



Club Rugby Council meeting (2008/3)

Date: *Tuesday, 24 June 2008*
Location: *Referees' Room, FMG Stadium*
Time: *7pm*

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendance: Tony Murphy (MRU chairperson); Hadyn Smith (MRU CEO); Chris Ricketts (MRU community rugby manager); Martin Brady (MRU club liaison officer); Kevin Tod (CRC chairperson & HSOB); David Faulkner (CRC deputy chairperson & Massey); Dave Wolland (Bush); Vicki Spicer (Bush); Terry Cooney (Halcombe); Roger Heatley (Ashhurst Pohangina); Murray Mitchell (Te Kawau); Jim Lyons (HSOB); Malcolm Burr (Marist); Neil Kitchen (Feilding); Mike Dravitski (Te Kawau); Trent Te Kooro (Kia Toa); Matt Pearson (Kia Toa); Troy Homes (Linton Army); Kenny Johnson (Kia Toa); Barrie Angland (Manawatu Rugby Supporters' Club); Mike Haddon (Manawatu Maori); Neil Aitcheson (Freyberg).

Apologies: Received from Hugh Blair, Steve Morris, Dave Parata and Roy Todd. Moved by Dave Wolland, seconded by Jim Lyons.

2. Confirmation of minutes from 26 March 2008

Moved by Malcolm Burr. Seconded by Troy Homes.

3. Matters arising

Kevin Tod raised the issues of the Code of Ethics which would be reported on later in the meeting and his suggestion for the MRU to run a contra account for club in relation to club grants. He said he awaited a reply from the board.

4. Turbos update (Wesley Clarke)

Mr Clarke introduced himself as having been a MRU development officer for 18 months and was now the Turbos manager. Mr Clarke said the following:

- players are training well
- Majority of the injured players were coming back from injury

- Depth in the squad was of concern – looking at players from within and outside the province
- Pre-season campaign starts on 4 July against Taranaki with the first home pre season match on 11 July
- Academy was going well under Jason O'Hallaron
- Highlighted the clash between PNBHS and FAHS 1st XVs – good opportunity for clubs to support junior players

5. MRU Board Update (Tony Murphy)

Mr Murphy said the focus of the board in recent months had been the NZRU review which Mr Smith would comment on later. He also mentioned that the sponsorship dollar was getting hard to secure and cashflow and managing costs was becoming an almost daily occurrence. He said that the Hurricanes dividend was likely to be down substantially from previous years.

Questions were asked about the Hurricanes returning to play in the provinces and who was the new board member replacing Ian McAffer. Mr Murphy said Peter Crawford from Taranaki was the new board member and the MRU was pushing for the Canes to play in the provinces.

6. MRU Financials (Hadyn Smith)

Mr Smith handed club representatives a financial report of the Union financial position and said while it looked good at the moment the next few months were the busiest of the Union's year and there would be plenty of expenses. At this stage the Union was forecasting a deficit of \$113,000. Already \$300K had been cut from the budget and more was needed.

7. NZRU Competitions Review (Hadyn Smith)

Mr Smith highlighted the submission that MRU made to the NZRU regarding the competitions review, he made the following points:

- the MRU looked to be proactive as opposed to reactive to the review
- the MRU was adamant it wanted to retain top level status
- the NZRU would release a further discussion document this week for unions to consider
- a summary of the submission has been distributed to club and was available on the MRU website

Kenny Johnson (Kia Toa) asked about the support received from other Unions. Mr Smith said other non Super 14 host unions were very supportive of moves to separate host unions from the franchises.

One other point that Mr Smith raised was Sideline behaviour – he reminded clubs of the need for spectators/parents etc to demonstrate good sporting behaviour on the sidelines.

Mr Wolland responded by saying often it was the case where referees either let dangerous play continue or not having the skills to deal with situations. Mr Smith said that we all needed to support referees not criticise them. Terry Cooney, of Halcombe RFC, mentioned that young people today were very savvy and having players acting like idiots reflected on the club and turned younger people off the game.

8. Community Rugby (Chris Ricketts)

Mr Ricketts said the following:

Grounds - the weather has been kind so far and grounds have been in excellent condition. As we head further into winter clubs should keep the MRU apprised of ground conditions for the allocation of games and requirements for line marking.

Club Affiliation Fees - Due by 30th June in order to be eligible for a financial grant for the 2008 season. Some clubs are yet to pay.

