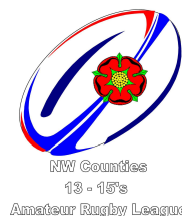


North West Counties 13 – 15 Junior Amateur Rugby
Meeting Minutes



Date of Meeting Wednesday 4th February 2009

Committee Members: Margaret Byrne (Chair)
 Sam Armstrong (League Sec. /Discipline Chair)
 Jayne Bissett (Treasurer)
 Lindsay Bissett (U13's Fixtures)
 Paul Edwards (U14's Fixtures & Reg Sec.)
 Brian Edwards (Reg Sec.)
 Jackie Clowes (U15's Fixtures Sec.)
 Paul Mitchell (Transfers Chair)
 David Lowe (Vice Chair/Ref. Appointments)

Apologies:

Next Meeting: Wed 4th March 2009 at 8.30pm, Golborne Parkside ARLFC

I. Attendance

Ashton Bears	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Blackbrook Royals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Blackpool Scorpions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Blackpool Stanley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bold Miners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Burtonwood Bulldogs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cadishead Rhinos	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chorley Panthers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Clockface	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Crosfields	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Culcheth Eagles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eccles & Salford Juniors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fitton Hill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Folly Lane	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Halton Farnworth Hornets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Haydock	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Higginshaw	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hindley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ince Rose Bridge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Langworthy Reds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Latchford Albion Unicorns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Leigh East	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Leigh Miners Rangers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Leyland Warriors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Moss Bank Bulldogs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Oldham St Anne's	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Orrell St James	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Golborne Parkside	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pilkington Recs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Portico Juniors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rochdale Mayfield	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rylands Sharks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Saddleworth Rangers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Shaw Rhinos	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Shevington Sharks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Thatto Heath Crusaders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Waterhead	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	West Bank Bears	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Westhoughton Lions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Widnes Moorfield	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Widnes St Maries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wigan St Cuthbert's	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Wigan St Jude's	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wigan St Patrick's	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Woolston Rovers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Clubs not present at the meeting have been fined £30 as outlined and minuted at the May 2008 meeting.

(Cheques to be made payable to NW Counties 13-15 ARL)

The Chair, Margaret Byrne, welcomed to the League's meeting Lance Todd Trophy winner and former Wigan, Bradford, Harlequins & dual code New Zealand RL/England RU International Henry Paul who attended to make the BARLA Northern Rail National Youth Cup draws for the U14's, U16's & U18's age groups.

Also welcomed were BARLA Chair Spen Allison and Youth Chair Carole Land along with Jaz Atwell and Eric Czerwionka – MD of the Utmost Affinity Group who brought along a party of delegates from Poland who were attending the meeting to see how a successful league is run, hopefully, with a view to developing the youth/junior game in Poland.

II. Minutes & Updates from the Last Meeting

The minutes of the January 2009 meeting which were posted on the NWC 13 – 15's website were proposed by Haydock and seconded by Wigan St Patricks.

III. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

IV. Correspondence

A statement was read out on behalf of Blackbrook Royals U14's clarifying their status following recent rumours of their team disbanding. This is **NOT** the case. They have recently appointed a new Coach (Andy Fairhurst - Tel: 07807 894196) and are currently aiming to fulfil all their fixtures. To achieve this they need the support of surrounding teams who are asked not to approach their players and try to entice them away whilst they rebuild.

(N.B. Any Club found guilty of attempting to poach players may find themselves facing disciplinary action)

V. Referee Appointments Coordinator's Report

There was no Referee Appointments Coordinators' report due to David Lowe's absence.

VI. U13's Fixture Secretary's Report/Registration Issues

The draws for the Quarter Finals & Semi Finals of the NW Counties U13'S Cup were kindly performed by Henry Paul and resulted in the fixtures below:

NWC Cup (Quarter Finals) - Sunday 15th February 2009.

