

2025-26 BUCS NATIONAL COMPETITIONS GROUP - MEETING 4 - MINUTES

Date Tuesday 2nd June 2026
Time 10:00-15:00
Location Microsoft Teams

ATTENDEES

Anna Russell (AR)
Victoria Carnall (VC)
Sam Johnson (SJ)
Ffion Hewlett(FH)
Ed Baker(EB)
Chris Purdie (CP)
Harriet Broadway (HB)
Laure Hockaday (LH)
Marcus Henson (MH)
Sophie Dunning(SDu)
Neal Kington (NK)
Alice Wilkie (AW)
Erin Simmonds (ES)
Nick Burley (NB)
Hannah Underhill (HU)
Max Bergin (MB)
Tonye Dokubo (TD)

APOLOGIES

Scott Dale
Daisy Gillie
Alison Davidson
Josh Darley

ORGANISATION

Chair
South West
London
Wales
North West
SSS / Scotland
Yorkshire
North East
East Midlands
West Midlands
BUCS
BUCS
BUCS
BUCS
BUCS
BUCS
BUCS
BUCS

ORGANISATION

South East
North East
Senior Managers Network
Student Rep

Item	Action
1. Apologies / Welcome Apologies from Josh Darley, Alison Davidson, and Daisy Gillie. Thanks to Scott Dale for his time on the National Competitions Group following his departure.	AR
2. Minutes and Matters Arising (Meeting '3' 2025-26) a) Feedback on Equestrian REG 6.1.6.2. NB – We've given two opportunities to feedback and whilst low response rates we aren't going to go back out again, so will work with the feedback we've got. b) Risk Assessments to be added to BUCS Play. There has not been an IA working group yet, but it is flagged to be brought up at the next meeting.	AR
3. Notice of Change 1 – Late Entry Policy and Process Review HU Introducing the proposed process changes that are intended to improve transparency and consistency in the late entry process, addressing concerns raised by both Members and the BUCS Executive. The revised approach reflects feedback from the March 2026 National Competitions Group, particularly in relation to: • Clearer and more consistent timelines • A revised approval threshold (80%) • The treatment of non-responses as acceptance 38 Institutions – seen & noted change/approved 2 Institutions – approve, but don't see the need to the extension deadlines HU – The extension deadlines are put in place as the summer often sees staff turnover and leave, so the extended deadline allows for time to respond to the consultation, if needed. AR – Is there any update on improving the member directory/ consistency of who is contacted. HU – There are improvements being worked on within SLT to improve our member directory.	HU
4. Notice of Change 2 – Competition Format - Rugby Union – WBSR Season HU Introducing the proposal to see the National Championship Final played prior to the end of March, to avoid the U21 Six Nations, and start in mid/late October to avoid a majority of the PWR Cup window. Within these new timelines there is not enough time for a 'play twice' league season to take place so WBSR would take on a 'play once' format, with 3 additional fixtures based on finishing position once each team has completed 7 fixtures. BUCS has consulted with WBSR members throughout this change, via the LMC to which The change has been created alongside the RFU's U23 review group, which features representatives from BUCS, PWR, Celtic Challenge, RFU Performance Team, RFU Competitions Team. The change has also been reviewed and supported	DR

