

Parliamentary Rugby League Group

GMB Union: Player Representation



GMB - Britain's General Union
The GMB Sports Section's Presentation to the
Parliamentary Rugby League Group
Tuesday, 27th November 2012

www.gmb.yorkshire.org.uk

History of the GMB
The union began in March 1889

Asked why he had dedicated his life to the movement, GMB founder, Will Thorne, said: "There is a world of freedom, beauty and equality to gain, where everyone will have an opportunity to express the best that is in them for the benefit of all, making the world a place more to our hearts desire and better to dwell in." These principles guide the GMB today.

GMB is a growing campaigning union with 622,000 members. One in every 32 people in work are members of the GMB. The GMB is organised in 34 of the UK's biggest companies.

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History of the RLPA
A Branch of the GMB

- Gary Hetherington joins with APEX to form a players' association
- APEX merge with the GMB, a larger more powerful union
- RLPA organise players and change uneven balance between players and clubs
- Recognition of RLPA by the Rugby Football League
- Bosman, freedom of movement in Rugby League
- Major contractual changes and improvements to players' conditions
- Abi Ekuko and Andy Goodway - **The Players' Voice.**

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Who does our sports section represent?

- Fully-professional Rugby League players, i.e. Super League
- Semi-professional Rugby League players, i.e. Championship
- Professional and amateur boxers (British Boxing Association – BBA)
- Coaches – Rugby League and boxing
- Rugby League officials – referees and touch judges
- Club staff.

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Scope of our service

- Legal representation
- Conflict resolution – individual and collective
- Education and future career planning
- Apprenticeships.

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Young players and club engagement

- **2012 Season** – 164 players achieved level 2 or level 3 apprenticeships
- This involved young players at:

Warrington Wolves	Hull FC
Wakefield Trinity Wildcats	Hull Kingston Rovers
Featherstone Rovers	Sheffield Eagles
Salford City Reds	Halifax
Bradford Bulls	Batley Bulldogs
Huddersfield Giants	Workington Town
Castleford Tigers	

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Funding successes

- 164 player apprenticeships at a total course cost of £328,000
- Free of charge to RLPA members
- Our partnership with numerous colleges and learning providers
- Other courses:
 - Gym Instructor (£600)
 - Personal Training (£1700)
 - Accountancy
 - Computer Studies
 - Cookery
 - Leadership Skills
 - Maths and English
- Now working towards a partnership with 'Rugby League Cares'.

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Players' contracts & agreements

- Negotiate players' contracts
- Avoid agents – keeps money in the sport
- 2013 formal registration with RFL for RLPA as a recognised agent
- The right of RLPA to represent members embodied in grievance and disciplinary procedures.

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RFL Full Time Player's Contract

Annexure 1 - Grievance Procedure

- 1 The Club will try to resolve, as quickly as possible, any grievance a Player may have about his employment.
- 2 **Procedure**
- (a) The Player's first step is to raise any grievance informally with the Head Coach/Football Manager or equivalent person of status within the club who, in most cases, will be pleased to respond to his complaint.
- (b) If, however, the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved the Player should raise the matter in writing with the Club Chief Executive who will try to agree a satisfactory solution and will confirm any decision/proposed action to the Player in writing within 14 days.
- (c) If the Player is dissatisfied with the outcome, the Player will have the right to an appeal, exercisable in writing to the Chairman in a final attempt to resolve the grievance. The Player should inform the Chairman within 14 days of the outcome of 2(b) above being communicated to the Player, of his decision to appeal. The Chairman's decision shall be final.
- 3 At all stages of this procedure, interviews will be held within 14 days of the grievance being raised. A written record of the interview should be agreed between and signed by the interviewer and the Player and recorded on his file. At all stages of the procedure, the Player will have the right to be accompanied by a fellow Club player of his choice/Licensed Agent/RLPA.
- 4 There may be exceptional occasions when it is not possible to complete a particular part of this procedure within the expected time limits however where possible the Club will use its reasonable endeavours to keep the Player informed of the cause and length of any delay.

Annexure 2 - Disciplinary Principles

- 1 **Purpose and scope**
- This procedure is designed to help and encourage all Players to achieve and maintain standards of conduct, performance and attendance. This procedure applies to all Players. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all.
- 1 **Principles**
- 11 No disciplinary action will be taken against a Player until the case has been fully investigated.
- 12 In order to investigate a complaint of misconduct against the Player or in which the Player is implicated and/or during the course of any disciplinary process to which the Player is subject, the Club shall be entitled to suspend the Player from his duties on full pay with full entitlement to all other benefits to which he is entitled under this Agreement for so long as the Club shall consider necessary in order to facilitate a proper investigation of such complaint. During such period of suspension the Club may forbid the Player to enter any Club premises or to contact any employees, officers, customers, clients, agents or suppliers of the Club without the prior consent.
- 13 The Player will be informed of the complaint(s) against him in writing, together with any supporting evidence, and will be given the opportunity to state his case before any decision is made or action is taken.
- 14 At all stages of this procedure, the Player will have the right to be accompanied by an official of the RLPA/fellow player of the Club/Licensed Agent.
- 15 No Player will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct where the penalty may be dismissal without notice or imposed in lieu of notice.

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Dispute resolution/player representation

- **Collective:**
 - Celtic Crusaders
 - Bradford Bulls
- **Individual:**
 - Ian Sibbit
 - Ben Cooper
 - Ian Morrison

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Our standing in the game

- Continual reference in players' contracts
- Player representation on RFL visa application appeals
- RLPA consulted on any proposed changes to players' contracts
- RFL/RLPA consultation on all changes and developments
- RLPA Trustee on the RFL Benevolent Board
- RFL players' handbook makes numerous references to RLPA and our vital role in supporting players.

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Not for profit

- Agent Negotiation
- Sponsorship
- Education & Learning
- Putting Money *Into* The Sport.

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The way forward

- Player Organisation
- Pro-active Approach
- 1eagu3.

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Testimonials

- Rangi Chase - Man Of Steel
- Ian Millward – Coach.

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TESTIMONIAL

My name is Rangi Chase, & I am a proud Member of the Rugby League Players Association, who are part of the GMB Union.

The game of Rugby League is a very tough Sport & our careers are usually less than conventional careers.

Every player needs to be in a strong, experienced & financially stable Union & the RLPA is the only Union for Rugby League players – they are always there when needed & also there to advise us on planning our future Careers.

I recently had a very serious work related issue at my Club, Castleford Tigers. I was charged with serious misconduct & I had been very foolish. I had let myself down, & my family, & the Castleford Club & its fans.

I needed some help & I spoke to Geoff Burrow, of the RLPA, who visited my home the same evening & we discussed my case in detail. I offered no excuse, but I needed guidance to save my career.

Geoff listened carefully & prepared a case for me. He then represented me a Board Meeting, where I was warned that I could face potential dismissal.

Geoff was a credit to the RLPA & GMB Union. He made a very professional case to defend me & showed the Board that I was worth another chance.

My career at Castleford Tigers was saved by the RLPA & I received a Warning & Fine.

I cannot thank the RLPA enough & I would advise ALL players to look no further than the GMB – they are "Top of the League"

Rangi Chase (Castleford Tigers & England)
21 November 2012.
