



**Scottish Rugby Council Standing Committee on Governance
Club Survey Response Data 2018**

SURVEYS

Three surveys were sent out to clubs. Each one was different in design and the returns presented a wide range of responses and opinions. The following information is a compilation of the data we considered from each of the surveys:

The data and comments have been anonymised to ensure that no comments can be attributed to any individual club or person. No alterations have been made to the data.

1. Player Payment Survey (30/9/18)
2. Domestic League Structure Survey (31/10/18)
3. Supplemental Survey – National and Regional Rugby Structures (7/12/18)

In addition, the Standing Committee on Governance received a number of submissions separate from club returns. These are acknowledged at the end of this document.

PLAYER PAYMENT & REWARD SURVEY (30/9/18)

The responses received were analysed, and can be broadly summarised as follows:

- **Response Rates:** 114 clubs responded to the Survey. Almost 70% of all league playing clubs took part, with the response rate amongst the Premiership and National League clubs being over 90%.
- **Club views on Amateur Rugby:** 55% of respondents indicated that they were in favour of allowing some form of payment in what was termed in the survey as the “Championship Division” i.e. the division above National 1. Those clubs most likely to be playing in this division (i.e. the current Premiership and National 1 clubs) were evenly split on the issue. In contrast a majority of respondents favoured a policy of “full amateurism” in respect of all other divisions.
- **Desire for Regulation:** Of the participating clubs 13% were against any limitation on the payment/reward of players.
- **Monetary Rewards:** 35% of clubs supported “monetary rewards” being permitted. When specific forms of monetary reward were mentioned the level of support fell, with 31% supporting the potential for some clubs to pay match fees, 28% win bonuses and 18% a wage for playing the game.
- **Non-Cash Benefits:** 38% of clubs indicated that they believed that non-cash benefits (such as flights or accommodation) should be allowed at least in some circumstances.
- **Capped Playing Budgets:** Less than 8% of clubs thought that there should be no cap on club playing budgets.
- **Rewards for “other work”:** A significant number of clubs would allow players to be paid for non-playing duties (82%), including as a player-coach (78%).
- **Expenses:** 94% of clubs would permit the payment of genuine expenses, though a majority of clubs (61%) would like to see a cap on the value a club can provide in respect of such expenses.
- **Timing of any change:** Finally, almost two thirds of clubs (65%) would like to see any change in this area brought in for season 2019/20.

Table 1 : Survey Responses

League Level	No. Clubs	No. Returns	% Returns
Premier	10	9	90%
National 1	12	11	92%
National 2	12	12	100%
National 3	12	10	83%
Regional 1	32	24	75%
Other Regional	75	40	53%
Non-League	126 ⁽¹⁾	8 ⁽²⁾	6%
Totals	279	114	41%

(1) Excludes Exile and wheelchair only clubs.

(2) Excludes 4 "nil" returns.

“Q1. In what leagues, if any, do you believe rugby clubs in Scotland should follow a policy of full amateurism?”.

The summarised responses were as follows:

Table 2 : Aggregate responses in respect of Q1 on "full amateurism"

	Champ	Nat. 1	Nat. 2	Nat. 3	Reg. 1	Oth. Reg.
Allow Payment	63 55.3%	43 37.7%	26 22.8%	25 21.9%	19 16.7%	18 15.8%
Amateur only	51 44.7%	71 62.3%	88 77.2%	89 78.1%	95 83.3%	96 84.2%
	<u>114</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>114</u>

Questions 2 to 7 the Survey asked a series of questions in relation to which types of payment / non-monetary benefits should be permitted (if any). It should be noted that respondents to Q1 who had indicated a preference for a “wholly amateur game” were asked not to complete Q2 to Q14, and this has been reflected in the data analysis.

“Q2. Does your club believe that Scottish Rugby should place limitation on the payment or reward of individuals for playing in the Scottish domestic leagues?”

The responses received were as follows:

Table 3 : Should there be limitations on Payments

	No.	%
No Limitations	15	13.2%
Some pay, but limitations	48	42.1%
Wholly Amateur game	51	44.7%
	<u>114</u>	

“Q3. Should clubs, participating in the Scottish domestic leagues, be permitted to provide monetary rewards to individuals (wage, match fee, win bonus, etc.) in return for playing?”

Table 4: Provision of Monetary Rewards?

	Nos.	%
Wholly Amateur game	51	44.7%
Some benefits, but "No" Monetary Rewards	22	19.3%
	<u>73</u>	
"Yes" to Monetary Rewards	40	35.1%
Not indicated	1	
	<u>114</u>	

Question 4 looked at attitudes to the different types of Monetary Reward. In this regard the number of clubs in favour each particular type of Monetary Reward reduced still further:

Table 5: Analysis by type of Monetary Reward

	(No. of clubs)			
	Wage	Game Fee	Bonus	Other
No Payment	51	51	51	51

Pay - but no <i>Monetary Rewards</i>	22	22	22	22
<i>Monetary Reward</i> - but not this type	17	4	8	3
"No" in total	90	77	81	76
"Yes" to this type	21	35	32	3
Not answered	3	2	1	35
	<u>114</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>114</u>

“Q5. Should a club be able to provide its players with non-monetary benefits in return for playing?”

Table 6: Provision of Material Benefits?	Nos.	%
Wholly Amateur	51	44.7%
<i>Do not allow Non-Monetary Benefits</i>	16	14.0%
	67	
"Yes" to <i>Non-Monetary Benefits</i>	43	37.7%
Not indicated	4	
	<u>114</u>	

Question 6 looked at attitudes to the different types of non-monetary benefit. In this regard:

Table 7: Analysis by type of Non-Monetary Benefit	(No. of Clubs)				
	Travel	Accom	Car	Agent	Other
No Benefits	51	51	51	51	51
No <i>Non-Monetary Benefits</i>	16	16	16	16	16
<i>Benefits</i> - but not this type	14	4	7	20	2
"No" in total	81	71	74	87	69
"Yes" to this type	32	39	34	23	4
Not answered	1	4	6	4	41
	<u>114</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>114</u>

“Q7. If a club decides to pay or reward any of its players for playing rugby, should its development funding from Scottish Rugby be reduced?”

Table 8: Should Development Funding by reduced?	Nos.	%
"Yes"	32	28.1%
"No"	31	27.2%
	63	
Wholly Amateur game	51	44.7%
	<u>114</u>	

“Q8. Should there be a cap on the total amount a club should be able to reward, whether monetary or non-monetary, its players?”

Table 9: Cap on Club player budget?	Nos.	%
Wholly Amateur game	51	44.7%
"Yes" - Cap on Club budget	50	43.9%
"No" - No cap	9	7.9%
Not indicated	4	3.5%
	114	

Question 9 asked whether any such “cap” should be in the form of a monetary amount or some other limit. 95% of respondents were in favour of a monetary amount. Other suggestions included a percentage of club turnover.

“Q10. Relating to Q8 and Q9, if a club’s total player budget was based on a maximum figure related to the division in which the club’s 1st XV plays, please indicate the figure your club believes appropriate for each new division. Please give a figure for each division.”

	No. Clubs					
	Champ	Nat. 1	Nat. 2	Nat. 3	Reg. 1	Oth. Reg.
> £100K	1	1	1	1	0	0
£50K+ - £100K	3	0	0	0	0	0
£25K+ to £50K	9	4	3	1	1	1
£10K+ to £25K	7	5	1	3	0	0
Up to £10K	6	5	8	7	6	4
	26	15	13	12	7	5
Wholly Amateur	51	51	51	51	51	51
No figure given	37	48	50	51	56	58
	114	114	114	114	114	114

Questions 11 to 14 asked a series of questions around limits to the number of players at a club who could be paid, and how much each player should be able to receive.

“Q11. Does your club believe that there should be a limit on the number of players at a club who can be rewarded for playing (whether in cash or benefits)?”

Table 11: Cap on number of paid players?	Nos.	%
Wholly Amateur game	51	44.7%
"Yes" - Cap on number	33	28.9%
"No" - No cap on number	28	24.6%
Not indicated	2	1.8%
	114	

“Q12. If ‘yes’ to Q11, please indicate the number of players you believe should be able to be rewarded by clubs in each of these divisions. Please give a ‘no more than’ number of players figure for each division.”

Table 12: Max. number of paid players

	No. Clubs					
	Champ	Nat. 1	Nat. 2	Nat. 3	Reg. 1	Oth. Reg.
No Limit	28	28	28	28	28	28
> 20 players	1	0	0	0	0	0
16 to 20	5	0	0	0	0	0
11 to 15	1	1	1	1	1	0
6 to 10	5	4	4	0	0	0
1 to 5	14	9	7	11	7	7
0	1	13	15	16	19	21
	55	55	55	56	55	56
Wholly Amateur	51	51	51	51	51	51
No figure given	8	8	8	7	8	7
	114	114	114	114	114	114

Questions 13 and 14 turned to the question of how much should individual players be able to earn.

“Q13. Does your club believe that there should be limits on the total amount any individual player should be able to be paid?”

Table 13: Cap on payment amounts?

