

Border League Meeting – 9 September 2019

Presentation

In 1996 I was the CEO of Scottish First Division Rugby Ltd, an organisation set up, by the 12 Premier League Clubs, to present the benefits of having Clubs deliver the Club game, of professional rugby, in Scotland.

The main reasoning behind this proposal was that having autonomous, professional clubs would encourage and enable commercial investment into the game and, in turn, it would provide a stronger, financial base from which the game would continue to develop. The SRU would be able to focus on the International game and provide intellectual, together with financial support, for the Club game, at all levels.

Since 1996, the Scottish Rugby Union have, gradually, increased their control over all aspects of the game and there is little sign of them considering loosening the control that they have acquired.

As a result, there is no route for an individual Club to seriously benefit from the professional development within the game.

We should not underestimate the importance of Rugby Union and its Clubs to their local communities and the Scottish Borders Region as a whole.

As individual Clubs, with purely individual thoughts, any one Club could be swallowed up with the ever increasing and accelerating changes in society, never mind the game of rugby itself.

As a group or body of Clubs, with an agreed ethos, structure, policy and set of objectives, but with individual Clubs having the autonomy to develop their own direction, we can look to support each other and present, agreed, future proposals, to the SRU and other bodies.

I suggest that we need to fully review what the rugby community is doing, within the Scottish Borders, at present. We should then consider what changes are required to produce the quality of business administration, management, coaching, player and player welfare, together with an ethos, which will enable us to present the “Best Way Forward for “Scottish Border Rugby”.

My focus would be on attempting to have Melrose Rugby Ltd. accept this and to fully support the transfer of semi-professional / professional rugby, within the Scottish Borders, to a “Scottish Border centric entity”, owned by the Scottish Border clubs.

This needs to be written as part of the Melrose Rugby Ltd Super 6 strategy, within their business **objectives and one which the SRU are fully aware of.**

Proposal

- The Border League agree to reviewing its Constitution, with the objective of creating an entity, which is the decision making body for future, rugby policy change, within the Scottish Borders
- The Border League agree to setting up a “Working Group” to research, consider and propose change.

South of Scotland / Scottish Borders Rugby Working Group

Suggested Areas for Consideration

Administrative Structure

- Review the existing Border League Committee constitution, powers and objectives.
- Amend the above to enable Scottish Borders Rugby Clubs to review their administrative, playing and other structures in order that new policy can be discussed, agreed and then proposed, as a Region, to the Scottish Rugby Union, for ratification.

Super 6 / Semi-Professional / Professional Rugby

- Create a truly, Scottish Borders Team, owned by Scottish Borders Clubs, with the objective of competing at the highest, professional level that the SRU will accept and fully support.

Senior / Junior / Semi-Junior / Youth Rugby

- Review existing structures and propose any perceived improvements

Women's Rugby

- Review existing structures and propose any perceived improvements

Scottish Borders Academy

- Review existing objectives, assess current performance and propose any criteria/performance changes

Sevens Rugby

- Review existing structures and propose any perceived improvements

Referees Society

- Review existing structures and propose any perceived improvements

Keith Robertson

Earlston, September 2019