

Redacted for publication

**MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH RUGBY CLUB RUGBY BOARD
HELD AT 5PM ON WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023
AT BT MURRAYFIELD AND BY MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Present:

Keith Wallace	(KW)	Vice-President
Alistair Forsyth	(AF)	Borders Regional Representative
Murdo Gillanders	(MG)	Edinburgh Regional Representative
Jim O'Neill	(JON)	Glasgow South Regional Representative (online)
Kevin Quinn	(KQ)	Premiership Representative
Bob Richmond	(BR)	North Regional Representative
Neil Sutherland	(NS)	National 2 Representative
Hazel Swankie	(HS)	Midlands Representative
David Jamieson	(DJ)	Glasgow North Regional Representative (online)
Gib McMillan	(GM)	Schools Representative (online)
Ian Carse	(IC)	National 3 Representative (online)
Mhairi Hay	(MH)	Referees Representative
Mike Bruce	(MB)	Women & Girls Representative (online)
Gerry Tosh	(GT)	National 1 Representative (online)
Gavin Scott	(GS)	Director of Rugby Development

In Attendance:

Colin Rigby	(CR)	President
[NAME REDACTED]	(XX)	Senior Solicitor
[NAME REDACTED]	(XX)	Head of Business Operations
[NAME REDACTED]	(XX)	Head of Regional Development
[NAME REDACTED]	(XX)	Head of Game Development
[NAME REDACTED]	(XX)	Competitions and Compliance Manager
[NAME REDACTED]	(XX)	Business Operations and Support Manger

1. Introduction ACTION

The Vice-President noted that a quorum was present and opened the Meeting.

1.2 Chair's remarks

The Vice-President proposed an elected closed session after the Meeting for elected members only.

2. Update from Premiership

2.1 Discussion

The Premiership Representative noted that the Premiership forum had recently met and discussed the impact which Super 6 had on club rugby, particularly the Premiership. He had been asked to discuss the matter at CRB.

During discussion, it was noted that a review into Super 6 should take place ahead of any renewal of franchise agreements. That review should include input from the CRB.

The Director of Rugby Development noted that High Performance could present to the CRB on their plans for the review. This would be arranged for a future CRB Meeting.

GS

The Borders Regional Representative noted that the Age Grades also should also be considered within any review.

The National 1 Representative advised that at the recent forum, there was a discussion regarding player movement. The President noted that for this Super6 season, a group of players would be identified to be able to play in the whole Premiership season in addition to playing for Super 6, as and when required. There will also be a limited number of players who could play within into Premiership. The National 1 Representative suggested creating a document detailing this protocol to provide to the Clubs. The President agreed to provide this protocol document ahead of the next CRB Meeting.

The Vice-President noted that any proposal beyond the original five years would need to be part of a revised strategy which would need to come to the Union Board for approval. He would update the Union Board on the CRB's discussion in relation to Super6 at its next Meeting.

KW

3. Fora Terms of Reference

3.1 Updated Terms of Reference for consideration

The Vice-President referred to the updated Terms of Reference that were taken as read. He noted that he had updated them in line with the feedback received at the last Meeting.

Following discussion and consideration, the updated Fora Terms of Reference were **APPROVED**.

4. Update from Rugby Development

4.1 Tackle Height Law Trial Paper

The Director of Rugby Development noted his thanks to the CRB who had been involved in the consultation to date. He further noted his thanks to all the club members and those in the community game who had directly impacted the recommendations that had been reached.

The Head of Game Development presented a Report which was taken as read. The following key points were highlighted:

- It was noted that world Rugby had provided recommendations on tackle height, which the Unions could opt-in to.
- The World Rugby recommendations was that tackle height should be lowered to below the sternum.
- No recommendations had been provided by World Rugby on the second tackler or the ball carrier.

Redacted for publication

- World Rugby would commence a research study into the trial which would allow the Unions to track any impact the change had on the community game.

