 2015 will be used to trial a large part of the RWC operation (including the transport plan), and the North and West car parks overlay build requirements.

vi. **World Rugby**

- a. The IRB has rebranded as World Rugby.
- b. A World Rugby Tier One CEO meeting took place in London in November. The main agenda items were the Global Season Calendar, World Rugby governance and Japan 2019.

vii. **RWC 2015**

- a. Planning for the event continues to go well with new standards being set across a variety of areas.
- b. A revised profit sharing arrangement has been agreed with World Rugby; this is more beneficial to the RFU.

viii. **Public Affairs**

- a. The RFU's new flagship social responsibility programme, Rugby United, will be launched at the England v Scotland game on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2015.
- b. Intense negotiations are continuing with HM Government on how to improve the regulation of the secondary ticketing market.
- c. Five members of the rugby family were recognised in the New Year Honours List, including players Sarah Hunter and Rochelle Clark (both MBE), former President and Chairman Paul Murphy (BEM) and members of the Community game John Atkinson and Michael Williamson (both BEM).

ix. **Disabled Tickets**

- a. The RFU has recently brought its policy on disabled tickets into line with standard industry practice.
- b. The new policy is that, in addition to a free car park tickets, the disabled supporter will be offered a ticket in the lowest price category and their carer/companion will receive a free match ticket.

x. **General**

- a. Budget planning for 2015/16 is underway. Although income is looking strong there will be pressures coming from possible investment in the 7s programme, including preparation for the Olympics and additional expenditure around RWC to optimise RFU positioning with the event and to promote legacy.
- b. An all staff survey was conducted in November 2014 with 89% of employees responding. Overall the results were extremely positive and favourable when compared to 2012.
- c. Consideration is being given to erecting a set of memorial gates at the Stadium as part of the World War 1 commemoration.

**7. Chairman's Report**

(Bill Beaumont - Chairman)

- i. Following a robust selection process Mark Bailey (ex England & Cambridge and past member of the RFU Council) has been selected by the Board to replace John Spencer on the Professional Game Board. Mark Bailey is currently High Master at St Paul's School.
- ii. Harry Walker, who having just had his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday is England's oldest surviving international, has been invited to the England v Scotland game as a guest of the Union.
- iii. ICAP, a financial services company, raised over £8m at its 2014 Charity Day. Of this £300k has been donated to the RFU's All Schools Programme.

**8. ER2015 Update**

(Debbie Jevans - Chief Executive ER2015)

- i. Debbie Jevans provided a written report.
- ii. The focus has now moved to finalising operating plans, finalising the testing and readiness programme and communicating with those who have successfully applied to be volunteers.
- iii. The International Trophy Tour continues with visit to Hong Kong/China and Italy.
- iv. The Festival of Rugby programme was launched on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015. This will provide clubs and schools with the opportunity to take part in the celebration of rugby and create a true festival feel across the UK. The Festival of Rugby is open to any event hosted between 10<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015 that includes a rugby theme. The programme will be promoted in conjunction with the RFU.
- v. Ticket sales continue to progress. Tickets will continue on sale through to the end of the tournament.
- vi. The ticket resale programme will be launched at the end of Q1, which will enable

spectators to resell any tickets that they cannot use.

- vii. ER2015 remains in good shape as the Tournament draws close. There is still a lot to do, but the plans are robust.

**9. RWC Legacy Update**

(Steve Grainger - Rugby Development Director)

- i. Council received a presentation from Steve Grainger on the RWC Legacy Update.