	Nos.	%
Wholly Amateur game	51	44.7%
"Yes" - Cap the maximum payment	39	34.2%
"No" - No limit on amount / player	21	18.4%
Not indicated	3	2.6%
	114	

“Q14. If ‘yes’ to Q13, please indicate the figure that your club considers to be a maximum total a player should be able to receive in each of these divisions. Please give a figure for each division.”

Table14: Maximum amount a player can be paid?

	Champ	Nat. 1	Nat. 2	Nat. 3	Reg. 1	Oth. Reg.
No Limit	23	21	21	21	21	21
> £20K	3	0	0	0	0	0
£10K+ to £20K	0	2	1	0	0	0
£5K+ to £10K	5	2	3	3	1	1
£1K+ to £5K	10	5	4	4	1	0
£1 to £1K	6	3	2	2	4	3
0	2	15	18	19	22	25
	49	48	49	49	49	50
Wholly Amateur	51	51	51	51	51	51
No figure given	14	15	14	14	14	13
	114	114	114	114	114	114

The questionnaire then looked at payments a player may receive from non-playing activities with the club.

Question 15 asked:

“Q15. Do you agree with this statement: a club may pay individuals who play for the club but also work for the rugby club in another capacity, such as a barman or groundsman.”

Table 15: Players paid for non-rugby work.	Nos.	%
"Yes" - this should be allowed	93	81.6%
"No" - this should not be allowed	20	17.5%
Not indicated	1	0.9%
	114	100.0%

Question 16 asked:

“Q16. Do you believe that clubs should be allowed to employ ‘player-coaches’? These are individuals who are paid or rewarded for coaching but who also play for the rugby club.”

Table 16: Paid Player-Coaches	Nos.	%
"Yes" - this should be allowed	89	78.1%
"No" - don't allow this	24	21.1%
Not indicated	1	0.9%
	114	

Questions 17 to 20 looked at attitudes to the payment of expenses to players. In this regard Q17 asked:

“Q17. Should it be permissible for clubs to pay genuine expenses to players, in line with those describe below which are the current expenses allowable under SDR 4.1: Player Status and Player Contracts?”

Table 17: Permit genuine expense payments?	Nos.	%
"Yes" - this should be allowed	107	93.9%
"No" - don't allow this	6	5.3%
Not indicated	1	0.9%
	114	

“Q18. Should there be any other expenses allowed other than those listed above in question 18? If “yes”, please list

Table 18: Other expenses allowed?	Nos.	%	
“Yes” – other expenses should be allowed	11	9.6%	(8 out of this 11 said medical expenses should be allowed)
“No” - other expenses should not be allowed	96	84.2%	
Not indicated	<u>7</u>	<u>6.1%</u>	
	<u>114</u>		

Question 19 asked:

“Q19. Should there be a limit on the expenses an individual player can claim during a season?”

Table 19: Limit on expenses per player?	Nos.	%
"Yes" - there should be a limit	44	38.6%
"No" - no limit for genuine expenses	69	60.5%
Not indicated	1	0.9%
	114	

Turning to the question of an overall cap on a club's expenses budget, Question 20 asked:

"Q20. Should there be a limit on total expenses that each club can provide during a season?"

Table 20: Limit on club's expenses budget?	Nos.	%
"Yes" - there should be a limit	69	60.5%
"No" - no limit for genuine expenses	44	38.6%
Not indicated	1	0.9%
	114	

Finally, Question 21 asked:

"Q21. If Scottish Rugby were to introduce new player payment regulations, when does your club believe that these should be introduced from?"

Q21. Timing of any change?	Nos.	%
2019/20	74	64.9%
2020/21	19	16.7%
2021/22	12	10.5%
	105	
No change to Regulation	6	5.3%
Not indicated	3	2.6%
	114	

DOMESTIC LEAGUE STRUCTURE SURVEY (31/10/18)

No of returns:

Survey Completed	102
Nil Returns	3
No Return	175
Exempt	7
Membership	<u>287</u>

Exempt : Exile clubs and wheelchair rugby only clubs.

Returns by Division

League Level	No. Clubs	No. Returns	% Returns
Premier	10	10	100%
National 1	12	12	100%
National 2	12	12	100%
National 3	12	10	83%
Regional 1	32	23	72%
Other Regional	75	32	43%
Non League	127	3	2%
Totals	280	102	36%

Question 1

<p>1. Noting the proposed wider league and season structure consultation for the 2020/21 season (and that clubs would ordinarily be provided with a full playing season's notice of changes), does your club support the existing domestic league structure remaining in place for the 2019/20 season?</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, that structure would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Premiership – current clubs (including Super 6 Club XV's), subject to promotion /relegation as per existing regulations;• National 1 – current clubs, subject to promotion /relegation as per existing regulations;• National 2 – current clubs, subject to promotion/relegation as per existing regulations;• National 3 – current clubs, subject to promotion /relegation as per existing regulations; and• East, West and Caledonia Regional Leagues - current clubs, subject to promotion /relegation as per existing regulations.	<p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></p>
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YES – 47 clubs
NO - 53 clubs

Not clear from response – 1 club

No response given - 1 Club

National League Clubs (including Premiership) Result: 21% said YES, 79% said NO

Regional League Clubs Result: 67% said YES, 33% said NO

Question 2

2. Noting that the potential placement of Super 6 Club XV's is covered under question 3 below, how would your club suggest that the domestic leagues are structured?	<i>Tick preferred option.</i>
Option A - Premiership/Championship; 3 x National Leagues; and East, West and Caledonia Regional Leagues	Option A: <input type="radio"/>
Option B - Premiership/Championship; 2 x National Leagues; and East, West and Caledonia Regional Leagues.	Option B: <input type="radio"/>
Option C - Premiership/Championship; 1 x National League; and East, West and Caledonia Regional Leagues.	Option C: <input type="radio"/>
Option D – Other (Please state your club's suggested structure below):	Option D: <input type="radio"/>

No. of responses – 101 clubs. (Clubs that answered they did not support existing structure and clubs that answered they supported the existing structure and also answered this question although instructed not to.)

Option A – 69 clubs

Option B – 20 clubs

Option C - 8 clubs

Option D - 4 clubs

No response given – 1 Club

Question 3

3. If you have answered question 2, where within your club's selected league structure would it then suggest that the Super 6 Club XV's initially play?	<i>Tick preferred option.</i>
Premiership/Championship	<input type="radio"/>
National 1	<input type="radio"/>
National 2	<input type="radio"/>
National 3	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify):	<input type="radio"/>

Results:

61 clubs responded to this question (Includes 10 clubs who answered Yes to Q1 and also provided an answer here. 4 made no response.)

Premiership/Championship- 11 clubs

Top Amateur League- 1 club

National 1 –	13 clubs
National 2 –	4 clubs
National 3 –	6 clubs
Regional –	1 club
Reserve League-	24 clubs
Other-	1 club
No response given-	4 clubs

Note: **These results do not include the remaining 37 clubs who voted for the status quo at Q1.**

Comments specifically relating to Question 3 (in no particular order) -

National 2 or 3. Earn promotion up the National League structure.
By redistribution of these top teams to different league & venues potential to increase attendance for many different clubs as they (presumably) progress up through league structure. Concern for all NL clubs about a talent drain if S6 Club XV's remain in Premiership as they look to replace S6 squads.
Allow teams to continue playing high standard of rugby to support Super 6. Keeps player standards high and better opportunities for pathway / academy players to play and develop.
The Super 6 Club XV should play in the league that is appropriate for their playing pool to ensure that they are sustainable and competitive. This may mean that the six teams could play in different leagues so that they are playing against the appropriate level of competition.
These players are semi-pro and would hurt players in the lower leagues, and they should earn their place with promotion or relegation.
The S6 clubs' teams are in effect their 2nd XV's. Their inclusion in the National Club Leagues would unbalance the Leagues and is to the detriment of other clubs.
This will help to maintain the status quo. Club XV's need to be self sustaining to be viable. Promotion/relegation will sort the Club XV's into their appropriate level over time.
National 2 would be a commensurate level to play at. Promotion should be earned.
As the Super 6 Teams are part of the Domestic club structure their no S6 side compete with an unfair advantage of additional SRU funding, facilities and backroom support within NL competition. They either play in a Reserve League of 6 or in the National Reserve 1 as it currently stands.
There is no way of determining the strength of the club sides after removing the S6 players and this way there is less chance of them attracting players just because they are associated to an S6 club. There is no value in creating 6 club sides that just dominate the amateur game because of their association. If they are of merit then they will rise to the top eventually but this will give other clubs the benefit of the associated finances available to the top tiers rather than the super 6 money being added to by the top amateur club money as well, creating an elite club that happens to run both a professional and an amateur side, effectively taking more money away from the rank and file clubs. If super six does in fact sit in domestic rugby the surely the next team down in the club should play in the reserve leagues. On the other hand if it is Elite rugby then the next team should sit in National 3.
The original proposal was the S6 would be part of performance rugby and that there would be no movement of players. That has been changed and the "club" sides are now reserve sides, so they go where reserve sides go.
National 1 was the division proposed in the Super 6 documents produced by the SRU. National 1 seems an appropriate level for these sides. We have no real idea of what this team will consist of in terms of playing strength. Given Super 6 it is unlikely that they will have the playing capability of

the side that competes in the 18-19 Premiership. They will still potentially be strong sides, but until they play rugby that is merely hypothesis.