The Head of Game Development outlined the feedback from the consultations, the key points were as follows:

- The majority of the community game seemed to agree that the maximum tackle height should be below the sternum. It was noted that training would be required for players and Match Officials as the new rule embeds.
- There was also general agreement that the second tackle should be at the same level (below sternum).
- The consultation results were mixed on the ball carrier, as a result the Rugby Development Department recommended that there should be no change to the current laws, but reckless play would be sanctioned.
- There was agreement that the pick and go laws would remain as they currently are, as it is a low-risk area for concussion.

NG

The Head of Game Development noted that further work was needed to finalise the wording in relation to the laws, the Match Official framework and the documentation promoting the changes. It was also noted that the Rugby Development Department would work closely with the other Unions in the next stages of the implementation process.

The Referees Representative provided feedback from a recent Conference where the proposed tackle height was trialled. She advised that initially there were a high number of “high tackles” however as players and officials became more familiar with the new laws, the players adapted well to the lower tackle height. The Head of Game Development noted that Scottish Rugby’s Rugby Development department were planning on running a small trial of the recommended tackle height during PDH (Player Development Hubs) to obtain more feedback from players, coaches, parents and spectators.

NG

The Borders Regional Representative questioned if there would be practical exercises to help clubs determine the level of the sternum. The Head of Game Development advised that there would be a number of learnings globally in the first year of the trial and Scottish Rugby would do a number of face-to-face training on what a successful tackle looked like. The Rugby Development Department would ask for feedback after the first couple of rounds of the season, from coaches and players, to review performance.

The CRB **APPROVED** the proposed Tackle Height Laws.

The Head of Game Development advised that the next steps for the Tackle Height Law changes were as follows:

- The RFU were currently undergoing their own consultation period and Scottish Rugby would remain live to with their proposed changes.
- Scottish Rugby would create a communications plan over the coming weeks, aiming for an early April comms phase.
- Scottish Rugby would hold roadshows at the end of April/early May to communicate the changes and conduct practical walk-throughs.

Redacted for publication

The Schools Representative noted that from a schools perspective, the timeline for next steps needed consideration with regards to private and state school term times.

The Vice-President noted that the content and tone of the online sessions had been very good and thanked the Head of Game Development and his team for this approach.

4.2 Club Funding Model

The Head of Business Operations referred to his Report which was taken as read. The following points were noted:

- The 2023/24 Rugby Development budget was the first time the department had budgeted using 15% of total revenue (as set out in the new governance structure).
- The CSF funding stream had recently received a number of queries from clubs who were currently struggling to meet the increase in cost of living and the use of the fund needed to be considered.
- The Rugby Development 2024-28 Strategy would include a thorough review of all funding models.
- It was noted that funding needed to be provided for the newly created National 4 league.
- There had been an increase in the funding allocated to the Women's Premiership. It was also recommended that all 8 clubs apply for the £5k funding from the Growth & Participation (G&P) Women and Girls' stream.
- Cashback Phase 6 had been given formal confirmation that it would proceed.
- It was highlighted that the budget was the highest that it had ever been, when coupled with the G&P funding which was ongoing each year.
- The Schools and Youth budget and Game Development budget were in the process of being finalised.

During discussion the funding of the premiership and national leagues was discussed. It was noted that the form of funding would be reviewed with the CRB for the 2024-28 strategy. It was noted that this was a wider discussion which needed to be agreed by the CRB at a time that gave the clubs as much notice as possible of the any relevant changes.

The President advised that it had also been discussed that the prize money was removed and distributed equally between the relevant clubs. The Vice-President advised that due to the point in the season the CRB came into existence, fundamental changes had not been possible but it would be considered ahead of the next season.

The Referees Representative noted that referee expenses have been significantly reduced. The Head of Business Operations advised that the Senior Match Official Development Manager was undertaking an exercise on these expenses and how they should be dealt with.

