

LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

Minutes of the Board meeting held using Zoom Video Conference on Monday 14th December 2020

Present: D. Clarke in the Chair, & Messrs P. Deakin, J.T. Hughes, H.H. Hughes, K. Andrews, R.T.J. Briers, M.J. Worsley, A.S. Kerboas, J.S. Greenwood, C.A. Baker & M. Downs.

In attendance: Messrs, G. Burns, G. Morgan, B.H. Stott & Roger McKerlie (Club Champions Ltd).

Apologies:

Club Champions Ltd

Roger McKerlie had been invited to present on the subject of his company Club Champions.

1. RM is a Marketing and Sponsorship Consultant whose club is Sevenoaks. Last season he secured £150K of sponsorship for them.
2. The companies function is to work with organisations (CBs) to help them gain sponsorship.
3. The Deal – Cost is £3K per year. Club Champions get sponsors, once they get £3k worth of sponsorship then the rest of income goes to the CB with 20% going to Club Champions. Current sponsors are excluded from the deal.
4. Clubs in CBs who deal with Club Champions have free access to an online library of marketing materials.
5. To date, Kent, Herts and Sussex have signed with varying degrees of success.

Roger McKerlie left the Zoom call.

Club Champions Discussion.

6. PD – Currently we have little in the way of active sponsorship management, we should try for one season and re-asses if successful or not.
7. JSG – Action to check the contract provided and its legality.
8. DC, PD – follow up with RM.

Minutes of the last meeting.

The minutes of the Board meeting held on Monday 2nd November, (previously circulated) were accepted and signed per procuracionem by the Honorary Secretary as a correct record.

Matters arising.

DC had spoken to A James of Lostock where communications between all parties had broken down.

Questions & Comments to written reports.

KA Circulated the minutes of the Lancashire Competitions Sub Committee – Appendix 1

1. HHH – Heard that the Colts committee had formulated dates for a restart but had not seen them. JTH to follow up with John Kitchen to confirm.
2. PD – Club Health check. All clubs seem healthy bar one who had financial issues and were being aided by a team from the County Management Board. The issues predate Covid potentially and close monitoring will be required.
3. MD – Cluster meetings had had 76% attendance by Club Chairmen, those not attending would be contacted by J Foster and A Howarth (RFU)

Correspondence.

There was no correspondence appertaining to this meeting.

New Members.

No new memberships have been received.

50:50 Draw

Nov 20	Value
R.T.J. Briers	£53.40
G. Spenglar	£8.90
H. Henderson	£8.90
G. Burns	£8.90
P. Sanderson	£8.90

Date of next meeting.

Next Meeting: To be confirmed.

Any other business.

BHS – There is a push from the RFU to brings schools into line with Clubs for disciplinary matters. KA commented that Lancs schools and clubs work well together.

DC – Spoken to Paul O’Leary at RFU who is unaware of work being conducted by Steve Grainger and Terry Burwell on the season start and end dates.

KA – There is a County Championship review on going led by Dr Tim Miller. We should assess the impact and benefits it has for the County.

KA – Surprised to learn from the cluster reports that Colne & Nelson had suspended their M&J section activities during lockdown as they were very successful with the work of Adam Padgett being recognised nationally.

ASK – he is joining the Diversity & Inclusivity RFU working group and would like to add D & I as a discussion point at the next board meeting.

MJW – no response from S Urquhart.

GM – there had been 44 cases of Covid related to rugby clubs in the County.

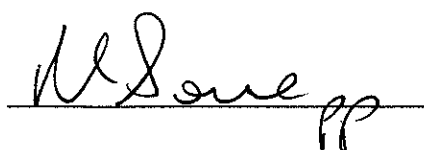
GM – Rugby Safe are insisting that all games have qualified first aid cover and RFU are pushing their courses at £60 per person. This is felt costly and RTJB to raise with Community Game Board.

GM – questioned if MADREFS and Liverpool Society are able to use the Cauliflower Ear services. This was confirmed that they are.

HHH – becoming increasing annoyed at the lack of response from the RFU over permission to run the Tri County Competition at the end of the season.