by the Rugby Union SAG and LMC (6/8 institutions were supportive of the proposed calendar and season structure. All institutions were supportive of moving the final out of the Six Nations window, as well as BUCS SLT providing support of hosting two finals events to enable the calendar to work. 35 institutions – seen and noted/approved change 3 institutions – raised concerns about changing the league format for international representation/'top teams' Feedback from BUCS re: responses raising concerns: <i>Birmingham – Supporting but concerned about 3 additional fixtures not being fair particularly for lower down teams who aren't affected by international players missing. Unfortunately, with 3 additional fixtures this can't be made even and is common in other sport leagues to not play home and away if there is a split of this kind.</i> <i>Bath – BUCS leagues shouldn't be shaped too heavily around NGB pathways – Acknowledge this, but it's incomparable to MBSR where no team loses their first choice 23 for half of the league season/most high profile games. Hockey is comparable, but most member feedback when this issue is raised is against playing when EDP players aren't available</i> <i>Exeter – Want to play everyone home and away and shouldn't just protect the top end players. This argument has been addressed before during discussions and Exeter have been outvoted in WBSR, with the majority thinking international tournaments should take priority and the league should be adjusted where possible to account for this.</i> AR – The feedback shows a majority but looks like Exeter are strongly against. HU – Member consultation is prioritised during big changes, and it may be that even with strong disagreement we end up going with the majority.	
5. Notice of Change 3 - Competition Format – Rifle – Full Bore Championships Team Category ES introducing a paper for the current team category to be moved into the individual categories section – recognising that it is incorrectly listed as an “overall/extracted team” category – and separated into two distinct categories: Long Range Team and Short Range Team. Each will carry its own BUCS Points allocation (12/8/6/4), recognising them independently and removing the need to combine scores across two distinct disciplines. 41 Institutions – seen and noted/approved change No comments on feedback tracker. AR – Query on trends in entry numbers. ES – Not currently any noticeable trends in rifle, entries stable year on year. Entries for this are now open.	AW
6. BUCS General Regulation Changes for 2026-27 – Set 1 REG 8.3.8.4: 30 in support, 7 rejected, 6 seen/noted. Comments against broadly wanted further technicalities added, NB would prefer to avoid too much complication. SD – Team has to play a playoff to be promoted so feels that further caveats not	NB

needed. Regions generally supportive, or when against not strongly so. <u>National Competitions Group recommends Implementation</u> REG 8.4.1 29 support, 0 rejections, 15 seen/noted No comments from NCG. <u>National Competitions Group recommends Implementation</u> REG 13.6 35 supported, 0 rejected AR – Comment on tracker about how to know if it is deliberate or not? NB – If results are raised to us, we will review it and if we see there is evidence that suggests the incorrect result has been more likely to be input deliberately than accidentally then it will be followed up. <u>National Competitions Group recommends Implementation</u>	
7. BUCS Sport Specific Regulation Changes for 2026-27 – Set 1 AMF 9.6 19 support, 9 reject, 16 seen/noted. SD – Region left negative comments but put seen/noted. Concerns were generally around additional pressure put on home logistics. Questions around whether this was brought by teams or to align with BAFA. NB – This came from our SAG and as the assistants don't need any qualification, the thought was that it should be possible to meet that requirement, and it helps even up the disparity between commitments of home/away teams. Action: NB/BUCS – Follow-up with institutions who were against/gave feedback against. <u>National Competitions Group recommends Implementation</u> AMF X (NEW) HB – Feels like its an unnecessary extra addition that just leaves open the door for sanctions, and that the region hadn't seen any complaints for this change. NB – This has again come through the SAG following complaints, the balls are quite expensive, and teams were complaining about this. This regulation doesn't come with sanctions, its just to make sure that the balls are monitored across fixtures so that there is less scope for blame if balls do go missing etc. SJ – Hasn't been an issue in his region, doesn't feel a need for this to exist within the BUCS regulations and would better sit within BAFA rulebook. Equally the institutions and officials can manage this themselves and act with common sense to ensure this – EB: Officials should be giving the balls back to the teams that handed them to them. AR – Agree that this is something that institutions can manage between them and that as the NCG we have looked to avoid regulations without sanctions. FH – What happens if the rule isn't followed? NB – The intention is more a rule to guide process, but if it wasn't followed there isn't much scope for BUCS to hold institutions accountable.	NB

Actions: NB – Pick up with AMF manager and take back to SAG and BAFA to suggest this fits better in a BAFA rulebook.

National Competitions Group does not recommend Implementation – Institutions to make note and feedback if it is an issue.

- **BAD 11**

Supported by 34, rejected by 1, seen/noted by 12

EB – How is “suitable speed” determined?

NB – Change of wording from “correct speed” to “suitable speed”, there are only two speeds generally used and the SAG put to us have we ever had anyone push back on the speed, and we hadn’t so we softened the wording to continue that trust that home teams are picking the right speed for their sports hall. This shouldn’t see any need to change which speed shuttlecock you are using.