- ii. **Better Facilities**  
To date £8,488k has been invested in facility projects with a total value of £29,062k.
- iii. **Investing in People**  
Coach and Referee training continues to grow. There were 17,723 course attendees from July to December 2014 (300 upon 2013 and 3,000 up on 2012).
- iv. **More Schools**  
There are currently 300 schools in the programme with an additional 100 schools selected to start in September 2015.
- v. **Returning Players**  
£500k has been invested into Constituent Bodies for returning player programmes through the Innovation Fund.
- vi. **Touch Rugby**  
There are now 264 Touch Centres, with 9,091 registered players, of whom 7,750 are playing in Touch Leagues.
- vii. **Unity Project**  
14 of 15 Unity Project outward visits have been completed as have 14 of the 15 inward projects. Croatia has been added to the programme as a late replacement for Ukraine. 10 development plans have so far been approved by the Project Board. The visits have undoubtedly enhanced the RFU's standing in Europe.
- viii. **Culture of Rugby**  
The Every Voice Counts and the Festival of Rugby programmes have been launched.
- ix. **Spirit of Rugby**  
£750k has been secured for the Spirit of 2012 Trust for 15 focussed projects aimed at attracting new players and volunteers from the 16-24 age range. The CGB has agreed the 15 locations for this programme.
- x. **Ready for Rugby World Cup**  
Work is progressing on:
  - ~ Workshops and equipment for mini/junior sections
  - ~ Autumn "instant" Fixtures
  - ~ Return to Rugby Opportunities
- xi. **Tournament Activations**  
Plans are well advanced for:
  - ~ Trophy Tour
  - ~ Team Welcome Ceremonies
  - ~ Team Community Outreach
  - ~ Volunteer Engagement

## 10 Financial Report

- . (Stephen Brown – Chief Financial Officer)
  - i. Stephen Brown presented the Q2 Financial Report.
  - ii. Revenues are up, mainly due to increased ticket revenue and Twickenham Experience (TEL).
  - iii. Overheads are in line with budget.
  - iv. There has been increased investment in rugby.
  - v. The stadium investment project is concluding, which will see capital expenditure return to normal levels of activity.
  - vi. The headcount remains favourable against budget, which is normal.
  - vii. The balance sheet remains strong with healthy cash deposits mainly due to RWC ticket income.
  - viii. The business plan KPIs continue to be as expected.
  - ix. The Risk Register was reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee in January 2015. An external review has been carried out on the process for identifying and reporting risk and the RFU received a favourable report.
  - x. **ER2015**
    - a. Ticket sales are healthy
    - b. Costs for staging the event are on track.

## 11 Professional Game Board (PGB) Report

- . (Ian Metcalf – Chairman of the Professional Game Board)
  - i. Stuart Lancaster has recently presented to the PGB.
  - ii. The new training facilities at Penny Hill Park are meeting the requirements and expectations of the coaches, players and support staff.
  - iii. The season structure for 2015/16 is almost complete.
    - a. The Premiership will start at the Quarter Final stage of the RWC.
    - b. The Championship dates are still to be agreed, but they will play through the

RWC.

- iv. **Injury Surveillance Report**
  - a. The PGB received a presentation from Simon Kemp on the recently published Injury Surveillance Report.
  - b. Concussion continues to be high profile, but awareness amongst coaches and players has improved.
- v. Saracens have been given permission by World Rugby to wear impact sensors for the remainder of the season.
- vi. **European Professional Cup Rugby (EPCR)**
  - a. The EPCR is in the run up phase, whilst European Rugby Cup (ERC) is being run down.
  - b. EPCR is based in Switzerland and it is unlikely that many staff will relocate from Dublin, where ERC is based.
  - c. Discussions are continuing on the appointment of a Chairman and Director General for EPCR.
  - d. On the field the tournament is going well. Four English teams have qualified for the quarter final stage of the competition, albeit all have away games. An additional four English teams have qualified for the quarter final stage of the Challenge Cup.

## **12 Community Game Board (CGB) Report**

(Malcolm Wharton - Chairman of the Community Game Board)

- i. The Key headlines from the CGB Sub Committees are:
  - a. Club Development is considering ways for engaging with the National Youth Council and seeking an opportunity for them to present to Council on their work and aspirations.
  - b. The Match Officials Blueprint Working Group will hold a series of consultations with referees societies and federations in late March/April.
  - c. A playing programme for Aspirational teams is in place for the 2014/15 season. It is the intention of Player Development to develop a 4-year rolling plan.
  - d. Progress continues in developing closer links between the Educational Institutions, the three Education Unions and geographic CBs.
  - e. Rugby Growth has been looking at how data is captured in Services recruitment and whether there are any applications for recruitment and retention in rugby.
  - f. A working group is being set up to look at implications of dual registration.
- ii. **"RugbySafe" Proposal**

The "RugbySafe" programme, which will bring together all the resources designed to promote and improve player safety and wellbeing, was approved by the CGB. An implementation plan has been developed and this will include launching two key training modules towards the end of this season.
- iii. **Spirit of Rugby**

