

SUSSEX RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LIMITED

Minutes of the Sussex Clubs General Meeting held at Horsham RUFC on 9th March 2010 at 7.30pm

09/128 Present – R. Edmondson (President), P. Silk (Secretary), G. Thompson, G. Howorth, A. Croucher, P. Bailey, R. Rogers, B. Lewis, P. Atthis, F. Edmonds, Ms. J. Coleman, D. Fisher, K. Gordon, P. Sealey, K. Nichols, P. Mercer, I. Mitchell.

Representatives from; Brighton, Bognor, Burgess Hill, Chichester, Cinque Ports, Crawley, Crowborough, Eastbourne, East Grinstead, Hastings & Bexhill, Haywards Heath, Heathfield & Waldron, Holbrook, Horsham, Newick, Norfolk Arms, O. Brightonians, Pulborough, Seaford, Worthing.

09/129 Apologies; R. Hopkins (Treasurer) and Representatives from Shoreham, Seaford, Crawley, Hove, Uckfield.

09/130 President welcomed Giles Hilton (Director) of Shepherd Neame, sponsors of Sussex Spitfire League 1, Team Leagues and Knockout Competitions to deliver a short address. They were pleased to become sponsors and hoped to extend their involvement, but this depended on increasing their business with Clubs. Current customers confirmed that they were excellent suppliers and clubs were invited to contact Simon Dixon, Free Trade Manager, on 07715 167119. President thanked Giles for his comments and for supplying beer for the meeting.

09/131 Minutes – of the club's general meeting held on 30th November 2009 were approved with the addition of Eastbourne being shown as being present. Proposed: K. Nichols, Seconded: A. Butcher. There were no matters arising. Minutes of the Executive meeting on 25th January 2010 were considered. No matters arising.

09/132 President's Report; the cold weather, snow and waterlogged pitches had caused clubs many problems resulting in a backlog of fixtures. He had been to Horsham, Bognor, Eastbourne (2nd XV), Littlehampton and Hellingly to watch their first XV's. He had travelled to Cheshunt to watch the Sussex U20's lose to Hertfordshire and to Brighton to watch Sussex U15 A and B teams beat Middlesex at both levels. He had attended the Sussex League U17 Finals at Crawley watching Lewes U17 beat Crawley U17's. He had opened the new pitch at Heathfield & Waldron RFC. He attended the Seaford RFC Sponsors Evening. With other Executive Members, he had visited Newick, Haywards Heath and Barns Green on a Club Aid Visits. The common theme from all three clubs was the number of fixtures played in a structured League system – less matches means more friendlies. On the DMRBS front, I have supported Warden Park reaching the last 8 in the U15 Cup competition with a win at Eltham and a draw at Berkhamstead. They nearly caused the greatest upset by running Wellington College close at Whitemans Green and only losing 13 – 8. After watching Brighton College beat Beaumont School in the QF, he travelled to Broad Street RFC to watch Brighton College beat St. Columba College 31-21 to reach the U15 Final at Twickenham on Wednesday 31st March. Finally he would like to congratulate the following players who have gained International recognition this season:

Dylan Hartley	Crowborough, England
Hugo Southwell	Eastbourne College ,Scotland
Noah Cato	Hurstpierpoint & Hove RFC, England Saxons
Joe Marler	Heathfield etc, England U20
Charlie Matthews	Hurstpierpoint & Chichester ,England U20
Rob Buchannan	St. Bedes, England U20

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Sam Twomey St. Wilfrids & Crawley, England U18

Grace Hilbourne Brighton University, Scotland Ladies

Mark Lewis Brighton RFC, England Deaf Captain

Ceri Thomas Brighton RFC, England Deaf

Leigh Bialik Haywards Heath RFC England Deaf

Ashleah McCulloch St Bede's School, Scotland U20 and Scotland 7's

Adam Raby St Bede's School, Hong Kong

Amy Wilson-Hardy Hove RFC, England U20

In reply to a question, President said that Partnership Chairs were already part of the CB Club Aid panel. It was agreed that the Curry evening would be held at the Newick Tandoori on 11th May – cost £15. Bob Rogers had not received the February Newsletter direct, and the Secretary said that the CB was trying to ensure that all interested parties would be included on the mailing lists. Building up the relevant databases was taking time. Clubs were asked to supply relevant material to the Secretary for inclusion in future newsletters.

09/133 Secretary's Report – Peter Silk reminded clubs to ensure that applications to go on, or to receive, tours were made before the deadline, and to ensure that proper Insurance was in place.