We should follow the precedence – it's a Domestic club 2nd team, so play in the Reserve Leagues where they are playing currently.

Due to the S6 Teams also being part of domestic rugby structure their non-S6 teams could potentially have an unfair advantage through coach, facilities, medical improvement if they remained in national competition, indeed it may be viewed that they are have 2 stabs at SRU funding. They should either play in a S6 Reserve league or National 1 Reserve rugby - this would also aid cooperation of dual registration in the local clubs.

Expected playing standard of S6 Club XV would best fit N1. We applied for S6 franchise on basis that our Club XV would be placed in N1.

Earn the right to play in the top league.

Feeder team for Super 6 team.

The Super 6 Club XV's are 2nd XV's and therefore should play in the Reserve Leagues.

The S6 "club" teams should be allowed to enter the lowest NL to allow that team to find their own level within 3-5 years and mirrors the length of contract that the S6 teams have been given. It also gives the other clubs, especially in Edinburgh, the opportunity to keep their players and play against the S6 "club" teams that need to establish their own player base and level. We do not agree with the dual registration of players and semi pros should only play semi pro rugby.

This was the negotiated outcome for the S6 application based on player safety as it would be dangerous to ask players of the quality in our club team to play any lower. If this can't be delivered then we would have to stay in the Premiership. Over the last 25 years this club has proven it operates on the field to a high level. This is only a 5 year licence. We cannot sacrifice its place in the leagues and therefore its long term survival. For this initiative and competition. We will continue to run as a normal club and our players who do not want to be S6 players must be allowed to retain the ambition to play at the highest levels they can achieve just the same as in any other club. The relegation/promotion, success or failure of our team must be decided in a normal sporting manner. An outcome based on politics and bad will by others would not be in the interests of the game. Any other outcome is a punishment to the club. We were awarded a franchise the franchise was not awarded our club. If forced below N1 or placed in a reserve league we would not be in a position to enter S6. We will outlast those currently involved both in the club and those running the SRU. It is not ours to give away. Our members were clear in their approval to apply based on N1 and no worse. A reserve league is out of the question.

As the S6 has now been defined by the SRU as top of the Domestic Rugby it is logical that their alternate teams - the club or amateur team - should take part in a Reserve League, similar to all other Domestic Rugby leagues. In this way they will be playing with opposing teams of similar levels

Former Premiership players would be too strong to drop too far down, making a mismatched competition.

On the assumption that most players from the clubs achieving S6 status will step up to the professional level, we believe that it is fair to other clubs that the S6 Club XV's should play initially in the lowest NL and work its way up.

S6 now in Domestic Rugby. The reserve teams should play in domestic rugby's reserve leagues.

While the S6 clubs may be stronger, they should earn the right to play in the Premiership.

Clubs/Players already at a high level deserve the right to retain such - appropriate level will settle in due course.

Would suit Super 6 club's strength.

These sides are likely to be able to compete at this level despite the loss of players to the S6 franchise.

We disagree with the proposed set up. It's a waste of money and we can't see people supporting this. It's going to put pressure on other clubs who will lose players. It is not going to help club rugby.

We feel that the S6 Club XV's should still be included within the top 20 clubs, but placed in the 2nd league (i.e. 11-20 clubs). This allows the S6 clubs to earn promotion to the top league (this should be earned, not given out directly).

The positioning of the Super 6 clubs in National 1 is consistent with what those clubs submitting a bid for Super 6 believed to be taking place. The Club XV's may not be competitive in the Premiership/Championship, and so a lower league is more appropriate. Any placement lower than National 1 could lead to concerns around player safety as many players from the Club XV's would have previously been playing a significantly higher level. It has been suggested by some parties that Super 6 Club XV's should take part in a separate reserve league for these teams. We believe that this would be detrimental to the club game since it would greatly increase the likelihood of Super 6 clubs "hoovering" players.

We believe that it is likely that the Premiership/ Championship will be partially semi-professional, regulated by the current rules, following the results of the payment survey and to bridge the gap for players at the level into the Super 6 level. The franchise club XV should be placed at the highest level of fully amateur rugby. If that is in fact National 1 or 2.

We believe that for the S⁶ 2nd teams to play anywhere other than in reserve leagues would cause 'Carnage in Clubland' with the amount of players which would be hoovered up from other clubs, at a time when most clubs are struggling to honour fixtures.

We also believe that the impacts of Super 6 and the need for a more radical league structures means that Super 6 should be postponed for a year and until such a review is complete and clubs can vote on the findings.

If S6 Club XV's were playing in either the Championship or National Leagues this would have a detrimental effect on the playing numbers of other clubs especially those situated within the catchment area of the S6 teams. We can already see players gravitating to clubs associated with S6 and this will only escalate. We are effectively creating 6 new clubs (up to 180 players) with no overall increase in playing numbers therefore the impact on existing clubs must be minimised.

The S6 Club Xvs should play in the Reserve Leagues as the S6 teams now in Domestic Rugby, the Club XV's which should be considered the reserve teams should play in domestic rugby's reserve leagues.

We would recommend that the Super six club sides play in the top reserve league in this way there will be no imbalance at that level. The new top reserve league would have the super six club sides and the reserve teams from other premierships and would therefore be more competitive than putting the club sides into the premiership/championship.

We recognise that these clubs still have a "status" in the game, however to place them in the top tier would be difficult competitively for players making up the "club" team, and to expect them to play in reserve league we feel would be disrespectful to that club and its supporters. This taking into consideration that the Super 6 franchise be a totally different entity.

Semi professional players need to be playing against other semi pro sides – partly because of health and safety concerns and partly because they need that level of competition if they are to improve. Also the SRU have stated that following the introduction of Super 6 all other rugby in Scotland must be Amateur and that if the SRU are intending playing Super 6 v any other Scottish team flies in the face of that avowed intention

We don't really know the answer to this. We understand that these Super 6 Club XV's will be amateur so this must be linked to the decision on player payments/ benefits in kind. They need to

<p>be at the top of the amateur game. Initially slot into National 1, certainly no lower than that to avoid the risk of a physical mis-match.</p>
<p>Player safety must be paramount.</p>
<p>Club XV's playing at this level should prevent these clubs recruiting from other clubs to sustain a higher level. Thus removing any hoovering or warehousing of players and allowing all other clubs to maintain their player base. This, in turn, supports the broader base of rugby throughout Scotland, and keeping it involved in as many communities in the country as possible.</p>
<p>If the S6 club team were in a higher league there is a strong possibility that there would be S6 clubs who would systematically take all talent in Scottish Rugby which would destroy the Regional Leagues.</p>
<p>The option is chosen on the basis that S6 are part of the Domestic game.</p>
<p>Reserve Leagues.</p>
<p>Agreed as part of the Super 6 arrangement.</p>
<p>It is likely that S6 Club XV's will prove too strong for fellow Premiership Club XV's over the 1st season and certainly over the 2nd season. At that time, a split similar to that employed by the SPFL in the 2nd half of the season will allow the non-S6 clubs to test their performance against the best in the 1st half of the season and enjoy more equitable tests in the 2nd half of the season.. Such arrangement would allow S6 Club XV's to hone their performance against true peers in the run in to the business end of the season.</p>
<p>As recently as June this year Scottish Rugby published an update on 'Agenda 3' indicating that a decision had been made on placement of Super 6 club sides and that there would, as a result, be no relegation from the Premier league for the 4 other Premier league sides. This published policy statement from SR has seriously misled clubs. As a result we believe that the only reasonable way of redressing the position is to allow promotion of 2 clubs from National 1 into the Premiership for season 2019/20 and run with a 12 team Premiership. This assumes that the current composition of the Premier league remains. If the Super 6 arrangement begins in 2019/20 then 8 teams would be promoted from National 1 as stated in the original Agenda 3 and S6 documentation. However, we are supportive of the idea of a 1 year delay in S6 as proposed by National 1 clubs (and, we believe supported by a number in National 2&3) so that we can get a much stronger strategy in place (see Q4). If Super 6 clubs run a 2nd XV they should be accommodated in the National Reserve league. However, we would advocate an entirely different arrangement as per 4.</p>
<p>We do not feel that what is basically a S6 2nd XV should be in a Premiership set up. This should be reviewed dependant on impact on existing teams in this league.</p>
<p>S6 clubs will draw on the resources of other clubs to develop their pool of 30/35 players. Adding a Club XV playing at Champ/Prem or even Regional Level would put further strain on clubs and player numbers.</p>
<p>It is clearly unfair to have a club with 2XV's in National Leagues. The drain this would have on other no-super 6 clubs would be catastrophic considering the low number of quality players in general.</p>
<p>Play in their own reserve league.</p>
<p>National Reserve 1 as S6 has been identified as a club competition.</p>
<p>To play a proving season with play-offs for placement the following season.</p>
<p>The S6 Club XV would effectively be 2nd XV's so should play in the Reserve Leagues.</p>
<p>As this is, in effect, the reserve team of the S6 franchise team, the correct place is in National Reserve 1.</p>