CGB agreed a list of 15 locations for Spirit of Rugby projects across the country: five in RWC 2015 Host Cities; five in RWC 2015 Team Bases and five in locations remote from direct impact of RWC 2015.
- iv. **U18 Schools Champions Trophy**
  - a. The pilot U18 Champions Trophy competition was introduced as part of the Age Grade Competition Review this season, with 32 school teams taking part.
  - b. Feedback has been very positive and CGB agreed that this competition will continue next season.
- v. **Offshore Travel**

CGB agreed to recommend a proposal for funding offshore travel for teams playing in RFU leagues for approval by Council in April.
- vi. **Review of County Championships**

The review group has undertaken a wide-ranging consultation process across Senior, Women and U20s and will report back to the next CGB.
- vii. **Styles of Play**

Terms of Reference for a working group to look at styles (speeds) of play were endorsed. This will be chaired by Adriaan Posthuma and have additional Council representation from Fred Batchelor.

viii. **Adult Competition Review Implementation**

Good progress has been made on the proposed structure and funding of cup competitions. An update will be circulated to Council members and following an opportunity for feedback, this will be then communicated to the wider game.

ix. **Age Grade Competition Review (AGCR)**

a. The findings of the England U16 strategic review were accepted. Work will be completed to align it to the AGCR and to build it into the implementation plan to be presented to Council in April.

b. A funding model for age-grade representative rugby will be brought to the next CGB.

c. A review of the Developing Player Programme (DPP) will be carried out and its findings brought to the CGB in September.

x. **Sevens Strategy**

a. Ben Lowe, Head of Rugby Growth, presented a paper on the proposed Sevens strategy, which the CGB endorsed.

b. Pilots will run this summer with evaluation taking place post-RWC 2015 to feed into planning for a series in 2016.

xi. **Business Planning for 2015/16**

Steve Grainger, Rugby Development Director, provided an update, following on from the CGB business planning day in January. He reemphasised that priorities will necessarily focus around RWC 2105 related activity.

### 13 Club Development Sub Committee Update

(Neil Hagerty – Chairman of the Club Development Sub-Committee)

i. Council received a presentation on the work of the Club Development Sub-Committee

ii. **Statement of Intent**

“Help every rugby club meet the demands of a new rugby generation”

iii. The key objectives for Club Development are

a. Supporting people

(Retain, Recruit, Recognise & Develop High Quality Volunteers)

b. Developing well run Clubs

(More Effective & Efficient Management & Governance)

c. Creating the right Environment

(More Effective, Efficient & Modern Facilities)

iv. The Sub Committee aims to support Clubs through:

a. **Supporting People**

~ More young people involved in volunteering

~ Recognising & rewarding volunteers

~ Identifying, recruiting & retaining new volunteers

~ A new National Youth Council selected from 1,000 YRAs

~ 500 RFU recognition opportunities

b. **Well Run Rugby Clubs**

~ Running clubs as effective & efficient businesses

~ High quality & motivated leadership of local rugby

~ Effective & appropriate club governance

~ 600+ Clubs in NatWest RugbyForce 2015

~ 100+ new local Rugby Leaders

c. **Creating the Right Environment**

~ Delivery of focused investment programmes

~ Maximising external investment opportunities

~ High quality natural turf pitch support programme

~ 200+ social spaces transformed

~ 360 registered at #GroundsmenConnected

v. Current season activity

a. **Working with & through CBs**

~ Agree the next phase of PFR

- ~ Agree further development of CB Roles & Responsibilities
- ~ Plan and deliver a Treasurers Conference
- b. **Developing well run clubs**
  - ~ Agree a vision to develop local rugby leaders for Clubs & CBs
- c. **Creating the right Environment**
  - ~ Produce updated Minimum Ground Standards for L3 & L4

#### **14 Governance Committee**

. (Jeff Blackett - Chairman of the Governance Committee)

##### i. **Adults at Risk Policy**

Governance has overseen the production of the Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy, which has been produced by the Safeguarding team. It will be included on the RFU website.

##### ii. **Regulation Review**

- a. The regulation review process has started with all relevant staff being informed of the timetable for the submission and consideration of regulation changes.

