

# MINUTES

## RLEF LIMITED

### ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING 2017

<b>Location</b>	Stari Grad Municipality, Belgrade	<b>Date</b>	Saturday 24 June 2017
<b>Chair</b>	Maurice Watkins (RFL)	<b>Time</b>	2.30pm
<b>Members present</b>	Andrew Pilkington (Asociación Española de RL), Andrey Zhukov (Association of Rugby League Clubs), Gerard Keenan (Czech RL Association), Mathieu Khedimi, Marc Palanques (Federation Française de Rugby a XIII), Tiziano Franchini (Federazione Italiana RL), Romeo Monteith (Jamaican RL Association), Remond Safi (Lebanese RL Federation), David Axisa, Jean Pierre Zarb (Malta RL), Jason Bruygoms, Timo Meinders (Nederlandse RL Bond), Nigel Wood (Rugby Football League), Des Foy (RL Ireland), Adrian Seglem (RL Norge), Bob Baxendale (Scotland RL), Predrag Pantic, Blagoje Stojilkovic (Serbian RL Federation), Roman Bykhov, Artur Martyrosyan (Ukrainian Federation RL), Brian Juliff (Wales RL)		
<b>Observers present</b>	Aris Dardamanis (Greek RL Association), Zsolt Lukacs, Balint Mezes (Hungarian RL Federation).		
<b>Proxies</b>	United States Association of RL (represented by RLEF company secretary)		
<b>Co. Secretary</b>	Danny Kazandjian		
<b>In attendance</b>	Adam Vernon (Albania), Zeljko Ljubanic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Stephen Nemeth (Hungarian RL Federation), Tom Mather, Paul Nicholson, Phil Smith, Graeme Thompson, Jovan Vujosevic, James Vukmirovic (RLEF), David Collier (RL International Federation), Miodrag Skoknic (Serbian RL Federation) Gurol Yildiz (Turkish RL Association)		
<b>Apologies</b>	Jean Du Christ Rusiga (Burundi RL Association), Paul O'Keefe (Canada RL Association), Richard Naylor (Danmark RL Forbund), Vilmars Sokolovs (Latvia RL), Bob Doughton (Nationaler RL Deutschland), Lukasz Lucka (Polska Rugby XIII), Sally Bolton (RLEF), Adam Kirk (Svensk RL Förening)		

**Absent** Belgium (BRLA), Ethiopia (ERL), Morocco (FMRL), Ghana (RLFG), Nigeria (RLN), Palestine (PRL), Saudi Arabia (SARLA), Sierra Leone (SLRLF), Trinidad & Tobago (TTRL)

**Item No. Agenda Item Who**

**1.0 ROLL CALL OF VOTING REPRESENTATIVES & APOLOGIES**

Maurice Watkins opened the meeting, welcoming all the delegates and recording the apologies. Danny Kazandjian called the roll. The meeting was declared quorate, with all but two members present.

Following the roll call Mr Watkins thanked Serbian RL Federation for its hosting and paid tribute to Serbian rugby league veteran Miodrag Skoknic, who was in the room. Mr Watkins then congratulated Federazione Italiana RL for attaining full membership, Nederlandse RL Bond for attaining affiliate membership, and the Bulgarian RL Federation for achieving official observer status, emphasizing the importance of membership to stability. He welcomed delegates from Albania and Bosnia & Herzegovina to the meeting; wished all the RLEF members participating in the 2017 RLWC the best of luck; and wished Marc Palanques and the French federation the best for a successful Wheelchair RL World Cup later in the summer. Finally, he congratulated Nigel Wood on his re-election to the chair of the RLIF.

**2.0 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 29 October 2016 were presented and unanimously approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING**

**3.1 Lodge resolution amending Articles 18 and 19 of RLEF constitution and amended articles to Companies House.**

Danny Kazandjian confirmed this had been done.

**3.2 Appoint Haysmacintyre to audit the RLEF's 2016 accounts.**

Danny Kazandjian confirmed this had been done.

### **Rugby League Ireland written resolution on EuroTag.**

3.3 Maurice Watkins reported that the polls closed on 5 January 2017 and the members voted 22-13 against the motion, which was defeated. Mr Watkins reminded Council that this was the first written resolution raised by a member and thanked RLI for proposing it.

### 3.4 **Annual Council Meeting minutes published on [www.rlef.eu.com](http://www.rlef.eu.com).**

Danny Kazandjian confirmed all approved minutes are now on the website. Maurice Watkins said this sets a good example of organisational transparency and that the 2016 minutes would be added to the website.

### 4.0 **CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT – MOTION TO STRIKE ARTICLE 66(F)**

Maurice Watkins reported that the UK Equalities Act (2010) allows for age or other characteristics as determinants in society, but that there is no “objective justification” to support a blanket prohibition on company directors based on age, which article 66(f) does.

*Council moves to amend Article 66(f) of RLEF constitution.*

Nigel Wood (Rugby Football League) moved and Brian Juliff (Wales RL) seconded the motion. The Special Resolution was carried unanimously.

DK

**ACTION: lodge the resolution and amended articles with Companies House.**

### 5.0 **ELECTION OF DIRECTOR**

Maurice Watkins sought Council’s retroactive ratification of Sally Bolton’s appointment to the Board. Article 61 states that the Board nominates Independent Directors to Council, which then elects the nominee(s). The RLEF omitted to make such a nomination to Council on 29 October 2016. Sally Bolton’s mandate would expire at the 2018 annual council meeting.

