



**MANLY WARRINGAH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION LTD**  
**COUNCIL OF CLUBS FORUM NOTES**

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020 7.30pm**

**Via video conference**

**PRESENT:** Lee Gallagher (Avalon), John Kowtan (Avalon), Vince Vescio (Beacon Hill), Mark French (BTH), Tony Cavalieri (Brookvale), Sam Femia (Brookvale), Brad Higgs (Curl Curl), David Lavings (Curl Curl), Anthony Pollard (CC Strikers), Stu Nairn (Dee Why), Giuseppe Guerrera (Forest Killarney), Chris Lynch (Forest Killarney), Tom England (HSU), Alex Green (Manly Allambie), Trevor Watson (Manly Allambie), Roland Winter (Manly Vale), Richard Pike (Mosman), Murray Jones (Mosman), Dan Cook (Narrabeen), Annette Burgoyne (Pittwater), Steve Harding (Seaforth), Paul Whittard (St Augustines), Greg Dick (Wakehurst), Toby Williams (IMWFRA), Wayne Plant (MWFRA), David Wilson, Linda Ward, Rhonda Ferguson, Joseph Sorbara, Duncan Kerr, Terry Gatward, Ian Clarke, David Mason (CEO), Lee-Anne Sestanovich.

<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
	Everyone welcomed by David Wilson Nil apologies (attendance as per above) The meeting was conducted via Video Conference	
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Presentation of Board minutes and Forum notes</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Business arising from MWFA Board Minutes (27 April) N/A</li> <li>b) Business arising from MWFA Club Forum notes (14 April) N/A</li> </ul>	
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>COVID-19 update</b>	
	<p><b>A. Update on current situation</b></p> <p><b>i. General update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As a nation, we are starting to take some positive steps forward and there is no doubt that we are starting to shift our focus towards a return to training and playing, which will be led by the advice of the Federal and State Governments.</li> <li>- Following Government announcements and the decisions to move into a phase of relaxing restrictions, the current dates that have been in play are no longer applicable. That is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FFA date of May 31 for the ban on all football activities has been revoked as some states have been given the go ahead to start training</li> <li>• The NSW Government Public Order that was in place until June 30, will be replaced this Friday by a new Public Order (more on that later).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

**ii. Government announcements and process**

- Last Friday (8 May) the Federal Government announced that we would start to go through a process of relaxing restrictions and released broad National Principles on how that would roll out. This included a sport specific document, put together in conjunction with the AIS, that specified a way forward for community football.
- As with all elements of the COVID-19 response and the lifting of restrictions, the exact details and timelines would be decided state by state with the NSW Government to make announcements and decisions that we would have to ultimately abide by.
- On Sunday (10 May) the NSW Premier made a series of announcements in relation to the first restrictions that would be lifted (as of Friday 15 May). This would ultimately replace the Public Health Order that was in place until June 30.
- Amongst the restrictions being allowed on May 15 was the ability to meet in groups of 10 people outdoors for exercise, which all community sport bodies in NSW understands opens up the ability for kids/teams to train in a group of 10 (including a coach)
- The other reference that was made (and is consistent with what other states have started) is that the exercise must allow for individuals to have a space ration of 4sqm per person when exercising.
- Following this; Football NSW and the MWFA has started enquiries to understand if we would be able to allocate either 4 or 6 groups to a full size football field to allow for a number of teams to train (separately) at the same time in different areas of a field. **THIS IS NOT CONFIRMED AS MWFA/FOOTBALL NSW IS AWAITING OFFICIAL RESPONSE FROM THE NSW GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE OFFICE OF SPORT.**
- The Office of Sport released a statement on Monday (11 May) indicating it was in the process of releasing guidelines to assist sports, associations and clubs to have clarity around what they were able to do. The Office of Sport declared it was “A matter of urgency”.
- The Office of Sport is meeting with all State Sporting Bodies (Football NSW) on Wednesday morning and the MWFA is part of a state-wide hook up with all associations and Football NSW on Wednesday afternoon.
- As soon as we have these guidelines they will be passed onto the clubs and will form the basis of a direct communication to all registered players towards the end of the week.

