

NOTES ON THE RFU COUNCIL MEETING

Held at Twickenham Stadium - 14th October 2016

The meeting was chaired by the President, Peter Baines.

The meeting started with a period of reflection in memory of Savenaca Korobulileka of Oakham RFC and Terry Parsons of Newton Aycliffe, both of whom died whilst playing for their Clubs in September. Also remembered were Council member Ted Atkinson's wife Beverley, former Presidents Dickie Jeeps and Brian Williams and Council Member for Surrey, John Douglas.

1. Nominations Report

(Simon Collyer-Bristow - Chairman of the Nominations Committee)

- i. On the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, Council **ELECTED Andy Cosslett** to succeed Bill Beaumont as Chairman of the RFU Board of Directors with immediate effect. The vacancy arose following Bill Beaumont's recent election as Chairman of World.
- ii. Council also **APPROVED** the recommendation of the Nominations Committee that **Ian Metcalfe** become a member of the Rugby Growth Sub-Committee for the current season.

2. Presentation by Eddie Jones

(Eddie Jones - England Head Coach)

- i. Council received a presentation from Eddie Jones (see Appendix 1).
- ii. Eddie Jones added that, with 8 of the 35 squad currently injured, the Autumn Internationals offered a great opportunity for players to stake a claim for a place.

3. CEO Report

(Ian Ritchie - Chief Executive Officer)

i. Senior England Squad

- a. The Provisional 45-man elite player squad (EPS) had a pre-season training camp in August 2016. The official EPS squad was announced at the end of September. A mini-camp was held at the beginning of October 2016 and a further training camp will be held in Portugal at the end of October 2016.
- b. The squad for the Old Mutual Wealth Autumn Internationals will be announced in late October 2016.
- c. Warrick Harrington has been appointed team Sport Scientist.
- d. Dean Benton has been appointed as Head of Sport Science (Senior team).

ii. Executive Team

- a. Following the recent departures of Rob Andrew and Karena Vleck and the imminent departure of Richard Knight (Stadium Director) the Executive Team now consists of Ian Ritchie (Chief Executive Officer), Steve Brown (Chief Officer Business Operations), Steve Grainger (Rugby Development Director), Joanna Manning-Cooper (Digital, Marketing & Communications Director), Simon Massie-Taylor (Chief Commercial Officer) and Nigel Melville (Professional Rugby Director). Eddie Jones (England Head Coach) also reports directly to Ian Ritchie, but he is completely focussed on the success of the England team.
- b. Steve Brown has been promoted to the new position of Chief Officer Business Operations and his role expanded to encompass Stadium Operation and Legal & Governance as well as Finance, Technology, Human Resources, Injured Players Fund and International Relations & Public Affairs.

iii. Professional Rugby

- a. The International Player Development Department has been merged with Professional Rugby to form the new Professional Rugby Department, which includes Men's Performance, Women's Performance, Sevens, Rugby Operations, Rugby Events & Competitions, Sports Science & Medicine and Professional Game Match Officials.
- b. Dean Ryan will oversee the Men's Player Pathway, which included the England Saxons, the Under 20s, Under 18s, Under 16s, England Rugby Licenced Academies and the Elite Coach

