

MIDDLESEX NOTES ON THE RFU COUNCIL MEETING Held at Twickenham Stadium - 24th November 2017

The meeting was chaired by the President, John Spencer.

1. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

(Stephen Brown - RFU Chief Executive Officer)

1.1 **Long-Term View & Strategies**

- a. The executive is starting to consider the long-term development of the Union and determine the needs of the Game over the next five to ten years.
- b. This will form part of the discussion at the Board's strategy day in December.
- c. The outcomes will be shared with Council.

1.2 **Recruitment of Chief Financial Officer (CFO)**

The recruitment of a new CFO is underway, and it is hoped that an appointment will be made by the end of December.

1.3 **England/Red Roses**

- a. The team is enjoying a successful OMW Autumn international series so far, with wins over Argentina and Australia.
- b. Steve Brown is meeting regularly with Eddie Jones
- c. The talent pipeline currently looks very good.
- d. The Red Roses have won their three-match series against Canada, having won the first two games.

1.4 **Property Strategy**

- a. A new property strategy is being prepared for consideration by the Board.
- b. The obligation to build housing in the North Car Park has now been formally closed down.
- c. As there is currently no compelling reason for a national performance centre, this will not now be progressing.

1.5 **Stakeholder Engagement**

Work continues to engage with staff, rugby and external stakeholders. Staff engagement is a current priority. In addition to visits to several rugby Clubs, meetings have been held with key rugby stakeholders to discuss player welfare, injury rates and potential solutions to the global season issue. Meetings have also recently been held with Ministers, Parliamentarians and other partners including UK Sport, Sport England, UKAD, the British Olympic Association and several commercial partners.

1.6 **Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan was launched on 24th October and has been widely circulated.

1.7 **PROFESSIONAL RUGBY**

a. **Global Season**

Global season discussions continue with the focus now turning to the domestic season structure.

b. **Women's Rugby**

- i. The Tyrells Premier 15s is continuing to develop well in its first season.
- ii. The Red Roses have agreed an England Player Squad (EPS) retainer and match fee for the season.

c. **Sevens**

Men and Women's teams are in final preparations for start of the HSBC World Series Sevens. The Series kicks off with the men's and women's Emirates Sevens tournament in Dubai.

d. **Championship**

The RFU Board met with the Championship Clubs to discuss the structure of the 2018/19 season; it was agreed that the competition would remain at 12 clubs with a new Championship Cup competition replacing the B&I Cup.

e. **Team GB**

It is anticipated that World Rugby will support Team GB 7s request to retain the 2016 Olympic qualification criteria for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Once agreed, Team GB 7s will finalise a selection/competition programme for both men's and women's teams.

1.8 **RUGBY DEVELOPMENT**a. **Player Data**

179 new male teams have started playing this season (77 at U14-16, 51 at U18 and 51 at Senior) with a further 125 scheduled to start (58, 14 and 53). This is against an overall net growth target of 230 teams. On the female side 70 new teams have started (37 at U15, 15 at U18 and 18 at senior) against an overall net growth target of 69 teams.

b. **Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)**

In addition to the 5 Rugby Turf AGPs already open, 5 more are due for completion this autumn with 10 more due to start construction in March 2018 (with completion by July 2018). Work has commenced on phase 3 projects with 11 approved in full to progress to planning, 6 in principle with additional work to confirm usage plans and a further 6 which are still undergoing feasibility. 3 Rugby Share sites have been approved with the first officially opened at the University of Hull. Recent changes to procurement and project management frameworks are beginning to show some cost savings.

c. **Community Sevens Offer - X-Rugby**

X-Rugby law variations were formally approved by the World Rugby Council on 15th November. It will be introduced into universities from February 2018.

d. **Engaging new communities**

- i. The women and girls action plan was launched on 13th November.
- ii. Work on a disability action plan progresses
- iii. Project Rugby, the partnership with PRL as part of the PGA, BME and LSEG communities was formally launched on 18th October.
- iv. Lessons from the externally funded Spirit of Rugby RWC 2015 legacy project are being disseminated across other work and a targeted action plan for London is being finalised.

e. **Age grade to adult transition**

- i. University work has been a key focus in Q1 in a specific effort to target freshers and to keep them playing. This has focused on the 14 University Partnerships and the inaugural 8 University Clusters.
- ii. There is a focus this term on transitioning greater numbers of players from the CBRE All School cluster schools to club rugby.

f. **Other**

- i. The World Rugby - Rugby Committee has established a working group to look at the challenges facing the XV-a-side game. This is chaired by Buck Anderson from NZRU. Steve Grainger is a member of the group.
- ii. As part of efforts to increase the use of technology in coach education, an inaugural Facebook Live coaching session was run with Eddie Jones. This achieved 80,000 views with 50,000 subsequent views of the follow-up video.
- iii. O₂ Touch centre numbers have risen to 415 with over 21,000 active players. 1,254 additional players having joined this season.
- iv. 4-year agreements are close to being finalised with Georgia and Romania for alternate season tours for England Counties and England Counties U20 teams.