**iii. Council updates**

- Northern Beaches Council is aware of the developments and working with MWFA to facilitate a possible resumption of training in line with the NSW Government’s new Public Order and any guidelines they will issue.
- Council has confirmed that fields are still “open” but they are being policed in line with NSW Government orders. That will continue after Friday.
- Lights will be switched on by NB Council (more than likely from next Monday) after a final go ahead from the MWFA.
- All clubs should anticipate that the field allocation will be as per the Winter allocations (including use of their fields on weekends)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In response to a question from Richard Pike (Mosman), MWFA indicated it has been working with Mosman Council but had not had a chance to deal directly today (Monday 11 May) but the liaison will continue in line with previous dealings.</li> </ul> <p><b>iv. General return to training information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Following the two announcements by State and Federal Government, the MWFA, in conjunction with Football NSW and the other Associations are working towards clear instructions and guidelines around a return to training under the NSW Government’s step 1 restrictions.</li> <li>- <b><u>At this point nothing is confirmed</u></b></li> <li>- MWFA and Football NSW is putting a proposal to Government to suggest we would allocate either 4 or 6 groups to a full size football field to allow for a number of teams to train (separately) at the same time in different areas of a field, well within the Government’s guidelines.</li> <li>- We are working to a very fine balance in respecting the health and safety concerns and advice of the Government and being able to get our players back into an abbreviated training system.</li> <li>- It will be important for as many of our players and parents as possible to download the COVIDSafe app to give Government confidence to continue to release the restrictions but also allow us to better contain any “cluster” that may appear in the MWFA footprint.</li> <li>- Like everything with the easing of restrictions, the more we respect the new rules the better chance we are of progressing smoothly through the levels of restrictions to the point where we can play matches and return to “normal life”.</li> <li>- <b><u>Before we can resume training</u></b> (and we are cautiously aiming for early next week), the following will have to occur: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As soon as the Guidelines become available, the MWFA will pass these onto the Clubs.</li> <li>• Clubs will have to acknowledge receipt of the guidelines and in writing confirm they are prepared to work with the MWFA to ensure they are followed</li> <li>• Clubs will have to submit revised training schedules to the MWFA that clearly show how the club is allocating its training spaces to ensure that the guidelines are being met in terms of groups of 10 and the space ratio. <i>At this stage we are suggesting clubs do some pre-planning with the thinking we will have four groups on a full size field (approximately 1500sqm per group of 10).</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>- <b>Compliance and policing players/teams to ensure they follow the guidelines will be taken extremely seriously by Clubs and the MWFA as the on-going roll out of restrictions will be dependent on the vigilance of the community to following the rules. The Club Presidents and MWFA agreed that any teams that break the rules will be withdrawn from the 2020 competitions without question. This will be clearly communicated to all players and clubs.</b></li> <li>- <b>If any club / ground breaks the rules on more than one occasion the MWFA and Northern Beaches Council will turn off the lights at that field until further notice.</b></li> <li>- A question was asked about whether the Football NSW insurance policies had been paid and activated to cover</li> </ul>	<p><b>MWFA to confirm FNSW</b></p>
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	<p>players and clubs when training resumes before we return to training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A direct email will go to all registered players towards the end of this week when the guidelines and situation is clear. This will include the guidelines and clearly spell out the fact teams will be removed from competitions for breaking the rules</li> </ul>	<p><b>insurance is active</b></p> <p><b>MWFA to send email to all players</b></p>
	<p><b>B. Competition re-start plans</b></p> <p><b>I. Feedback from Competitions Committee</b></p> <p>David Mason updated the Clubs on discussions and outcomes from the Competitions Committee last Thursday (7 May), which will be considered by the MWFA Board, along with the thoughts and sentiment of the May MWFA Clubs Forum in determining some changes to the rules for the 2020 COVID-19 season. The MWFA Competitions Committee feedback was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Starting with a number of trial games</b> – It was deemed irrelevant as the Government’s staged return to play process meant a time of training before we can play matches. The intention is to move straight into competition matches</li> <li>- <b>Last weekend of the season</b> - All competitions to run through until the second last available weekend with the 1v2, 3v4, 5v6, 7v8, 9v10, 11v12 concept to be adopted to give a CONSISTENT end to all seasons for all competitions, regardless of how many teams in each competition.</li> <li>- <b>Promotion and relegation</b> - between Men’s Premier League and AL1s should remain in place but with the following caveats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Both competitions should move past the stage where they play each other once before promotion and relegation comes into play</li> <li>b. There will only be one team up and one team down, based on the final standings at the end of the regular season (i.e.) the 2nd last weekend - not the final match (1v2, 3v4 etc)</li> </ul> <p>There was a lot of debate and differing opinions on this decision with the MWFA Board to consider the Competitions Committee consensus and the sentiments of the Clubs before making a final decision.</p> <p>It was agreed that any decision (and in fact all rule changes / decisions) should be confirmed, in writing and sent to clubs) before the season commences.