<p>We feel that the S6 Club teams should play in a reserve league of their own. If S6 fails, the top XV's should come back into the Premiership.</p>	
<p>Any arrangement that allows a Super 6 franchise and a Premiership place to be held by the same club will provide that club with an SRU funded and promoted market advantage in attracting players. That will unfairly affect other clubs in their region. No club should be allowed to hold both Super 6 franchise and Premiership position. The Super 6 pressure on player supply in the Edinburgh area will almost certainly cause some club failures.</p> <p>We believe that, in conjunction with the current Agenda 3 proposals, the Super 6 plans are at risk of creating a complex monopoly in the commercial operation of rugby clubs in Scotland, which would not be permitted in any other branch of business.</p>	
<p>S6 clubs should ideally play at the highest league. This should increase the potential for future national players.</p>	
<p>This question has divided our Committee into 2 groups of opinions. As such we do not have a consensus with which to answer the question:</p> <p>Opinion 1 – This is that the Club XV's play in National 1. The statement in question 1 about the Super 6 club XV's playing in the Premiership has not been floated, to our knowledge, prior to this survey being sent out. This group supports the argument that given the players who will be available to these clubs, it is most likely that this is the level they will play at. They will then get promoted or relegated on merit.</p> <p>Opinion 2 – This that the Super 6 club xvs play in a reserve league and that this has been reflected in some of the discussion in the National 2/3 forum meetings. This is due to concerns that super 6 club xvs will draw players from other clubs and pose a threat to sustainability of playing squads.</p> <p>This has really divided our group and probably reflects the need to consult on this as a single issue and/or that there is a longer process where there is perhaps more information gathering that can then be presented to clubs. This would allow them to be able to make a decision based on facts about the impact of Super 6 club xv's.</p> <p>(1) Distinction between S6 & Club Xvs (i.e. different clubs) is artificial/spurious. (2) Fewer players required to form 1 club and reserve side that can share players than for 35 players x 2 clubs. (3) More of the S6 playing squad would get competitive game time.</p>	

Question 4

<p>4. If you have answered question 3 and suggested a level below the Premiership/Championship, does your club also suggest that the Super 6 Club XV's should be unable to be promoted from that level (regardless of where they finish in the league)?</p> <p>If "Yes", for how long should that period last?</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Yes</td> <td style="text-align: center;">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: right;">_____ seasons</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____ seasons	
Yes	No						
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>						
_____ seasons							

Number of responses = 49 (Only clubs that met the conditions of the question by placing Club XV's below Premiership/Championship were included)

Super 6 Franchises Club XV's should be unable to be promoted

Results:

	No.	%
Yes (unable to be promoted)	18	36.7%
No (able to be promoted)	27	55.1%
N/A	3	6.1%
No response given	1	2%
Total	49	

If 'yes', how long should this period last?

Results (18 clubs):

	No.	%
1 season	1	5.5%
2 seasons	2	11.1%
5 seasons	2	11.1%
Indefinite period	10	55.5%
Review periodically	1	5.5%
No response given	2	11.1%
Total	18	

Comments from clubs relating to Question 4 (in no particular order)

We strongly believe in fair play and have no desire to "sanction" the Club XVs. The best teams in each league deserve to be promoted and over a few years those that deserve Premiership status will have rightfully earned it.
Teams should be allowed to progress and develop to keep a competitive edge to league structure. Over a period of time this should level out.
They should be able to be promoted or relegated as normal.
They would be subject to promotion / relegation in the Reserve Leagues. This Qu shows one of the faults in the Super 6 structure. If the Super 6 club xvs are not to be considered as 2nd xvs but as clubs in their own right to be seen as clubs on their own right, then they should be placed in the old Nat 3 / new Regional leagues, and then left to find their own level. But that would denude the other National clubs of players, putting their existence under threat.
The clubs should not be restricted from promotion opportunities or bound by special measures. Once in the league system, we should be looking to create a structure that works well from the start.
Super 6 need to concentrate on what they have been created for and forget about dominating club rugby as well as the part time pro competition. They already have sides in National Reserve 1 and creating a NL side between their S6 side and Reserve side will warehouse players. In addition it will distort fairness within the NL competition.
With only two teams promoted each season this will create enough protection all the finances being sucked up by the S6 clubs.
We need to allow the new structure to settle down. There are no clear rules on how the S6 will exist with their amateur teams. The previous guidance in the Super 6 and Agenda 3 documents - that paid players will not play amateur players and vice versa appears to have been dropped. If this is the case the S6 club sides will have an inherent advantage over other clubs. There should be further analysis towards the end of the moratorium period to understand what's happening to players and results in Nat 1 and any recommendations for subsequent seasons.

As per q3, while S6 is part of domestic rugby the club teams of the S6 are reserve teams and there are rules in place where they can play.
N/A as in Reserve Leagues. This will prevent warehousing and distortion of the NLs equally if placed in the championship /national 1 and they do not recruit heavily we will have a duty of care and player safety to consider - this is after all the main driver where we split the national and Scottish Cup into 2.
Would prefer no restrictions but would agree to 1 possibly 2 season max where unable to be promoted to help non S6 clubs in Premiership to settle in the transition period.
Every club should be able to gain promotion/suffer relegation depending on performance.
Per the answer to Q3, the Super 6 Club XVs are 2nd XVs and should therefore play in the Reserve Leagues.
We need to allow the new structure to settle down. There are no clear rules on how the Super 6 clubs will exist with their amateur team. The previous guidance in the Super 6 and Agenda 3 documents – that paid players will not play amateur players and vice versa appears to have been dropped. If this is the case the Super 6 club sides will have an inherent advantage over other clubs.
This will allow the S6 club team to find their own level within a suitable period of time. It will also ensure that the stockpiling of players, that has taken place, would dissipate. Those players that want to remain playing rugby at the top amateur level would move clubs or if loyal, remain to assist the promotion.
As per Q3 - it would clearly be a farce if a team finished 7th and were promoted. They may well refuse promotion as they would not be able to cope with it and it may damage them as a club. How do you market a league to supporters / press / sponsors when it is based on politics and not sporting purpose.
The SRU under its bye-laws has no remit to introduce measures that are contrary to its purpose: 'to promote, encourage and extend the game of rugby football throughout Scotland.'
As with S6 there would be no promotion or relegation from the Reserve League during the period of the franchise.
Promotion (and relegation) should always be played for to encourage spirit and reward in the sport.
We need to allow the new structure settle down. There are no clear rules on how the super 6 clubs will exist with their amateur team. The previous guidance in the super 6 and Agenda 3 documents - that paid players will not play amateur players and vice versa appears to have been dropped. If this is the case the Super 6 club sides will have an inherent advantage over other clubs. There should be further analysis towards the end of the moratorium period to understand what's happening to players and results in Nat1 and any recommendations for subsequent seasons
If a team is good enough, we see no reason why it should not be promoted.
Permanently remain in Reserve League.
We need the best players playing at the highest level.
Club rugby in Scotland is currently in danger of imploding, just look at the number of unplayed games each week. To allow six clubs (Franchises) to dominate the top end will accelerate that and cause more teams and or clubs to fold - which is not what is best for our overall game.
Clubs should play and if they win promotion they should be promoted. No point in playing in the leagues otherwise.

Lack of promotion for Super 6 Club XV's would be detrimental for several reasons: (i) Lack of incentive for Super 6 Club XV's to participate strongly, driving down the overall standard of the league, and lessening appeal to members of all clubs and spectators. (ii) In the event that Super 6 Club XV's occupy promotion places, then the highest placed non-Super 6 Club XV teams would be eligible for promotion, even though their season's performance would have demonstrated that they had not earned promotion. In the most extreme case, with all six Club XV's occupying the top six positions, the 7th and 8th placed teams would be promoted (assuming 2 promotion places). (iii) Stipulating a period without promotion for Super 6 clubs would be a punitive action, with no clear rationale for suggesting a period without promotion.

If the franchise club XV is run truly separately from the franchise and is amateur then there is no reason to prevent promotion, as it will be through organic growth of that club side rather than paid for. The club side should be sustainable in its own right without relying on players, finance or any other resource, out with agreed provision, of the franchise side.

If a club invests time and money into creating a sustainable future then they should be allowed to rise to the level they wish to attain.

As the S6 Club XV's will be playing in the Reserve League they must play as per the rules for these leagues which allows them relegation and promotion within the Reserve League arrangements but they are not part of the main Domestic Leagues so can't impact on these leagues..

They can continue to play each other in competitive matches. It makes little difference if there is promotion or relegation in the reserve league or in the new championship.

The purpose of club league rugby is to create a pyramid system, allowing natural promotion and relegation, thus if the club XV fails then correspondingly they would be relegated.

We are not too sure but can't see why they can't be promoted. But there is an issue that they just mop up players over time.

Our reasons are the same as Q3. Rugby should be available within as many communities in Scotland as possible and not be hoovered up into a few elite clubs.

It would take them a few years to reach the top amateur league which should coincide with the promotion/ relegation from S6.

Again, if the S6 is considered to be part of the Domestic game Club XV's can only be considered 2nd teams and have to remain in the National Reserve League.

They should be able to be promoted within the 2Xv league structure.

It is necessary to have promotion/relegation to create a real sense of challenge to all involved, especially the players who require this challenging environment to assist their improvement.

Cream rises to the top unless artificially constrained.