- Development Programme.
 - c. Richard Hill has been appointed England Team Manager and will report to Eddie Jones.
 - d. Global season talks continue with the Premier Rugby Limited (PRL), Six Nations and SANZAR.
 - e. The England Women's training base has moved to Bisham Abbey.
 - f. Discussions continue to take place on a Centre of Rugby Excellence.
 - g. Nigel Melville is also working with the Rugby Players Association (RPA) to support the delivery of players' personal development programmes.
- iv. **Rugby Development**
- a. **Playing Data**
 - i. Work is being undertaken in conjunction with a specialised agency, to provide robust data to underpin the work of the Community Game Board (CGB).
 - ii. Progress is being made on achieving the male XV a side strategy as approved by the CGB, Board and Council. These targets for this season include 190 new male teams plus an additional 103 new teams in the Under 17s to Under 19s age groups.
 - b. **Sport England 2017-2021 Strategy**
Discussions have taken place with Sport England to align their strategy with the work of the Union. Six clear areas of alignment have been identified: University transition, All Schools transition, Return to Rugby, O₂ Touch, expansion of Women & Girls rugby and Community Sevens.
 - c. **Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP)**
 - i. Work has started on the first two AGP projects and two more are expected to start shortly.
 - ii. A long list of sites is being considered for phase 2.
 - d. **Club Development**
 - i. Mitsubishi Motors has agreed to be the RFU's Official Volunteer Recognition partner.
 - ii. 24 volunteers have been accepted onto the inaugural Leadership in Union programme.
 - iii. Membership of "Rugby Groundsmen Connected" now stands at over 700.
 - iv. £1.1m has been awarded this season to 25 facility improvement projects.
 - e. **Game Development**
 - i. Good progress has been made on the implementation of the Match Official Blueprint and the setting of a new set of match official appointment priorities.
 - ii. Filming has been completed on CRCs delivering best practice coaching in several skill areas, which will be shared across the game.
 - iii. Emergency First Aid training has been transferred from an external provider and is now in house. 50 educators have been trained and accredited.
 - f. **Education Department**
 - i. Targeted delivery work is underway in 500 All Schools establishments and 660 other schools, colleges and universities.
 - ii. University partnerships have been agreed with 15 institutions.
 - iii. The new Age Grade regulations have been implemented. Over 500k leaflets explaining the changes have been circulated to the game.
 - iv. 373 Clubs have signed up to the Old Mutual Wealth Kids First pledge.
- v. **Commercial**
- a. The new home and away kit has been launched and is trading well. England will wear the alternate kit for the Fiji game.
 - b. Sponsorship renewal discussions are continuing with Greene King and O₂.
[Post meeting note: The O₂ sponsorship has now been renewed for a further five years.]
 - c. The Mitsubishi Motors sponsorship was announced in September 2016. Mitsubishi Motors replace BMW as the Union's car provider.
 - d. The new Ticket Exchange has launched successfully. Over 600 clubs activated their accounts

ahead of the launch.

vi. **Digital Marketing & Communications**

a. **Marketing**

- i. The England Rugby Supporters Club is being repositioned and will be relaunched in December 2016.
- ii. The Women's team has been rebranded as the Red Roses.
- iii. A new CRM strategy is in development, alongside a process for fixing some of the technical challenges with the database.

b. **Communications**

- i. The recent focus has been on promoting Team GB at the Rio Olympics.
- ii. An RFU/Rugby Writers media working group has been established to improve media operations.
- iii. A joint media briefing was held with PRL to announce the new eight-year Professional Game agreement.
- iv. A monthly media programme has been instigated, which will include a monthly RFU press briefing.

c. **Digital**

- i. The England Rugby digital channels continue to grow.
- ii. Greater use is being made of Facebook Live to reach new audiences.
- iii. Digital channels were used to promote the Under 18s tour to South Africa and the Return to Rugby campaign.

vii. **Stadium**

a. **East Stand Project**

- i. Richmond Council have confirmed that they remain on track for the planning application to be considered by their Planning Committee in November 2016.
- ii. To date there have been 10 public objections.
- iii. The necessary utility diversion works have been completed.
- iv. The Mace Group has been appointed as the Construction manager for the project and their initial focus is to obtain tenders for Site Logistics, Substructure, Steelwork and the External Façade. Final prices for these should be obtained by the end of October 2016.
- v. The interior design of the hospitality and debenture spaces is running in parallel.

b. **Stadium General**

- i. Big Game 9 between Harlequins and Gloucester Rugby will take place on 27th December 2016.
- ii. The NFL game on 23rd October 2016 threw up a lot of challenges, but there has been good cooperation between all parties.

viii. **Human Resources**

The All Staff Bonus scheme has been announced and there has been a positive response.

ix. **Technology**

Jonathan Conn, the new Technology Director, starts at the end of October 2016.

x. **International Relations and Public Affairs**

- a. The Six Nations continues to discuss the strategy and future of the Six Nations.
- b. The five main sports (Cricket, Football, Rugby League, Rugby Union & Tennis) have each submitted further evidence to the Corporation Tax consultation.
- c. Sport England has launched a further consultation on its Sports Governance code. Their recommendations, which are likely to include mandatory quotas for diversity and independents on Boards, are likely to be published by the end of October 2016. Failure to comply may lead to a loss of funding.

