

HONG KONG RUGBY UNION

香港欖球總會

Members : Asia Rugby, World Rugby, SF&OC of Hong Kong, China



25th September 2015

To all of our friends at World and Asia Rugby, Hong Kong Rugby Union Past Chairmen and Vice Presidents, Board of Directors, Hong Kong Rugby Club Chairmen and the Hong Kong Rugby and Sporting Community:

My apologies for having to send you this note.

I have been contacted recently regarding an article which has been circulated to members of the rugby community referring to the alleged "implementation of racial discrimination in Hong Kong Rugby".

I am deeply saddened by this and would like to clarify this issue further for the members of the global, regional and Hong Kong rugby and sporting communities.

The article turns a positive development idea considered by the Hong Kong Rugby Union (HKRU) for increasing the participation of local players, in what is our fourth level (division) of men's senior rugby in Hong Kong into a story that fails to capture the spirit and intent of our proposal.

Hong Kong Rugby fields six men's divisions, the top three being performance league divisions. We have also historically enjoyed very strong social leagues and competitive lower divisions.

The HKRU is seeking to implement a 4th division league that is tailored to provide a competition where local players, many of whom are new to the game, can participate and develop and equip themselves to improve their skills in a confidence-building, safe and competitive environment.

Many players in this proposed league may be new to rugby or interested to play at a more serious level but need time and a competitive environment tailored for their needs where they can develop the required skills.

The HKRU views this initiative as a positive development for our domestic game as we look to increase participation from the local community in an environment where we have historically had a predominantly expatriate base in the men's senior leagues.

Despite our best intentions to implement a division in our men's league specifically geared to grow the game and provide an environment where local players can both develop their skills and take the utmost enjoyment from their rugby, we have been advised that the initial eligibility ruling proposed to encourage local participation was not consistent with Hong Kong law and, accordingly, will not be implemented.

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The relevant rule for the 4th Division has been amended to require each club to field a minimum of 14 players in a match day squad of 22 who are Hong Kong permanent residents. We believe that this amendment is consistent with our objective of encouraging players to take up the game and gain experience in an atmosphere that is conducive to their development.

The HKRU remains fully committed to providing opportunities for everyone in Hong Kong - no matter their race - to experience our great game in environments that are safe, positive and ultimately conducive to player development.

I hope this clarifies our position on this matter. Should you have further queries, please contact Mr Robbie McRobbie, our General Manager of Operations & Commercial at the Hong Kong Rugby Union on Robbie@hkrugby.com or by telephone on +852 2504 8311.

Yours in Rugby,

Pieter Schats
HKRU Chairman

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