We believe that S6 is about creating a pyramid structure to support professional rugby in Scotland. It has, however, been poorly thought through and the consequences of this poor policy direction are only now becoming clear. We believe that for S6 to operate effectively, the S6 playing entities need to engage with local community clubs in a constructive and practical manner. We suggest that the best means of doing this is to ensure that the S6 entity is seen as a regional organisation at the top of the 'club pyramid' with the active support of local community clubs. To promote this engagement we believe that S6 clubs should run 1 regional team and be able to draw from clubs that it is able to negotiate a reciprocal arrangement based on dual registration of players. If S6 clubs continue to run additional club sides then we suspect that the anxieties of clubs who fear the 'hoovering up' of player resources will be realised. Given the shortage of player resources currently available to the club game, this would be the most positive route in establishing a support structure for professional rugby and the least damaging for community clubs. (We also believe that maintaining the maximum number of points of access to our sport is essential for future growth.)

We think it would have an adverse effect on Scottish rugby if we had top tier of super 6 then the domestic 2nd XV teams of these clubs sitting in the next league below. If we introduce Promotion/Relegation within the Super 6 franchise we do not want the next best 6 teams being the 2nds of the existing teams. By not allowing this it would allow players who have missed out on a place in a Super 6 club to play for a Premiership Club and still harbour goals of achieving the goal of playing in a Super 6 set up.

These are club teams, fully amateur and should not place additional pressure on already strained resources. There needs to be clear definition between the S6 team and Club team.

Promotion OK but not into National Leagues. These S6 clubs will have a large pool of high quality players all of which cannot play every week. This will mean the 2XVs will be bolstered by the residual players. To run teams in the national (amateur) leagues is untenable.

They should find their own level.

As it stands there is no promotion from the National Reserve League.

The club XVs would remain in their own reserve league. It may be their club 2XVs should be unable to be promoted beyond a certain level, to prevent these teams becoming the primary team in the Club and rising to the top of Scottish rugby.

As per Q3, reserve league would not have promotion. This creates less of an obstacle to other ambitious club sides and crucially less of a drain on players/clubs from Nat 1, and subsequently Nat 2 and 3.

Question 5

Question 5 then asked all respondents to the Survey:

<p>5. Please provide any general comments or suggestions that your club has on future domestic league/season structures, including its suggested season for implementation.</p> <p>Comments:</p>	
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Responses (comments)	No.	%
No. of comments	80 clubs.	78.4%
No comments made	22 clubs	21.6%
Total	102	

Where the term ‘extensive comments provided’ were noted in the column these comments have been included below.

Comments specifically relating to Question 5 (in no particular order.)

We'd ideally like to see the current structure remain in place as we've no issues with it/ can't see how an alteration would benefit us.
We believe our Club XV, our amateur XV, should play in NL1 in season 2019/20, with a view to gaining promotion to the Premiership within 1/2 seasons. Our overall view is, we require competition commensurate with playing standards and the technical and physical rugby abilities of the playing squad we will have in place in 2019/20.
Our concerns are exclusively about season 2020/21 onwards

Given the pressure on the programme due to weather and fitting in the Cup/Shield/Bowl, 10 team leagues must be considered for 19/20 on.
A 2 week break around the time of the ATs in the domestic leagues. We are due to play 17 weeks on the row from pre-season to Christmas which is hard on players where there isn't a surplus of numbers allowing rotation. Also lets players watch live matches or even TV events.
1. Feel that clubs awarded a S6 team should not have a Club XV team playing in the leagues. 2. Fewer National Leagues as travel issues etc. for teams being promoted from regional leagues.
Shorter season to keep player interest & avoid internationals; Have more club run tournaments 7s, 10s & 15s to create community engagement.
Clubs need to be open and honest about their ability to field teams so that they are placed in the correct league and level of competition. Also if they cannot sustain the number of teams in the league structure they must admit early so that fixtures can be rearranged if a team falls out of the league, or drops down to the bottom. Having games cancelled at very short notice as teams cannot fulfil fixtures is very frustrating and may end up losing two teams as those not getting game time get fed up and go off and do something else. There should be big penalties for those that claim to have teams but blatantly do not as fixtures are unfulfilled each week. This should be a financial impact on those clubs and indeed potential to sanction all the teams that that club puts out, e.g. if they say they have a 2nd XV but it cannot fulfil its fixtures then a sanction could also be placed on their 1st XV as one assumes that team is taking the players up from the 2nd team.
Clubs should be asked if their ambitions are regional or national for next season. That way there can be a balance between regional and national leagues.
All leagues should consist of 10 teams, and it should start in 2019/20. There should be more regional leagues to save expense of travelling.
If a team wins a league it must be promoted - there should be no option for clubs to decline promotion.
Separate from the Super 6 debate, the current Nat 3 travel burden must be tackled and reduced. The impact is two fold: - horrendous travel bills imposed on clubs with lowest national income. - Anti-social impacts on social life, reducing the availability of players to play and officials to travel. Consideration should be given to regionalising Nat 3, which would reduce the overall travel bill. Also and separately, the SRU subsidies must be increased, which would reduce the adverse impact on Caledonian clubs (or Nat 3 clubs if it was not to be regionalised). Consideration should be given to have play-offs for promotion from the Regional leagues.
A period stability is now needed to allow clubs to get used to the new systems. As a club we would prefer 10 team leagues to allow for breaks weather, internationals, etc. after the structure comes in.
We feel it is important to have a well thought through plan effective from the start of 2019/20. A well-managed programme of communication is essential to ensure success.
1. Super 6 should be delayed at least 1 season to allow the McColl review to report and leagues to be realigned. To commence S6 whilst the current Premiership and 3 National Leagues remain risks a mass movement of players and/or a Premiership that becomes more unbalanced than already exists. If Super 6 was a separate Performance competition with co-joined club partnerships there would be an argument for the partner clubs to remain in the NL structure, but not within the proposed Championship.
To continue to review club numbers in the lower leagues to prevent seasons continuing into mid/end April and even the beginning of May as in previous seasons. It proves difficult in raising a team at this time of year, with the addition of players wanting to partake in 7s, player fatigue and an increase in injuries.

Firstly, disappointment that dates for commencement are getting changed without the same widespread publicity that the initial dates were given, where all the changes were taking place in season 2019/20. Also answers to vital questions are still not available. Where can the players not selected for the S6 match day squad be played? Where are the pro players getting played when not in the Glasgow and Edinburgh squads? There is no explanation as to what the difference will be to the current situation, with a lot of players in the top 2 leagues getting paid to play in some form, if the game does not change to become an amateur sport? In which case does the S6 sit in domestic rugby or elite rugby? Without the answers to these vital questions then how can constructive comments be made? We believe that if the governance report will not be available to allow a new league structure for season 2019/20 then the Super 6 should be postponed by a year to make all the changes at the same time.

There should be an EGM after the results of survey are in and the structure for 19/20 set.

As noted before, we think there is need for more radical review to meet changing needs. This review could we believe be carried out before the August 19 AGM to allow decisions to be made for Season 20-21. This included postponing S6 for a year to allow this.

S6 should be postponed for 1 season to allow conclusion of all consultation documents and league structure, it will also aid the S6 in regards of what level of players they are recruiting for regarding the amateur team. We would also like to see in writing that IF the S6 ceases, these clubs should be reinstated back to the highest level of the club game in Scotland, unless the club has been declared bankrupt. Likewise, if a club terminates its S6 contract they should be entitled to return to top flight competition, this caveat would then remove one of the drivers for the amateur team to be in the N1 or Championship league. We have answered NO to Q1 when we agreed that it should be postponed. However if we answer YES, we then have no input on the rest of the question! Finally you do not ask for league sizes only structure, we would support 12 team leagues.

(1) Changes should apply in 19/20 per the S6 document; (2) As part of any agreement for our Club XV to be placed in N1 we would require agreement that if we lost our S6 franchise for whatever reason our Club XV would represent our main team and be placed in the Premiership if not already in the Premiership.

We are satisfied with the current structures and timescales and believe that maintaining these will give the club the best opportunity to prosper. We feel it essential to maintain 3NLs below the Premiership/Championship.

Season start in September - finish March. Maximum league size of 10.

We are content with the status quo for adult level but would add that a facility for U20 games would support the transition from U18 to adult rugby.

Status quo.

(1) Super 6 franchises to lead change & create the super hubs required to support our national game & academy players. Super 6 franchises to build collaborative links/relationships with surrounding clubs through multi registration of players, coaching & training. (2) Stop all Club 2XV fixtures & place these teams in the National League & Region structures. (3) The East Region league structure to move to a sharp swift competition. (The removal of the home and away set up). 10 teams in each league playing only 9 games. Competition to begin September and end December. Cup & shield competitions to be held in Jan & Feb. This allows ER players, volunteers to enjoy & support the Autumn & 6 nations games plus the sevens season. It also allows for local and friendly matches to be held. It allows multi reg players to play for a higher team in the spring. It stops the drain that a long season has on all and is the cause of numbers walking away from the game.

