

Notes of DMG / Coaches meeting 5 June 2014

### Coaching

- Steve Palmer (SP) noted an interest in speaking with Elite S&C coach to ensure club training programme does not impact on Elite training.
- Rob Tarr (RT) commented that the Elite open door policy for coaches was beneficial and he had taken up the offer.
- RT observed that with a greater variety of disabilities now represented in the sport, coaches would benefit from a greater understanding, including where medication is involved. Kirsty Clarke (KC) commented that this was the reasoning behind the Coaching Strategy not providing basic level descriptors (e.g. Level 1 etc) as the sport needs to understand the different needs. Lorraine Brown (LB) also noted that Elite are gaining greater knowledge on CP players.
- Darren Matthews (DM) highlighted the importance of being able to communicate effectively with players, and understanding the mental impact their disability can have. LB suggested that this could be raised further at the Coaching Conference.
- Mike Spence (MS) raised the issue of Safeguarding, noting that disabled people are classed as vulnerable adults, and that this is also important considering that the sport has children participating with adults, and adults at different cognitive levels.

### Competition

- RT suggested that the Nationals 2015 would be a good time to link with schools / invite pupils to the tournament, as this will grow fans and give young people a greater understanding of disability sport.
- Regarding the Nationals being held at the Copperbox, Graham Kamaly (GK) noted the importance of holding competitions in large arenas, with regard to the atmosphere and experience for the players.
- Keith Jones (KJ) questioned the number of courts available at the Copperbox – David Pond (DP) confirmed 3.

### Non-classifiable players

- RT commented on his experience of RugbyWheels programmes, and the rewarding nature of working with people with learning disabilities and understanding how to engage / communicate effectively.
- MS noted the transferrable nature of these skills, as they can be brought back to clubs to aid working with different groups.
- MS also noted that programmes with non-classifiable players do lead to engagement with classifiable groups.
- Richard Allcroft (RA) noted that variations of the sport are taking place, and GBWR's need to understand the aspirations of these variations. It was commented that there is minimal risk, however this does exist to membership numbers / sponsorship, and suggested that it is easier to control other variations if brought under the GBWR umbrella.
- RT noted that the 3.5 / low-point variation exists without detriment to the 8 point game, and that variations with players of higher function may not necessarily harm the 8 point game. SP commented that the 3.5 game only incorporates low point players.

- DM noted concern that a version with more functional players could be more marketable, and SP highlighted the potential for these players to create a faster/ more exciting game for spectators. MS commented that this could reduce the tactical appeal present in the current version.
- SP questioned the value to the 8 point game, in the extra work to raise funds for these new variations. MS again noted that classifiable players have been identified through variation games.
- Jonathan Marsh (JM) noted that Canterbury welcome all players with a disability, regardless of classification, and that even those unable to classify get value from engaging in a team sport. These players also help develop classifiable players through training, and a large club base helps to increase club recognition in the community, increasing the chance of sponsorship.
- LB noted that wheelchair rugby is in its infancy compared with other sports, and is currently developing / evolving.
- Richard Wilding (RW) highlighted that where there is a risk of other variations gaining popularity, it is better we have ownership.
- DP noted that the BOM understand the need to maintain the game in its current form.

#### **Costs**

- JM questioned GBWR's turnover and DP confirmed over £1m, primarily from UK S / SE, with additional income from sponsors, membership and fundraising.

#### **New Club Model**

- KJ questioned whether clubs end up reaching the levels described in the club model through natural progression. DP noted that this was correct, however GBWR wishes to formalise and give structure to the process.
- JM questioned whether GBWR membership would be linked with the RFU system. DP confirmed that GBWR is not, and has no intention of, being a constituent of the RFU. Where a club is linked to an RFU club, this will provide a good governance basis and support them in the accreditation process.

#### **IWRF General Assembly**

- LS asked who would be representing GBWR at the IWRF GA, and this was confirmed as DP who highlighted the need for member input to ensure votes are in line with the wishes of the membership.

#### **Invictus**

- Richard Cartwright (RC) noted that whilst the Invictus Games will involve a game variant, as it will be played in rugby wheelchairs with a round ball, the public will be ignorant to the differences and this will only serve to positively promote the sport.
- Amanda Thomas (AT) noted that the GB players have some experience through the military programmes, and DP commented that the experience of other nations is still unknown.
- KJ highlighted concern that Invictus has arrived and GBWR has no ownership of the wheelchair rugby element. DP advised that this was due to being unable to own the



wheelchair rugby brand. Lee Stutely (LS) questioned whether this could be looked at further, however Ross Morrison (RM) advised that the IWRF had explored this.

- LS questioned whether having no ownership of wheelchair rugby brand would pose issues with ClubMark accreditation. KC noted that ClubMark is a seal of approval, which GBWR can have regardless of ownership of wheelchair rugby as a brand. Additionally, our sport holds recognition with the Sports Councils.
- DM questioned whether the rules of the game could be trademarked if wheelchair rugby as a brand name cannot. RA agreed to take this to the IWRF to be explored.

#### **WWRC15**

- Amanda questioned whether BT had explored as a sponsor. DP confirmed that BT, BT Sport and Jaguar Land Rover were being explored as title sponsors.