Ongoing Senior 1 and 2 Competition Formats:

Senior 1

- Each senior 1 team will play 4 games prior to any play-off games
- Priority for the draw is as follows:
 - 1st: 2 home games and 2 away games
 - 2nd: Reversal of home/away fixture from competition round (subject to priority 1)
 - 3rd: At same venue as Senior 2 team (subject to priorities 1 & 2)

Top 8:

- Grouped into 2 pools of 4 based on finishing position in competition round 1,3,5 & 7, and 2,4,6 & 8
- Teams play against the opposite pool, i.e. team 1 will play teams 2,4,6 & 8
- One points table for all 8 teams
- Teams ranked 1-4 play semi-finals for the Hankins Shield (1v4 & 2v3)
- Teams ranked 5-8 play semi-finals for the Val Holland (1v4 & 2v3)
- Semis are at the home of higher ranked team on 2nd August
- Final is at Arena Manawatu on 9th August

Bottom 5:

- Teams play a round-robin with a bye
- Top two ranked teams then play final for the Goldfinch & Cousins at Arena Manawatu on 9th August

The Senior 2 competition is the same format as Senior 1 but different trophies.

Mr Ricketts then moved onto the Code of Ethics document and stated the following:

Background – At the last CRC meeting a draft document regarding a 'Code of Ethics' for player recruitment was presented to clubs for discussion. The document was created in response to the concern shown by some clubs with regards to inducement of players. Two clubs were not in favour of the draft document because inducements cannot be policed, whilst one other club recommended an amendment to include MRU coaches and staff.

Update - the MRU Board's perspective is that the clubs now either: reach a resolution on the code or take it no further. This is a moral dilemma that the clubs must resolve. The MRU cannot police or enforce the code unless there is buy-in from all clubs. If clubs want to progress this concept further, discussion via the Chair.

The topic was then discussed at the meeting with Mr Wolland believing the matter should not be discussed as there was only a limited number of clubs present at the meeting.

The discussion continued with other points raised being: policing any such agreement; terminology and definition of the agreement; while it would be extremely difficult to police the document would simply be like a gentleman's agreement among club chairs.

Martin Brady suggested to the meeting that the matter be moved to the Operational Support Committee (OSC) where clubs would have a further week or so to make submissions then the finalised document be distributed to all clubs for clubs to sign if they wish.

Mr Wolland believed the matter should not go to the Operational Support Committee as they were "Yes Men" for the Union and simply followed the instructions of what the Union wanted. He said his comments came from a previous issue with the Union and that he had written proof of this.

Malcolm Burr, who was on the OSC, said he had just been elected onto the committee and could not comment but welcomed other members' views. Fellow member Neil Kitchen said he was offended by such a comment while Neil Aitcheson said he was certainly not a Yes Man for the Union.

The meeting then moved back to the issue at hand – the code of ethics. Malcolm Burr formally moved (seconded by Neil Kitchen) that the Code of Ethics document be completed and forwarded to clubs for signing. The matter was put to the vote with majority support. Bush (via Dave Wolland) voted against the motion.

9. General Business

Barrie Angland (Supporters' Club) thanked clubs for getting the results into him on Saturdays. He also mentioned that he was looking to have the MRSC Player of the Year trophy mounted permanently at the White House at Massey University.

Mr Angland praised the efforts of the Under 20 World Cup winning coach Dave Rennie and the three Manawatu players (Kurt Baker, Aaron Smith and Andre

Taylor) who fly back into Palmerston North on Wednesday (25 June) and he encouraged supported to get to the airport to welcome them back.

Mr Angland said the region should also be proud of the representation of Manawatu players in the Highlanders and the New Zealand Sevens team.

Mr Wolland mentioned the impact of travel was having on clubs and highlighted the case of Kia Toa colts having to travel to play East Coast in Wairapa (a further 30 minutes drive from Masterton). He wondered whether some consideration should be made in the future to playing such fixtures at a central venue. Chris Ricketts responded by saying that all clubs in the Colts A grade would have to travel to East Coast and while it was some distance to travel the response had been from clubs that the East Coast hospitality was great. Murray Mitchell also added that this was the age group that we needed to support as if we did not have young men playing today then we would not have rugby in the future.

Trent Te Kooro, from Kia Toa, said he had not heard of the Kia Toa colts complaining that it was a long trip to East Coast.

Meeting concluded at 8.20pm.

Chairman 

Date 30/6/08