<p>Regarding Q3, the original Agenda 3 presentation at the SRU AGM in 2017 showed the Championship division as comprising 12 clubs (instead of the Premiership's current 10); each of the NLs 3 divisions already has 12 clubs. That would increase to 48 the clubs in the 4 "national" divisions. However, the S6 team's reserve XVs would not be in that number, and we have also taken into account the recent reluctance of some Regional League clubs (specifically East and Caledonia) to accept promotion to N3. Therefore we recommend that the opportunity is taken to reduce the number of clubs in "national" divisions from the current 46 to 36 (3 divisions of 12).</p>
<p>The league structure suggested should be implemented in 2019/20 and made up of 12 team leagues with 2 teams promoted and relegated each season. The S6 "club" sides is to be placed in the lowest NL and have the opportunity to be promoted/relegated. With immediate effect. This would also allow some historic club names to remain playing in Scottish club rugby. For this to work amateurism has to be reinforced in club rugby, as per the original Agenda 3 document.</p>
<p>All leagues should be 10 team. The season is too long - players don't want this. It is part of the reason why player numbers are dropping. Some clubs don't have pitches available to finish their campaign.</p>
<p>It would be best if all changes, including the introduction of Super 6 franchises were held back until the 2020-21 season so that the introduction can (for all leagues) be suitably planned and promoted. That would also avoid the chaos and confusion that currently exists and which will prevail if the changes are made in the 2019-20 season.</p> <p>The introduction for each league should be overseen by a Committee of practitioners who have a close knowledge of what is need to make any new system a success.</p>
<p>When initially introduced the changes to S6 and leagues was to happen simultaneously. It is unacceptable that changes to the league structure would be a year out of step with the introduction of S6. If this requires an EGM/ SGM this needs to happen in sufficient time to make changes to the leagues in 2019/20 as originally envisaged - not in 2020/21..</p>
<p>12 team leagues MUST be retained. Any reduction will have a significant impact on the potential income and sponsorship to clubs. The investment in the top end of the club game is very welcome however a step change is required in how we introduce, promote, attract, and retain current and future players. The concerns raised by most of the clubs at recent meetings and private discussions around S6 club XVs is in relation to the movement of players and reducing the ability of clubs to field teams. This is a direct result of the decreasing number of active players in Scotland, at the current rate of decline there will be little if any reserve rugby club rugby in the near future. This attrition of active participants is shared in a number of sports and reflects among other factors changes in society. A nationwide initiative in re-introducing team sports to all schools is required including lobbying government and local authorities explaining the benefits of sport to the individual and society.</p>
<p>We think that the present structure of NL 3 involves excessive travel which discourages teams in the league below to accept promotion, primarily on financial grounds. WE therefore feel that consideration given to regionalising NL3.</p>
<p>Ten team leagues in Premier, N1 and N2. Scrap the play-offs.</p>
<p>Promotion</p> <p>We have become more concerned over recent years with the Increasing number of teams declining promotion. While we recognise that players and club resources change over time, which may mean that a club feels it will perform badly in a higher league, this seems to fly in the face of natural competition.</p> <p>Why compete in the league you have no intention of taking promotion?</p> <p>There should be some sanction for teams that decline promotion- that could be as simple as losing their participation money, but could include relegation to the next division.</p> <p>The Championship rules are quite clear on this matter - 3.1.1. the Team finishing In first place In each of the Regional Leagues shall be promoted to National 3. The use of the word "Shall"</p>

seems quite definitive.

There is no specific timeline associated with this proposal.

Notes on Summer Rugby

There has been much commentary about changing the playing season to one that has better weather. We believe that rugby is a winter game. Pitches require to be pliant to allow for "soft landings". Summer rugby would result in different types of injuries to damper conditions.

The bigger issue is in maintaining pitches. Rugby pitches take a lot of punishment through the course of season and need time, during the growing season, to recover and get maintenance. That wouldn't be possible if rugby is played in spring/summer months.

Finally, if we are able to predict good weather in the summer months, we should give up rugby and take up forecasting. We have had many summers where our ground has been flooded or constant rain has stopped grass cutting.

2nd XVs in Midlands Leagues

Midlands leagues have had various teams 2nd XVs playing in them for a number of years. This has been beneficial in expanding the number of possible teams. We now have the situation where there are 2nds from Falkirk, Dunfermline, Grangemouth, Kirkcaldy, Howe of Fife, Glenrothes and Stirling county 3rds. Dundee HSFP 2nds could also be considered in this group. These teams should be playing in a reserve league rather than against 1st XVs. Propose implementation would be implemented in 2019/20

"Amateur Clubs"

There has been much debate about amateurism in club rugby. The SRU's very clumsy handling of this issue with dictats of how this would work, has been poor.

Our view is that clubs are independent entities. It is for their members to manage their affairs in compliance with current regulations and laws. It is not the job of the SRU to police this. Indeed, we do not believe that the SRU has the capacity or skills to audit clubs effectively.

Some players are paid because they make themselves available to play over their regular job. If a player can work on a Saturday rather than play. The small amounts being offered make it viable for the player (while they are still probably losing money by not working that day). If this option is removed it essentially means that people in those types of roles will be excluded from the game. We are trying to increase our inclusiveness and appeal to a broader range of people. This approach narrows our reach to those that can afford to give up Saturday working.

Fundamentally, there is a conflict of interest with the SRU funding Super 6 clubs and encouraging part time/semi professional players and stopping other clubs managing themselves in a way that enables them to pay players.

With the falling playing pool, and more so after S6 enter, a more innovative approach is required. Possible shorter league season, with more local friendlies.

(1) Today's players mostly show that commitment on a Saturday is perhaps 4 – 6 hours and so playing on a regional basis is preferred option. Also, competition at Regional level could be optimised on so many fronts – too many clubs have ambitions beyond their capability or consistency and spend ridiculous amounts of money that could be used more beneficially sustaining their club's future. (2) A real chance to re-enthuse our sport; re-build the real spirit of rugby of decades ago – brought up to date and to take forward. (3) Sad to report that having issued this document to all senior players (60+) - only 2 responded – of course, these are reflected in overall response. (4) It would be helpful if many current National League Clubs did not have some bias or feel that there is a stigma around Regional rugby – clubs could become much better and stronger for it. (5) This questionnaire only slightly scratches the surface of Scottish Rugby's problems – the issues are at deeper levels!

Further Regionalisation to reduce travel both in terms of cost and player availability.

10 team Regional Leagues. Shorter season.

Support for Option A in Q2 is subject to SRU assurance that the competition would involve leagues comprising 10 teams with these leagues mirrored at national level for 2XVs. If, however, it is decided to continue with leagues comprising 12 teams, then our preference would be for option B. We would wish these changes implemented for 19/20. We consider that the season should continue to be September - March. In any planned restructure of leagues it is essential that the SCG (Governance Group) recognises the importance of reserve team rugby. A related point is the need for flexibility of competitions for reserve team leagues in order to make it easier for teams to play/fulfil fixtures without being too formally punished for non-fulfilment.

We recognise that players/coaches/supporters value their time more and wish to spend this time not having to travel the entire length and breadth of Scotland to play an 80 minute game of rugby. Due to clubs also increasingly finding it difficult to manage the costs associated with long distance travel this is why we support efforts to regionalise rugby and structure leagues from 2 national leagues downward.

It is our view that the league structure, as proposed in the S6 info document, should be implemented as written and on the same timetable i.e. in place for season 2019-20.

We need to meet the demands of today's players, or clubs will continue to be cancelling games and lose their 2/3XVs - lose a 3XV and then the 2XV is at threat, lose the 2XV and the 1XV struggles - as we see weekly now in both the National and Regional Leagues.

We thus need a league structure and a playing season that fits today's players needs - that's the length of season and the consideration on reducing the amount of travel via more local rugby the further down the club league pyramid we go.

The structure should be seamless with the top three leagues playing nationally and for 1XVs only. The rest of the structure being regionalised and containing all remaining 1XVs plus all 2XVs, 3XVs and S6 'club' XVs. The rules of no two teams from the same club being in the same league plus no S6 'club' XV or 2/3XVs being promoted to the 1XV leagues should be implemented.

The clubs playing in the National Leagues should be allowed to 'reward' their players, those in Regional Leagues and below not and any changes to be introduced when S" comes into force.

1 - There should be three National Leagues for 1XVs (and that may be too many) That is clubs covering the length and breadth of Scotland - 36 teams in total. Playing as the Premiership (we see no point in changing that) and National 1 and 2

2 The rest of the league structure should combine the remainder of the 1XV Leagues and the

Reserve Leagues as happens in the Caledonia Regional Leagues today forming two Regional Leagues of 10 each, two in each Region - that is 1XVs, 2XVs and 3XVs all in the same leagues - 60 teams in total.

3 - The remainder of the teams should form Regional Social Leagues' of 6/8 per 'league' - to get as much 'local' rugby as possible at the bottom end of the pyramid and encourage all to play.

