



Berkshire Rugby Union Referees Ltd

(operating as Berkshire Society of RFU Referees)
c/o Reading RFC, Holme Park, Sonning Lane, Reading, RG4 6ST

Summary Minutes of ExCom Meeting held on 9th January 2024 at 8pm via ZOOM

Present: DL, SB, KP, AG, PL, NC

ACTION

1. Apologies

RC

2. C/fwd actions

(Dec'23) MOD Consistency/Admin 'Event'

Given the low turnout (only DL,PK,RF in attendance) DL is looking at further dates in Feb/March for a follow-up coherence session with MODs – details to be confirmed & circulated to MODs

DL

(Sept'22) Referee Feedback Forms on WTR (completed by clubs, post-match)

On RFU 'WTR roadshow' call (25/10/22), Mark Brown (WTR owner) confirmed availability of existing templates on WTR, as used by several other RefSocs for some time

Nov'23 update: SB circulated templates examples received from Mark Brown (WTR) on 17th Oct – all quite similar in format/content

SB

Action: ExCom to decide on version to be used by BRR and confirm with MB (WTR)

ExCom

Jan'24 Actions:

- NC to recirculate templates to ExCom for decision on format (& 'delivery method') to be used
- RC to speak to Dave Elliott re: potential Googleforms version of the template for CRefCs to get coaches to complete on club-appointed fixtures involving BRR Refs/YMOs

NC

RC

Resources/Succession Planning

Ongoing action for ExCom to consider succession planning & resourcing

ExCom

(Oct'23) CRefCs meeting

RC hosted a meeting of Berkshire clubs CRefCs which was, unfortunately, only sparsely attended (4 present, several apologies for absence) – a follow-up session is to be arranged.

Jan'24 update – RC planning to run session in Feb

RC

(Aug'23) 100 game 'awards' (KP)

Following receipt of initial image, KP sourced a higher-res logo and is currently awaiting updated 'sample' image to decide on final version and progress order confirmation with supplier

KP

(Sept'23) Kit issue (rebranding/75th season)

It was agreed to progress an issue of kit to (i) reduce the 'surplus' held in the current account, (ii) commemorate the 75th season of activity (BSRFUR having been founded in 1948), and (iii) help publicise the name-change from 'BSRFUR' to 'BRR'

SB

NC shared details of the RFU 'club hub' procurement platform, with clothing/kit options available, bearing the England Rugby rose (at v.low prices), to which the BRR logo could be added.

It was subsequently agreed that members would be issued with a new t-shirt (white) and backpack.

Nov'23 update:

- 'Final' Googleform request list shared with AG, for him to progress with Club-Hub vendor

Jan'24 update:

Kit order (t-shirts & backpacks) received and to be distributed by AG at Jan'2024 members' meeting

AG

(Sept'23) Corporation Tax

Nov'23 update: PL has sent a technical letter to , detailing why BRR should not be considered a commercial entity subject to Corporation Tax – awaiting their response

Jan'24 update: NC to check RRFC mailbox for any response from HMRC

NC

Nov'23) Video footage 'library'

AG – speaking to RRFC re: access to game footage and will speak to CD if available; potential to refresh the 'library' available to members on the BRR website

AG

3. Comms

Further to discussion at Dec'23 meeting, NC asked DE to review communications methods, given younger people's apparent 'aversion' to email/websites/FB

DE has subsequently set up the following WhatsApp groups:

- L6/7 Refs
- L8/9 Refs
- L10/11/PROV Refs

Agreed actions

- AG to ask DE to:

- set up a WhatsApp group for MODs (ie. all coaches & advisers)
- confirm who has been designated as the 'Admin' for each group

AG
DE
DE

4. Complaint received re: behaviour of BRR ref

(Ref. email correspondence circulated previously by NC)

NC has spoken with referee and, based upon the response subsequently received from the complainant, the matter is now considered closed.

5. Club coach's allegation re: 'scrum safety'

Club coach has failed, despite follow-up from AG, to provide any of the claimed video footage to support his allegation that our referee's refereeing of the scrum was unsafe (an allegation that prompted the re-appointment of the referee from another fixture).

Agreed actions:

- NC to raise matter with Club Chair, since they need to (i) be aware of the unsubstantiated allegation and (ii) take remedial action with their coach

NC

6. Mid-season Grading Review

Five 'new' referees now given first grading; five promoted from previous season's grade; one referee downgraded (due to fitness/speed around the pitch)

AG flagged that, for those refs earmarked for potential upward progression, the low number of games in February limits the opportunities for them to 'prove themselves' before the end of the season, but action plans are in place with reference to March fixtures, to maximise their chances.

