

 **WRGFL DECEMBER MEETING MINUTES**

 **MONDAY 4 DECEMBER 2023 - 8PM**

**1. Chairperson – Welcome**Craig Webb (CW) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for their attendance.

1. **Roll Call**CW took the roll call of Clubs. Clubs were added and marked as ‘in attendance’ as they came online. CW confirmed he would take a further register at the end of the meeting to catch any clubs who may have joined the meeting late. Those Clubs not attending the meeting would be fined in accordance with the SCORY fines tariff.

Those Clubs who were not in attendance and being fined £25.00 were:

Amaranth Crossgates, Bramley Amigos, Brayton Belles, Brodsworth Welfare, Calverley United, Carlton Athletic, Castleford Town, Castleford White Rose, Eldwick Juniors, Golcar United, Goole Town Tigers, Halifax FC, Kellingley Welfare, Kirkheaton Youth, Kirkstall Crusaders, Knaresborough Celtic, Leeds 28, Linthwaite FC, Pinfold Pumas, Queensbury Celtic, Redfearns Women, Ryburn United Women, Shadwell United, Sherburn White Rose, The Hunslet Club, Thornhill AFC, West End Terriers, Westend FC and Wigton Moor.

**3. Discipline**Russ Clarke (RC) opened the topic on Discipline by stating, that like many football leagues up and down the Country, there had been a marked rise in the poor behaviour of Club Officials, Managers/Coaches, players, and Spectators at WRGFL games. The poor practise and behaviour had been building over the last couple of seasons and was now going to be challenged in the strongest fashion possible.

Last season a Club was threatened with expulsion from the WRGFL if it did not get a hold of the then Secretary, several Managers/Coaches, players, and spectators. That Club did work hard and was accepted back into the WRGFL for season 2023/2024. The previous Secretary and one of the teams were not allowed to continue and had left the Club. This season one Club had already been at a disciplinary meeting with the WRGFL and was now under tight supervision.

As a league we do talk to managers/coaches and parents if they contact us. We engage with them as we feel it is the best way to resolve any matters that arise, the practise is very close to ending as some managers/coaches had absolutely no understanding of how to behave when contacting the WRGFL.

RC was at a game a couple of weeks ago and had to leave the sideline of that game to go over to a game on another pitch the other side of the ground, a good distance away. Two people, a coach and a parent could be heard all over the ground, and whilst what they were shouting was quite supportive of their team/daughter the parent involved will probably drive his daughter from the game within a season and the coach will teach by her actions alone some very poor practise. RC had to intervene on the day as supporters on other pitches were becoming quite annoyed at what had been going on.

RC noted Stacey would be covering discipline in more detail in her report, so RC moved directly to agenda item number 5, The League Welfare Officers Report. **4. Secretary’s Report**No report as everything RC wished to report to the League Council was contained in other officer reports.
 **5. League Welfare Officers Report**Stacey Timlin (ST) noted that sadly there has been a huge uplift in poor behaviours and club sanctions given by WRCFA so far this season. The first sanction was given on the first official game day of the season which had been disappointing to see and poor behaviour had sadly continued from that point. ST was sure that Clubs would all agree and understood that the poor behaviour/practice could not continue.

ST said that moving forward if any club or individual from a club received an official charge from the WRCFA, the WRGFL would be in contact with the committee of that club to hold a meeting to discuss the reason for the charge and look at the next steps. If the WRGFL received 3 complaints of tier 1 and/or tier 2 Concerns (as outlined in the WRCFA reporting process) about any Club, again the WRGFL would be in contact with that clubs committee to arrange a meeting to discuss the concerns and the next steps, the next steps could lead to that club and its teams being expelled from WRGFL for poor continued behaviour and practices. None of us want to see Clubs/teams being expelled from the WRGFL though it would be the final action for non-compliant clubs did not follow the FA rules regarding Safeguarding, welfare, and disciplinary matters.

ST confirmed the WRGFL had already started the process of sitting down with some Club Committees to discuss current concerns and the next steps. Although the meetings were being set up because of elements of how the clubs were conducting themselves in relation to respect and behaviour, RT did say the meetings had been proactive and collaborative, with a clear understanding of what needed to happen next with the full support of the WRGFL to help clubs achieve the desired outcome. It had also been highlighted to the Clubs what the consequences were regarding failing to make improvements but she was confident the Clubs could turn those pressing matters into a more positive experience for everyone involved.

RT noted that at the beginning of the year she held a SGM with all Club Welfare Officers at the WRCFA, the meeting was to discuss the new processes for logging and dealing with welfare issues raised under Tier 1 and 2. RT said there had been some great results with clubs who had followed the new processes, which had opened doors for respect being shown and club-to-club desired outcomes being achieved by all involved. ST thanked for their time and for following the processes to ensure everyone got a fair hearing.

For anyone who was not sure what Tier 1 and 2 complaints are ST attached the slide from the meeting back in January 2023 (can be seen at the end of the minutes). ST said to be clear the WRGFL**DOES NOT** cover Tier 3 and 4, that was the WRCFA.

As a matter of course ST would be sending out the Process Map to all CWO’s and Secretaries to ensure that had any changes in club personnel been made since the start of the season everyone got picked up.

ST asked all Clubs to brief their Managers/Coaches on the processes as there were lots of concerns/complaints sent straight to RC’s email address, which was great but was clogging up his inbox and causing a time delay as the correct processes were not being followed. ST wanted to see a more robust and streamlined way of working across the WRGFL and Managers/Coaches being briefed on processes would help that.