This could be achieved by having a league structure as below:

Level 1 - Premiership - National, top 12 club teams (excluding S6 'club' teams) - 2 relegated

Level 2 - National 1 - National, next 12 club teams (excluding S6 'club' teams) - 2 promoted, 2 relegated

Level 3 - National 2 - National next 12 club teams (excluding S6 'club' teams) - 2 promoted, 3 relegated to Regional Leagues

Level 4 - Regional - East 1, West 1, Caledonia 1 - Regional Leagues made up of top 30 (10 in each Region) remaining S6 'club' teams and 1XV, 2XV and 3XV club teams (as Regional Leagues formed in Caledonia at moment) - top 1XV of each league promoted (not 2/3XVs or S6 'club' team), bottom of each league relegated

Level 5 - Regional - East 2, West 2, Caledonia 2 - Regional Leagues made up of next top 30 (10 in each Region) remaining S6 'club' teams and 1XV, 2XV and 3XV club teams (as Regional Leagues formed in Caledonia at moment) - top of each league promoted, bottom of each league considered for relegation if 'successful' team from Regional 'Social' Leagues can make case for promotion

Level 6 - Regional 'Social' - remaining S6 'club' teams and 1XV, 2XV and 3XV club teams - playing very local, 6/8 per league, no promotion or relegation, though referees and fixtures managed through the Union/Regions. Some arrangement need to be made to allow for ambitious and successful teams to move into the Regional Leagues

(1) It is imperative that any league structure that is introduced is allowed time to prove its worth. At regional level in particular there is a habit of changing league structure every other season without time for the system to bed in. Further to this there is a need to have stability at the bottom end of the leagues, and allow regional clubs to adjust the number of teams in any league to accommodate fair competition at present there are a number of team who can field teams weekly at a good regional standard playing in leagues where not all team can. It impacts the stronger clubs playing in this level. (2) The Cup/Bowl/Shield should be national from an earlier stage also, allowing teams to play against different regions and widen links across the country. (3) A move closer to summer rugby would be a welcome step also, as it would reduce competition with other sports to allow players freedom to play more. It would also be more attractive for supporters, open up further facility sharing with other sports and due to our weather the ground conditions would not realistically pose an issue.

Numerous attempts have been made to reform this in the past inc 8, 10, 12 & 14 team leagues. Regionalisation has been attempted with the Championship A & B (East and West) and this resulted in many clubs especially in Caledonia actually travelling longer distances than the Premier 3 league it replaced. An in depth investigation needs to take place and we feel that the main problem to be addressed is actually the lack of numbers playing rugby rather than tinkering with league sizes or the pros and cons of national or regional rugby. Reserve Leagues are played regionally and the number of unfulfilled fixtures here are record number. When top class clubs cannot raise a 2XV we have a big problem and there is every likelihood that many clubs will end up playing with just 1 XV in the foreseeable future. Why players are deserting rugby needs to be addressed before any further tinkering is done and this must include seeking the views of players, coaches, ex players who have given up the game especially in the 18+ age group. Summer rugby or a winter break should be considered along with having just one national reserve league and all other reserve rugby being played as friendlies at local level.

We believe that a 10 team league structure is essential to maintain both the welfare of our playing squad in the short, medium and long term.

Our coaches fed back at the end of last season that they prepared the first xv squad for 42 weekends. This led to feelings of burn out amongst playing, coaching and managerial personnel. There was certainly a lack of enjoyment, which after all is what it should be all about.

We ask that it is strongly considered that players are not asked to play more than 20 -25 games per year to preserve their playing lifespan. Preparing for 42 weekends is unrealistic and unsustainable and places strain on players families, who the players depend on to support them playing.

We should be aiming for players playing over a longer period of time and not dropping out of the game due to unnecessarily being over played, which is for most, an amateur game.

We also believe that players are fans of the national team too. Playing games on international days leads to discordance between the players, who are supporters too, and playing for their club.

We cannot see the rationale of the super six club sides playing in the top league. A. back-stop position of the league competitions continuing in their current form and with promotion and relegation as per past seasons being retained has been communicated to the clubs by the SRU. However, it has also been stated that the creation of a new league, the Super 6, within the current domestic league structure will go ahead as planned for next season. This decision by the Scottish Rugby Union to proceed with Super 6 regardless and with no impact assessment having been carried out on what the consequences of doing so may be and before the conclusion of the Governance review that the SRU themselves have commissioned is, in our view, a dereliction of their duty to their stakeholders and puts the future health of Scottish club rugby in unnecessary jeopardy.

We feel strongly that a special conference of all member clubs is required. The league structure for 2019-20 should be determined only after a full one-day conference at BT Murrayfield to which all member clubs are invited. The meeting should be professionally facilitated. The conference should also agree on the definition of amateur status and the split point between semi-pro and amateur rugby.

Our viewpoint has always been that clubs should be able to play at a level they are comfortable with both financially and competitively. Previously we gained promotion to the National League whilst it was great success to do so it turned out to be o failure, the playing side of the club went from 2 flourishing teams to only 7 and we have never recovered. National League rugby whilst is an idealistic dream is actually we feel in this modern day a strain on resources, both financially and encouraging players. We applaud and acknowledge clubs who do strive to play National Rugby, however many are doing so at expense, would that money not be better spent creating sustainable clubs with good facilities and a stream of players wanting to play the game without the worry of spending a whole day travelling. In our opinion Regional Leagues should be extended to help clubs flourish, and that promotion should only occur to National Leagues by desire and not imposed.

Reconstruct the boundaries for National League rugby based on the following; (1) Orkney /Shetland in the North drawing the line through Caithness and Inverness down to Edinburgh or Stirling in the south and all points North and East being your East Region or Conference if that term is preferred; (2) Western Isles/Lochaber in the North down to Glasgow in the south across to Falkirk in the East being the West Region; (3) All other locations being the South Region which would stretch across from Berwick in the East to Stranraer in the West. This suggestion is made for a number of reasons: to keep costs down for Clubs and the SRU; to avoid games which mean going from an island to the mainland and then to another island or difficult to get to venue, in order to fulfil a fixture (examples of this would be Orkney v Stornoway, Arran v Mull, Shetland v Oban, etc. We like the idea of Conferences which the SRU are applying to the Women's game or indeed the NFL/AFL system in the USA . Also 10 team leagues would help to give us a break when the weather is at it's most unpredictable – mid December to mid January say? This is also a period when for a whole variety of reasons clubs have difficulty fielding sides to travel away from home because of cost, work commitments and family commitments

No more than 20 games per season. Implement when feasible.

As noted before we think there is need for more radical review to meet changing needs, This review could we believe be carried out before the Aug 19 AGM to allow decisions to be made for season 2020-21. This Included postponing S6 for a year to allow this.

We want changes to be implemented as soon as possible. Most clubs are struggling for players as the world of teams sports keeps on changing and we need to get our 'heads out of the sand'. We have far too much talk about the game without properly considering the key question 'why would someone want to play the game' and 'under what conditions do they want to play the game . Fewer and fewer players are prepared to commit to play each weekend, they have other commitments and opportunities, the game gets physically tougher so they stop playing at a younger age, want a break, don't want to play as many games as they used to and we get injuries... The season is too long. We should have 10 team leagues. The season should start in September and 15 a side rugby must be finished by the end of March. We should be more flexible on when we play matches – we can't just ignore international weekends. More and more players are not prepared to give up a whole day for a game of rugby – so we need to restrict travel obligations by reducing the number of National Leagues. We also need to think about the front row regulations. A lack of a front row is going to cause more and more games to be called off – in the lower leagues we shouldn't have regulations that restrict the number of subs you can have according to how many front rows you have. In the lower leagues we must be able to start a game without front-row cover and still be allowed substitutes. A suggestion would be to deduct a point if a team went uncontested and deduct two points if they started uncontested.

The season must be shorter Aug - Jan for XV's, the length of the season is onerous on players, coaches & volunteers. Youth rugby should follow the women's game to March - Oct / Nov season. Following this type of move will increase retention of players, coaches, etc.

Within a season of S6 implementation we believe that the reserve leagues should be disbanded and all teams entered into one league system. All reserve teams and below to be entered into their regional leagues. They would be allowed to be promoted to one league below their clubs 1st XV (NB S6 franchises cannot have a club side in the premiership). Players in S6 squads who don't make the match day squads to be sent back to their parent/family club to play for them (repeat NOT) to be drawn into S6 club XV.

Regional leagues should only be 8 or 10 teams allowing us a shorter season (last year, training started in July and the season finished end of May which is madness) as well as potentially Co-op games (didn't happen for us last season as everyone was injured or exhausted). The season needs to be shorter as we will continue to lose players and volunteers who will exit the game

The key to Q4 & 5 is to establish if S6 is part of the Domestic game or considered as an elite entity separate from the Domestic Game. If the latter then clearly the answers given will alter accordingly.