Orrell St James v Folly Lane or Widnes Moorfield

Wigan St Jude's v Bold Miners

Rylands v Wigan St Patrick's

Langworthy or Leigh Miners Rangers v Ince Rose Bridge

NWC Cup (Semi Finals) - Sunday 1st March 2009.

Orrell St James, Folly Lane or Widnes Moorfield

v

Langworthy, Leigh Miners Rangers or Ince Rose Bridge

Rylands or Wigan St Patrick's

v

Wigan St Jude's or Bold Miners

II. U14's Fixture Secretary's Report/Registration Issues

Not much to report due to frost etc., however Paul Edwards highlighted that there was now a need for clubs, who have the necessary facilities, to try to help reduce the fixture backlog by arranging midweek fixtures where necessary as there is a danger that the season may come to a close before all the fixtures have been completed and any outstanding games would then be classed as draws.

Clubs were again asked that, if their own pitches are unplayable they contact their opposition to see if the fixture can be reversed before considering postponing. It was highlighted that some teams currently have good & fit pitches but no fixtures as games had been postponed rather than reversed.

The draw for the next round of the U14's BARLA Northern Rail National Youth Cup was kindly performed by Henry Paul and resulted in the fixtures below (NW Counties teams in bold):

Bold Miners v King Cross Park
Kells v Meltham All Blacks
Normanton Knights v Stanningley
Oldham St Annes/Ovenden v Newsome Panthers
Rylands Sharks v Beverley Braves
Shaw Cross Sharks v Whinmoor Warriors
Smawthorne Panthers v **Saddleworth Rangers**
West Hull v Siddal

VIII. U15's Fixture Secretary's Report/Registration Issues

Jackie Clowes echoed the sentiments of Paul and also asked that Clubs endeavour to get games played. Any clubs whose facilities are being unused but are fit were asked to make the Fixture Secretaries aware so that other teams could possibly use them and perhaps bring some much needed revenue into the clubs who have offered their facilities.

The draws for the next two rounds of the NW Counties U15's Cup were kindly performed by Henry Paul and resulted in the fixtures below:

Sunday 15th Feb (includes entry of Div 1 teams)

Ashton Bears v Shevington Sharks
Folly Lane/Shaw Rhinos v Latchford Albion Unicorns
Latchford Albion Giants v Burtonwood Bulldogs
Leigh East v Thatto Heath Crusaders
Leyland Warriors v Chorley Panthers
Oldham St Annes v Ince Rose Bridge
Saddleworth Rangers/Hindley v Waterhead
Wigan St Judes v Moss Bank Bulldogs

Sunday 1st March (includes entry of Prem Div teams)

Blackbrook Royals v Ashton Bears/Shevington Sharks
Folly Lane/Shaw Rhinos/Latchford Albion Unicorns v Oldham St Annes/Ince Rose Bridge
Golborne Parkside v Portico Vine
Latchford Albion Giants/Burtonwood Bulldogs v Wigan ST Judes/Moss Bank Bulldogs
Leigh East/Thatto Heath Crusaders v Halton Farnworth Hornets
Leigh Miners Rangers v Leyland Warriors/Chorley Panthers
Rylands Sharks v Wigan St Cuthberts
Saddleworth Rangers/Hindley/Waterhead v Wigan St Patricks

IX. Transfer Committee's Report

Paul Mitchell informed the floor that 3 or 4 transfer requests are currently being processed and he will be in touch with the relevant Club Secretaries soon. Clubs were reminded that the deadline for transfers is the 28th February - no transfers will be processed after that date.

X. BARLA Representative's Report & SGM

Prior to the SGM, and following the meeting between the League Secretary and BARLA on Thursday 29th January 2009, Spen Allison (BARLA Chair) & Carole Land (Youth & Junior Chair) were invited to address the meeting. Below is a copy of Spen/Carole's presentation.