- b. Significant changes will need to be made to Regulation 13 to accommodate the implementation of the Adult Competition Review recommendations.
- iii. **Sub-Committee Review**  
The review of the Governance Sub-Committees has been completed and the recommendations were presented to Governance at the November meeting. Each Sub-Committee Chairman has been given the opportunity to consult their Committees on the proposal and their feedback was considered by Governance at the January meeting. The details of the changes are being worked through and will be presented to Council at the April meeting.
- iv. **Discipline**
  - a. 121 cases have been received of which 115 have been heard.
  - b. The Head of Discipline referred two conviction cases to the Head of Judiciary for review.

## 15 Six Nations

(Bill Beaumont – Chairman Six Nations)

- i. **Trophy**  
There is a new trophy for the 2015 Six Nations.
- ii. **UK and Ireland Broadcasting**  
A sub-committee has been established to discuss the renewal process for the UK and Irish TV rights.
- iii. **Fixtures 2016 & 2017**  
The 2016 & 2017 fixtures have been approved (see Appendix 1).
- iv. **Hawkeye**  
A trial of Hawkeye technology aimed at assisting the TMO and speeding up the process has been approved.
- v. **Sports Betting**  
Sportradar has been appointed to monitor worldwide betting activity around 45 Six Nations matches. The Betting integrity Working Group continues to work on an integrity protocol.
- vi. **Women's Six Nations**  
It has been agreed that all women's matches can be broadcast if the local broadcasters are willing.
- vii. **Rugby Europe Under 18s Tournament**  
The Age Grade Sub Committee is considering the format of the Rugby Europe Under 18s tournament and will report their findings back to the Six Nations Council.

## 16 Nominations Committee Review

(Stephen Pearson – Member of the Nominations Review Group)

Stephen Pearson updated Council on the progress being made on the appointment of an independent member of the Nominations Committee. Some further work needs to be done on the finalising of the job description.

## 17 Communication Strategy Presentation

(Will Chignell – Head of Communications)

Council received a presentation on the RFU Communication Strategy from Will Chignell.

The next Council meeting is on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

## SIX NATIONS FIXTURES 2016

### Round 1

Saturday 6th February **France v Italy** (2.25pm GMT unless stated)  
Saturday 6th February **Scotland v ENGLAND** (4.50pm)  
Sunday 7th February **Ireland v Wales** (3pm)

### Round 2

Saturday 13th February **France v Ireland** (2.25pm)  
Saturday 13th February **Wales v Scotland** (4.50pm)  
Sunday 14th February **Italy v ENGLAND** (2pm)

### Round 3

Friday 26th February **Wales v France** (8.05pm)  
Saturday 27th February **Italy v Scotland** (2.25pm)  
Saturday 27th February **ENGLAND v Ireland** (4.50pm)

### Round 4

Saturday 12th March **Ireland v Italy** (1.30pm)  
Saturday 12th March **ENGLAND v Wales** (4pm)  
Sunday 13th March **Scotland v France** (3pm)

### Round 5

Saturday 19th March **Wales v Italy** (2.30pm)  
Saturday 19th March **Ireland v Scotland** (5pm)  
Saturday 19th March **France v ENGLAND** (8pm)

## SIX NATIONS FIXTURES 2017

### Round 1

Saturday 4th February **Scotland v Ireland** (2.25pm) GMT unless stated.  
Saturday 4th February **ENGLAND v France** (4.50pm)  
Sunday 5th February **Italy v Wales** (2pm)

### Round 2

Saturday 11th February **Italy v Ireland** (2.25pm)  
Saturday 11th February **Wales v ENGLAND** (4.50pm)  
Sunday 12th February **France v Scotland** (3pm)

### Round 3

Saturday 25th February **Scotland v Wales** (2.25pm)  
Saturday 25th February **Ireland v France** (4.50pm)  
Sunday 26th February **ENGLAND v Italy** (3pm)

### Round 4

Friday 10th March **Wales v Ireland** (8.05pm)  
Saturday 11th March **Italy v France** (1.30pm)  
Saturday 11th March **ENGLAND v Scotland** (4pm)

### Round 5

Saturday 18th March **Scotland v Italy** (12.30pm)  
Saturday 18th March **France v Wales** (2.45pm)  
Saturday 18th March **Ireland v ENGLAND** (5pm)