HHH – West Park had recently appeared on a news item on the BBC about the work they do as a club during the covid crisis.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:10pm

 Chairman Date 11th Jan 2021

Appendix 1

Rugby Development Committee

Competitions Sub Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Competitions Committee held on Tuesday 21st January 2020 by zoom meeting starting at 6.30 pm.

Present: Ken Andrews (Chairman & Schools), Chris Barrett (Colts), David Clarke (RFU Leagues), Helen Duggan (W & G), Howard Hughes (Rugby Development), Brian Hurst (Senior), Robbie Jones (Schools), Ian Spivey (Junior), Alan Whalley (Junior) Christine Spivey (CSO),

In attendance Matt Bryan (North Competitions Development Manager)

Apologies: Alan Bower (Junior)

Minutes 79 Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21st January 2020 were read and accepted

Minute 80 **Matters arising:** There were no matters arising

Minute 81 RFU Update: KA the recent developments with the guidance from Government and RFU regarding Covid 19 and the implications. This included moving to Stage E in the Return to Rugby and the complications of the different Tier restrictions in three areas of Lancashire.

Minute 82 Matt Bryan, Area 4 Competitions Development Manager spoke briefly about his role with the RFU. His role was one of the few to have survived the recent RFU re-structure and would be, in the first instance as rugby starts to return, the supports CBs and clubs to return to organised competition noting that players should be encouraged to start playing again and not to be too worried about leagues and cup competitions. His priorities would be to help and support:

- CB Organising Committees
- Competition opportunities
- Women's 1st XV Leagues
- Inner Warrior Series
- NOWIRUL and lower XVs

Minute 83 **Section Reports:**

83.1 **ADM Lancashire Leagues**

HH reported on the following:

- Micro-Leagues have been adjusted to fit into the Tier restrictions. Lucky that little adjustment had to made to the original plan. This is ready to go on Saturday 16th January subject to any further Covid restrictions.
- There will be break weeks which may help with the poor weather usually expected in January and February. Good flexibility in the system to allow the leagues to be completed
- Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) have joined the leagues but have asked to play all fixtures away from home.
- Referee Societies have been contacted.
- Combinations Leagues for 2nd, 3rd and 4th teams also ready to start.

83.2 RFU Leagues.

DC reported:

- *All communications re RFU Cluster leagues are through the North DOC*
- *All Lancashire clubs in RFU Leagues have entered the Cluster Competition. Aspull RUFC have resigned from RFU Leagues and are looking to join the ADM Lancashire Leagues.*
- *Cluster leagues due to start on Saturday 23rd January 2021*

NOWIRUL

DC mentioned that NOWIRUL leagues had been organised as 14 games without a break and there needs to be some oversight into how that is going to work.

83.3 Senior Competition:

BH reported:

- *At present there are no plans to organise the Lancashire Cup Competitions. Clubs are much more interested in getting players into their clubs and playing rugby. It would be very difficult for any meaningful competition with the Tier restrictions in place.*
- *The Cup Committee will meet to consider something at the end of the season if that were to be possible.*

83.4 Colts:

CB reported that the NW Leagues have met recently and have organised leagues:

Senior Colts- 6 leagues of 6 teams

Junior Colts- 4 leagues of 6 teams

To enable games to be played and with the worry to how many players would be available to teams it was suggested games could be played 10 a side and above.

CB felt that the league programme was important and that Cups were not being considered.

It was noted that the Youth Structured Season continues to be in place for 2020-21 and although the U18 CB programme has been cancelled the U17 programme will still go ahead. Consideration must go to those youngsters who have aspirations of playing County rugby should be accommodated on CB activity weekends.

83.5 Clubs- Mini/Junior:

IS and AW reported:

The main aim of the all Junior Sections in Clubs is to get the youngsters back playing again They have been advised to consider organising local fixtures within their Tiers.

Please see full report in Appendix 1.