4. **Concussion Presentation**

(Dr Mike England - Community Rugby Medical Director, Dr Simon Kemp - Head of Sports Medicine & Rachel Brown - Player Welfare Manager)

- i. Council received a presentation on Concussion.
- ii. Concussion continues to be a significant risk facing the game.

- iii. The incidence of concussion has increased, though this is thought to be due to greater awareness and a lowering of the threshold. It is hoped that this will settle down.
- iv. Most concussion injuries occur in the tackle, with 2/3rds of those being sustained by the tackler.
- v. The RFU management strategy comprises:
 - a. Awareness & education.
 - i. Headcase resource.
(www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/players/player-health/concussion-headcase)
 - ii. Mandatory pre-requisite module for RFU courses.
 - b. Prevention - Reduce risk.
 - i. Zero tolerance on head contact.
 - ii. Eliminate reckless tackles.
 - iii. Improve tackling techniques.
 - c. Injury Management.
 - d. RFU Funded/Supported Research.
 - e. Communication with all stakeholders.
- vi. The RFU is leading rugby in concussion research.
- vii. The strategic priority going forward is prevention.
- viii. The RFU will be represented at the forthcoming 5th Concussion in Sport International Consensus Conference, which is being held in Berlin.

5. Women' Performance Strategy

(Malcolm Caird - Women's Performance Group & Deborah Griffin - Women & Girls Representative on Council)

- i. Council **APPROVED** the establishment of a new women's premiership from the beginning of 2017/18 season.
- ii. The proposal is to establish a new premiership competition comprising of eight or ten teams, not all of whom will necessarily be in the current premiership.
- iii. In exchange for agreeing to meet minimum standards, the teams will be entitled to receive match funding of up to £75k per team.
- iv. The new premiership competition will be ring fenced for three seasons to allow it time to bed down.
- v. A new Second XV competition will also be introduced.
- vi. The aim of the new competition is to develop talent and enhance the performance of the England teams.

6. England Colleges Rugby Football Union - Constitution

(Angus Bujalski - Legal & Governance Director)

Council **APPROVED** the new constitution for the England Colleges Rugby Football Union.

7. Compensation Advisory Panel (CAP)

(Malcolm Caird - Chairman of Compensation Advisory Panel)

- i. Council **APPROVED** a recommendation by CAP that, with effect from 1st November 2016 all Council members on the Board should be remunerated and the level of remunerations set at the same level as for the Independent Non-Executive Directors (currently £25k per annum).
- ii. This recommendation supersedes the current CAP scheme, whereby Board members could only claim loss of earnings.
- iii. CAP agreed to revisit other positions in the Union, held by Council members, which carried a commensurate level of responsibility and/or workload and to report back to the next Council meeting.

8. Payment of Players

(Malcolm Wharton - Chairman of the Community Game Board)

- i. Council received a paper and presentation of the recommendations from the CGB concerning the payment of players at Levels 3 and below.
- ii. The CGB has concluded that the payment of players in the Community Game is having a detrimental effect on the ethos of the game and the development of Clubs.
- iii. The recommendations are that:
 - a. Payment caps will be introduced at Levels 3, 4 & 5.
 - b. Clubs at Level 6 and below will be encouraged not to pay players (other than one player coach).

- c. If a Club at Levels 3, 4 or 5 exceeds the payment cap or a Club at Level 6 and below pays players then they will not be entitled to RFU financial support eg: travel funding, facilities funding etc.
 - d. All Clubs at Levels 3 and below will be expected to make an annual formal declaration signed by four Club Officers as to whether they are paying players and the amounts being paid and that they are HM Revenue & Customs compliant. Failure to do so could lead to loss of RFU funding.
- iv. Council **AGREED** that the matter would be further considered at the December Council meeting. This allows time for Council members to circulate the paper and consult with their CBs and Clubs.

9. Match-day Hospitality

(Ben Calveley - Head of International and Public Affairs)

Council was informed that the following changes will be made on a trial basis to the match-day hospitality for the Old Mutual Wealth Autumn internationals.

- i. Guests will be named on all accreditation, including those for access to the Members Lounge.
- ii. The team dinner will be replaced by a stand-up reception.
- iii. Introduction of match specific themes and messaging.

