

Sussex RFU Competitions Committee

Minutes of the meeting on Thursday 21st April 2011 at Hove RFC

Present: K. Nichols, N.Lyons, M. Richardson, S. Flint, J. Thompson, P. Bailey

Apologies: J. Melody, M. Liley, C. Wise, M. Doyle

There were no preliminaries and the meeting got straight into the agenda.

Sussex 1.

First of all it was confirmed that Uckfield have been promoted and that Crawley will not be relegated from London SE3 due to a level transfer situation elsewhere in the league structure. There is also the possibility that Hastings & Bexhill may move to Kent 1 but that is yet to be resolved. St. Francis will definitely be relegated from Sussex 1.

There followed a lengthy discussion about the possible make-up of Sussex 1 for next season, including consideration of a proposal from James Melody which suggested a 10 team league comprising the surviving teams from 2010/11 plus Chichester III and Newick promoted from the Intermediate League. There would therefore be 7 1st teams and 3 lower XV's. However, it was agreed that we should continue to have a 12 team league if possible.

There was also a 'radical proposal' from Simon Flint which was considered with interest. This proposed splitting level 9 into 2 parallel leagues with 1A comprising the top 8 1st XV clubs and 1B comprising the top 8 2nd/3rd XV's of clubs competing in the London & SE leagues. The teams in each league would play each other home and away and all teams in league 1A would play all teams in league 1B once. This would provide 22 games for each team as currently with a 12 team league playing home and away. A similar format would pertain for Sussex 2 then Sussex 3 would be split East & West and Sussex 4 split East, West & Central, comprising a mixture of 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th teams as currently exist.

It was generally agreed that this proposal had some merit and deserved further consideration but was thought to be a bit too radical to introduce at Sussex 1 level, although it possibly could be introduced at Sussex 2 level. It was agreed to put the whole proposal to the clubs at the end of season Forum so that they may give it due consideration with a view to introducing the format for the 2012/13 season.

S.F. asked if the clubs in S1 are happy to continue to have a 12 team league and it was generally thought the answer is yes and that the players now are more interested in playing competitive league rugby than 'friendly' games. J.T. pointed out that we have a lot of successful clubs in Sussex playing at levels 8,7&6 with Worthing at level 4 and asked if it was thought that there may be enough good 2nd & 3rd XV's to form a separate league, probably playing at a higher level than Sussex1. It was generally thought that this was not the case as some clubs' 2nd teams are relatively weaker than others. It was agreed that the overall standard of Sussex 1 had improved in the last three seasons. It was accepted that some clubs have concerns about the inconsistency of standard of some of the lower teams, particularly of Worthing III. N.G. explained

some of the selection difficulties that they faced this season, including the lack of a regular captain. There was some discussion about the issue of not being able to check registered players for Worthing and it was hoped that this can be resolved for next season so that the League Secretary will have access to Worthing's list of registered players. It was suggested that Worthing should also provide a supplementary list of players likely to play for the 3rd team who do not appear on the club's main official registered list.

Ultimately, it was agreed that we would present the following proposal to the Forum meeting:

A.To amend the limit on the numbers of 2nd/3rd XV's in Sussex 1 to no more than 50%, but they will not be eligible for promotion.

When the previous limit of 1/3rd was introduced 3 years ago it was agreed to be subject to review after 2 years. Since then a number of clubs have improved their position in the London leagues resulting in more lower XV's of a higher standard and capable of playing at level 9.

B.Sussex 1 will comprise the following 12 teams for 2011/12:

Burgess Hill
Holbrook
Pulborough
Hastings & Bexhill
Seaford
Brighton II
Rye
East Grinstead II
Worthing III *
Eastbourne II
Chichester III
Newick

*It was not mentioned at the meeting that Worthing III's points tally for this season is subject to a deduction of 15 points for cancelling three fixtures so their position would be below East Grinstead II

It was agreed that if H&B do move to Kent the league will operate with 11 teams.

J.T. pointed out that we must present the agreed make-up of Sussex 1 to LDOC in time for their end of season meeting on 13th/14th May.

Sussex Leagues.

S.F. thought that some clubs want fewer league matches and to start later but it was felt that most are happy with things more or less as they are so it was agreed to carry on as before. M.R. will produce next season's leagues having sorted out promotions and relegations from this season, but perhaps starting a little later than previous years.

Sussex K.O Cups.

It was agreed that this season's new format with the extra tier, i.e. the Bob Rogers Cup, was a success despite some cancelled matches so we will maintain the 4 tier format for next season.

K.N. suggested holding the finals under floodlights but M.R. pointed out that this would limit us to only 4 possible venues. N.L. suggested having the two Trophy semi-finals under lights on the Friday evening of a normal cup weekend and it was agreed to put this forward as a proposal at the Forum.

Women's Competition.

In Mel Liley's absence K.N. reported that there will be a Women's 7s Tournament on Sunday 8th May at Worthing RFC and it was agreed that SRFU would cover the cost of a new Cup.

Forum.

The date of the Clubs Forum will be Wednesday 11th May at 7.30pm.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm (?)