83.6 Women & Girls:

HD reported:

83.7 Schools:

RJ reported:

- *No knockout Cup Competitions this season*
- *Festival style rugby activity to be held for U13 to U18 in February and March.*
- *Good interest in the idea of festivals but everything subject to how Senior Management Teams in schools allow the students to play and travel.*
- *There has been interest from 6 schools for entry into the new Girls festival.*

For full report see Appendix 3

Minute 84 *Date of next meeting- Wednesday 24th February 2021 by Zoom call*

Minute 85 *Any other business.
There was no other business*

Meeting ended at 7.35 pm

Appendix 1.1

Lancashire County Rugby Football Union 7-16 Junior Section

Following our recent meeting and subsequent discussions, it was felt that given the current uncertainty and risk with the Covid 19 virus, that sadly, the Lancashire Junior Rugby Challenge could not be run in a competitive format this season .

The Committee feel that Clubs are advised to run their own "friendly" tournaments/waterfall festivals for the remainder of the season with the emphasis on participation for all who want to play. With the best interests of the players in mind, the clubs should attain the necessary consent from the Lancashire Junior Rugby Challenge Committee, and also to make sure to follow the RFU guidelines which is aligned with Government Covid 19 restrictions.

If a club finds itself short of numbers on the day and where practical, the game numbers should be adjusted and, if appropriate, players can play for the opposition to to even up and get games played in the true spirit of rugby. The Committee are available to share ideas, in what we appreciate, is a very challenging environment and look forward to hearing views on how best to offer the best opportunities for our young players.

Allen Bower Organiser & Ian Spivey Chairman

Appendix 1.2

Lancashire Women & Girls Section

Lancashire CB rugby

The youth programme rugby for girls is still part of the players pathway and selection into the centres of excellence, the girls version of the DPP.

There were three considerations for cancelling the boys programme included pushing it back beyond its normal run time, the girls programme normally starts late February and runs into March. The other was the impact on exams.

The U18s girls encompasses three ages groups, therefore to be equal [as requested] with the boys if the girls U18s doesn't run the boys U16s and U17s should also not run –Neither girls or boys u16s and u17s players should be disenfranchised because we have to cancel them because the boys U18s is cancelled.

Strong communications we would be able to mitigate the issue and allow the U18s girls to go ahead.

There have been approached by other counties who want games and I've explained we need a decision at CB board level before any plans can be made.

Competition rugby

The women's clusters have been released but cause a massive issue with travel into and out of different tier lockdowns.

To enable to some rugby I will be looking to arrange some pitch up and play style events with local clubs so we

can at least try and mitigate the strength of players and squads. The RFU club development team have expressed their support but due to no funding it would be reliant on the clubs buy in and participation. We could also advertise under the inner warrior banner and try and recruit players for struggling clubs.

I would like to review the tiers and lockdown in February to see if we can run some festival days for U15s and U18s towards the end of April and beginning of May – depending on permissions within the structured season.

There are some clubs that are struggling for numbers while others have thrived and recruited during lockdown. We have had a new team set up in Broughton, Manchester – their nearest women's team has also increased in numbers so it's encouraging.

Helen Duggan

Appendix 1.3

Lancashire County Schools Union

Lancashire Schools Executive committee have met several times during the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. Schools/colleges are generally operating with more stringent guidelines/regulations than those stipulated by the RFU. Nonetheless, some schools have endeavored to maintain some rugby during lessons and additional training sessions.

It has been confirmed that the CSU will not hold any schools knockout competitions during 2020-21 season. However, following discussions in the executive, all schools were contacted to gauge the desire to participate in any Lancashire activities in the latter part of the season, during the Spring term. Responses were received from 24 schools, with 22 expressing an interest to participate.

The committee has proposed that, if the RFU roadmap and Government restrictions permit, a series of festival style activities would be planned for each 13-18 age group. Due to external exams, the U16 and U18 events would be planned for February under floodlights to minimise time out of school, while the U13-U15 would be held in March during the day.

The precise format of these events would be solely dependent upon the current restrictions in place, but likely to be touch/limited contact in order to be more inclusive. It is also planned that where possible, events would be local to prevent unnecessary travel, potentially operating in the Manchester, Merseyside and North Lancashire areas.

Robbie Jones (Lancashire CSU Competition Organiser)