*Council moves to elect Sally Bolton as a company director.*

Nigel Wood (Rugby Football League) moved and Brian Juliff (Wales RL) seconded the motion. The members voted unanimously in support of Sally Bolton's election.

## **6.0 GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

Danny Kazandjian reiterated Maurice Watkins' gratitude to the SRLF for hosting the congress and providing so much added value to European rugby league. He added to Mr. Watkins' earlier comments about Italy and Netherlands, praising FIRL vice president Tiziano Franchini and NRLB Director Jason Bruygoms for their years' long dedication and contribution. He congratulated Jamaican RL Association for registering a record 138 games in 2016-17 season.

He reported that the RLEF's technical delivery system is growing in flexibility, with the material now available in Russian, as well as English and French, and that RLEF is discussing with Asia-Pacific RL Confederation adoption of the system under the RLIF.

He announced the reintroduction of the U19 European Championship, which will coincide with a week-long elite coach and match officials camp and confirmed a consultation on the possible addition of a second age group tournament will be conducted.

## **7.0 REGULATION OF NATIONAL TEAM SQUAD PLAYERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH RLIF ELIGIBILITY RULE 3.2**

Maurice Watkins read out the motion proposed by SRLF and seconded by both RL Ireland and Ukrainian RL Federation:

*"SRLF moves to limit to 10 in a 19-man squad the number of players eligible under RLIF eligibility rule 3.2(b),(c) or (d); this limit is subject to specific tournament regulations and applies to any sanctioned international match between RLEF Members not including RLIF Global events."*

D. Kazandjian was asked to explain RLIF eligibility rules 3.2 (b), (c) and (d) which he did.

Mr Watkins then reported that an amendment had been drafted and invited Wales RL chairman Brian Juliff to speak. Mr Juliff thanked SRLF for tabling the resolution which had encouraged many nations to profoundly consider the sport and its

development. He said national identity is incredibly important in international sport and homegrown players tend to demonstrate much more pride and passion. He said he felt there was a positive environment to discuss such matters, and duly read out WRL's amendment:

*“Wales Rugby League moves that in any 19-man squad for matches between RLEF Members in official tournaments run by the RLEF, including world cup qualifiers, there must be a minimum of 6 players that qualify through the Domestic Quota rule; and further to that proposed amendment, WRL would refer to committee a review of the DQ rule.”*

Mr Watkins invited views from the floor. Tiziano Franchini (Federazione Italiana RL) said FIRL supported the principle of promoting local players but questioned why there was one rule for RLEF nations and another for non-RLEF nations. D. Kazandjian said there was already such a disparity and had been for several years, with world cup qualification events administered by RLEF using the domestic quota rule, in addition to all levels of the European Championship.

Bob Baxendale (Scotland RL) asked if the proposal would cover youth too. D. Kazandjian said that, according to the amendment's text, it would.

Nigel Wood (RFL) agreed with the Italian delegate and questioned whether it is in the RLEF's gift to amend rules pertaining to the RLWCQs, which are owned by RLIF.

Bob Baxendale said there had been no evidence provided on the impact of the DQ rule on domestic development; that Scotland had seen visibility of rugby league in Scotland increase on the back of a successful national team and suggested the rule could be applied at a national level, rather than universally. Graeme Thompson (RLEF) asked Mr Baxendale if he would classify players born in Scotland as DQ. Mr Baxendale said he would.

Stephen Nemeth (Hungarian RLF) said it would be preferable for friendlies not to be affected by any DQ regulation. David Axisa (Malta RL) said he would be happy with the WRL amendment if friendlies were not affected. D. Kazandjian confirmed they would not be, only official competitions.

Mr Juliff stressed that the amendment still allowed nations to play up to 13 expatriate players in a 17-man squad but Wales's intention was to foster sustainability through development of local players. Mr Baxendale said that SRL

would be more amenable to the amendment if the DQ rule included locally born players.

Remond Safi (Lebanese RL Federation) said that although his organisation benefitted from expatriate players it was important to cultivate local players as immigration trends would not remain the same. He said LRLF was in support of WRL's amendment.

Mr Watkins invited Serbia, the original proposer, to voice its opinion. Predrag Pantic (SRLF) said that SRLF would withdraw its text in favour of WRL's amendment.

David Collier (RLIF) reported that the RLIF was keen to foster locally produced players and had extended the residency rule from three- to five-years, but that any change to the RLWCQ rules would need to be approved by the RLIF general assembly.

Mr Watkins thanked the contributions from the floor and, in summation, said he felt there was unanimity in support of the principle of regulations that promoted local players in international rugby league, and a general view to support an increase of DQ players in 19-man squads in official tournaments from four to six, but that the text of the resolution should be considered further.

Both resolutions were withdrawn in support of this view.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL REPORT TO THE COUNCIL**

Graeme Thompson delivered the financial report to the council. The delegates were provided with the statutory accounts, which the Board had signed off on 30 May 2017. The 2016 accounts were presented and unanimously adopted by Council.

## **9.0 APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS**

Maurice Watkins sought Council's support to re-appoint Haysmacintyre as the 2017 auditors and for the Board to set the auditor's remuneration, which was unanimously supported by Council.

MW / DK

**ACTION: re-appoint Haysmacintyre as auditors for 2017 accounts.**

**10.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business

**11.0 NEXT MEETING**

Maurice Watkins reported that the RLEF had received five expressions of interest to host the 2018 congress and the Board had awarded hosting rights to Belgrade once more, to coincide with the final round of the U19 European Championships. Therefore, Belgrade 2018 would take place between 10-12 August 2018, with the Council Meeting taking place on 11 August 2018.