

Sussex R.F.U. Youth Management Group

West Sussex Clubs' Forum

MINUTES of the Meeting held on 25th March 2010.

PRESENT: Mark Jenkins (Haywards Heath); Duncan Bennett (Chichester); Mick Black (Crawley); Mark Keeley (Crawley); David Bowen (Crawley); Mike Fisher (Pulborough); John Clery (Horsham); David Beglan (Chairman).

1). APOLOGIES had been received from Steve Searle (Under 14/15 League Organiser); Tim Gue (Pulborough); John Riley (Horsham); Adam Tunesi (Hove); Steve Briscoe (Under 15/16 Leagues Organiser) and a belated apology was received from Kevin Blakiston (County Minis Organiser). No communication had been received from the Representatives of Bognor, Midhurst, Shoreham or Worthing.

2). The Minutes of the Meeting of 21st January had been circulated and a correction requires to be noted to Minute # 4b, line 7. The reference to an Under 15 match should be read as Under 16. The matter regarding whether or not the Chichester Under 11 Coach encouraged his players to "take out" a Midhurst opponent is a matter of doubt and it could well be that this comment could reasonably be taken to mean that the players were being encouraged to stop the threat posed by tackling fairly that opponent. It appears that there had been no complaint from Midhurst and it was suggested that Coaches, when speaking to their players at half time, would be sensible to take them well away from parents, who might misconstrue advice given. The Forum is satisfied that these matters have been resolved.

3). Matters arising. The West Minis Festival would not be staged at Pulborough, where there are problems with parking but would go to Chichester and the Forum thanked Chichester for stepping in. This refers to Season 2010/11.

4). Matters referred from the Youth Management Group and the CBRDP. Although the arrangements for the Youth Leagues for Seasons 2011/12 et seq. have been discussed at Forum, YMG and CBRDP levels, there are still apparently people seeking to do away with the Leagues at Under 13 and Under 15 age groups. As far as the West Forum is concerned, we have recommended that Leagues continue to run as at present and this is the proposal (backed by the East Forum, YMG and CBRDP) that is going to the Youth AGM in May for discussion and probable ratification.

5). There was no other correspondence that was not covered elsewhere in the Agenda.

6). Mini matters. There had been many emails flying around with regard to the organisation of the Mini Festivals. Mark Jenkins had requested the opinion of the Clubs about whether or not to "seed" the perceived better teams in each age group, to ensure that the best teams got to the Final and the best team overall represented the West in the Mini Festival Final. It is particularly important that the better teams at Under 12 are seen to gain acceptance into the following season's Under 13 A League. After extensive discussion, the Forum agreed that seeding was desirable and that it should be done by the County Organiser, prior to the Festivals. The Forum recommends that four teams from each age group from Under 9 (the first year where contact rugby is involved) should be seeded. The top two seeds should be kept apart and the third and fourth should be drawn to establish in which group they play. The rest of the teams in the age group would be drawn afterwards. It would be helpful to Coaches to plan their approach if the constitution of the groups could be made available in advance of the competition. Any thought that this might have a detrimental effect on programme sales could be offset by offering a prize to the person with a winning programme number. There seemed to be some doubt as to how many players constitute a squad and how many may be on the pitch at any one time in Under 12 matches. The Continuum states that six forwards and seven backs may be used unless the restricted size of the pitch suggests that teams should be twelve a side with six backs being used.

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6) Mini matters (continued).

At Haywards Heath last year, the Under 12s played thirteen a side and this practice was followed at Crawley this year. If both teams are prepared to play thirteen a side, it would seem logical for this to be followed in the Final. The lack of consistency in refereeing was raised, with concern expressed at differing interpretations by the various officials. Mick Black mentioned that his players had been penalised for carrying the ball in one hand (even though no hand off was attempted) by one referee while another stated that this practice was allowable. The play offs for 4th and 5th places had failed to be a success and it was recommended that there be a play off only for 3rd place in future. There seemed to have been a shortage of medals and certificates at Crawley. There had been an unfortunate incident involving Pulborough Under 8s. They were told that they had got to the Final, only for this information to be proved incorrect, when a scorecard for another match (Horsham v Haywards Heath) had been found to have been filled in as a 5-5 draw, whereas Horsham had in fact won 6-5, thus putting Pulborough out of the Final. It is to be hoped that, in future, Referees, Pitch Marshals and the Coaches of both teams would agree on the score before the scorecard is handed in.

Haywards Heath Under 12s would like the YMG to review the position regarding the status of Haywards Heath Under 13 for next season.

7). Youth Leagues. Steve Briscoe had emailed the Chairman with the following details:

Under 13 Final: Worthing 22 Brighton 7

Under 15 Final: Heathfield 8 Haywards Heath 8. As everything was equal, the match is to be replayed at Hove on 18th April.

Under 14 Final: Brighton v Chichester to be played at Seaford on 28th March.

Under 16 Final: Worthing v Chichester to be played at Seaford on 28th March.

Under 15 A League: Two weather rearrangements to be played – Lewes relegated to U16B.

Under 15B League: All matches completed – Chichester are top and are promoted with Crawley to U16A.

Under 15 C League: All matches completed – Bognor top.

Under 16 A League: One weather rearrangement to be played – Worthing top.

Under 16 B League: Five weather rearrangements to be played.

Duncan Bennett asked if Chichester Under 16 B team would be promoted if they were to win the Under 16 B League and the answer was probably that they would not be allowed so to do.

8). Suggested change of meeting day to Wednesday. This suggestion seems to have hit the buffers, as the Horsham Clubhouse is not generally open on Wednesdays. The Chairman agreed to enquire of those Clubs that regularly fail to be represented at the Forum, as to whether a change of day and possible variation of venue would make their Representatives more likely to attend. The date and venue of the next West Forum Meeting will be notified in due course.

9). Other business.

a). Mick Black mentioned that a particular parent from Horsham had been trying to poach players from Crawley by denigrating the latter Club. John Clery agreed to take the matter on board. The Chairman said that Sussex RFU would consider such a matter as “bringing the game into disrepute” and a Sussex Disciplinary Hearing could result.

b). David Bowen stated that a body called the “Safety Advisory Group” had contacted Crawley regarding the West Festival. Duncan Bennett, whose work brings him into contact with such bodies, said that the Safety Advisory Group works with local Councils to make sure that safety issues at events are solved. Duncan considered that the number of people at a Mini Festival was not large enough to require the Group’s involvement. It was wise to advise the District Council in advance of an event. David Bowen said that Crawley had had to purchase an “Events Licence” at a cost of £350-00. This is, apparently, yet another new law to make life awkward for sporting events. The Chairman said that he considered that such cost should not be borne by the Club but should be an expense paid for by the County out of the Mini Budget.

c). Mark Keeley asked about the planning for the County Under 14s for next season. After this

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9) c) (continued)

season's debacle, it is hoped that matters would be resolved more satisfactorily and Mark suggested that the Assessing Coaches should go to Centres where players were not previously known to them.

There being no other business, the Meeting closed at 9-55 p.m. with thanks to Horsham for their hospitality.

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