He had available the current printouts from the RFU of the RugbyFirst data, all clubs were invited to contact him for copies for their club. He reminded all present the importance of keeping this data base up to date. For instance not all clubs had registered their Referee Coordinator.

A new CB Executive structure had been adopted, and requests for nominations for Officers were to be circulated after the next Executive, this will include the role of Chairman which would be a separate position for the first time. This split would largely mirror the way clubs are structured in Sussex. The 2010/11 CB Executive will be the President, Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Chairmen of CBRDP (Playing) and Community Rugby (People and Places), RFU Representative, Senior Vice President/Immediate Past President, RRDM/RRCBSM. The aim of the change was to have a smaller executive committee with the day to day aspects devolved to the two principal committees, CBRDP & Community Rugby.

A new volunteer webmaster was needed, and a job description had been circulated.

The Seal of Approval process was still ongoing, and Alan Croucher confirmed that although sanctions could be taken against clubs not qualifying by 1st September these would not include removing junior teams from competitions. Allan Butcher said that the process included provision of ELRA qualified referees, but no immediate courses were planned for the spring of 2010. Peter Atthis said that these courses depended on the number of applicants, and could be held once a minimum number of 10 had been enrolled. P. Chapman pointed out that Crawley DC did not recognise the SOA, and required extensive applications to be completed. Graham Thompson agreed to take up the matter with the RFU.

09/134 Treasurer's Report – In his absence, the Secretary said that a few Clubs had still not supplied Accounts for last season, and this should be done without delay. There were no major current issues.

09/135 Election of RFU Representative. Proposed: Seaford RFC, Seconded: Cinque Ports RFC, Graham Thompson was elected to serve as the Sussex Representative on the RFU for 2010/11. President thanked Graham for his hard work during the year and he responded thanking members for their support.

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09/136 – Core Values – Bob Rogers gave a short talk on Rugby’s Core Values, and distributed z-cards explaining the ethos of rugby which it was important to preserve. The RFU ‘Codes of Conduct’ were still valid.

09/137 CB Plans for 2010/11 – A joint presentation was made by Alan Croucher (CBRDP –the Playing Committee) and Gary Howorth (Community Rugby- People & Places). These were now the two main ‘drivers’ and concentrated all aspects of the running and development of the game, at all levels, in Clubs, Schools and Universities. They would work closely with the RDO and RFU staff, (although these roles still had to be fine-tuned), to ensure that the CB’s strategic plan would converge and work in concert with the RFU strategic plans. The RFU’s aim was for every club to be running one more adult team, and for 95% of coaches to be referee qualified by 2015. It was confirmed that the title ‘RDO’ would remain, and that any change of role would probably not affect the CB too much, but they would become responsible for ‘Whole Club’ management. All RDO’s would administer the same number of Clubs, between 30/35. They would co-ordinate the work of both professional staff, including the CRC’s, and volunteers. The RRDM would be re-named Regional and CB Service Manager, and source funding and facility development on behalf of the CB. More information would be available in April.

Alan Croucher noted that a consultation exercise would take place to see if the current youth competitions structure needed amending. P. Chapman asked that Senior Club secretaries also be included, as some decisions would affect the whole club, not just the junior section. This was agreed.

09/138 RFU Representative – Graham Thompson’s report had been circulated and was on the website. He drew attention to the concerns about the popularity of ‘leisure rugby’ drawing members away from the Saturday game, and that clubs should attempt to involve themselves in it.

09/139 Discipline – Frank Edmonds asked clubs to note that any incident involving reference to the Police, should be reported immediately to the County Secretary for notification the RFU. A notice regarding the Continuum, and playing out of age-groups had been issued by the RFU. Clubs were reminded that they were responsible for the behaviour of spectators, and could be disciplined for breaches of etiquette. A RFU on-line First-Aid course was now available, and will be of use for those attending club matches. G. Howorth reminded members that Community Rugby First-Aid courses were also available). A new list of IRB sanctions had been issued, superseding those published in the 2009/10 RFU Handbook. Brian Vincent said that Worthing had imposed a requirement for a member to take a collection for the Wooden Spoon as a disciplinary sanction.

Tim Evans	Heathfield & Waldron	Cited for biting	Suspended 12 weeks.
Andrew Hitch	Hastings & Bexhill	2 yellow cards	Suspended 2 weeks.
Steve Blake	Plumpton	Striking	Suspended 5 weeks.
William Rockall	Crowborough	Dissent/2 yellow	Suspended 2 weeks.
Darryl Elliott	Unattached (Hove)	Physical Abuse Match Official	Suspended 7 years

Brighton FC (RFU) Accepting incoming tour without RFU permission; Warned as to future conduct & incident placed on record.