10. Strategic Plan

(Steve Brown - Chief Officer Business Operations)

- i. The current strategic plan expires at the end of the current season.
- ii. Work has commenced on a new strategic plan.
- iii. Consultation will take place with representatives of all stakeholders.
- iv. Council and the Board will be consulted.
- v. The President is setting up a Group of Council members to be involved in the process.
- vi. Council will be kept informed throughout the process and will receive updates at the December 2016 and February 2017 Council meetings.
- vii. The Board will consider the strategic plan at their December 2016 and February 2017 meetings.
- viii. It is hoped that the strategic plan will be approved by Council at its April 2017 meeting so that it can be communicated to the game ahead of the 2017/18 season.

11. Financial Report

(Steve Brown - Chief Officer Business Operations)

- i. Steve Brown presented the flash financial report for the first quarter.
- ii. The retained profit is £0.2m adverse at £6.5m.
- iii. There are no significant variances in any area.

12. 2015/16 Annual Report

(Steve Brown - Chief Officer Business Operations)

- i. Steve Brown presented the 2015/16 Annual Report.
- ii. The report includes the 2015 RWC.
- iii. The financial statements have been restated following the adoption of Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102.
- iv. Revenues (including RWC 2015) were a record £407.1m.
- v. A record £89.8m was invested into rugby.
- vi. The profit & loss reserve of £23.2m is in line with the RFU reserves policy.
- vii. The balance sheet remains strong.

13. Professional Game Board (PGB)

(Nigel Melville - Professional Rugby Director)

i. PGB Chairman

Discussions are ongoing about the appointment of a new PGB Chairman to replace Ian Metcalfe, who is time served.

ii. Six Nations

- a. It has been decided not to go ahead with a Six Nations Sevens competition.
- b. Further discussions are to take place re the introduction of a bonus point system.
- c. Discussions are also taking place on how to strengthen the Women's competition.

iii. Professional Rugby Department

- a. Current focus is on referee and coach development and working with the Championship on how to improve the competition and get regular games for the 250 academy players.
- b. PRL have confirmed their current policy of not releasing coaches to work with international teams.
- c. Following the Rio Olympics Sevens, discussions are taking place with Scotland and Wales about the future of Team GB.
- iv. **Premiership Rugby Update**
 - a. Attendances appear strong.
 - b. A low-key communication has been sent out to the Clubs about match official abuse.
 - c. PRL has decided to retain the salary cap for at least a further two seasons.
- v. **Championship Clubs Update**
 - a. Competition is fierce.
 - b. Discussions are taking place over how to further develop the competition.
 - c. Discussions are also ongoing about RPA representation for Championship players.
- vi. **RPA Update**
The RPA will be launching a mental health initiative at the end of October.
- vii. **PGB Sub Groups**
Nigel Melville and Phil Winstanley (PRL Rugby Manager) will be reviewing the terms of reference and membership of PGB sub groups and reporting back to the next PGB meeting.

14. **Community Game Board**

(Malcolm Wharton - Chairman of the Community Game Board)

- i. **Competition Organisation**
The CGB has endorsed the establishment of four competition commissions. This will now be considered by the Governance Committee.
- ii. **Emergency Funding Policy**
The CGB endorsed the revised emergency funding process for individual and multiple Club incidents.
- iii. **Walking Rugby**
The CGB has agreed in principle to develop an RFU format for Walking Rugby.
- iv. **PRL Community Partnership**
 - a. Nigel Melville presented to the CGB an overview of the partnership between the RFU and PRL for Community rugby as set out in the new Professional Game Agreement.
 - b. Funding, focus areas, ways of working and timelines were all discussed.
- v. **Age Grade Good Practice**
The CGB endorsed the formation, terms of reference and membership of a working group to review policy and develop good practice for those participating in age grade rugby. The group will be chaired by Nigel Gillingham.
- vi. **Anti-Doping**
Stephen Watkins, Anti-Doping & Illicit Drugs Programme Manager gave a presentation to the CGB on anti-doping proposals for the Community game. The CGB endorsed the need for greater education.
- vii. **Community Sevens**
The CGB received an update on the Community Sevens activity in summer 2016 together with plans for the future.
- viii. **Adult Competition Review Update**
CGB debated the decision not to implement the new league structure. Some recommendations are now defunct and will go to the Governance Committee and Council so that they may be formally rescinded.

