

RFUW COMPETITION STRUCTURE FEEDBACK & PROPOSALS 2007/08

The Competition's Review Group (CRG) was set up 12 months ago to look at the Competition Structure for the 2007/08 Season, we gathered feedback from the RFUW Conference and also gave your club a chance to sit on the review group as well as write in with your concerns and ideas. To all those clubs who responded, we would like to thank you very much for your input.

Feedback

The major issues that arose from the feedback were;

- Traveling at Premiership 2 level was increasing as this league is National.
- Some teams want the opportunity to play at a higher level but are stuck due to the amount of clubs in their area.
- Standard of referees / lack of referees.
- Cup Competition and teams not willing to play if they feel they may lose a fixture. 50% of fixtures were being cancelled.
- Cup - no clubs wishing to play the top teams in Premiership 1.
- Lack of players at grass root rugby.
- Rearrangement of fixtures.
- Increase the number of leagues that can play to the full IRB Rules as opposed to U19 laws.
- Lack of quality coaches / coaching opportunities.
- London clubs sending weakened side to play matches in the North.
- The calendar being disrupted by England so clubs feel a lack of continuity.
- Problems with play offs.

Some of these points have already been addressed as follows;

- We have successfully launched a referee's recruitment programme.
- The onus of rearranging fixtures at National Challenge 1 and below has been given to the clubs and it is up to both teams to agree to rearrange a fixture, if one team refuses the fixture stands on the original date.
- We have run a number of women only coaching courses designed for coaches who are coaching within the women's game.

These targets are also in the new RFUW strategic plan.

Previous CRG Changes & Success

Three years ago the CRG brought in new guidelines including reducing and matching the number of players to get matches played and U19 IRB Laws for Division 2 and below, These have proved very successful we went from 65% of matches being completed to:

Season 03/04 – 80% completed 679/844 games played

Season 04/05 – 90% completed 722/854 games played

Season 05/06 – 84% completed 822/978 games played

Although there was a dip last season we must take into account that there were 48 players removed from League Rugby and due to the World Cup we had a very

compacted calendar with the running of the Super League alongside the League Programme.

2007/08 Proposals

Taking into account the feedback we received we have put together the following proposals. It is imperative that we still run a National league (Currently Premiership 1) that has a geographical spread of clubs which enables all players the opportunity to play top class rugby. Whilst this league is not currently a closed shop, there is a strict criteria to this league, clubs who do not keep to this criteria will find themselves removed and replaced where possible.

We have looked at changing the names of the leagues to help the partners we work with these include the referee societies, where there has been some confusion regarding the playing rules.

The proposals could mean a movement in leagues for a number of clubs, these clubs would be expected to fill in their "Intention to Affiliate" forms with the guidance of the League Criteria as to which league they feel they would be best suited.

Proposals: League

1. Change the titles of the leagues to help our partners.
 - The current Premier 1 league to be known as 'The Championship'.
 - The current Premier 2 to be Premier 1 and National 1 leagues become Premier 2.
2. Current Premiership 2 – Regionalized to Premier 1 North and Premier 1 South.
 - Reduces traveling with an increase in Leagues to give clubs the opportunity to play higher up the leagues.
 - Increases the number of teams that can play full IRB Rules.
3. Close the Championship so we have a geographical spread of clubs which enables all players the opportunity to play top class rugby.

Proposals: Cup

The Championship – Top 4 teams to play at the end of the season for a "Super Cup" this will offer further competition to help aid the development of the Elite Squads.

Premiership 1 North and South – The winners of the two leagues will play off for the Premiership Cup.

Regional Cup - Available to all other teams to enter on a regional basis.

Super League – The top 88 - 100 players to play in a Super League competition (3 x English qualified teams; 1 x Celtic qualified team).

PROPOSED COMPETITION STRUCTURE DETAIL 2007/08

Championship (Full IRB Rules) – Will consist of 8 geographically spread clubs, this is to enable players to have the opportunity of playing top class rugby wherever they are situated in the Country.

Relegation - Closed League providing all the clubs sustain their development plans and continue to grow and develop rugby within their region. Any club failing to do this will be removed and the option of going into the Championship will be offered to the Premiership Champions.

Or:

Play offs – winner of Premier Cup to play off with bottom of Championship.

Premiership 1 North and Premiership 1 South (Full IRB Rules) – Will consist of a maximum of 8 sides.

- Clubs will qualify for the North league if they play their rugby in the North or the Midlands Leagues.
- Clubs will qualify for the South League if they play their rugby in the South East or South West Leagues.
- The winners of the league will playoff in the Premiership Cup to find the Premiership Champions.

Relegation - There will be a minimum of 1 side and a maximum of two sides relegated from each league at the end of the season.

Premiership 2 (Full IRB Rules) - North, Midlands, South East, South West.

Promotion – Winning sides will be promoted to Premiership North and South respectively.

Relegation – There will be a minimum of 1 side and a maximum of 2 sides relegated from each league at the end of the season. These teams will go into their regional league depending on their geographic location.

National Challenge 1 (U19 Laws) - North, Midlands, South East and South West, 15 a side.

National Challenge 2 and below (U19 Laws) - Teams can match numbers.

All leagues where possible will be produced with a geographical spread that will hopefully reduce traveling eg, North East, Midlands West.

Please send any comments regarding these proposals by 14th November 2006 to:

Competition Review Group, RFUW, Rugby House, Rugby Road, Twickenham, TW1 1DS
or e-mail to RFUW@therfu.com

RFUW CRG PROPOSAL 2007/08