Tom Polhill	Chichester	Trampling	Suspended 1 week
Patrick Delaney	Lewes	Striking	Suspended 2 weeks
Joshua Burt	Crawley	Striking	Suspended 2 weeks

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Aaronn Boczek	Horsham U14	Punching	Suspended 1 match
Guy Ellery	Heathfield & Waldron U15 Coach	Verbal Abuse	Suspended 4 weeks
Clint Redman	Uplands U16 Parent	Verbal Abuse	Head Teacher refused Sanctions.

09/140 Safeguarding – Jackie Coleman gave an explanation of the new requirements of the **Independent Safeguarding Authority**, which would come into effect on 10th July and become mandatory on 10th November 2010. These include the **VBS** – Vetting and Barring Scheme – and identification of an **RAP** – Regulated Activity Provider (i.e. a club or school). Training for Club Safeguarding Officers (CSO) would start in May. The scheme would not replace the current CRB immediately but would do so eventually. The CRB forms would shortly go on-line to replace the current paper forms

Only 1 registration would be required to cover all 'Regulated Activities'. These are defined as:-

1. Regular contact with children and which is specific in nature; i.e. coaching.
2. In a specified place i.e. sports club AND is
3. Frequent - more than ONCE a week; Intensive - 4 or more occasions in any 30 days; Overnight- Between 2am and 6am on one or more occasions.

It would become an offence to 'knowingly' employ a barred person in a club – Secretaries would be able to check at the RFU, but would not be required to do so for every person involved, unless they had reason to suspect.

09/141 – Competitions – Ken Nichols said that the bad weather had caused many problems, which were now slowly being resolved. Some clubs had felt it necessary to withdraw from cup competitions, which were delayed and would now finish on 2nd May. There would be no Womens' KO because of the difference in strength between Hove and the other clubs. Geraldine. Brown had tried to raise interest in a cross-CB competition without success.

It was hoped to run a Vets League next season, and this may affect some Sussex Division 3 teams. President noted that feedback from Club Aid visits was that 22 games were too many and league sizes could be reduced. An additional level knockout would be introduced next season, incorporating Worthing and Haywards Heath First XV's. This should reduce all KO's to 3 matches. The fixtures backlog was causing some selection availability problems for the Presidents XV to play Surrey at Cranleigh to be reduced. He confirmed that the proposal to introduce bonus points at levels 7-9 would again be raised at the next London DOC meeting.

09/142 Referees –Iain Mitchell reminded all Clubs to appoint a Club Referees Co-ordinator (CRefC) – Secretary confirmed that a number of Clubs had not registered these on RugbyFirst and some may have yet to appoint an official. Referees must be notified at the earliest possible time, when fixtures were re-made – especially where this fell on Sundays. Local training evenings were being held at Chichester and Hove.

09/143 Facilities – Report circulated - P. Mercer reported that all Clubs had now returned the facilities questionnaire, and a 4 year CB plan had been prepared. The RFF scheme was now temporarily in abeyance.

09/144 Any Other Business.

1. R. Rogers asked Clubs to support the Wooden Spoon Sussex Rugby Golf Day on 3rd June.
2. R. Russell said that a recent item in the RFU Grassroots ezine, did not make it clear that the RFU had to give permission for Festivals and Tournaments only applied to Under 18 events.

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3. G. Thompson said that members wishing to accompany the County XV's tour to Belgium on 24th April should contact Alan Jenkins.
4. P. Chapman asked if the RFU/RFUW merger was to be completed – G. Thompson said it was delayed on financial grounds.
5. M. Newark expressed concern at the number of sides not taking meals provided after matches and not notifying the club concerned in advance– this went against the Rugby ethos. Some Clubs sent an invoice to the offending club.
6. G. Thompson said the RFU executive would visit Seaford for a Question and Answer session on 26th March and it was hoped that club members would attend. **Names to President in advance please.** They would then split up to visit several clubs and watch matches on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. **Friday 26th March** 8.00pm Question & Answer Sessions at Seaford RFC with Francis Baron, Martyn Thomas, Andrew Scoular and Rob Udwin. **Saturday 27th March;** The RFU party will be watching the following games: **Lewes v Hove; Plumpton v Hellingly; Holbrook v Burgess Hill and Horsham v Crowborough. Sunday 28th March;** Sussex U14 League Final at Seaford RFC at 11am. The full details would be sent out in Sussex March Newsletter.

Meeting ended at 10.00pm

Signed by the President.....dated 2009

Peter Silk. Hon. Sec.

SUSSEX RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION LIMITED
Registered Office
23 HAVELOCK ROAD
HASTINGS TN34 1BP

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