Governance Report

Date – 17.10.2025

Report compiled by Rob Gibson

Key events, issues, and achievements since the last report.

Adult Discipline Report

There have been 4 disciplinary issues to deal with in September

- A citing raised by a Durham side in a match in Northumberland where a player was stamped on was found proven following a contested hearing and a mid entry 4 week suspension imposed
- Two red cards (separate matches) with guilty pleas both dealt with as low entry one match suspensions
- One red card was dismissed as it did not meet the threshold

A referral was made by Durham relating to a possible 5.12 incident but on investigation NFA was needed based on the lack of evidence and the assurance from the club as to spectator warnings.

Age Grade Discipline Report

Five very different cases resolved in September-

- Morpeth Colt red card
- Cumbria CB red card in a Colts game v a N'land Club
- School U12 foul play issue
- U15 inter club (Durham & N'land) issue
- U19 [adult] at an Academy playing for a club

Detail forwarded to Chair of Governance

Safeguarding Report

We currently have no serious ongoing safeguarding investigations.

RugbySafe Report

There has been a serious injury reported to an age-grade player at Morpeth. Morpeth were advised to report to RFU so the IPF could reach out and help navigate help, insurance, etc. This was delayed and parents contacted RFU directly blasting the club. This was passed to me by RFU RugbySafe Lead. I reached out to Morpeth. The report was delayed going in due to personal issues for the club volunteer. The form was then submitted and family contacted by club. Must note that the coach and manager of the players team had been in touch with the Mum on more than one occasion since the incident, it was just the RFU report that was delayed. Morpeth have requested that in future I contact more than one person at the club – noted.

A parent made contact with county office and school asking if their son could play rugby for school on day 17 post suspected concussion. Both school and myself contacted the parent

and reiterated that earliest return to play is 21 days. Whilst the RFU GRAS states it is a pathway not a protocol and may be individualised, the 21 days return to play is non-negotiable. It is more that some players may require longer at certain stages.

Current and impending issues, events, and work streams

Age Grade Discipline Report
Awaiting the RFU information pamphlet re Age Grade Discipline.

Safeguarding Report
The issue of inclusivity has raised itself again. We have a current age grade player who has been retained in the game by good management and the use of 'player on a page' however due to some recent issues there are some clubs who are apparently going to refuse to play the team if the player in question is involved. I have asked the County Chair of Age Grade to put something out to all clubs regarding the need to be inclusive. This issue has also highlighted the need for improved relationships between safeguarding and age grade discipline.

There have also been a couple of incidents of poor behaviour from spectators/coaches and players. These have been dealt with by the respective clubs.

RugbySafe Report
Clubs need to be chased regarding completing their annual First Aid Risk Assessments as these are mandatory under Regulation 9 and should have been completed and declared as such on GMS by end of September. The RFU will be contacting clubs in November who have not declared this as completed on GMS. From the October Data Run on First Aid Risk Assessments that I have been provided by the RFU the following Northumberland Clubs have either not declared the FA Risk Assessment as completed, or it is over a year since they completed it:

- Alnwick RUFC – not recorded at all
- Ashington Joint Welfare RFC – 2 years old
- Berwick Upon Tweed RFC – 1 year old
- Blyth RFC – 2 years olds
- Border Park RFC – YES but no date
- Gosforth RFC – not recorded and NO RugbySafe Lead!
- Medicals RFC – states NO
- Morpeth RFC - YES but no date
- Newcastle Ravens RFC – Yes but about to expire 1 year
- North Shields RFC - Yes but about to expire 1 year
- Northern FC - Yes but about to expire 1 year
- Novocastrians RFC – Yes but no date and NO RugbySafe Lead.
- Percy Park RFC - Yes but about to expire 1 year
- Ponteland RFC - Yes but about to expire 1 year
- Prudhoe and Stocksfield RFC – Yes but no date
- Seghill RFC – yes but 1 year old
- Tynedale RFC – Yes, completed January 2025
- Wallsend RFC – Yes but 2 years old
- West Tynedale RFC – still exist? No Risk Ax and no RS Lead
- Whitley Bay Rockcliff RFC – Yes but about to expire

Issues requiring Decision, Discussion or Dissemination

Adult Discipline Report

The RFU Disciplinary and Safeguarding Conference takes place in May/June and numbers of attendees is needed. It is likely that there will be 2/3 attendees from Discipline (FMcD, Alan Beddis and Kingsley Hyland) and we need clarity as to numbers from safeguarding as I suspect we will be limited to 5 in total

Age Grade Discipline Report

26 August proposed a 'Way Forward' re Age Grade tours (overnight) in England following a problem at the end of last season, this was referred to in my August Report, action?

Coordination with Safeguarding, this was referred to in the August Report. There are still issues and I suggest a meeting to evolve a process within RFU Regulations.

Safeguarding Report

the annual safeguarding audit s underway and we have 3 clubs left to submit their by the end of October. I am sensitively chasing them up

RugbySafe Report

ALL clubs need chased to either complete or review FA Risk Assessment and update on GMS. The Howdens FA Risk Assessment can be completed through GMS with drop down menus, etc. Please can this be disseminated to them before they receive letters from RFU in November!

Rep rugby is underway and physio cover being sorted. We need tape – pretty much nothing left! Has the budget been approved?

NB – This report must not include personal or identifiable data as it may be appended to the Board Minutes. If there is a need to report on a Confidential matter, please forward that communication separately, marked 'Confidential'.