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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Please find below WRU Status Update issued to member clubs this afternoon:  ***This week clubs will have read the news about Welsh Rugby Union pay-cuts across all staff, with senior employees, from Wayne Pivac to executive staff, universally accepting a 25% pay-cut.  This policy is also due to be extended out to the professional game across Wales, with Professional Rugby Board currently working hard on the detail.*** ***Further staff at the WRU, anyone earning over 25k per annum, have also accepted wage reductions or engaged the government’s furlough scheme. Across the board I would like to extend the gratitude of Welsh rugby to these individuals who are making personal sacrifices in the name of the long-term stability of our game.  Around the country our club game is sustained by a network of volunteers who will be making similar and often deeper sacrifices over the coming weeks or will have already done so.*** ***I have a conference call this week with World Rugby Executive Committee when we will all update to create a worldwide perspective on the current situation and I’m sure that the plight of USA Rugby will be discussed.  These are incredibly difficult times and for the USA rugby board of directors and congress to vote to file for bankruptcy after exploring all other options just shows the financial impact that suspended income due to the coronavirus measures can have.*** ***But, we are all in this together and, together, we will see it through. It is our collective aim to ensure that Welsh rugby remains intact through this current period of enforced inaction, so that we can pick up again where we left off when the time comes.  We are doing all we can to make this happen and are grateful for the cooperation of all as we take each necessary step towards achieving this goal.*** ***Yours in rugby,*** ***Gareth Davies*** ***WRU chairman***  **Club Support** Given the fast-changing nature of the advice being made available, a Working Group has been established who are in regular dialogue with external partners to ensure clubs are provided with the most accurate and up to date information. One of the first recommendations of the Working Group is to circulate a Club Impact Survey in the weekly information updates provided by the Club Development Team to better understand the specific challenges being faced by each of our clubs.  The latest club information update issued last Friday gave further details of the immediate steps that clubs can take to reduce ongoing costs. Guidance is also provided on the medium to long term finance options and cost saving measures that clubs may wish to consider. Most clubs should now be eligible for selected business Grants and have been furnished with the details of how to apply to local authorities for Welsh Government packages.   Clubs should also be aware of help available with existing loans and new schemes for businesses, alongside the prospect of VAT deferral via HMRC. We continue to work on our financial forecasts which make clear that the situation is challenging. Should any additional WRU funding be available in the future for clubs, it will be imperative for clubs, in the first instance, to demonstrate that they have exhausted all opportunities to access funding from the various government schemes that have been communicated.  It should be noted that any future funding would be conditional on this being demonstrated.  For further information or to follow up or check on any detail we would encourage all clubs to continue contacting the team via the helpdesk [clubdevelopment@wru.wales](mailto:clubdevelopment@wru.wales)  **National Hub Officer Deployment**  We have 45 rugby Hub Officers currently engaged as Key Support Workers within their own education establishments, central Hub venues or registered to support Unitary Authority created locations.  This includes officers engaged within their communities delivering meals to the vulnerable, delivering Google Classroom activities to school pupils and providing a support function for WRU Club development.  One officer has been re-listed with the Welsh Ambulance Service in order to support NHS work and we thank all of these individuals for their ongoing commitment.   **Community Fitness and Healthy eating plans** This week the Welsh Rugby Union’s physical performance team, lead by Paul Stridgeon, published a comprehensive document designed to keep Welsh rugby fit and well during these difficult times.  The document takes the form of a pdf guide, with four sections targeting both adult and child (12 to 16 yrs) fitness activity and nutrition.  The team point out that it is key for us all to keep active during this challenging time to safeguard and maintain good physical and mental wellbeing and have formulated training programmes that can be performed at home with little or no equipment. They have also added some nutritional guidelines that will help you stay, fit and healthy during the coming weeks.  The programs are basic and have differing intensities for different fitness levels for all abilities and can be found here [bit.ly/WRUStayActive](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=451A459A1A1128) Elsewhere online we would like to bring your attention to game locker and digital classroom site addresses, where content will continue to be placed for use at home:  The Game Locker has a wealth of existing content that clubs can access however, new content is: Stay Home, Stay Active Scorch activity packs Short ‘Garden Rugby’ activity videos  *To be uploaded soon:* CPD events for coaches in the format of webinars (dates TBC) New distance learning content for coaches during the Coronavirus pandemic Google Classroom courses to assist specific formal training in preparation for returning to coaching. In particular coaches transitioning from non-contact rugby, U8s to contact rugby, U9s Visit the Game Locker here: [https://www.wrugamelocker.wales/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=451A459A1A1129)  WRU Digital Classroom can be accessed by all schools, who simply required to sign up using ‘How to’ tutorial videos (this will likely to be live by the end of the week), with the same access forwarded to all WRU Hub Officers to assist them in the workplace whilst caring for school children of front line workers WRU Digital Classroom Sign up page: [https://signup.wruschools.co.uk/](https://wru.acemlnb.com/lt.php?notrack=1&s=7e1f6645b4724ab5c5295c3afd677ef7&i=451A459A1A1130)  **The professional game** As mentioned above we have announced further measures to reduce costs during the current period of inactivity in the game in Wales. With no stadium events currently and pressure on other income streams, and following in depth reviews of potential ‘return to rugby’ dates, a comprehensive plan for cost savings has been implemented. The first part of this plan, the reduction of outgoings and a review of ongoing projects, has already delivered cash savings for the WRU. Phase two included a review of staff costs. Senior rugby staff, including head coach Wayne Pivac, and WRU executives including CEO Martyn Phillips, will take a 25% reduction to salary According to business need, further staff will take pay cuts of either 25% or 10% with the difference broadly accounted for by the extent to which roles are directly related to professional rugby. Furloughing, in accordance with the government’s Job Retention Scheme, will be implemented where applicable until the end of May. ***"I have been struck by the efforts and attitude of all WRU staff during this crisis,"*** said WRU Group CEO Martyn Phillips. ***"As businesses across the country are faced with similar difficult decisions, adopting this new policy was made all the more challenging as everywhere you look everyone at the WRU has ‘rolled up their sleeves’ and adapted.