

**LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LTD**  
**Board Meeting 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019**  
**RFU Representatives Report**  
**Headlines**

**Chairman's update**

- Nigel Melville took up the reins as interim CEO in December and as part of this became a Director of the Board. Nigel has made an excellent start, quickly settling the organisation, reassuring external partners and stakeholders and focussing the Executive Team on some major issues.
- Board meetings. Much of the time of the current Board agendas is spent on the investment in the community game in future years, and developing thinking on governance of the professional game.
- Engagement with stakeholders. Work is being done so that Council Members have a clear understanding of their role and whether they are provided with sufficient and timely information to enable them to discharge their responsibilities,

**2019/20 Appointments**

- Bill Sweeney was appointed as CEO after the last RFU Council meeting. He will take up his role later in the year. Nigel Melville will continue as interim CEO.
- Dominic Proctor was reappointed as INED (and Senior Independent Director) for a further three year term from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2022.
- Jonathan Webb was appointed as World Rugby Representative and member of the Board for a further three year term from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2022.
- Junior Vice President - Nigel Gillingham, OBE,

**Interim CEO Report**

- Transition - Steve Brown officially left his post on the 21st December following an appropriate 'send-off' at RFU Live and the Christmas Party event.
- Engaging/connecting - with key stakeholder groups is important at this time. Additional meetings/calls with World Rugby, Six Nations, British and Irish Lions, Premiership/Championship Clubs, National Clubs Association, England Rugby Counties Association, sponsors (O2, Quilter, Canterbury) and local government have been very important part of this process.
- Brexit – our Communications and Legal teams will update all stakeholder groups on the potential impact of Brexit on the game. We are working closely with DCMS during this period of uncertainty.
- Health and Safety - a new Health/Safety and Risk Executive meeting met for the first time in January to discuss business including, Health and Safety, Stadium, Safeguarding and Player Welfare
- Professional Rugby - Premiership Rugby announced that they had sold 27% of their equity to CVC (Private Equity Company) The RFU have been assured that this money will be directed to improvements in stadium facilities and training grounds, and that the wage cap will remain at its current level.
- Six Nations – Six Nations announced our new title sponsor (Guinness) at this seasons media launch. The Six Nations Council also met to discuss their response to the World Nations League being proposed by World Rugby.
- The PRISP report was released to the media on 9th January and as anticipated the news that injuries have continued to increase in the professional game received significant media interest. The RFU are the only rugby body collecting such detailed injury data, this has often been reported as an 'English problem'. The RFU has spent time with World Rugby discussing our findings and encouraged them to undertake a review of the Laws of the Game.
- Tackle Height Law Trial – we halted the 'Tackle Height' trial in the Championship Cup following the pool stages. Data shows that the first objective of lowering tackle heights was achieved.

### **Budget/Business Planning –**

- Sue Day presented the Q2 financial report and gave a comprehensive update on the RFU's Financial Position and Strategic Plan Performance. This serious report outlined the £4.6 million reduction in the Community Rugby budget. Reasons included the downturn in commercial sponsorship, television revenue and the four yearly loss during World Cup Year.

### **Half Game Rule Regulation**

- Council's approved of the Half Game Rule Regulation and delegated authority to Governance to finalise the drafting of the regulation.
- The U19 Commission, CGB and Governance had recommended that the half game rule be mandatory and be included in Regulation 15 from next season (2019-20).
- This Regulation will be supported by updates to the Age Grade Codes of Practice and Frequently Asked Questions document which are already in circulation.
- Appendix 6 of RFU Regulation 19 will also be updated to provide the infrastructure pursuant to which the RFU, CBs and CSUs can deal with breaches of the half game rule, alongside other RFU Regulation 15 breaches.

### **Transgender policy**

- Council's approved the draft Transgender Policy; and delegated authority to Governance to finalise the drafting of the Policy and to make any other changes as required in light of any further changes to the World Rugby Transgender Policy.

### **Council Code of Conduct Working Group.**

- Paul Murphy, RFU Past President informed the meeting of the working group's progress in assessing the extent to which the current code of conduct and disciplinary process for Council Members, Past Presidents and Privilege Members is fit for purpose. The will recommend what the most appropriate process should be to ensure that the RFU Core Values and RFU reputation is protected.

### **Council Recognition and Reward Review Group Update**

- Malcolm Caird outlined the proposals from the Council Recognition and Reward Review Group (CRRRG) as to entitlements for Council Members, Past Presidents, Privilege Members and others for final discussion ahead of firm proposals to be brought to the April Council meeting.

### **Professional Game Board Report**

- Review of Autumn Internationals
- Professional Rugby Injury Surveillance Project (PRISP)
- Age grade transition into senior rugby (ages 18-22)
- Worcester Warriors  
The change of ownership at Worcester Warriors was agreed
- Competition overview.
- EPS squads - All the EPS squads have been announced including the full time contracted women's squad for the first time.
- Championship Cup tackle height trial - There was evidence that the trial had lowered the height of the tackle, so law changes and referee interpretation did change behaviour, but there are unintended consequences that have led to incidences of concussions actually going up. This is due to the player carrying the ball also dropping lower to cope with the tackler going lower. 'Head on head' remains the highest cause of concussion to date. The trial has been suspended as of 25 January.
- New structured season 2019-2022 - As part of the changes for the next 3 seasons and the introduction of mid-season breaks for all players, playing frequencies will be measured on a live basis,
- Yorkshire Academy -As Yorkshire Carnegie have been outside the Premiership for 3 years now, there is an automatic trigger of a review of the academy and their licence to run the academy.

- Promotion and Relegation from the Premiership - the RFU will consider this in the wider interests of the health of the whole game. Considerations will relate in particular to player welfare, improving the chances of England winning the World Cups in 2023 and 2027, and financial sustainability of the professional clubs.

#### **Tyrrells Premier 15s Season 4**

- Council approved the recommendations:  
The size of the league will remain at 10 clubs.
- Mechanism to access the league in year 4 will be through a combined process of audit and tender/retender process. This structure will be put in place for three years.
- Delegated authority to Board to agree upon the operational details pertaining to the audit and tender / retender process.
- Rejected the principle that there will be no promotion and/or relegation from the Competition for a further three years from 2019-20.

#### **Community Game Board**

- Rob Briers and Steve Grainger gave a comprehensive report that included proposals for reductions in budgets across the whole range of the Community Rugby.

#### **Governance Standing Committee.**

Chris Cuthbertson submitted a written report on the work of the Governance Standing Committee which included:

- Transgender Policy
- RFU Position Statement on Supplements
- Half Game Rule
- Game On Project
- Competition Structures in the North
- Club takeovers

#### **Council Nominations Committee**

Competition Organising Committee appointments

- Professional Competitions  
Norman Robertson – Chair  
Terry Burwell – Committee member Tom Price – RFU Staff member Dean Ryan – RFU Staff member
- Community Competitions  
Ron Jones – Chair  
Simon Collyer–Bristow – Committee member Paul O’Leary – RFU Staff member  
Mike Bennett – RFU Staff member

#### **RFU Privilege Membership**

Council approved the Council Nominations Standing Committee’s proposal for the criteria to be applied when considering Council members for Distinguished Membership. (Previously known as Privilege Membership).