SJ – Is there a list of what speed is suitable for each level?

NB – I did ask and the NGB says that does not exist and if BUCS were to do this it would be a large task and we could end up restricting what would usually fine shuttlecocks.

AR – Within the regulations has a number ever been specified of new/old tubes and speed?

NB – The feedback is generally that feather shuttlecocks are expensive and it would be good to find ways to reduce the need for them in regulations.

AR – For organising e.g. conference finals, it was raised that this was the only equipment where the numbers weren’t clear. Might be something to take back to the SAG to provide clarity on number of tubes that are needed to provide – although want to avoid institutions ordering more than needed, or less but within regulations.

Action: NB – Take back to SAG for further regulation changes around the number of tubes needed (and of each type).

National Competitions Group recommends Implementation

- **RUU 1.1**

37 support, 0 reject, 10 seen/noted

National Competitions Group recommends Implementation

- **RUU 2.4.4**

14 support, 11 reject, 18 seen/noted

SD – Were institutions not directly affected counted? One option raised was to scrap the 33% rule altogether as this feels like a regulations to fix another regulation.

NB – When reviewing the tracker we do bare in mind the relevance of that team to the competition affected, but they can still raise useful feedback or be likely to compete in the competition in the near future. However, we can and do weight the feedback based on the context.

We are aware that, as we keep adding caveats, do we get to a point where we may have to review it given everyone starts to fit some part of the caveats.

LH – Current regulation should stand as students should be expected to play for their university to be eligible.

FH – Rewards institutions that don't prioritise BUCS. Can also see students who achieved the chance to compete in that competition dropped for students who haven't chosen to compete in BUCS. As such, the region would be against this regulation.

EB – Currently we have a system that may exclude some students but is clear and equal for all institutions. This change moves us to a world where we start debating what an external team is.

AR – If students are selected for other teams that is institution preference. The general consensus in the room is not supportive.

SD – Supportive comments from the region were that if a student is eligible to play, they shouldn't be penalised/blocked because they have chosen to compete for a different team at other points in the season.

EB – This affects so few institutions, even when extending to the league below, should this not be a consultation that gets those teams in the room and they can bring it to us if they get an agreement for us to review?

NB – Understanding is this did start with the LMC, and that there was a majority support for the change and the SAG were also subsequently happy with the change.

HU – This regulation did come from representatives of those teams who came together to propose this change. There is going to be difficulty in that we likely aren't going to get a full agreement.

NB – This was a discussion point brought to a previous NCG and the conclusion was that there is scope to bring discussions to allow external competitions to be considered within the regulations but feedback now is moving more towards being blanket against this.

Would it be beneficial if we had the numbers from each league of potentially affected to see whether they said yes or no?

EB – If reviewed can the eligibility section be reviewed to mention partner clubs that might not be an "institution" team but are partnered and students compete for them.

FH – In line with EB changing intent from teams to individuals fits better for the students and for smaller institutions.

NB – From a BSR perspective they did discuss that and settled on just institution teams, but from a Prem (North/South) perspective it may make sense to broaden eligibility.

AR – Feels we haven't got enough knowing support from those impacted in lower leagues so further consultation with those would be useful to come back with a stronger argument.

Action: NB/HU/DR – Things to review: Consultation with the Premier North/South 1 teams led by the SAG, and how the SAG defines a "University external team".