Reasons to remain in BARLA

We've been invited to your meeting tonight to address you and we're very grateful for the opportunity extended to us, prior to you making an important decision on your future. We want you back at the Junior Forums, we need your input, we realise exactly the importance of your league and what you have got to offer. We've been asked in open forum just exactly what do BARLA do for junior rugby, well I'm here to try and answer that question in person. These are the services and benefits that the Association do deliver at present.

Since I took up office as the BARLA chairman, we have abolished all fees for junior players up to eleven years of age. All other age groups have enjoyed a 50% reduction on BARLA fees, this constitutes a loss for the association which totals in excess of £25,000 in fees. My ultimate goal would be to abolish BARLA fees completely. For the cost of £45 per annum you become a full and equal shareholder in an association which is in possession of substantial assets.

Insurance: *BARLA have brokered a far superior insurance policy, than any other on the market, which is offered to all associate personnel*

Competitions: *BARLA Provide & administer prestigious cup competition at all age groups. Northern Rail have been highly delighted with BARLA input and have requested further talks to extend their involvement*

Player compensation: *BARLA work in direct consultation with the RFL financial department to finalise and administer the compensation payments to amateur clubs. The present deal was in fact brokered by myself despite initial resistance from the RFL*

Appeals: *BARLA Provide And administer a comprehensive appeals & arbitration service. This service has been recently modernised*

Support: *BARLA provide high profile figures to enhance further cup competitions and functions. Traditionally, BARLA does not interfere with the running of your leagues, but we are always there to offer advice and guidance if required. We are constantly networking to uncover avenues of sponsorship and new income streams for the benefit of the whole of the organisation.*

Registration & ID cards: *It also administers and controls the transfer system.*

BARLA Annual Awards: *These prestigious and long running awards are open to all BARLA members and provide recognition for players, coaches, clubs, media, administrators and the whole spectrum of volunteering. Previous winners of the Youth player award include; David Heron, Derrick Fox, Andy Gregory and Rob Worrincy.*

CCPR Awards: BARLA are invited to submit three nominations annually direct to the CCPR

Rugby League Services: Most of the services that are provided by this department have been a direct result from initiatives that were introduced then developed by BARLA. These services were handed over to the RFL along with all BARLA staff to open the floodgates for millions of pounds of public money for the direct benefit of all sections of the game of rugby league.

Representative Rugby: BARLA provides the amateur game with representative rugby at county and International level. On the International scene, BARLA have made a major impact on the expansion of the game. In pre BARLA days, amateur internationals were limited to annual exchanges with France. Since 1977, BARLA extended its boundaries 12,000 miles to take in Australia and New Zealand. Since that day there have been no less than 40 tours to and from the Southern hemisphere, these include pioneering visits to; Fiji, Western Samoa, Tonga, The Cook Islands and in 1993 BARLA provided the first Great Britain team to tour South Africa. Other countries visited include; Moldavia, Russia, Morocco, USA Serbia and Italy. The International Board was delighted with BARLA's role in the International expansion of the game and that work was recognised by BARLA's inclusion as affiliate members of the International Federation and furthermore by BARLA's inclusion of the Emerging Nations World Cup, which they won in the year 2000. Even as recent as 2008 the BARLA chairman visited Pakistan, Dubai and Poland.

New Initiatives: Since BARLA handed over the responsibilities of its initiatives, we're following different directions for the association. One of the most important of these, more so in this time of recession, is the introduction of the BARLA Utmost Affinity Group whose priority is to raise income streams and support for the BARLA leagues and clubs. An example of its success is the recent sponsorship with one of your own clubs, Portico Vine, who have just been made the benefactor of a three year shirt sponsorship deal.

Listening to our membership and its needs, we've now introduced the BARLA Forum in an attempt to open a more direct means of communication. We have also introduced a 24/7 telephone which adds to methods of communications. We are actively involved in the development of a full time BARLA officer. We fully appreciate the financial situation of some clubs, so I hasten to add that all these new initiatives arrive at BARLA without any cost to any members of the association. BARLA do remain fully committed on the expansion of the game and identify the need remain a united family.

