



Club Rugby Council meeting (2011/4)

Date: *Wednesday, 30 November 2011*
Location: *MRU Referees' Room, FMG Stadium*
Time: *7pm*

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees: Dave Faulkner (CRC Chair), John Whitehead (MRU Board), Chris Ricketts (MRU community rugby manager), Martin Brady (MRU rugby services manager), Phil Metcalf (Old Boys Marist), Mike Burmeister (Bush Sports), Andrew Rankin (Bush Sports), Terry Cooney (Halcombe), Mike Dravitski (Te Kawau), Patrick Bevan (Bunnythorpe), Colin Parker (Freyberg), Tasi Tuhana (Freyberg), Barry Mitchell (Dannevirke Sports), Aaron Third (Bulls), Garry Watts (Dannevirke Sports), George Ponga (Kia Toa), Jason Wright (Bulls), Dan Lewis (Feilding Old Boys Oroua), Troy Homes (Linton Army), Kim Durham (College Old Boys).

Apologies: John Knowles (MRU CEO), Steve Morris (MRU Board Chair), Hugh Blair (MRU Board), Clayton Crowther (Feilding), Neil Aitcheson (Freyberg), Roger Heatley (Ashhurst Pohangina), Kevin Tod (Old Boys Marist), Dave Adamson (Kia Toa).

2. Confirmation of minutes from 26 October 2011

Confirmed by Dan Lewis / Phil Metcalf

3. Matters arising

No matters arising

4. New Vote: Freyberg Old Boys RFC's request for 2012 Senior II status

- a. **Freyberg representative addresses the meeting**
 - Freyberg declined the opportunity to speak
- b. **Discussion from the floor**
 - A brief discussion took place

c. Vote

- The vote was a show of hands with the following result:

In Favour: Bulls (1), Bunnythorpe (1), Bush (1), Freyberg (2), Halcombe (1).

Against: College Old Boys (2), Dannevirke Sports (2), Feilding Old Boys Oroua (2), Kia Toa (2), Linton Army (2), Old Boys Marist (2), Massey University (2), Te Kawau (2).

- Request declined 16 to 6.

5. Operational Support Committee Recommendations

Please refer to Appendix one regarding the OSC recommendations.

Points 1 to 5 were discussed and ratified at the meeting with much discussion around the criteria to Senior 1 status.

The discussion centred around whether removing the need for clubs to have a stand-alone Colts side to maintain their Senior 1 Status would see clubs lessening their focus on the age group. Those members who spoke to the matter believed that focusing on the age group was still essential for club development.

Promotion/Relegation:

A vote was taken by a show of hands on how the promoted team should be determined – a motion was put that the promotion team should be the winner of the final. The votes were:

In Favour: Linton Army (2), Kia Toa (2), Bulls (1), Halcombe (1), Old Boys Marist (2), Feilding Old Boys Oroua (2), Massey University (2), Te Kawau (2), Bush Sports (1).

Against: College Old Boys (2), Freyberg (2), Bunnythorpe (1).

Abstained: Dannevirke Sports.

Decision: The promotion team would be the winner of the grade final. Vote was 15-5.

2012 Senior 1 & 2 Competition Format:

Mr Ricketts told the meeting that the NZRU had pushed back by one week the start date of the 2012 ITM Cup (now 25 August) which meant it was possible to play two full rounds of the club competition plus finals before Turbo players would be taken out.

A vote was taken on whether to progress the option that allowed the Turbos to participate in the entire club competition. The results were:

In favour: Old Boys Marist (2), College Old Boys (2), Kia Toa (2), Te Kawau (2), Massey University (2).

Against: Linton Army (2), Feilding Old Boys Oroua (2), Dannevirke Sports (2), Freyberg (2).

Decision: The option which allowed Turbos to participate in the entire competition was favoured 10 votes to 8.

Both the Senior 1 and 2 competitions (10 teams in each) would be mirrored with the following details:

- a. Start date – Saturday, 24 March 2012
- b. Finish date – Saturday, 4 August 2012
- c. One round of home and away with semifinal and final
- d. No play over Anzac Day

2012 Senior Reserve & Presidents:

The meeting decided that these two grades could start later (after Easter) on Saturday 14 April 2012.