- v. Good feedback has been received from the CB Leaders conference held at Hinckley and from the Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer Recognition Awards held at Twickenham.

1.9 COMMERCIAL

a. East Stand Development

- i. The major structural elements of the East Stand are nearing completion and 61% of the budget has been committed.
- ii. Following the Grenfell Tower fire, it has been decided to install a sprinkler system throughout the new build. This was not included in the original specification (as it was not required by Building Regulations) and is thus likely to result in increased costs.

b. England Rugby Hospitality

The new hospitality business has moved into Keith Prowse's new offices in Webb Ellis House. The RFU hosted a successful brand launch on 13th September and packages have been on sale since 6th November. Initial sales figures have been positive and ahead of budget.

c. Sponsorship – Technology Partners

Samsung will not be renewing its technology partner sponsorship. Following this, the Union's technology partnership strategy is being reviewed.

d. Broadcasting

- i. Broadcasting is a rapidly changing market with several new online entrants.
- ii. The Union's strength is its ability to provide live sport, which is still highly regarded/valued.
- iii. Discussions regarding the next broadcast cycle will probably begin in Q1 next year.

e. Licensing and Retail

- i. **Fanatics** - Improvements are being made to the mobile and desktop ecommerce site this month and a full refurbishment of the Rugby Store is due in January 2018.
- ii. **World Rugby Museum** - The refurbishment is on schedule to open in February 2018. A commercial plan is in development to improve revenues.

1.10 DIGITAL, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

a. Digital

- i. A full review of ER.com has been undertaken to improve customer experience and functionality, evolve CMS, and provide for a range of commercial digital assets.
- ii. The new Green King Championship website was launched on 1st September to provide the latest news, features, fixtures, results, highlights and live matches. The site is built for a mobile first audience; with 60% of our traffic coming via mobile. The site www.championshiprugby.co.uk has had a solid start with over 100k page views in the first 6 weeks of operation and over 30k users.
- iii. The Tyrrells Premier 15s website was launched on 22nd September to provide the latest news, features, fixtures, results, highlights and live matches. The site is also built for a mobile first audience. The site www.premier15s.com has attracted over 50k page views in first month of operation and 18k users. A Twitter handle for the competition has also been launched (@Premier15s) and has generated over 2.7m impressions on social media for the competition so far.

b. Marketing

i. England Rugby Club/Membership

England Rugby Club Social and First XV members bought over 50k tickets to the Old Mutual Wealth (OMW) Autumn Internationals (£2.6m revenue). A Canterbury competition was run to win an England Season Ticket and received more than 60k entries including 22k new opt-ins. The database has grown by 7% in the last month alone and open rates are steady at 23.7% (above industry average).

ii. CRM

An internal "CRM re-vitalisation" process has begun. As part of this we have completed a set of marketing workshops. A new Engagement Committee is established to track and prioritise campaigns across the organisation.

iii. Game of Our Lives

The film has been launched and activation of the campaign is now taking place.

c. **Communications**

i. **Media Launches & Announcements**

A significant number of media launches have recently taken place including for the Greene King IPA Championship and the Tyrells Premier 15s seasons; the England squad announcement for Oxford training camp; announcement of the 2018 OMW Series matches to tie into England Rugby Hospitality unveiling; extended England Women training squad announced; launch of the new alternate England kit; announcement of new trial concussion test as part of the Head Injury Assessment (HIA) in the Premiership and the launch of PRL/RFU Project Rugby.

ii. **Club Visits**

Several Premiership Club visits have taken place to discuss communications from an England and professional rugby perspective (8 since the start of season).

iii. **Monthly Media Briefings**

Monthly media briefings continue to be held. The latest focusing on introducing Steve Brown as new CEO with Andy Cosslett and the launch of the Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

1.11 **BUSINESS OPERATIONS**

a. **Finance**

The 2017 Year End Audit has been completed, with no major issues identified. The Annual Report should be signed shortly.

b. **Legal Update**

i. **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**

Work continues toward compliance with the GDPR. Debate is currently ongoing in Parliament as to the extent to which this should apply to sport, particularly within regulatory functions. Once this has become more certain, communications will be sent out to the game.