15. **Governance Report**

(Jeff Blackett - Chairman of the Governance Committee)

- i. **Universality of Sanctions**
World Rugby is revisiting the Universality of Sanctions and the ongoing issue around the Sempere case when a sanction was only applied by France to EPCR games rather than universally.

ii. **Regulations**

Governance is currently reviewing the following regulations:

- ~ Insolvency
- ~ Criteria to become a National Constituent Body
- ~ Club takeovers and mergers
- ~ Club and team name changes

Recommendations for regulation changes will be presented to the Board and Council in due course.

iii. **Laws**

- a. World Rugby (WR) has issued three Law Clarifications this year
- b. World Rugby will be considering proposals for global trials at the WR November Council meeting. The trials will, if approved, commence on 1st January 2017 in the Southern Hemisphere and on 1st July 2017 in the Northern Hemisphere.
- c. The work of the WR Laws Simplification Group continues. The first draft of the simplified laws is nearly ready and will be sent out for consultation shortly.

iv. **Discipline**

- a. Governance has noted the work being done by many stakeholders to improve player behaviour towards match officials. It is hoped that a presentation will be made to the December Council meeting on this subject.
- b. The Discipline team dealt with 186 cases in the 2015/16 season.
- c. Two players were disciplined for taking cocaine on Kent County RFU's tour to Argentina and were suspended from playing for eight months. A third player was found guilty of supplying cocaine and was suspended from playing for fifteen months.

v. **Safeguarding**

- a. The Safeguarding team dealt with 141 cases relating to interactions between adults and children in 2015/16. These range in seriousness from serious harmful sexual behaviour to poor practice.
- b. In the same period the Safeguarding team processed 13,725 DBS applications.
- c. A protocol for Notification of Circumstances has been agreed with the RFU's new insurers. This will hopefully prevent insurers declining any subsequent claim.

vi. **Review of Sub Committees**

Currently the CGB has a Competition Development Sub-committee and Governance has an Adult Competition Management Sub-committee. A review will begin shortly to consider whether both sub-committees are needed in their current form.

16. International Rugby Report

(Ben Cleverley - Head of International and Public Affairs)

i. **World Rugby**

- a. Recent focus has been on the Sevens at the Rio Olympics. A decision on the future of rugby in the Olympics beyond 2020 will be made in May 2017.
- b. The Global Calendar will take on greater significance in coming months.

ii. **Rugby Europe**

- a. Rugby Europe is forecasting a loss in the current financial year. Recent exchange fluctuations have meant that some programmes have had to be cut.
- b. Elections are being held in December for the President and Board.
- c. A strategic plan for 2017/21 is currently being finalised.
- d. The Six Nations is investigating if there are more ways in which to the two organisations can collaborate.

iii. **Six Nations**

- a. The search for a title sponsor is ongoing.
- b. Discussions are continuing regarding the timing of the Under 20s tournament.

iv. **European Professional Cup Rugby (EPCR)**

- a. A strategic review of the tournament is being undertaken.
- b. The bid process is underway for hosting the final of the 2017/18 competition.

v. **Unity Project**

- a. The first phase of the Unity Project is coming to an end with the focus now on completing the delivery of the development plans and starting the evaluation.
- b. Regeneris has been appointed to complete the qualitative evaluation of the project.
- vi. **British & Irish Lions**
 - a. Warren Gatland has now been appointed head coach and will be putting the coaching team together over the coming months.
 - b. Discussions continue around player insurance and liability provisions and player remuneration and administration fee packages.

17. Valete

(Peter Baines - RFU President)

- i. Karena Vleck, who recently left the RFU after eleven years, was thanked for her services to the Union.
- ii. The President confirmed that Richard Hill had, following his recent appointment as England Team Manager, stepped down from Council after eight years. Richard was thanked for his service on Council.
- iii. The President made a presentation on behalf of Council to Bill Beaumont, who has had to step down as Chairman of the RFU Board of Directors following his election as Chairman of World Rugby. Bill was thanked for his outstanding service to the Union.

The next Council meeting is on 2nd December 2016.