National Competitions Group Recommends Review and Resubmission

- SQU 15.7

24 support, 0 rejections, 20 seen/noted <u>National Competitions Group recommends Implementation</u> • SQU 15.8 (NEW) <u>National Competitions Group recommends Implementation</u> • SQU X (NEW) <u>National Competitions Group recommends Implementation</u> VOL 4.2 NB – Delay to introduce the regulation below the Premier Tier was to allow those other teams a buffer to acquire the equipment. Action: REPS – Share with regions that this is to be rolled out wider. Action: NB – Add wording in regulation to let institution know that it will be being introduced across the tiers from 27-28.	
8. BREAK	
9. Standing Item #1 – Events Update • Remaining events in the 2025-26 calendar can be found on the website • As of Tuesday 2 June, events still open for entry are Athletics: Combined Events, BMX and Rifle Full Bore will be opening too. • Boxing Bid has just closed - expected decision on bid in next 1-2 months • Athletics: Cross Country open for bids until 26 June • Indoor Rowing: Will consist of a window of two weekends at the end of October and bid documents will be published in due course • Beach Sprint Rowing : likely to be earliest event in the calendar at the start of September, entries will be open in July and August so please factor into your summer planning • Staff update - Jodie has left BUCS - new appointment will be starting in July. Any queries for now to events inbox – events@bucs.org.uk • Entries for Indoor Cricket and Equestrian are open • BUCS Points - The last event in the calendar to have BUCS Points attributed will be Standard Tri. Combined Athletics and Rifle Full Bore will fall into 2026-27. BMX is a trial event with no points attached. Currently working through any queries, so please any queries to be emailed into Digital. Please note there has been some bugs and issues with BUCS Play and we are working to resolve issues as quickly as we can. AR – Is there a precedent that Cross Country won't be hosted in the same venue two years in a row. AW – Not a precedent but we do like to move the venue around where possible to give variation and have it across different areas of the membership, but if we have to go back to the same venue twice in a row, we will.	AW
10. Standing Item #2 – BUCS Competitions Update We are nearing the end of the league and knockout season with the cricket season concluding at the end of June. Following the conclusion of the season we will release the End of Season Review.	HU

2026-27 Season current team entries are 5038 +16 from last season (not including cricket) Provisional Leagues and Appendix 2a will be released on the 8th of June, and the Provisional Feedback window will be open until 26th June. Myself and Max are hosting League Adjustment meetings in each conference on the 15th (Midlands and Western) and 18th of June (Northern & South East) – Thanks to Chris who is doing this work for SSS. Updated Appendix 19a and Appendix 2a will be published on the 2nd July, the Finalised fixtures should be live on BUCS Play on Friday 24th July. We have concluded the in-person elements of the League and Knockout Evolution Roadshows, with the online webinar taking place this Thursday. Post the webinar (Sign up link here) Sam and Neal will be reviewing all the feedback received via the form and will work with our insights team to present the findings back to members at BUCS Conference in July. For those unable to attend in person, an online session will also be held post conference. The RFL funded role ceased at the end of this season, this will be officially announced to the wider membership with the impact report later this month. RFL funding came in during the 2022-23 season, and introduced the men's national league, restructured the mens programme and supported the introduction of Women's 9s into the event calendar for next year. Abbie Diskin is continuing to support the Comps and Performance team until the end of July, and RFL will be managed as per our other non-NGB funded roles for next season with the support of RFL. Kris Jackson, is leaving his role as the Regional Competitions and Events Coordinator at the end of the June and will be replaced ASAP, we will update the membership once confirmed. Thank you for all of your support across this season and moving into next. Please continue to use your channels to share feedback with us on how we can continue to improve our communications and provision moving into next season.	
11. Standing Item #3 – International Competitions Update Nat Comps Grp - International Update Jun26.pdf Action: HU/LJ/AR – Follow-up on whether institutions are being made aware of the selections of their athletes. Any questions contact: GBStudents@BUCS.org.uk	LJ
12. Standing Item #4 – Inclusion Update Gender eligibility: The EHRC's Code of Practice was submitted to parliament on the 21st May and there are 40 days for MPs to review it before it becomes law. We will be looking into what this means for our competitions and events. We are not expecting to propose any changes to REG 4.3 in response to this legal update, however we expect to see a significant number of NGBs update their gender eligibility policies. We will be working to update our gender eligibility spreadsheet to reflect these changes as soon as possible. As always, if you spot an updated policy that is not recorded in our spreadsheet, please do contact discipline@bucs.org.uk. Members have also shown interest in how the change in policies impacts cis women's eligibility for 'Men's/Open' categories and concerns have been raised over the quantity of dual competing in two gender categories. The League/KO data for 2025-26 shows that cis women's participation in 'Men's/Open' categories has declined since the previous year (-81 in 'Men's' and -39 in 'Open'). We are yet to consolidate the Event entry data.	HU