ii. **Safeguarding**

a. Several further bans have been issued, which is consistent with previous seasons. The majority of those who have been banned following receipt of information about behaviour outside of rugby. The case management team has dealt with 50 cases this season, which represents a significant increase in reporting compared with 25 cases at the same point last year (this is viewed as positive as it shows an increased awareness of the need to report concerns).

b. 6,546 DBS applications have been processed. 298 of these applications contained conviction information, which is a slight increase on previous years.

iii. **Discipline**

a. The Discipline Department is working with stakeholders in the university sector to address the increase in unacceptable crowd behaviour at varsity matches.

b. The EPCR Discipline Conference was held in Bilbao between 7th and 9th October and was attended by the RFU.

1.12 **STRATEGY & CORPORATE AFFAIRS**

a. **Public Affairs**

i. Measures to enable National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and others to secure a corporation tax deduction for investments made into grassroots sport are successfully passing through Parliament and should receive Royal Assent later this year.

ii. Lobbying continues to change the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to recognise the specificity of sport in areas such as safeguarding, anti-doping and integrity continues.

iii. A full review of compliance against the recommendations in Baroness Grey-Thompson's Duty of Care in Sport report is being conducted.

b. **Corporate Strategy**

i. The Strategic Plan roll-out is underway to staff and stakeholders. This has included a launch event to staff and meetings with sporting and government stakeholders. The Strategic Plan was launched on 24th October to the media.

- ii. A Strategic Committee has been relaunched, to include Risk & Contract Management programmes, Deal Approval, Project and Performance Management and a review of the Strategic Plan KPIs.
- c. **CSR and Fundraising**
 - i. Try for Change (a partnership with Sport Relief) has awarded its first round of 11 small grants (of up to £10,000).
 - ii. An extensive programme of fundraising events and activities in aid of Try for Change are being run.
 - iii. Support was given to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission with their fundraising activity around the England v Argentina match.

2. **INTERNATIONAL REPORT**

(Ben Calveley - RFU Head of Strategy & Corporate Affairs)

2.1 **World Rugby (WR)**

- a. At its November meetings the WR Council approved:
 - ~ Alterations to WR Regulations to the Game
 - ~ Alterations to WR Laws of the Game
 - ~ Alterations to WR Bye-Laws of the Game
 - ~ Law Trial Extension
 - ~ A WR Council Ruling

Further details are included in Appendix 1.

- b. Rugby World Cup 2023

The WR Council appointed France as the host Union for the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

2.2 **Rugby Europe (RE)**

- a. The RE Age Grade & Development Sub Committee has agreed to form two working groups; one to deal with competitions and the other to look after development. Steve Grainger (RFU Director of Development) will support the Development Group's work.
- b. There will be two qualification tournaments for the Youth Olympic Games; the women's tournament will be in France in April 2018 and the men's tournament will be in Lithuania in May 2018. Discussions are ongoing with RE on the qualification mechanism for Team GB and this is being conducted simultaneously to those for the senior teams with RE.

2.3 **Six Nations**

- a. The Six Nations Council has approved the terms of reference for a broad ranging strategic review.
- b. It has been agreed that the Six Nations Disciplinary Officer will have the ability to refer cases to a group made up of four representatives of the Unions not taking part in the match where the incident took place.
- c. WR has taken over the appointment of citing official for the Six Nations and the Autumn Internationals from the Six Nations, who previously did both.

2.4 **European Professional Club Rugby (EPCR)**

EPCR are considering the possible implications of the recent changes, including the inclusion of two teams from South Africa) to the Guinness Pro14.

2.5 **British & Irish Lions**

The British and Irish Lions Board met in October to review the New Zealand tour. A comprehensive tour review was presented, and it was noted that the financial targets were hit. Detailed recommendations and costings will be presented at the next Lions Board meeting.

3. **COMPETITION REGULATIONS**

(Chris Cuthbertson - Chair of Governance Committee)

- 3.1 Chris Cuthbertson presented the changes being proposed to the U18s Academy competition and the County Championship competitions (Mens, Ladies & Under 20s).
- 3.2 Council **APPROVED** the changes and delegated to the Governance Committee the finalisation of the drafting of the necessary regulations.

4. WORLD RUGBY REPRESENTATIVE

(Simon Collyer-Bristow - Chair of Nominations Committee)

Council **APPROVED** the recommendation of the Nominations Committee that Stephen Brown be appointed as one of the Union's two World Rugby Representatives for a three-year term from 24th November 2017 to 31st July 2021. Jonathan Webb is the other Union representative.

5. CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD'S UPDATE

(Andy Cosslett - Chair of the RFU Board of Directors)

- 5.1 Andy Cosslett updated Council on the process for determining the host Union for the RWC2023, how the Union had assessed the submissions, including the technical report produced by World Rugby and who the Union had voted for in each round of the ballot. As it was a secret ballot, the Union would not be publicly announcing how it had voted and Council members were asked to respect this.
- 5.2 A meeting was held with the Championship Clubs on 1st November to discuss issues of concern to the Championship Clubs. It was agreed that an external review of the Championship will be undertaken to determine an agreed strategy going forward for the benefit of the Clubs and the Union.
- 5.3 The Board has approved an action plan to give an overarching structure to the diversity and inclusion work to be undertaken both by the executive and by the Diversity & Inclusion Working Group.
- 5.4 A Board Effectiveness review was conducted in November/December 2016 and came up with 25 recommendations. To date all but one has been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. The one outstanding item is an annual "pulse" survey of Council to assess the relationship between Council and the Board. It is proposed to do this before the end of the current season.
- 5.5 A productive meeting was held with the new Leader of Richmond Council. The aim of the meeting was to continue to improve the Union's relationship with local stakeholders.
- 5.6 The Board will be holding its annual offsite strategy day on 13th December at Hinkley RFC.

6. COMMUNITY GAME BOARD (CGB) REPORT

(Rob Briers - Chair of the Community Game Board)

6.1 Player Tracking

Player tracking has been high on the agenda of the CGB for the last six months and it was a substantive item at the September meeting. It is intended to include it in the 2018/19 business planning process with, hopefully, some early trialling taking place during that season.

6.2 Women and Girls Action Plan

The Women and Girls Action Plan was launched on 13th November. The executive are now working to develop the appropriate tactical plans to deliver each of the actions. Oversight on this will be assumed by the respective sub-committees.

6.3 Age Grade Regulations

Consideration is being given to relaxing Regulation 15 to allow new/casual players to play in June. This would include players from CBRE All Schools and the RFU/PRL Project Rugby Partnership. Recommendations will be brought to Council as due course.

6.4 Facility Investment

The CGB is considering how to take a more strategic, innovative approach to facility funding. This will be considered by the Board at the Strategy Day.

6.5 Spirit of Rugby project

£750k was secured in 2015, as part of Rugby World Cup 2015 legacy work, from the Spirit of 2012 Trust to develop projects in 15 communities across the country. The CGB has received the final report, which shows that of the 15 projects 8 are now fully self-sustaining, 3 are continuing with integration into other RFU programmes and 4 will no longer continue.

6.6 County Championships and Cup Finals

Work continues to secure the staging of all county championship finals (Bill Beaumont Division 1, 2 and 3) along with the women's county championship final (Gill Burns Cup) at Twickenham. The Jason Leonard Trophy (U20 male County Championships final) will be staged at Twickenham alongside the RFU Cup Finals earlier in May. The women's club cup final will be aligned with the final of the Tyrell's Premier 15s competition.

7. UNIVERSITY CLUSTERS

(Mike Waplinton - Chair of the Education & Age Group Sub Committee
& Mark Saltmarsh - RFU Head of Education Department)

- 7.1 Council received a presentation on the work being done on university clusters.
- 7.2 The work is being performed under the oversight of the Educations & Age Group Sub Committee, whose remit includes establishing connections and transitions between schools, colleges, universities and Clubs. The aim being to transition age grade players into adult rugby.
- 7.3 There is a current focus on Universities, with three prime strategies:
 - ~ University leavers
 - ~ University Partnerships
 - ~ University Clusters
- 7.4 There are 1.5m students at English Universities.
- 7.5 Of those attending university who have played rugby before, 20% continue to play at their university or at local Clubs, 20% are no longer interested and 60% are still interested in rugby, but not playing. It is this 60% that is the prime target audience.
- 7.6 University clusters are being set up to target big populations of full time students (>30k).
- 7.7 The aim of each cluster is to establish four new teams, to establish and expand O2 touch, to encourage inter/intra mural activities, to improve playing opportunities and to signpost leavers to Clubs.
- 7.8 The activity will be driven by a full-time officer. The RFU will provide £15k of matched funding for the post.

