



# IDRU - Minutes of Chairman's Meeting 13 March 2023

Date: 13 March 2023 @ Shamrocks Rugby Club – 6.30pm

Attendees: As per Attendance Sheet

Apologies: (Report Provided) Bob **Novotny**, UOW Seniors (Report Provided), Steve Tressider, Tony Georgievski and Brendan Goddard – Shoalhaven, various representatives from Camden, Campbelltown and Bowral (see below), Harvey Cole (see below).

## **Introduction**

Tom noted at the commencement of the meeting that there had been a very serious accident which had closed the Hume Highway at Menangle in both directions causing traffic chaos. John Masters and Tom had received a number of calls from people wishing to attend the meeting from the Camden, Campbelltown and Bowral Clubs but were unable to travel.

Apologies were noted and the meeting proceeded on the basis that detailed minutes will be produced with an invitation to those Clubs who were unable to attend (and to others unable to attend due to work commitments) by way of Teams during the week (probably Thursday night).

Tom also noted that the meeting had been scheduled at Shamrocks because the referees had called Clubs to a meeting to review the match day guidelines at Shamrocks from 7pm. We had, at the last rugby meeting, indicated that we intended to take the meeting to either Campbelltown, Camden, or Bowral, however, due to the clash with the referees the meeting was brought to Shamrocks at 6.30pm.

## **Future Rugby Chairman's Meetings.**

The Rugby Chairman's meeting will be held by Teams for the month of April, given its proximity to Easter and school holidays and commencement of the competition. The Board members attending would still be in person and Clubs via Teams.

We will continue to meet face-to-face during the season and the next face-to-face meeting will take place in May and that will be held amongst one of the clubs of Bowral, Camden or Campbelltown.

The next face-to-face meeting which will follow after that will be held South, presumably at Kiama or Shoalhaven, subject further discussions.

It was noted that there were no attendees from Vikings or Avondale, and this was quite disappointing. Those Clubs are specifically reminded to get representatives to the Rugby Chairman's meetings without any further excuses. Both Clubs have a poor attendance record.

## **IDRU Report.**

1. The website has gone live. The IDRU Board acknowledges the excellent work undertaken by Sarah to rebuild and reset the website.
2. John Masters spoke of the stronger interactivity with the site and that there still are final tweaks to be made to some of the resources (for example - competition rules), but these will follow after tonight's meeting and will be amended in the next 7 - 10 days.
3. Clubs have received contact from Sarah and it will be left with the Clubs to liaise with her directly about getting material onto social media.
4. A question was raised whether it relates to juniors - and the answer is yes definitely. We would like to see junior as well as senior traffic going through the website and on our social media page.
5. The Clubs were complimented for their social media activity to date and this will continue to be encouraged.
6. Tom thanked Shaun McCreedy's team for the outstanding work which was done leading up to and including the Super W game at Vikings on the weekend.
7. Shaun and his team have now been placing some good media awareness through social media and otherwise and the IDRU will continue to provide as much support as we can through the website, social media and so forth.
8. We also acknowledged the appointment of Phil Green in Shaun's team in the Illawarra, but also very importantly to Phil's appointment to the prestigious role of Coach Mentor for New South Wales Rugby. More on that below.

## **Wet Games.**

The competition rules will apply as follows: –

1. Where the home club's field is declared unfit to play, then the opposing club will have an opportunity to host the game.
2. If the opposing club's field is playable, then the game must be played at that field.
3. If played at the opposing club, the normal game times will apply unless an agreement is reached otherwise – but strictly on the basis that the IDRU are consulted and the referees confirm that those changes in times and locations are suitable.

4. In the event that there is a question as to the playability of the opposing club's field, then that will be resolved by direction from IDRU Senior Board Members in consultation with the IDRU on the morning of the game day by a physical inspection. Until that inspection is concluded Clubs must assume the game will be proceeding unless it is called off.
5. If the game is not played on the Saturday, then the clubs will have until the following Friday evening to play the game and, if not played by 9.00pm on that Friday evening, there will be a declaration of points being shared.

## **Sanctions.**

There has been some concern that clubs have played trial games without proper sanctions.

The sanction process has been widely communicated over the last few weeks but there remains concern that clubs are not following the relevant procedure.

Clubs are reminded that sanction form may be found on the IDRU website. The usual game day requirements apply including a central table with MDC from both clubs wearing high viz.

Games will only proceed on the basis that clubs can demonstrate to the attending referees that the players who are anticipating are registered.

Red cards are to go to the judiciary. If an opposing club is from outside of the district, that the red card will be reported to that player's home district to be dealt with under their relevant judiciary rules.

The yellow card sanctions (for accumulation) will not apply.