7. AOB

DL – Discipline

- Low number of RCs received compared to historic trends (long may that continue!)

- However, a clear issue with one new BRR ref
 1. High number of (questionable/unsubstantiated) RCs issued
 2. V. poor quality of Sending Off reports submitted (**when** submitted – it appears not all RCs issued may have been documented)
 3. RC made aware of safeguarding issue raised by a club due to ref’s self-confessed use of foul language towards an age-grade player

Despite this, referee appears to be constantly requesting/pushing for appointment to higher level games

Agreed actions:

- DL & AG to speak to referee before the Jan’24 members’ meeting, to advise of the seriousness of their actions and urgent need to improve conduct; reaffirm that grading accurately reflects current ability and that they needs to demonstrate improvement in order to be eligible for ANY higher level games; make sure they understands the potential consequences of continuing as-is (esp. with regard to age-grade, given the safeguarding concerns)

DL,AG

RC – Poppy Cooper

PC is a 15 yr old YMO (so only covering up to U14, currently), part-way through her ERRA, but keen to progress her refereeing (whilst still playing).

ExCom agreed to allow her (or her parents) to get 2x BRR shirts and reclaim through expenses, plus any ‘tailoring’ required – RC to communicate this to PC & her parents

ExCom also agreed that – if she demonstrates clear potential – to arrange for her to be watched by a BRR MOD and potential agree to supported coverage of higher-level games – RC to monitor.

RC

RC

KP – club querying of ‘admin fees’

A club has queried the ‘validity’ of the £25 late cancellation charge, in the light of ‘Game On’ initiatives and challenges in fielding sides. KP has advised that the charge was held at £25, rather than rising in line with revised match fees, to limit its financial impact on clubs.

ExCom also flagged that – if a club is proactively communicating with BRR, in the event of opposition pulling-out of a fixture and trying to arrange an alternative, BRR would be more likely to look favourably (as it allows the opportunity for the ref to be reassigned to a more ‘certain’ appointment, if required); so the onus is on the home club to proactively communicate/collaborate with the BRR Appointments team, if they want to avoid penalty charges.

KP – request for authorisation to purchase webcam from DE

Following negative feedback received, relating to the quality of the Zoom video/sound quality of live-streamed members’ meetings, DE has asked for approval to purchase a wireless webcam with built-in mic (cost: c.£200)

NC had previously asked DE to complete a simple ‘business case’, laying out the pros & cons of the various alternatives available (no response received as yet, from DE, despite chasing)

ExCom agreed that, whilst livestreaming meetings was good for those members unable to attend a meeting, in-person attendance was the preferred means of participating – possibly publicising that some meetings would not be live-streamed, may encourage people to come in person

Agreed action: no approval to be given unless/until business case is received and reviewed by KP – KP to advise DE of decision/requirement for any future approval

KP,DE

KP – social ‘event’ options

Following Jack Kingman’s suggestion of ‘paying’ for MRR members to attend a Rams 1st XV evening game (away to Chinnor, in Dec’23 – denied due to short notice), KP has reviewed upcoming fixtures and the following possibilities were agreed as viable:

- 23rd Feb – ‘Friday Night Lights’ fixture: Rams 3 vs Windsor

- 13th Apr – Rams 1st XV final home game vs Richmond

Agreed actions:

- KP to advise members of the plan – with the invite/ instruction to see a member of ExCom to buy them drinks at the bar KP
- ExCom (AG/NC?) to speak to Rams re: possibility of them waiving entry fee for BRR refs at 1st XV game on 13/04 AG/NC

RC – BBO Regs on number of subs permitted

Ongoing confusion/disputes between coaches on eligible numbers of subs – NC to flag at CB Clubs meeting on 10th Jan NC

KP – Y/E 30th June 2023 Accounts

KP confirmed that a copy of the final Accounts, as approved on 30th November 2023 (proposed by KP, approved by NC), has been sent to the RFRU

NC to send out minutes for review, publish summary minutes on website and agree agenda for next meeting. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 21:08 NC

The next ExCom meeting is scheduled for Tues 10th February 2024 – venue TBC

NC to circulate Agenda in advance, point members to previous Summary Minutes on website, etc. NC