<p>If a club wins a RL and doesn't want promotion, there should be a play-off between 2nd placed teams in other RLs to ensure at all times 3 teams are promoted. Implementation = with immediate effect.</p>
<p>A reduction in the number of teams in league to 10 would allow clubs the flexibility, to play a number of friendlies. Change to timing of Cup games needs to be looked at.</p>
<p>The league season together with Cup competition starts far too early with relentless games over several months. Clubs with limited resources find this very difficult particularly in rural areas. We would prefer season starts no earlier than October allowing clubs to get their act together rather than straight into League & Cup fixtures. A break of 3 or 4 weeks also advisable.</p>
<p>We will work with and follow the recommendations of the North Committee.</p>
<p>The Status quo should remain in current structure. Any semi pro teams should remain managed by the high performance dept and budgeted re the same and in their own league. One concession if required being that the reserve teams from semi pro teams should be positioned in the relevant corresponding reserve team league. Significant ongoing consultation would be appreciated, especially in regard to any wording or suggestion to format of future questionnaires re the same .</p>
<p>Any changes are likely to take 2 seasons to bed down and perhaps 3, so, we recommend season 21/2 for full implementation (voted at SRU AGM) depending on progress. As S6 Clubs should allow concentration of best Scottish Rugby; so we must not neglect the other end of the pipeline. The Development Leagues we have suggested should permit the greatest latitude in player registration, minimum player numbers for games to proceed and early publication of manageably-limited fixture lists. Most importantly, there should be sympathy rather than sanction for those Clubs experiencing difficulties. For sympathy, read targeted, professional assistance.</p>
<p>As alluded to above, the club game in Scotland is extremely fragile and there is an urgent need to enter into evidence based consideration of what is best for the future health of Scottish Rugby based on a long term perspective. Current levels of non-fulfilment of fixtures is worrying and a tendency to 'blame clubs' for current failings is all too common. We need to review the schools and youth policy to establish its effectiveness in pass-orting players into clubs, and, through a facilitated discussion/ debate establish a long term strategy for the development of the sport. That facilitated debate should consider issues such as season length at the different levels of the game, timing of the season etc.</p>
<p>There has been wide talk of returning to a more regional based system for leagues to try to stop the decrease in playing numbers by reducing travelling time and costs but we are against this and would prefer the 3 national Leagues remain in place but reduce the teams in them to 10.</p>
<p>Implement 10 team leagues throughout Scottish Rugby below S6. Review Cup competitions including their relevance & the support for the competition itself as opposed to any associated participation funds.</p>
<p>The Super clubs have to survive in isolation in their Championship. To let them have another team which will train, etc. with the pros and benefit from many other things which will be unique to the Super teams is grossly unfair. The Scottish pool of such quality players is low enough and the general club game would be harmed immensely. (2) National 1 2018/19 NO RELEGATION as per start pof season Super clubs have own league and 2nd XV's can play in reserve leagues.</p>
<p>Keep current league structure as it is at present, with the S6 club XV's playing in a separate reserve league.</p>
<p>1. How can we have a full picture of club rugby when we haven't been asked what size of league we are to be participating in? (2) The Cup needs looked at. (3) Reserve Rugby is already struggling if you check recent statistics, don't understand why we have not been asked to consider something else. (4) We strongly fel that there should be further dialogue with clubs before anything is implemented. We suggest more discussions for at least a year. (5) Earliest implementation should be 20/21.</p>

As existing
We think the principle of the existing structure is fine, however, we are unsure of the quality of the new 1XVs for those clubs who are becoming a Super 6 franchise and perhaps other clubs in the Premiership and upper National leagues as players are drawn into the Super 6 teams. We expect this will cause some disruption and may require further attention as the impact of this becomes obvious. With regards to Caledonia Div 1 this is the second season it has had only 9 teams which is not sufficient and disruptive to players' and team development when this means only 18 fixtures, plus two lie weeks in the season. It may be that both the above points combined mean that we need fewer National leagues to populate Regional leagues.
Regional Leagues Review This specifically refers to Caledonia region but In our view applies equally to the West leagues. We have presented a motion on this at the AGM. Caledonia region Is an anomaly and Is gettingIn the way of effective league rugby. A region that covers 2/3 rds of the landmass of Scotland will present logistical difficulties. The approach should be to have a Midlands and North league set up.Proposed Implementation would be season 2020/21
We think that the Premiership/Championship and National Leagues should all be 12 team leagues
We feel that our league structure is essentially good. We only have issues at some points around fixture scheduling, particularly during the Autumn Tests and 6NC.
More needs to be done to support 2XV rugby, less rugby at 2XV level means a less healthy club scene. National Leagues of 10 teams playing fewer games would mean fewer injuries and less of a need to take players from 2XV sides and avoid the need to play on Autumn Test dates. From Season 2020/21.
In future Caledonia must be split into Midlands and North. The players of today, in the main, are not prepared to spend hours travelling to play 80 mins of rugby. Travel costs are proving exorbitant to our club - no clubrooms to call our own., therefore only income sponsors and Scottish Rugby.
Some clubs are arguing for a return to 10 team leagues - we prefer 12. A late finish to the season is less of a problem than an early one (21 Jan in 2017).

SUPPLEMENTAL SURVEY – NATIONAL/REGIONAL RUGBY (7/12/18)

As of the date of the Survey (26 November 2018) there were 287 clubs in membership of Scottish Rugby. Of these, five were “Exile” clubs and two participated only in wheelchair rugby. All member clubs apart from the Exile and wheelchair rugby only clubs were invited to respond to the survey.

In respect of season 2018/19 153 clubs are participating in the league pyramid.

Survey Responses

The number of responses from each league grouping were as follows:

Survey Response Totals

League Level	No. Clubs	No. Returns	% Returns
Premier	10	8	80%
National 1	12	12	100%
National 2	12	11	92%
National 3	12	11	92%
Regional 1	32	14	44%
Other Regional	75	18	24%
Non-League	127	2	2%
Totals	280	76	27%

Nil returns were also received from three non-league playing clubs.

Question 1 – Does your club wish to play national or regional rugby?

Response Table

	No.	%
“National”	48	63%
“Regional”	26	34%
Neither/Not answered	2	3%
Totals	76	

Question 2 – How many teams does your club consider should compete in each National League?

Tick preferred option.

Option A – Eight

Option B - Ten

Option C – Twelve

Option D – Other (Please state your club’s suggested number below):

Response Table

	No.	%
Option A	3	4%
Option B	42	55%
Option C	29	38%
Option D	2	3%
Totals	76	

Question 3 - How many National Leagues (including a Premiership or Championship) does your club consider that there should there be? (Note this does not include the separate Super 6 competition).

Tick preferred option.

Option A – One

Option B – Two

Option C – Three

Option D - Four

Option E – Other (Please state your club’s suggested number below):

Response Table

	No.	%
Option A - One	0	0%
Option B - Two	7	9%
Option C – Three	28	37%
Option D – Four	36	47%
Option E – Other	5	7%
Totals	76	

Specific comments received in this Survey (in no particular order)

Answer to Q3 assumes 10 team leagues. If 12 team leagues would then support only 2 national leagues.
Whatever size chosen the league fixture season for all needs to be reduced and removed from the ATs & 6NC. No SBDs. A short sharp competition for all will prove attractive to playing numbers and volunteers and can be marketed/sponsored better. As an alternative the club would be happy with one national league of 15 playing once home OR away.
This is impossible to properly assess until the impact of Super 6 has been assessed. The present 4 league option has worked reasonably well. However, with the withdrawal of 6 teams into S6 and a 12-team league structure at Premiership it seems likely that there will only be sufficient players to maintain 3 National Leagues.
Regional means Midlands, not Caledonia.
If S6 club sides in Nat. Leagues - 4 x 10 leagues, If S6 club sides not in National Leagues - 3 x 10 leagues. Concerned at not knowing Cup schedule or Reserve League structure.

Q2. We believe the season needs to be shorter and the league season sharper, and also travel reduced. This would point to smaller leagues if still home and away or larger leagues if single fixture. We believe a proper review of the pros and cons of options should be done prior to the AGM in August. This review needs to consult in a meaningful way with players. We also strongly believe that Super 6 should be delayed until this review is complete.

Q3. The number of leagues should reflect the size of the leagues and the number of clubs who want to play nationally.

If we were good enough we would be prepared to play national rugby. Just wanted to re-inforce the point we made in the previous survey that we should have a one day conference of all clubs before agreeing league structure for next season.

Either 4 leagues of 12 teams, or 5 leagues of 10 teams.

1/ Do we want to play national league - Yes (wholeheartedly); 2/ How many teams in each league - 10 (we don't believe 12 works in terms of players getting occasional rest weekends); 3/ How many national leagues - we're happy with current 4 - if S6 Clubs drop out of Prem then possibly 3, but if we go 10 team leagues then the remaining 40 Clubs stay across 4 leagues- we feel this is a balanced position and satisfies aspirational Clubs ambitions.

Q1. We aspire to play at the highest level we can, given the league structures in place at the time. Speaking as a Caledonia club, but one that is located closer to Edinburgh and Glasgow clubs than we are to many of our Caledonia colleagues, being a regional club is a moot point. Any reduction in National Leagues would require a fundamental review of the regions and specifically a split between the North and Midlands. Whatever system is adopted, there is invariably a log jam from regional into national leagues (see Regions into Nat 3 currently), so this question cannot be answered in isolation to what is the proposed structure and how will promotion and relegation be decided?

Acknowledgements:

In addition to the comments provided in the surveys the Committee received further submissions from individuals and clubs and third-parties, all of which were duly considered in our discussions. These were as follows:

1. National 2 & 3 Forum – survey outputs re implementation of Super 6 and placement of Club XVs
2. Dr. James Robson – SRU Chief Medical Officer.
3. Glasgow Hawks (supported by Edinburgh Academicals RFC, Currie RFC and Hawick RFC.)
4. Stirling County RFC
5. National 1 Forum request – re implementation of Super 6.
6. Melrose RFC
7. Currie Chieftains RFC
8. Combined submission: Heriots RFC, Boroughmuir RFC and Watsonians RFC.
9. External analysis of Player Payment and Reward Survey data and Domestic League survey data from independent third-party data specialist.
10. External legal advice re potential player payment restrictions.