8. REFEREE BLUEPRINT

(Nigel Gillingham - Chair of Referee Blueprint Working Group
& Tim Miller - RFU Representative of Rugby Football Referees Union)

- 8.1 Council was given a progress report on the implementation of the Referee Blueprint.
- 8.2 The aim of the work is to ensure that there are qualified and competent referees for all XV a side games, whether at adult or youth level.
- 8.3 The report made 11 recommendations, which fall into three categories:
 - ~ Improved use of technology
 - ~ Better governance & integration
 - ~ Improved development of match officials
- 8.4 The results of the pilot projects to provide greater support to referee societies has been encouraging, with more referees refereeing more matches.
- 8.5 The next stage is to provide more support for Club referees, to provide a consistent pathway throughout the country with the aim of having a world class system for the development of referees.

9. U19 COMMISSION

(Ted Atkinson - Chair of the U19 Commission)

- 9.1 Council received a presentation on the work of the Under 19 Commission (Appendix 2).
- 9.2 The Community Game Board established an Under 19 Commission in September 2016 to consider the challenges and issues facing the game for 14-19 year old male players.
- 9.3 During its tenure, the Commission considered a wide range of issues affecting the target age group, hearing from an extensive list of stakeholders from within the game and engaging with a wide range of individuals and organisations outside of the game. These included other Unions (SR, ARU, NZRU), other sports (Cricket and Athletics) and other relevant organisations (including Cadet Forces, Scouts Association, Street Games, YMCA, BUCS).
- 9.4 The final report, including ten key recommendations, was presented to the Community Game Board at its meeting on 28th September. The recommendations were all accepted and follow up actions/responsibilities assigned to existing sub-committees, staff members and task groups.

10. PAYMENT OF PLAYERS

(Chris Cuthbertson - Chair of the Governance Committee)

- 10.1 Chris Cuthbertson presented the update paper on the preparation of the regulations required to implement the recommendations previously approved by Council.

- 10.2 Council had previously approved:
- ~ the payment caps for Level 3, Level 4, Level 5 & Level 6 & below.
 - ~ the requirement for all Clubs at Levels 3 and below to complete an annual declaration.
 - ~ the support that would be withheld if Clubs either breach the caps or fail to submit the annual declaration. This includes the withholding of travel support and the ticket supplemental pot monies
- 10.3 The paper highlighted several issues that are still to be resolved and Council was asked to provide feedback as soon as possible so that a consultation paper can be issued by 30th November. Feedback to the consultation paper will be required by 8th January 2018 so that it can be considered at the January meeting of the Governance Committee.

11. **TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY**

(Jonathan Conn - RFU Technology Director)

11.1 Jonathan Conn gave a Technology Update presentation to Council (Appendix 3).

11.2 The presentation covered:

- ~ Assessment of technology at the RFU
- ~ Some of the challenges and the progress made
- ~ Update on the current focus area and roadmap
- ~ GMS insight

12. **FINANCIAL REPORT**

(Richard Daniel - RFU Finance Director)

12.1 Richard Daniel presented the Quarter 1 (June to September) financial report

- ~ Overall performance for Q1 is slightly favourable to budget. due to strong U2 merchandising sales and TEL Conference and Event performance.
- ~ Total overheads are on budget.
- ~ Underlying Professional rugby investment is slightly below budget largely due to unbudgeted Women's Rugby World Cup player bonuses.
- ~ Development investment is slightly favourable to budget largely because of Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP) programme delays against budget assumptions.
- ~ At 30th September, £25m of the RBS £50m revolving credit facility had been drawn down. The RFU cash balance at this date was £25.1m.
- ~ Capital investment is currently at £8.4m with £8m of this spent on the strategic AGP and East Stand Development projects

12.2 October is on budget

13. **EXTENSION OF BANK FACILITY & DRAWDOWN APPROVAL**

(Richard Daniel - RFU Finance Director)

13.1 The Union has negotiated a new bank facility of £100m.

13.2 Under the Union's Rules, Council must approve any drawdown over £25m. Council had previously approved a drawdown under the previous facility of £50m and was now asked to approve a drawdown of up to £100m.

13.3 The additional drawdown is required to finance the Artificial Grass Pitches programme and the East Stand Development. Once the East Stand Development is fully open and generating funds, the loan will be reduced.

13.4 The requested new drawdown limit includes a buffer of £10-£15m.

13.5 If any further funds are required then this will require a Rule change (which would need to be approved by the Members) as the current Rules limit borrowing to £100m.