2012 Colts Grade:

A discussion was had with the following points raised:

- Possible move to one large pool where some of the lesser teams would to play the tougher sides once. This would be decided upon once team entries are known.
- Cost of travelling for clubs to play teams from outside the MRU boundary.
- Feilding High School's 1st XV's inclusion in the grade. In 2011 the school's team entered the competition and dominated most opponents. Concerns were raised at the strength of the side and their ability to commit to every game of the competition. Mr Ricketts is to follow up with the school.

Other grades:

It was decided that the format would be decided on the number of entries.

MRU Player Transfer System:

The meeting decided that clubs would provide a list to the MRU of players who had outstanding debts to their clubs as at 31 December. The MRU would then notify all clubs and work with those clubs affected to get matters resolved.

6. MRU letter to Clubs – Payment of Players

Please refer to Appendix two regarding this topic.

Mr Ricketts read a report from MRU CEO John Knowles in which he outlined a number of matters, most importantly the issue about clubs which looked to pay or provide assistance to MRU contracted players to play for their club.

Mr Ricketts said if that was occurring then clubs needed to contact the MRU CEO to ensure there was no conflict with the Players' Salary Cap.

Dave Faulkner thanked Mr Ricketts for his work over the last six years and wished him well with his future endeavours. Mr Ricketts finishes with the MRU in late December.

7. General Business

Mike Burmeister of the Bush Sports Club gave the meeting an update on the club following the vote against the club fielding a Senior 1 in 2012 at the last CRC meeting. He made the following comments:

- He thanked the clubs that voted for them but was accepting of the CRC's decision
- Up to 17 players had indicated they want to play Senior 1 rugby in Wairarapa Bush next season (preferably for Bush)
- The decision of the players to move has put the Bush committee in a difficult position and it may decide to play its rugby in the WBRFU competition in 2012 in order to save its club.

Meeting closed at 8.41pm.

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 24 January 2012



**CRC Operational Support Committee Meeting
6pm Wednesday 16th November 2011
MINUTES & RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CRC**

Present: C Ricketts (MRU), C Crowther (Feilding), D Lewis (FOBO), D Faulkner (Massey), K Durham (COB)
Apologies: M Mitchell (Te Kawanu), A Leatherby (Bush)

A) 2012 Club Competition By-Laws:

The Committee reviewed the existing By-Laws and propose the following amendments and additions:

1. Defaults & Forfeits (Paragraph 14)

Amendment: Where a team provides at least 24 hours notice of a default the result is recorded as a 4 point win to the opponent. Where a team provides less than 24 hours notice of a default, or that team forfeits the match on the day due to lack of playing numbers, the result is recorded as a 4 point win to the opponent and two (2) competition points are deducted from the offending team.

Rationale: There is an incentive in place for defaulting teams to provide appropriate notice to the opposition team, match officials and supporters.

2. Classification of Players (Paragraph 21)

Amendment: A player will be classified in the grade for which they have played (by being listed on the team scorecard) the majority of games for (50% or more) during the competition round(s). Clubs may apply to the MRU for an exemption with regards to injured players.

Appendix 1

Rationale: This allows more flexibility of interchangeability between grades and is easier to monitor. Example: Where a player plays for both a club's Senior 1 team and Senior 2 team during the course of a season, that player may only play in the play-offs of the Senior 2 competition if they have played in at least 9 of the 18 competition round games leading up to the play-offs, i.e. they are a bona-fide member of that team.

3. New players (Paragraphs 16-18)

Addition: A player new to a club cannot join that club during or immediately prior to the play-offs. That player must have joined and played for that club during the competition round(s) 3 weeks prior to the completion of the competition round(s). There is an exemption to this By-Law for MRU contracted players.

Rationale: This prevents players joining a club team for the sole purpose of participating in the play-offs.

4. Club Transfers (Paragraph 17)

Addition: A player moving from one MRU club to another during the season will have the 2-week stand-down waived through the mutual agreement of both clubs.