We recognise the importance of you league and the great values, you bring to the game. We also consider it very important to halt the fragmentation of clubs. You the juniors are the life lines and the very future of your individual clubs and I cannot stress enough the need for clubs to remain whole. I would urge you to strongly consider returning as a full member of The British Amateur Rugby League Association.

Spen & Carole were asked from the floor "Why has it taken so long to get round the table with the League?" and replied that it was acknowledged that it should indeed have happened sooner and that all agree that it had benefitted no-one but that they had had a constructive meeting with Sam

Armstrong and have now gained a better understanding of the League and hope to build on that.

There was concern that the Board was perceived to be Open-Age orientated and that sometimes Youth/Junior issues were being dealt with by people without the necessary grassroots knowledge of issues affecting our age-groups. Spen replied that the Board consisted of 4 x Open-Age Representatives & 4 x Youth/Junior Representatives. He explained that he had spoken to the OA Reps to ensure that a better understanding of Youth/Junior issues was adopted. The sad death of Carole Land's husband Trevor has meant that the balance is at present slightly skewed and this will be addressed but has not currently been done so as a mark of respect for Trevor which the League appreciated and understood.

Margaret Byrne thanked Spen & Carole for their address and then announced that voting for the issue raised in the SGM would take place. Every club was represented and was given a voting card with four options and the right to abstain if they so wished.

The question put to the floor was
"Which direction should the NW Counties 13-15's League take?"

The 45 represented Clubs voting cards were collected and the following results reported. There were 8 Clubs who wished to abstain from voting meaning that 37 Clubs voted for an option.

Option 1 - Re-apply for Full membership of BARLA and have voting rights via them (Votes 13 = 35.1%)

Option 2 - Remain as Associate Members of BARLA with no voting rights via them (Votes 1 = 2.7%)

Option 3 - Remain as Associate Members of BARLA but register our votes via the RFL's Community Boards' "Other Leagues". (Votes 5 = 13.5%)

Option 4 - Leave BARLA completely and seek representation solely via the RFL's Community Boards' "Other Leagues". (Votes 18 = 48.6%)

As there is currently a requirement for a two-thirds majority, no single option could be adopted and therefore our status will remain the same for the time being.

It was recognised and highlighted to the Management Committee that there were possibly too many options available which had possibly diluted the vote but it was felt that every option had to be made available in the first instance.

Whilst no overall decision was made, the fact that nearly 50% of our Club's recommended that the League should leave BARLA entirely should, we feel, be a major matter of concern for the Association. These sentiments were relayed to the BARLA Chair following the meeting and hopefully this will be taken back to the BARLA Board with the obvious discontent then being looked into as a matter of urgency.

XI. Disciplinary Chairman's Report

Hearing Notifications were issued to several clubs for cases which were to be heard on Thursday 19 February 2009 at Golborne Parkside Sports & Community Club.

Verdict Notifications were issued to clubs for cases which were heard on Thursday 22nd January 2009 at Golborne Parkside Sports & Community Club.

XII. Any Other Business

The Treasurers' Report showed that the League had a balance of £12153 at the time of the meeting.

Sam and Jackie explained how, at the Youth & Junior Congress which took place at Bradford Bulls' Coral Stand on 27th January 2009, the issue of Summer Rugby which we had tabled as an agenda item was discussed with the other Regional Playing Leagues as requested by our Clubs.

Overall it would appear, from their responses, that the move (certainly for younger age-groups) has been very successful with large increases in participants, however, there are issues that would need to be investigated and addressed before any move was implemented.

We have, on the back of the meeting, been approached to enquire whether we would be interested in participating in a trial programme this summer to determine a set of measurable criteria as part of a feasibility study. The League are in favour of this trial and will seek to work with the various parties to bring this, what we believe to be a groundbreaking programme for an established League, to fruition.

We will, of course, keep everyone up to date, as we receive more information.

The date of the next meeting at Golborne Parkside will be the 4th March 2009 commencing at 8.30pm.