



Club Rugby Council meeting (2007/3)

Date: *Monday, 16 April 2007*
Location: *McMillan & Lockwood Lounge,
Level 4, FMG Stadium*
Time: *7pm*

Minutes

1. Welcome and apologies:

Chairman John Anderson welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from: Mike Dravitski (Te Kawau); Steve Kinane (Bunnythorpe); Chrissie Hughes (Halcombe); Kevin Shing (FOB); Steve Morris (MRU president); Graeme Bull (MRRRA). Confirmed by Dave Wolland (Bush), seconded by Sam Strahan (Oroua).

Attendance: Hadyn Smith (MRU CEO); Tony Murphy (MRU Board Chair); Mark Buxton (MRU Board); Shane O'Brien (MRU Board); Graeme Fraser (MRU Board); Peter Clark (Marist & MRU Board); Kevin Tod (HSOB & MRU Board); John Whitehead (Massey & MRU Board); John Anderson (CRC Chair); Dave Wolland (CRC Deputy Chair); Chris Ricketts (MRU community rugby manager); Martin Brady (MRU club liaison officer); Gary Nesdale (Oroua); Sam Strahan (Oroua); Malcolm Burr (Marist); Jim Lyons (HSOB); Murray Edgecombe (HSOB); Bill Donovan (Te Kawau); Martin Chesterfield (COB); Kevin Jones (COB); Paul Harris (Te Kawau); Doug Brew (FOB); Trent Te Koro (Kia Toa); Dave Parata (Kia Toa); Kenny Johnson (Kia Toa); Troy Homes (Linton Army); Craig Lindsay (Bunnythorpe); Stephen Scott (Feilding); Vicki Spicer (Bush); Murray Mitchell (Te Kawau); Neil Aitcheson (Freyberg); Colin Parker (Freyberg); Colin Gates (Te Kawau); Barrie Angland (Manawatu Rugby Supporters' Club).

2. Confirmation of minutes from 14 March 2007 – Dave Parata / Dave Wolland.

3. Matters arising – There were no Matters Arising.

4. General Business

- Spectator sideline control – Dave Parata, of Kia Toa, raised the issue of controlling crowds on the sidelines at various venues as it makes it difficult for touch judges to perform their duties as well as it being dangerous. Chris Ricketts, of the MRU, responded by saying that Ongley Park, Bill Brown Park and Ashhurst (if need be) will be roped off.
- Neil Aitcheson mentioned his concern about spectators “getting in the ear” of touch judges and having an influence of their decisions. Mr Smith said he believed this issue should be dealt with the Manawatu Rugby Referees’ Association directly.

5. 2008 & Beyond Club Competition Format

MRU Board Chair Tony Murphy addressed the meeting and said the Board had expended considerable time and effort in discussing this issue. He said the focus was to ensure the growth and sustainability of clubs.

MRU CEO Hadyn Smith then presented the meeting with the Board’s seven resolutions regarding the future competition. They were:

1. That the Manawatu Rugby Union Premier Club Competition (MRU PCC) will be made up of 16 teams in two divisions of eight (8) from the start of the season in 2009.
2. All teams that are in the MRU Premier Division 1 competition must have a B team and a development (colts) team in order to be eligible for the 2009 Premier Division 1 competition. All such teams to exist in 2008.
3. Premier Division 2 region-wide competition in 2009
4. All MRU PCC Head Coaches in clubs must be working towards being Level 2 NZRU certified coaching qualification within a reasonable period of time
5. All Clubs in the MRU PCC (Division 1) must aim to have a part or full time operational staff member by 2009
6. Age grade development – support for clubs that develop increased numbers of junior teams.
7. All Premier Clubs must have a transition plan for the support of secondary school players leaving school and growth of our playing numbers at the underage level

Mr Smith raised the point of there being insufficient numbers of quality coaches in the province and it would not be a case of the Union simply saying in one or two years all coaches having to have a certain qualification. It was a matter to look on a case by case basis where coaches work alongside the MRU RDO to map out a timeframe to gain qualifications.

Sam Strahan (Oroua) said that club coaches were “thin on the ground” and wondered what assistance the MRU would give clubs. Mr Smith agreed with Mr Strahan’s point and said that both Union and clubs together must attempt to raise the level of coaching.

Mr Smith pointed out that there was a need for clubs to have either a part-time or fulltime paid administrator and the Union would look to assist with funding towards these position – he hoped this would be a 50-50 split between the club and the Union.

Mr Smith also mentioned that there will be a strong focus on age group rugby with a view to growing the numbers and there being cash incentives for clubs increasing numbers at the under 19, under 21 age level.

Mr Parata believed that points six and seven were similar and the MRU may consider combining those two points as well as focusing on the lower levels (school children) as that was the area where it all began.

Mr Murphy said the key for success of the changes would be providing a meaningful competition in premier division two.

Mr Parata asked when the NZRU would be looking to review Manawatu's status in the Air New Zealand Cup and how these changes to club rugby would be viewed by the NZRU.

Mr Murphy said that the review of Manawatu's would likely start later in the year and it was likely that Manawatu would look to apply for an extension on the three-year license midway through next year. He also said that the NZRU would see the changes as positive ones as the MRU has looked to follow aspects of the NZRU Community Rugby Plan.

Mr Strahan said that he believed the competition was an eight team competition.

Mr Murphy disagreed and said the success of the changes would be determined by the competitiveness of the division two competition. He said the Board did look at the MRU operational staff's plan to have a 10 team competition but believed that would consign two clubs for ever. He said the changes have been devised with the long term future of the Union and clubs in mind.

Mr Smith said that the format was what the Board believed to be that will strengthen community rugby.

Gary Nesdale (Oroua) queried what was meant by "meaningful competition". Mr Murphy responded by saying it would be a competition where games were competitive, it held attractions to the community, and that it was meeting the needs of players.

Kevin Jones (COB) said the change would mean that COB would have to raise its standards and that was from board level down.

Mr Nesdale asked whether the MRU was in a position to fund the administrators in 2008 rather than 2009. Mr Smith responded by saying if the Union had funds available now it would do it but it does not at this point.

Dave Wolland (Bush) said that avenues already existed for clubs to cover the cost of administrators through community trusts. Mr Wolland also mentioned that during the club consultation phase of the process clubs stated that in order to gain Senior I status they must be affiliated to the MRU, would this still be the case under these changes. Mr Smith said yes and said that players playing in the premier divisions must be able to play representative rugby for Manawatu.

There was no further discussion on the matter. Mr Smith said clubs would receive a comprehensive explanation of each of the seven points probably by Tuesday 17 April but no later than Wednesday 18 April. Once the clubs had been informed a media release would be sent to local media.

Manawatu Rugby Supporters' Club

Barrie Angland of the Manawatu Rugby Supporters' Club tabled a report prior to leaving the meeting.

The report said that he thanked all clubs for their help in getting results in on Saturday afternoons for Rugby Roundup on Access Radio (999khz) at 4.45pm.

The MRSC plans to take a convoy of supporters to the Turbos v Wellington game on Saturday 11 August 2007. This will include transport to and from the game to the Manawatu including game tickets. The club is currently working on prices, trying to get the best possible deal between the trains and buses. The plan is to leave Palmerston North at 10.30am and return around 8pm. We will make seats available to all clubs who express an interest. More details to follow in the near future.

6. Next meeting

To be confirmed at a later date.

Meeting closed at 8.03pm.