Rationale: This allows the player to continue playing if the former club has no issue with the player moving on.

5. Criteria for Senior 1 Status (Paragraphs 19 & 20)

Amendment: (To apply from the commencement of the 2013 season) A club participating in the Senior 1 competition in any given year must have a back-up side (Senior 2, Senior Reserve or Colts) participating at full strength in it's respective competition in that same year. A senior 1 club failing to do so may forfeit their Senior 1 status for the following year.

Rationale: Promotion & relegation between grades is an important factor in both catering for the needs of aspiring clubs and creating meaningful competition for the lower ranked teams of the higher grade. The opportunity for teams to promote from Senior 2 to Senior 1 is vital. It may be unlikely that a Senior 2 club would have the ability to field both a Senior Reserve side and a Colts side in the year prior to promotion to Senior 1. The retention of Colts-aged players is becoming difficult particularly in rural towns as is evident by the challenges faced by both Bush Sports and Dannevirke Sports in doing so in 2011 – despite both these clubs having strong links with local high schools. This is likely to become an issue for town based clubs to face in the immediate future also. The purpose of having a Colts team for Senior 1 status was to ensure that clubs are recruiting and developing young players for progression into their senior grade teams. The reality is that many Colts-aged players go directly from school into senior grade teams. Clubs that are recruiting and developing young players may not have the numbers to field a stand-alone Colts team – essentially an additional 25 players to those playing in the senior grades at their club already (see below data).

U21 players per club & team 2011

	Senior 1	Senior 2	Senior Reserve	TOTAL
COB	3	9	4	16
Dannevirke	7	1	na	8
FOBO	4	7	0	11
Feilding	0	2	na	2
Freyberg	0	3	na	3
Kia Toa	2	2	na	4
Linton	2	7	9	18
Massey	3	21	16	40
OBM	3	4	4	11
Te Kawanu	9	1	na	10
Bush	na	12	na	12
TOTAL	33	69	33	135

Further recommendation: That in 2012 a working group is formed to make a detailed investigation into age grade rugby with the view to creating a strategy to increase the retention and recruitment of young players in our clubs. This should involve collaboration with NZRU and research locally to identify if our current grade structure (U21-Senior 2-Senior 1) is appropriate and meeting the needs of young players or if alternative grade structures, competition formats, game times, day of play etc. could enhance participation levels by this group of players.

B) 2012 Club Competition Formats:

1. Senior 1

The committee propose 2 formats for consideration based on the key factor of 'Turbos players participation in the play-offs'. Senior 1 participant clubs are asked to vote on their preference as follows:

Option 1: Turbos players participate in the play-offs

OR

Option 2: Turbos players are unavailable to participate in the play-offs
(Subject to selection/release by Turbos Coaching staff)

Once the preferred option has been decided upon there may be further variations within each option which can be discussed.

Common features proposed that apply to both options are:

- Competition round: points accumulated over 18 games
- 9 home and 9 away games
- Jubilee Cup awarded after 9 games
- Centennial Shield awarded after 18 games
- Play-offs for Hankin Shield

Option 1: Turbos IN play-offs

Week:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
Date:	24/3	31/3	7/4	14/4	21/4	25/4	28/4	5/5	12/5	19/5	26/5	2/6	9/6	16/6	23/6	30/6	7/7	14/7	21/7	28/7
1											Top 4									
2																				
3											Middle 4									
4																				
5											Bottom 2									
6																				
7																				
8																				
9																				
10																				

Easter Weekend

Queens B'day Weekend

Features:

- Senior 1 Finals on 28/7 when Turbos players are available
- Required to start on 24/3
- Requires a midweek fixture – Anzac Day is a public holiday on Wednesday 25/4. Linton Army may hold over their fixture to the following Wednesday under lights.
- Playoffs: Top 4 (Hankin Shield), Middle 4 (Val Holland), Bottom 2 (Goldfinch & Cousins)
- Semi-finals at home venue of higher Ranked team, Finals at FMG Stadium and Arena Manawatu.
- Other grades to start one week later on 31/3 and not play the midweek fixture on 25/4. Mirroring of Senior 1 and Senior 2 to be retained by playing the Senior 2 equivalent of games 1 and 6 on 21/7 and 28/7 followed by play-offs.