13.6 Both the Audit & Risk Committee and the Board support the new drawdown limit.

13.7 Council **APPROVED** the new £100m drawdown limit.

14. **STRATEGIC PLAN KPI REPORT**

(Ben Calveley - Head of Strategy and Corporate Affairs)

14.1 Ben Calveley presented the first quarterly report against the Strategic Plan KPIs.

14.2 The first report covers the first quarter of the four-year plan.

14.3 The Key Performance Indicators commentary is included in Appendix 4.

15. PROFESSIONAL GAME BOARD (PGB) REPORT

(Jeff Blackett - Chair of the Professional Game Board)

- 15.1 Discussions are continuing with PRL about the season structure post 2019. Nigel Melville (RFU Director of Professional Rugby) is leading on behalf of the RFU.
- 15.2 The Sports Science Advisory Group and the Medical Advisory Group (both of which report to the PGB) are collecting and analysing data about loading on professional players. The data will be used to inform the debate on season structure post 2019.
- 15.3 The PGB will be making recommendations on the season structure post 2019 for consideration by the Board and Council in due course.

16. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

(Chris Cuthbertson - Chair of the Governance Committee)

16.1 The Committee has recently considered:

- ~ The proposed changes to the Rules to implement the changes necessary to comply with the Sport England Governance Code.
- ~ The regulations necessary to implement the Payment of Players recommendations.
- ~ The regulations for the Under 18 competition and the County Championship competitions.
- ~ The date and location for the 2018 AGM.

16.2 The Committee, along with its usual regulatory review work, will be considering the following before the end of the season:

- ~ The criteria for the admission of new National CBs.
- ~ Changes to the insolvency regulations
- ~ The implications of the New General Data Protection Regulations being finalised by the Independent Commissioner's Office, which are due to take effect in 2018 and to advise the game accordingly.
- ~ The Union's Supplements Policy.
- ~ A review of the effect of the Global Law Trials.
- ~ The amalgamation of the Adult Competition Management Sub Committee and the Competitions Development Sub Committee.
- ~ The implementation of the new Rules (if approved by the SGM)

*{Post meeting note – The SGM **APPROVED** the new Rules.}*

The next Council meeting is on 9th February 2018 at Twickenham.

Chris Cuthbertson & Rob Udwin

2nd December 2017

These notes are our personal recollections of the meeting and include those matters which we believe will be of interest to Middlesex Clubs. No attempt has been made to convey all the opinions expressed during the debates.

APPENDIX 1

WORLD RUGBY - SPECIAL & INTERIM MEETINGS**ALTERATIONS TO WORLD RUGBY REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE GAME**

1. Regulation 8 - Eligibility to Play for National Representative Teams
(Implementation date: 1st January 2018)
2. Regulation 16 - Organisation of International Matches; International Tournaments; International Tours
(Implementation date: 15th November 2017)
3. Regulation 20 - Misconduct and Code of Conduct
(Implementation date: 1st January 2018)
4. Regulation 22 - Artificial Playing Surfaces
(Implementation date: 1st January 2018)

ALTERATION TO WORLD RUGBY LAWS OF THE GAME

1. Simplified Law Book**
(Implementation date: 1st January 2018)
Consequential amendments to Regulation 17 - Discipline–Foul Play
(Implementation date: 1st January 2018)
2. Sevens Laws of the Game
(Implementation date: 1st December 2017)
3. Approved Law Variations - X–Rugby
(Implementation date: 1st January 2018)

ALTERATIONS TO WORLD RUGBY BYE – LAWS OF THE GAME

1. Approved Bye-Laws alterations
(Implementation date: 1st January 2018)

NOTICE OF APPROVAL OF LAW TRIALS

1. Approved Law Trial Extension - Law 4 - Player Microphones
(Implementation date: 15th November 2017)
2. Approved Sevens Law Trial Extension***
(Implementation date: 15th November 2017)
The Sevens Law Trial applies only to the following: 2017/2018 HSBC Sevens World Series for Men and Women, 2018 Commonwealth Games, Rugby World Cup Sevens 2018

NOTICE OF WORLD RUGBY COUNCIL RULING

1. Regulation 4 - Player Status, Player Contracts and Player Movement

End

APPENDIX 2

U19 COMMISSION REPORT**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. To receive and consider an overview of the current playing landscape for players from U15 to U19 – in the context of the recently revised landscape for U14 and below
2. To consider insights from other rugby nations and other sports on their programmes for this age group
3. To listen to the views of different sectors of the game and from relevant external organisations on perceptions of the game in these age groups
4. To hear the views of current and lapsed players in these age groups
5. To receive and consider reports on player safety and injury across these age groups
6. To consider the current provision (quantity and quality) of match officiating and coaching across these age groups
7. To consider the implications of the findings on senior rugby
8. To produce a report detailing the challenges and opportunities identified
9. To produce a shortlist of proposed high-level actions for the Community Game Board to consider and for the working groups to take forward