The Director of Rugby Development suggested that the Operational Sub-Committee working group should continue their work on the funding model for the department to be in a position to present any changes to clubs in August 2023.

Redacted for publication

4.3 Community Game Conference

The Director of Rugby Development asked for volunteers from the CRB Members, to join the organising committee for the Community Game Conference.

It was noted that the following Members volunteered:

- National 2 Representative
- Borders Regional Representative
- Edinburgh Regional Representative
- Referees Representative

4.4 Regional League Review

The Competitions and Compliance Manger noted that feedback from the working group was reflective of the discussions which had taken place. More work was still to be undertaken on the matter.

The Vice-President thanked the Competitions and Compliance Manger for her and the working group's work to gain agreement.

The Borders Regional Representative suggested that the competition rules needed to be looked at as the next step. He advised that communication about the consultation being open had not been well distributed. The Competitions and Compliance Manager advised that this feedback would be passed to the Regulatory team. The Vice-President suggested that stage one of the consultation period should be extended to reflect this and a communication should be included in Club Comms.

VC

It was noted that it was for the Competitions Committee to approve the competitions rules, but the Rugby Development Department wanted the CRB to be content with the direction of travel. After consideration, the CRB confirmed they were content with the proposed changes, subject to the Competition Committee's approval.

It was asked when the proposed changes could be communicated with the clubs. The Competitions and Compliance Manger advised that she would work with the Rugby Development Communications Manager to agree a launch date.

VC

The Competitions and Compliance Manager provided an update on the reserve league work which was underway. The Competitions and Compliance Manager noted that an inter-city reserve league of 10 teams (5 from the East and 5 from the West) had been proposed.

4.5 Scrum School Project Update

The Director of Rugby Development advised that the breakdown on how many participants from each club had signed up to Scrum School, split by region and level of club would be provided to the CRB.

The Referees Representative asked that referees were also be involved in Scrum School so they could also improve their working knowledge of the scrum.

4.6 Transition and Retention Project Update

Redacted for publication

An update was provided by the Head of Regional Development that the University of Edinburgh had created a partnership with Scottish Rugby's Rugby Development department for a pilot project to monitor how and when youth players leave university. He advised that the project should be in a final draft format for the T&R pilot in June.

4.7 Schools & Youth Competition and season structure review

The Borders Regional Representative queried why the Borders meeting was the only one held online. The Director of Rugby Development advised he would look into this.

4.8 Club & Schools Proposed Conference & League Structure

The Head of Regional Development advised that the club conference U13 &U14 would not need to travel out of their region to play, but instead the game would be kept within each region.

5. AOB

The Vice-President advised that the Glasgow South Regional Representative and the National 1 Representative are coming to the end of their term. The Senior Solicitor noted that she would review the election rules.

The Referees Representative raised that there had been some concerns with the calls of touch judges in certain instances. She touched the National 1 league to engage professional touch referees in their games. The National 1 Representative advised that this discussion was ongoing and had been a capacity issue. The Referees Representative highlighted the need to recruit and obtain good referees. The Director of Rugby Development emphasised that to the Rugby Development Department were actively trying to grow the Match Official community and attract the right people.

The President marked his thanks on behalf of Scottish Rugby clubs to the Head of Business Operations for his services. The Director of Rugby Development also noted his thanks and advised that recruitment to replace the role was in the progress. He also advised that the Competitions and Compliance Manger had been being promoted to the Senior Leadership Team within Scottish Rugby's Rugby Development department.

The President provided the CRB with an update on the Custodian recruitment campaign. The deadline for applications for the final two positions for the Scottish Rugby Union Board was 11 April.

The President also advised that the Union Board had met for their first reporting meeting and had discussed the following topics: player welfare, the CRB update from the Vice-President, an induction with the executive of SRL, the strategy, webpage, maternity leave for female players and international honours. The President advised that the next meeting was 27 March.

No other AOB was raised and the Meeting was closed at 7.20PM.

APPROVED 17 APRIL 2023