</p> </li> <li>- <b>Borrowing rule relaxation</b> - To allow for all teams and players to play as many games as possible, especially if a team ends up losing a few players due to not wanting to resume the season due to COVID-19, borrowing rules will be relaxed WITHOUT it being open slather. Current rules will remain in place in terms of the following; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The current eligibility table, which shows what players can be borrowed into each age group and division REMAINS in place There will only be one team up and one team down, based on the final standings at the end of the regular season (i.e.) the 2nd last weekend - not the final match (1v2, 3v4 etc)</li> <li>b. The limit of four (4) players that can be borrowed by a team for any game is increased.</li> <li>c. The limit of times a player can be borrowed before they need to move to that team, which stands at four (4) games will now be unlimited / increased</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<p><b>II. Update on plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draws are in place but yet to be published</li> <li>- There is no plan to change the number of teams in competitions, although we will relax borrowing rules to assist teams that may be short</li> <li>- As we are moving into a training phase before competition, clubs should come forward if they are aware of any teams that will start the season drastically short due to players not wanting to play so alternatives can be considered</li> </ul> <p><b>III. Midweek rounds (holidays)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As we will not be in a position to travel for holidays during the July school holidays, and quite possibly the September holidays if we are still playing, the MWFA believes we should schedule midweek rounds for juniors and sub-juniors, to be played during the day to assist in providing as many games for our players as possible. There were concerns raised around the ability of working parents to be able to get their kids to games and the possibility of some teams being short of players but the majority sentiment in the room was to schedule the games to give players/parents as much time as possible and stay true to relaxing borrowing rules to get as many people playing as possible.</li> <li>- If we are playing before the July holidays, the MWFA will also schedule one round of senior matches, to be played across 6 nights throughout the two week period (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) to once again add another match for the adults into the season.</li> </ul> <p><b>IV. Guidelines for restart</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- David Mason went through a DRAFT set of guidelines to give clubs and indication of what may be required for when we resume training and playing matches.</li> <li>- The document contained a number of common sense measures and considerations for clubs to assist in providing a safe environment for players and also giving us all the best opportunity to limit any breakouts or spread of COVID-19, which will ultimately allow us to continue moving towards resuming a “normal life”.</li> <li>- There was a lot of discussion around these guidelines but as they are not set in stone nothing was confirmed or adopted.</li> <li>- The guidelines will eventually come from the NSW Government and we will be required to understand and adopt them to be able to train and play</li> <li>- The MWFA introduced John Kowtan (known to the clubs), who’s business has imported some hand sanitiser stations and hand sanitiser. The MWFA will purchase a number of hand sanitiser stands for the major fields and will also put the clubs in place with John to be able to purchase any sanitiser they wished to utilise when the guidelines are confirmed.</li> </ul> <p><b>V. Maps of fields</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The MWFA has already sent google map diagrams of all fields on the Northern Beaches to clubs to give clubs and players a guide for where players, parents and officials should stand and congregate in and around matches to best prepare for the social distancing aspect of a return to competition.</li> <li>- These maps will be finalised in conjunction with the clubs and should be shared (by the clubs) to their players.</li> </ul>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They will also sit on the MWFA website to assist teams attending “away” games</li> <li>- They should also be displayed at each of the larger grounds.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>C. Finance Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Joseph Sorbara updated the Clubs on the finances since the last meeting. Over the last month, the spending, which has been curtailed into a “no football situation” was just \$500 over the new budget.</li> <li>- Joseph and David Mason confirmed that no money has been passed onto Football NSW or FFA, as per previous discussions.</li> <li>- That left \$1.5 million in the trading account ready to be attributed when we start playing.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>D. Deregistration / Hardship feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- David Mason asked the clubs for feedback on the hardship cases and system that was put in place last month to ensure that people genuinely in need of financial assistance were looked after by the clubs. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive that there had been very few cases and people offered assistance were very appreciative.</li> <li>- It was decided that players who had applied to de-register to switch clubs for the 2020 season should be able to do so. The MWFA office will contact the clubs and include the MWFA Registrars in a clear process for this to happen that will be see players deregistered and as soon as they register with their new club a partial refund can be issued by the first club in line with its own policies.</li> <li>- A question from the floor was “how many players had asked to de-register”. To which David Mason confirmed there were currently only 68 deregistrations in the system, which is less than the previous 3 years.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>E. General Business</b> n/a</p>	
<b>Item 4</b>	<b>Next Meeting</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Forum closed at 9.46.</li> <li>- The next meeting is Tuesday 9 June 2020 at 7.30pm. (by video conference)</li> </ul>	