Potential Variations:

- Instead of playing midweek on Anzac day, could play a double header over Easter on Friday 27/4 and Easter Monday 30/4
- A 3 week play-off structure could be implemented by playing Anzac day & a double header over Easter.

Option 2: Turbos OUT of play-offs

Week:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Date:	31/3	7/4	14/4	21/4	28/4	5/5	12/5	19/5	26/5	2/6	9/6	16/6	23/6	30/6	7/7	14/7	21/7	28/7	4/8	11/8
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Easter
Weekend

Queens B'day
Weekend

Top 4

Middle 4

Bottom 2

Features:

- Senior 1 Finals on 1/18 prior to commencement of ITM Cup
- Start on 31/3
- Playoffs: Top 4 (Hankin Shield), Middle 4 (Val Holland), Bottom 2 (Goldfinch & Cousins)
- Semi-finals at home venue of higher Ranked team, Finals at FMG Stadium and Arena Manawatu.
- Other grades to start on same date

Potential Variations:

- A 3 week play-off structure could be implemented by playing one week longer (would need to request no ITM Cup game at home on 18/8)

2. Senior 2

As per 'Option 2' for Senior 1

3. Senior Reserve

Best Possible format based on number of entries

4. Colts

The committee discussed the Colts competition at length with the view to putting the best structure in place for 2012 pending the detailed investigation recommended above. The following proposals/considerations were raised for 2012:

- One grade for Colts. Based on 2011 there are only 4 strong Colts teams (Feilding, FOB Oroua, Marist and Massey). Whilst one grade would put the weakest teams up against the strongest this would only occur on 4 occasions. Last year the 8/8 split for Colts Premier and Colts A meant the weaker teams in Colts Premier played the top 4 twice therefore had 8 tough games. Outside the top 4 the remaining 12 were fairly evenly matched.
- Include teams from outside the province. MRU has a wider responsibility in developing the game outside of our geographical boundaries. One Colts grade would mean less frequent travel to Masterton as the 8/8 split meant teams in the same grade played these teams twice.
- Participation of school teams (Feilding High in 2011): If a school is to enter this grade there must be a documented commitment to play on every scheduled game day. This was not the case with Feilding High in 2011 as they had other school fixtures scheduled. It may not be appropriate to have Feilding High participate in future if there is one Colts grade as they would only have 4 competitive games.
- Massey University teams. As yet there has been no real solution to the team's being unable to get sufficient numbers during University Holidays. Another benefit of one Colts grade is that with all Massey teams in the same grade they can be drawn against each other during this period and arrange amongst themselves to play on alternative dates mid-week.

5. Presidents

There should not be an age restriction on players. Player ability is more important in this grade. It is up to clubs to ensure that Pressies Rugby is played with an ethos in mind and that players with the ability to dominate are either not included or their influence on the game is moderated.

6. Women

Representatives from teams to meet pre-season and put in place the best possible format based on the number of entries and the potential expansion of the interchange with HBRFU teams.

C) Other discussions:

Payment of registration fees (subs)

The committee discussed the pros and cons of a system where players pay their subs or 'registration fee' directly to the MRU when they register for the season. The NZRU is introducing an online player registration system in for 2012 where this will be possible to pay online. This could be a standard sub fee for all clubs that is then distributed back to clubs minus team affiliation fees as early as May. On one hand this would ensure all players pay up front prior to playing but would be dependant on clubs not playing players who had not registered/paid. There is also the issue of affordability.

Recommendation: For further discussion once NZRU have finalised their new registration system.

