

Minutes of the Halbro NW Colts league AGM held at Bowdon RUFC on Wednesday 21st August 2024

Present : Jon Kitchen (League chairman), Steve Mooney (League fixture secretary), Leeann Aspinall (League Fairplay secretary), Nick Hayes (League treasurer), Andy Thompson (League committee), Chris Whitfield (League committee), Phil Mason (League committee), Billy Borrett (League Vice President), Mike Henry (League disciplinary secretary), Mike Hull (Manchester & District Rugby Union Referees Society Secretary + a number of MADREFS referees), Ben Moore (Liverpool & District Rugby Union Referees Society representative on league committee) and Brian Stott (Lancashire CB Board member & Disciplinary secretary)

Representatives from : Aldwinians Junior Colts (JC's) & Senior Colts (SC's), Anselmians SC's, Birkenhead Park JC's, Bolton JC's, Blackburn SC's, Broughton Park JC's, Burnley JC's, Bury JC's, Caldý JC's, Chester JC's & SC's, Crewe & Nantwich JC's & SC's, Davenport JC's, Eccles JC's, Firwood Waterloo JC's & SC's, Furness JC's, Garstang JC's, Heaton Moor JC's & SC's, Kendal SC's, Leigh SC's, Liverpool Collegiate JC's, Liverpool St Helens JC's, Lymm JC's & SC's, Macclesfield SC's, Moorgate JC's, Newcastle (Staffs) JC's, New Brighton JC's & SC's, Ormskirk SC's, Rochdale JC's & SC's, Rossendale JC's, Sale FC SC's, Sale Wolves SC's, Sandbach JC's & SC's, Sedgley Park JC's & SC's, Southport JC's, Stockport JC's & SC's, Trafford MV JC's & SC's, Tyldesley JC's & SC's, Vale of Lune SC's, Whitchurch JC's & SC's, Widnes SC's, Wigan SC's. Wilmslow SC's, Winnington Park SC's and Wirral Gulls JC's & SC's.

Apologies received from : Chris Barrett (League Honorary Secretary), John Jeskins (MADREFS representative on league committee), Millom SC's, Ormskirk SC's, Preston Grasshoppers SC's and Tyldesley SC's

Absent without apologies : Caldý SC's, Orrell SC's, Tarleton SC's and West Park St Helens JC's.

The AGM was opened by Jon Kitchen at 7.30 pm welcoming all present. He set out how good organisation can lead to the successful participation in the league by teams. He thanked our long-time sponsors, Halbro Sportswear, and only asked that if teams were purchasing a new kit, Halbro be asked to give a price.

Mike Hull explained that a tube containing 2 separate sheets had been placed on tables for each club to take back. One was what referees say about officiating and higher instances of Match Official Abuse (MOA). The second sheet was for putting up in clubs highlighting this with the hope that MOA cases would be reduced or totally eradicated.

Secretary's report : In his absence, this was read by Jon Kitchen. The only correspondence specific to the AGM was an item being discussed in AOB.

The Regulations updates were proposed by Nick Hayes, seconded by Leanne Aspinall and carried unopposed.

The election of officers as posted on the league website were accepted and carried unopposed.

Any Other Business :

Discuss the 5 x Dates reserved for Lancashire & Cheshire CB U18's fixtures in the Age Grade Calendar (AGC). There were 3 proposals put to the meeting, i.e.

1. Clubs to agree that the Colts League contact Lancashire & Cheshire CB's to arrange to take back 3 of the 5 dates.
2. Current trigger to be able to postpone a league game is 4 players – Reduce trigger number to 3 or 2 players.
3. Lads selected to play a county game but do not play are not allowed to play in a Colts League fixture on the date of a county fixture.

Martin Henderson of Lymm SC's proposed the 3 proposals, and they were seconded by Mark Roberts of Sale FC SC's.

Martin highlighted that in previous seasons, there have been no Senior Colts games on CB U18 Assessment and Training days, i.e. games could be played on the 3 x CB game days with the proviso that clubs could apply for a postponement of a Colts League game if they had 4 or more players in a CB U18 matchday squad. Stopping any Colts League games being played on the additional 3 dates was penalising the overwhelming number of senior colts players from playing in a league game on the same dates.

Mike Henry said that it was not in the Colts League remit to reinstate the fixtures, it was the RFU. Rather he would suggest that representations be made to Aaron Howorth, RFU North Competition Manager. Also, there was no way to reinstate the 3 matchday dates in the 2024/25 season. Any discussion could only be for the 2025/26 season onwards.

Brian Stott said that the draft Structured Season, including the AGC, is sent by the RFU to the CB's who distribute it for consultation to the club GMS contacts. Once finalised, the final Structured Season, including the AGC, is once again distributed to competition secretaries and club GMS contacts.

Phil Mason said that he has recently taken over as Cheshire CB Minis & Junior Chairman. He will look to liaise with his Lancashire CB colleague to try to get a cross CB agreement. He said that he cannot understand the logic of standing down 95% of players on the 3 x CB U18 match days to accommodate the 5% playing county rugby.

Alan from Wirral spoke in favour of making representations to whoever can influence this decision so that the 3 dates might be reinstated.

John Pemberton from MADREFS asked whether the league should allow a game to be postponed if there was a combined number of 4 or more players from the 2 teams selected for a county matchday squad.

Phil Mason proposed that Proposal 2 be defeated so that the '4 players in a CB matchday squad' from 1 team be retained.

Votes were taken with Proposal 1 carried unanimously and Proposals 2 & 3 defeated.

Brian Stott then stood up and said that he would take back the feelings of the meeting to both the Lancashire & Cheshire CB's.

There being no further business, the AGM closed at 8.17 pm.