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Ted Atkinson (Chair)	<i>RFU Council Member</i>
Michelle Andrews	<i>Marketing Director, Old Mutual Wealth</i>
David Cook	<i>Director of Rugby, Heathfield & Waldron RFC</i>
Danny Grewcock	<i>Director of Sport, Oundle School</i>
Steve Grainger	<i>RFU Rugby Development Director</i>
Gareth Griffiths	<i>Head of Sponsorship, O2</i>
John Lawn	<i>RFU Head of Game Development</i>
Andy Leach	<i>Lymm Rugby Club</i>
Ben Lowe	<i>RFU Head of Rugby Growth</i>
Rob Linthwaite	<i>Notts, Links and Derby CB Rep, Former National Youth Council member</i>
Kate Marks	<i>National Youth Council Vice-Chair</i>
Alison Oliver	<i>CEO, Youth Sport Trust</i>
Nigel Orton	<i>England Rugby Football Schools Union</i>
Stephen Pearson	<i>RFU Council and Board Member</i>
Dennis Richards	<i>Head teacher</i>
Dean Ryan	<i>RFU Head of International Performance</i>
Mark Saltmarsh	<i>RFU Head of Education Development</i>
Henry Snow	<i>National Youth Council</i>
Vince Thorne	<i>RFU Corporate Strategy Manager</i>
Gillian Winter	<i>Further Education Principal</i>

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**1. HALF GAME RULE**

'Half game rule' successfully pioneered in New Zealand and now implemented in Wales, be introduced for all Rugby up to and including U19 from the 2018/19 season. This guarantees those players present in a match day squad at least half a game of Rugby.

2. PLAYERS ONLY ABLE TO PLAY ADULT RUGBY AFTER 18

The Commission believes that there is significant merit in increasing the age at which players can play adult rugby until the date of their 18th birthday and recommends the establishment of a task group to consider this.

3. OVER PLAYING

Over playing, both in overall amount of rugby and intensity, is a concern affecting a growing number of young players. The Commission has noted that it is particularly prevalent in U15 and U16 players and recommends that further work be undertaken to define playing and rest times for age grade players, up to and including, U19. Revise to playing, training and rest times needed. Move lower age to U14.

4. VARIED PLAYING OFFERS

The importance of a varied playing offer across the U14-U19 age groups cannot be under-estimated. Further work should be undertaken to ensure that all providers of Rugby are supported to ensure more choice for players - in both the choice of formats and in when rugby is scheduled. This should include Fifteens, Sevens, X-Rugby and Touch Rugby.

5. ELECTRONIC MATCH CARDS

Improving the tracking of players from U14 age group through to adult rugby will ensure that trends can be better tracked and players at risk of over playing and dropping out can be monitored more effectively. The Commission recommends that use of Electronic Match Cards for all age grade club rugby be mandatory from season 2019/20 and that further work be done to explore expansion of the existing player registration system for age grade players into educational establishments.

6. Player Tracking

With drop out of players significant in this age group the Commission recommends that the current work being undertaken by the RFU on player tracking is given the highest priority, and is adopted with urgency, to enable players to be monitored as they pass through the latter stages of age grade rugby into the adult game.

7. BRAND CAMPAIGNS

With brand connection becoming more and more important for young people the Commission recommends the development of two clear brand campaigns, one to look more closely at what U17/U18/U19 rugby is called, how it is promoted and how this is used to aid retention and one to look at how more young people in the U14-U19 age group are attracted into rugby. The latter should be modelled closely on recent successful campaigns run by the RFU such as "Inner Warrior".

8. WI-FI ACCESS

With increased choice about where young people spend their time and with them spending increasing amounts of time on mobile devices access to Wi-Fi is now an important part of their lives. The Commission recommends that greater support be provided to all rugby clubs to improve Wi-Fi access/connectivity with the target of all clubs being fully Wi-Fi accessible by September 2019 and consideration should be given to rolling out social media training for club officials, where required.

9. TASK GROUP ON MODERN DAY NEEDS OF PLAYERS

The interaction that a young player has with the adults around them is critical in aiding their retention – a positive experience can retain, a negative one turning them off for life. The Commission recommends that a task group is established to further consider what more can be done and how this can be done, to encourage

and support more coaches and match officials, including parent-coaches, to play an active role with this age group, to support them in better understanding the modern day needs of these players and to recognise the importance of the role that they play in transitioning players to adult rugby. It further recommends that work is undertaken to provide examples of how clubs can focus on player transition as a measure of success and how they can create and establish a player transition mind-set across all club members.