BUCS has published our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for 2026. This is available to view [here](#). The DIAP is our annual action plan, in accordance with the Code for Sports Governance however it does not outline our EEDI ambitions. Our strategic priorities and ambitions for EEDI will be encapsulated within our Belonging Strategy which will be going to Board for approval in July,

BUCS is excited to update that we are on track to launch our Anti-Racist Charter, Diagnostic Assessment and Toolkit at BUCS Conference. This is the major output of the hard work over the past two years by our Race Equality Research Implementation Group (RERIG) which is chaired by Katy Teasdale (UON) and Ryan Carty (Westminster City Council). For those not in attendance at Conference, there will be an accompanying launch webinar after Conference. We are finalising our Toolkit content and if anyone has examples of anti-racist/cultural competency/race equity training they have used, we would really appreciate sharing this through our form:

[BUCS Anti-Racism Charter - Training and Education - Fill in form](#)

13. AOB

a. [Making Changes – Year One Review – Flag Football](#) -TD

TD – Providing an update on the flag football regional series. The one year “probation” review has concluded and scored an A across the three criteria set out, as such flag football is going ahead with full adoption of flag football as a BUCS Sport.

b. Membership Consultation - HU:

Currently have concerns that some institutions may not be fully engaging with the processes we have put in place for consultation for changes to our programmes e.g. only 42 out of 154 institutions have engaged with the tracker for this meeting. And we have had a few members raising concerns following the Volleyball National League paper and other changes around not being consulted about changes, despite us going through the recognised channels that have previously been agreed by the membership.

We have spoken about the need to improve our CRM, but is there a better way to engage the membership?

CP – BUCS have made a lot of changes to improve accessibility for members, it may be a change in tact from making it easier to provide feedback to pushing it back onto institutions that they need to place a greater emphasis on providing feedback.

HU – If there’s recommendations we can take to continue to improve please feed them back but agree that we may need to look at increasing accountability.

AR

c. Meeting 5 Expenses – HU

Thanks to Harriet for hosting the final seasons meeting in York. Reminder to please book travel and submit expenses to HU ASAP. If you do not require travel expenses, please also let us know so we can adjust the budget accordingly.

d. Clarity on use of the tracker following A.O.Bs raised through it.

Points raised through the tracker should be raised as A.O.B but unlike other agenda items there’s no context and so it’s not really possible for the NCG to discuss and give meaningful feedback.

e. With reference to Brighton’s tracker feedback, NB will be following up with them on this and Leicester’s will be handed as feedback to the events team.

f. Squash number issues raised as a concern to see whether it was a trend or if it was just a localised issue.

MB – The national picture is that there’s only been a decrease of 1 entry from last

season. Similar experiences are noted by FH and CP for their regions in terms of struggles with numbers. HU – We can review g. Can BUCS ensure that feedback from the Roadshow captures representation. EB – we’ve seen a big difference between institutions, especially from smaller institutions, in terms of support for different proposal. So flagging that and making sure there is representation from smaller institutions in the feedback. NK – We flagged it with our insight team that we’re going to try to ‘band’ our responses by institutions, and one of those would be institution by ‘sizes’. Appreciate that, in person, it may be a challenge but we do have the virtual option and encourage reps to encourage those institutions to attend that. h. Volleyball officials requirements too high? NB – This has been raised to us, but as it was a proposal that went through last season and no issues were flagged at the time, we’ve reached back out to those institutions to ask them to detail their process for hiring officials to make sure there aren’t solutions to the problems and so we can bring it back with evidence if we want to change the regulation back. i. Results not easy to find on Web page for BUCS Big Wednesday NB – Something for BUCS to review internally as it sits across many teams. BUCS Big Wednesday 2026 Results are now on the BUCS Website here. j. There will be a lot of regulation changes coming for the July meeting, please do push for them to be read and feedback given.	
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Dates and times of remaining meetings for 2025-26 season.

Meeting 5 – Tuesday 14 July (University of York – In Person) – 10:00 – 15:00

[Competitions Group Feedback Tracker](#)