## **Registrations.**

Strong concern was expressed that clubs are not getting players registered nor, volunteers.

Players should not be training, particularly engaging in **contact** training when they are unregistered and uninsured. There has been widespread communication regarding issue, particularly after concerns have been expressed from CRU and from the IDRURA.

Last week, the clubs were contacted on at least two occasions identifying issues and clubs were reminded that in the event that a person is injured and uninsured, there are likely to be repercussions for the club and the individuals involved.

Volunteers are able to register for free - this includes coaching staff, player managers and people who are working in and around clubs.

This is an mandatory priority for clubs to address.

## **CRU Meeting.**

A number of IDRU board members, together with the judiciary chair, **Liam Allen** attended a meeting of CRU at the Daceyville Complex on 25 February 2023. Attendees were separated into different streams with Liam focusing on the presentations for judicial procedures, while Harvey, Dani and Tom attended the general sessions.

CRU have produced a bundle of material which will be sent to club secretaries this week. We recommend clubs distribute the material amongst all committee members to review and read. There is some good and helpful information concerning the responsibilities clubs and also general administration matters.

CRU/NSWR have engaged a consultant who has been providing advice and support to clubs. This process appears to have been adopted very broadly across clubs. The NSWRU and the Board feel it would be very helpful for all clubs to assist them with their management structure.

Other aspects of that day included a workshop with respect to the challenges for rugby - which frankly was somewhat of a waste of time having regard to the fact that the ARU broadly conducted this exercise last year producing a report which it presented to the club forum in early November.

Tom is to write to Country Rugby Union to identify specific areas of concern for our competition and to seek assistance - particularly with respect to assisting clubs to compete for funding.

## **Club Reports.**

The clubs present provided reports on recruitment and training. Shoalhaven and Bowral juniors both provided promising reports.

Vikings were congratulated for subsidising players fees for the 2023 season. This was a very promising kickstart and a really strong indication to clubs who have financial capacity to think about doing the same to attract players to their clubs.

We have seen Campbelltown recently lose player strength to Blue Mountains on the back of payments being made by Blue Mountains Rugby.

A number of reports have been received at Board level about clubs who are paying players in breach of the competition rules and, if the complaints are formalised then they will be investigated. The reality is, the club presidents will need to meet sooner rather than later to discuss this issue and, to develop some consensus as to whether or not they will keep the current competition at an amateur basis, or consider other options including subsidised fees for juniors and seniors.

The reality is that we are in competition with other sports how are better funded with professional full-time administration officers. This is evident from Tom's participation in the Sports Grant Committee and Wollongong Council who have paid administrators doing a lot of legwork for sponsorship, grant funding and the like. We receive no such support from CRU nor NSWR - but this is not to be taken as a criticism. Shaun and his team are doing an outstanding job with development, community awareness, and coaching programs. Emphasis needs to be placed on looking hard at where clubs are spending their money, where it is being budgeted and how that might be directed towards recruitment and retention.

Tony Burke from Tech noted concerns which exist around the under 14's competition. Tony has emphasised the need for the Wollongong based clubs to confer to look at the establishment of a Barbarians team in that age group (and again in the opens). The Board strongly encourages all Wollongong based clubs to discuss that issue as soon as possible.

The IDRU will look at Rugby Xplorer to identify the registration numbers in particular age groups and where numbers might be lacking in one club, direct those clubs to confer with other clubs to form Barbarian sides, or otherwise use other initiatives such as dropping down age groups.

## **Gala Day.**

With the junior chairman being unable to attend due to the Hume Highway incident, clubs are reminded about the Gala Day scheduled for 28 March 2023. Can all club's confirm their ability to fill teams in the Gala Day with the junior president - together with providing a brief report as to their current team's strength.

## **Thanks to our DO's.**

Phil Green attended on behalf are NSW. Tom extended the appreciation of the IDRU and all clubs present for the fantastic work they had done organising and conducting the Super W game on the weekend which saw a clinic which was well attended by kids. It was a good showcase which received good media attention.

Tom also thanked Phil, Shaun and the team for all of the positive social media stuff moving forward and encouraged them to continue to utilise the district's website and communications officer, Sarah to spread the word.

Phil is conducting a clinic at Nelson Bay this weekend in his capacity as the New South Wales Coaching Mentor for all junior representative coaches. We strongly ask the junior rep coaches to attend that clinic.

## **Next Meeting.**

As the meeting had to complete by 7.00pm to allow the IDRUA to proceed with their game management instruction, the meeting was closed at 7.00pm.

The April meeting is to be confirmed but is likely to take place on the Tuesday evening after Easter by way of Teams. Calendar invites will be issued.