*** ***"However, we have taken these steps to aim to safeguard jobs and protect the medium and long term health of the game in Wales. We remain focussed on our goal to come out of the other side of this crisis.*** ***"We are continuing our constructive dialogue with the Welsh Rugby Players Association (WRPA) and the Regions. This includes an exchange of information with the WRPA, particularly around the complex financials involved, so that all parties can come to an informed decision. We are working as quickly as possible to bring this to a conclusion"***  **Working with the NHS**  Work continues on turning Principality Stadium into a fully functional, temporary field hospital to provide around 2,000 extra beds to NHS Wales as part of scenario planning by the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. Clinicians and managers are currently working with the Principality Stadium team and a range of specialist contractors to create the new facility at pace. The work has already started with teams assigned to adapt the home of Welsh rugby to a temporary hospital- a significant task in scale and the timing of the virus. ***"We have made the entire Principality Stadium available to be used based on NHS requirements, including hospitality areas and a variety of further rooms and facilities,"*** said WRU CEO Martyn Phillips. ***"It is a privilege to be able to offer our services, facilities and a significant number of operational staff, at their individual choice, to help at this time of national emergency.*** ***"We have made advanced plans to transform relevant spaces into fully functional hospital environments, working closely with Levy UK, who are responsible for overseeing similar transitions elsewhere."*** Operational staff at Principality Stadium have been offered the opportunity to continue in full-time work supporting NHS staff as the national ground is transformed.  Also, work has started on setting up another field hospital at The Vale Resort, Hensol, on the site of the WRU National Centre of Excellence, with thanks also to the generosity of Leekes. This will provide 290 additional beds for us as the numbers of people with COVID19 increases. It is being established with the support of our local authorities and the military, and some fantastic contractors. ***"The speed and efficiency with which our stadium is being transformed into a hospital is just one example of the hard work and dedication of our team,"*** added Phillips.  ***"I know there will be hardship to endure, but equally I know that all our staff have the very best interests of Welsh rugby and the wider community in Wales at heart and that we will get through these tough times together.*** ***"We’ve worked with Leekes in partnership for many years at the National Centre of Excellence. We’re more than happy for the facilities there to be used by the Health Board at this challenging time and to support the wider communities of Wales."*** Dr Sharon Hopkins, CEO for Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB, said: ***"We are very grateful to everyone who has supported the response to the challenge of COVID19. The response continues to be amazing.*** ***‘The WRU and Leekes have kindly let us use their facilities, which is greatly welcomed as rapid work takes place to increase available staff, beds and equipment. The support of the military, local authorities is just so vital in transforming the spaces and making the changes happen.*** ***"The field hospitals will be vitally important in providing care to patients and communities in the coming weeks and months.  It is an inspiring example of organisations working collaboratively to provide urgent new environments to respond to COVID."***  **Rugby** We are continuing to work with pro rugby competitions to coordinate fixtures and plan for as and when rugby can be played again.   The latest event to be postponed, clubs will have noticed last week, was Judgement Day, but the word postponed is significant here.   ***"Judgement Day is the kind of event that could fit flexibly into any re-scheduled season, what a way to start off any resumption in playing, for example,"*** added Phillips.  ***"As with the Scotland Six Nations match, we urge all supporters to hold onto their tickets for the time being, of course refunds will be available if we re-schedule and you can’t make the new time, but, for now, we are hoping for a resumption in rugby one day soon, giving the opportunity to re-activate all tickets."***  **And finally, the stats** With the final facts and stats now in, congratulations to Billy McBryde who ended the Indigo Group Premiership season 40 points clear of his nearest rival in the race for the title of leading scorer in the truncated campaign. The former Wales U20 outside half notched 163 points for RGC as he completed 50 unbroken games. That put him well ahead of the top scorer in 2018/19, Aberavon’s Jack Maynard with 148, and he still had five games to play. The north Walians were the leading points and try scorers in the Premiership with 409 and 53 respectively. That kept them just ahead of table-toppers Cardiff, six places above them, although they played one more game than their Arms Park rivals, who ended with 392 points and 50 tries. McBryde’s total included six tries – two short of Pontypridd wing Dale Stuckey, who topped the table with eight. This is the second season in a row a winger from Ponty has claimed the honours, with Alex Webber running away with the gong last year. One try behind Stuckey was the Carmarthen Quins hooker Torin Myhill, who plundered his tries on the back of his side’s lethal driving maul, while the RGC wings Afon Bagshaw and Rhys Tudor also ended with a magnificent seven. Cardiff ended the season seven points clear of the Quins having played one game less. Aberavon were one point further back in third, on the same number of matches as the Blue & Blacks. | | |