Transfer process for players going between MRU Clubs

MRU wishes to come into line with the NZRU procedure. This is that a transfer must take place in season but players are essentially free agents out of season. This involves doing away with paper forms and using the NZRU database online transfer process. Clubs can approve or deny the transfer application. This is what we are currently using for transfers to MRU clubs for players from outside the province and it works well. The current paper application we use is flawed in that it is not linked to the registration database - we have no actual way of ensuring that player transfers are actually taking place. We have required players to transfer during the off season in the past to safeguard a club against player debt (subs not paid, gear not returned). Clubs should be able to sort this out before the end of the calendar year in future. - Clubs have until Dec 31st to ensure this happens.

Recommendation: New system is adopted.

**MANAWATU RUGBY UNION
CLUB RUGBY COUNCIL
CEO REPORT**

30 November 2011

Since the last meeting of the Club Rugby Council, the staff has been quite busy with future planning and 2011 review of competitions, programmes and administration.

The ITM cup competition for 2012 will commence on the weekend of the 25th August and conclude on 27th October. The competition will include a semi-final and a final. This means that we have a further week available between club rugby and ITM Cup.

In 2012 we are planning on reintroducing a development team into a regional competition. At present these are being budgeted for, but further discussions are needed with various parties to finalise these teams. NZRU has advised that there will be a change from NZ Under 20 team to an Under 19 team. This will mean that we will also amend our age grades accordingly.

The New Zealand Rugby Union has had a working party preparing a change in the constitution around NZRU Board make-up and voting powers. In essence, there is likely to be a removal of zone representation and be replaced with a system that a Union can nominate any number of candidates for a position on the board. The Appointments and Remuneration Committee will put up two candidates for each position for the AGM to vote on. No person can be put up from the floor. There is a set criteria for which candidates will have to meet to be eligible, and the committee has to take into account the geographical distribution and rural versus metropolitan spread of nominations.

The number of votes is determined by the number of teams each Union has. There has been some change to this to recognise the number of votes large metropolitan areas receive. A Special General Meeting is likely to be called to ratify these changes early in the New Year.

This week there is a Chairman/CEO meeting to be held in conjunction with the annual Steinlager awards dinner. Steve Morris and I will be in attendance. A G9 Union meeting is to be held at the same time along with a Hurricanes AGM.

At present we have a range of players contracted and a number of younger players contracted on development contracts for 2012. These are as follows:

Nick	Crosswell	James	Oliver
Siosaia	Ma'afu Fia	David	Te Moana
Rob	Foreman	Fraser	Stone
Grant	Polson	Doug	Tietjens
Callum	Gibbins	Hamish	Gosling
Aaron	Smith	Tomasi	Cama
Michael	Fitzgerald	Aseli	Tikorituma
Craig	Clare	Reece	Robinson
Nehe	Milner-Skudder		

Young Players Contracted to the Manawatu Academy

The Union has been quite proactive in recruiting young players to join the Manawatu Academy. The following are the boys who have been provided development contracts.

Michael	Gardner
Hamišh	Northcott
Dan	Fitzgerald
Jade	Te Rure
Matthew	Gardner
Jamie	Perigo
Tom	Hughes
Daniel	Law
Willie	Paia'aua
Jason	Emery
Nick	Grogan
Tepasu	Thomas

Club Benefits to Players

The Manawatu Rugby Union is concerned for rumours and accusations around clubs and third parties making payments to players. This has been outlined in a letter to Chairpersons of clubs and I am still to follow up with each individual club.

I am concerned in particular for the long term implications for clubs. As we all know, players talk among themselves and this in term leads to disgruntled players who would otherwise be loyal to clubs. It is difficult enough in the professional environment of the Union, let alone it sneaking into clubs.

As explained in the letter, our main concern is with those players already contracted to Manawatu and how this may impact on the salary cap. The implications are far reaching for the Union and I am seeking legal advice as to how the Union can verify such payments – either by way of signed declarations from clubs, or by declarations from players. Either way, it must also cover known third party arrangements – just as it applies to NZRU by provincial unions.

House Project

The house is still progressing with a view to it being on sale in the not too distant future. It has been quite a difficult exercise with a shortage of builders available to assist. The website has a list of the companies involved and how others can help. There is a shopping list on the site that we are encouraging people to look at and offer a pledge. These are things like taps, tub, dishwasher and fittings etc.

John Knowles