10. INCENTIVES FOR CLUBS

To further support the delivery of the RFU's existing Male Fifteen a Side strategy the Commission recommends that further work is undertaken to consider what measures may be taken to incentivise clubs to run teams up to and including U19 and to ultimately position the U18/U19 team as the most important team in a club.

End

APPENDIX 3

TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY PRESENTATION

KEY THEMES	
Early Challenges	Action Taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles & Responsibilities for IT were not clear • Insufficient measurement within IT to understand how well things were done • Less capability in applications and data than traditional infrastructure • Uncontrolled demand being created across the organisation • General lack of planning and communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focussed on not being different – in the main the Union should be industry standard • Conducted a team restructure and introduced new skills and capabilities • Formed new relationships at right level with our suppliers • Worked closely with the Exec on major projects to ensure alignment • Started to be data and metric driven

TRANSFORMING TECHNOLOGY AND MAKING PRIORITIES RUGBY RELATED	
Focus Areas	Enablers
<p>Community Rugby Enabling the development and management of the game</p> <p>Professional Rugby Identifying, nurturing and enabling elite athletes</p> <p>Rugby Fans Reaching, engaging, exciting and growing a global following for rugby</p> <p>Corporate & Stadium Providing world class venues and support for our players, staff and fans</p>	<p>Customer Focussed Placing the end user at the heart of the Technology Strategy</p> <p>Data Driven Harnessing the power of data to inform decision making</p> <p>Innovative Culture Creating an environment to embrace innovation in technology</p> <p>Delivery Excellence Establishing best in class operating models & governance</p>

WHAT IS THE GAME MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (GMS)?
Player Registration & Golden Roles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mandated for RFU Voting Clubs</i> • <i>All age-grade players, all female players, Adult 1st XV Players (existing cap of 100 players per club)</i> • <i>Selection of mandatory Golden Roles entered by Club</i>
Entry of Teams & Key Roles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Club nominates all teams within Club</i> • <i>Allocation of key roles (coaches, team managers etc) and DBS compliance</i>
Club Communications, Memberships & Payments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Club uses GMS to communicate with its database via email</i> • <i>Management of members, including allocation of membership schemes and online payment</i>
Friendly Fixtures & Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All competition fixtures are pre-populated against club</i> • <i>Club enters any remaining “unstructured fixtures”</i>
Electronic Match Card <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ability to utilise electronic match card to enter line ups, match events and results (desktop and mobile)</i> • <i>Replacement of paper based process thus reducing administration effort</i>
Club Websites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Opportunity to utilise free website to surface GMS data including key contact roles, memberships & competition information</i> • <i>Utilise GMS information to surface variable information on alternative solutions.</i>

GMS FOCUS AREAS	
Action Taken	Current Focus
Reshaping of GMS Governance New Steerco and GMS Working Group to increase objectivity and accountability for component parts	Regular release cycle enhancing the Union’s ability to make changes faster
Area User Groups mobilised 6 groups across the country to listen and engage with the game	Analytics & reporting showcasing the data held in GMS in an engaging format
Roadmap development Looking ahead to the next season and panning for the future	Updated security settings the ability to protect the Union and the users, with a particular focus on GDPR
Regular updates to CGB Aligning with formal game governance	Unstructured fixture collection capturing how much rugby is being played
	Player tracking project getting an accurate picture of who is playing rugby

End

APPENDIX 4

STRATEGIC PLAN

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS COMMENTARY

Protect

- a. The results from the National Rugby Survey have only very recently been received. These show a small fall in our overall Net Promoter Score ***. A detailed analysis is being carried out and discussion is taking place on the timing and frequency of this survey.

*** *The Net Promoter Score is an index ranging from -100 to 1000 measuring the willingness of customers to recommend an organisation's product or services to others.*

Engage

- a. Fans - we are performing well compared with the same period last year and are on track to exceed our 2017/18 target.
- b. Brand - the first wave of the Brand Tracker will be conducted in December.
- c. Revenue - a detailed Q1 financial review is included separately in this paper.

Grow

- a. Teams - we targeted 277 new teams to have begun playing in Q1, 250 have and work is underway to convert them to qualifying teams (7 matches per season).
- b. Matches - data for the current season is not yet available. We will have a detailed picture for the next report.
- c. Players - this is measured by Active Lives (Sport England survey) which is due in March 2018. The most recent Sport England results are not included as they are not a statistically accurate comparison versus the baseline measures we have set in our Strategic Plan, as they track a different period.

Win

- a. In addition to the Win KPIs we will track our win percentage (XVs men and women) and our World Series position (7s men and women). No matches have taken place in Q1 so results for the first part of the season will be reported in the next report.

End