ST… ONE LAST THING FROM HER – ST asked all Clubs to send in their good news stories, things like where teams had played another and that team had created a safe space for everyone to enjoy grassroots football, where had you felt welcome and had respect shown towards you, your players and parents, who had the best-supporting parents and what had that looked like...... ST wanted to champion all the amazing welfare and safeguarding practices that go on within the WRGFL all the time.
 **6. Fixture Secretary’s Report (to include U7-U11 Division Report)**RC said that the season was proving to be as challenging if not more so than seasons past. The number of games that had already been postponed which had not weather related was already far too high. RC explained that the WRGFL took a very soft approach to postponements because we believed in the main it helped… how long that could continue with the continued abuse of the softly-softly approach by some teams was a matter the MC would be discussing at the next MC Meeting.

What the WRGFL had expected this season and had already noted, was that when postponing a game due to players not being available teams noted each player who was missing the game and why they were missing the game on the postponement form. RC confirmed that If that did not happen from games starting in January 2024, the WRGFL would refuse the postponement and the game would be awarded to your opposition, unless the postponement request was updated quickly with the information we required after the WRGFL’s first refusal. Should that information not be provided at all, and the game not played the defaulting team would lose the points and be fined, where points were not played for the club would be fined.

RC confirmed that the U7-U11 Development Divisions would be looked at over the Christmas break and the divisions hopefully made more competitive. Many Clubs had already sent in requests, if teams had still to do so they were asked to do so prior to 16 December 2023. New fixtures would be published for all Development Divisions from January 2023. RC explained that meant teams could play each other more than twice during the 2023/2024 season. It was the WRGFL’s intention from next season, 2024/2025 to trial 2 up 2 down where we could in the Development Divisions.

 **7. 12/U13 Fixture Secretary’s Report**No Report.

**8. U14/U15 Fixture Secretary’s Report**No Report.
 **9. U16/U17 Fixture Secretary’s Report**No Report.
 **10. U18 Fixture Secretary’s Report**CW confirmed the following:

As of 04/12/23:

* 3 x teams played 8 out of 11 games.
* 3 x teams played 7 out of 11 games.
* 3 x teams played 6 out of 11 games.
* 1 x team played 5 out of 11 games.
* 2 x teams played only 4 out of 11 games.

In the main, all managers seemed to be working well together to get games played.

5 x fixtures were to be re-arranged (all from 02/12/23).

Post Christmas fixtures would be looked at and moved around to best fit the remaining games to be played as there were some big gaps currently due to the number of postponements.

Not sure what the next step was with regards a further round of fixtures – a meeting would be held in the new year.

Possibility that the Cup/Shield games would be brought forward as a result of the meeting to be held.

**11. Registration Secretary’s Report**

RC in Catrin Ridyard’s (CR) absence reported that there were 5788 players registered in the WRGFL and he expected to break the 6,000-player mark by the end of season 2023/2024.

Dual registered players:

RC confirmed that no player could play within the same age group for two teams. In the Development Divisions should the need arise for a team to borrow a player on a particular day so a game could be played the WRGFL would consider that, however, in the Published Divisions no player would ever be permitted to play for 2 teams in the same age group.

A player could play for 2 teams in 2 age groups in the WRGFL. The teams could be from the same club or two separate clubs.

The WRGFL continued to trial an initiative for the FA where a proper U14 could sign for a team at U15 and U16, so a two-year age banding. It was hoped that this would see teams in the older age groups be able to recruit more players and provide sustainable divisions at U16, U17 and U18. The trial seemed to have had no impact on that at all.

A reminder that at the beginning of March 2024 the WRGFL would be invoicing Clubs for all players registered with the Club. Each player would be charged £2. Players signed for the first time after or on 1 March 2024 could play the remainer of the season without charge.

The last day for transfers was the last day of February 2024. No transfers would be permitted after that date. Players signed by Clubs after the last day in February 2024 would not be eligible to play in any knockout competitions.

**12. Referee Secretary’s Report**No Report.

**13. WRCLGS Report**James Todd (JT) noted that since the last League Council Meeting in September 2023 the West Riding Girls County Rep squads had continued their training on a three weekly basis and had played fixtures against teams such as Harrogate Town, Huddersfield Town, and Doncaster Elite.  The standard on display in those games and at training had been extremely high, so credit must go to those coaches and the clubs whose players have been selected to represent The West Riding.

The first weekend of January 2024 would see the WRCLGS’s host visiting teams from Australia as the Australin Wanderers make their third visit to see us.

We were in the process of confirming fixtures with York City, Lincoln City, Rotherham United, Sheffield United and Manchester City for the early part of next year, 2024.

Trials would be taking place again during summer 2024 for places in next season U15, U14 and U13 squads, and a new intake at U10's. JT asked all clubs within the WRGFL to support this to allow the WRGFL to showcase the talent the region had to offer.

 **14. FA Future Lionesses Report**No Report.

**15. Social Media/Website Update**No Report.

**16. Skillabus**Colin from Skillabus addressed the League Council and went through the Skillabus Programme. It was confirmed that the Programme was being rolled out to all players in the WRGFL free of charge as part of a partnership with the WRGFL.

The WRGFL had paid a fee of £900 for each player to have a season’s membership. RC would be contacting each players parents/Carers prior to Christmas with ‘the Christmas Gift’ in the hope that many signed up and get the benefits the programme has to offer.

 **17. AOB**There were two items of AOB. Horsforth SM asked visiting teams to accept the KO times at the Club which were always within the WRGFL core hours. Teams had been refusing to attend games kicking off at 12:00/12:30.

Wortley Girls asked all teams to respect their home playing day of Sunday. The League Council had agreed to those Clubs playing on a Sunday historically in the WRGFL to continue to do so until the teams’ journey in the WRGFL came to an end. Wortley had 2 teams that played at home on a Sunday, and each was having a hard time arranging games as teams seemed surprised the fixture was on a Sunday.