

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **ARMY RUGBY UNION POLICY – THE PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING RUGBY UNION – RUGBY LEAGUE CROSS CODE RELATIONSHIP**

#### **Background**

1. The game of Rugby Union is popular within the Army at all levels and is played by most units<sup>16</sup> at some point during the year, whether it be full fifteen aside rugby, sevens, tens or tag/touch rugby used as part of the unit training programme. Allied to these activities is the recent growth in units playing Rugby League during the summer months<sup>17</sup>. Many of those involved in playing Rugby League also play Rugby Union during the normal winter season<sup>18</sup>. It is therefore the aim of this document to set out Army Rugby Union policy by underpinning certain agreed principles so that each code may de-conflict its activities in a manner that ensures maximum safe participation for both codes during periods of cross code activity<sup>19</sup>.
2. The following principles have been agreed by the ARU Management Board and the Army Rugby League (ARL) Executive Committee.
  - a. To maintain a structured season in both codes which to the greatest degree possible, de-conflicts matches played in both codes.
  - b. To ensure that a duty of care is provided to all personnel in that they adhere to the details laid out in the ARU policy document (Chapter Two, paragraph 11). This paragraph details the measures that need to be taken to ensure players are not 'overplayed' thereby increasing the risk of serious injury or 'burn-out'. Players are strongly advised to follow any medical advice given regarding injury, rehabilitation and rest periods both in the document and that given by Medical Officers, GPs or other relevant healthcare professionals.
  - c. The acknowledgement that individual players must have the power to decide for themselves whether to play, and (where a conflict exists) the code of rugby they wish play. Furthermore they must not be ordered or otherwise unduly pressurised into playing or choosing one code over another.

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<sup>16</sup> The Army Rugby Union has at any one time approximately 200 unit and corps clubs registered (as of June 09)

<sup>17</sup> The Army 'summer' rugby league season generally runs from mid March to July each year with inter-service matches currently played in September.

<sup>18</sup> The ARU season runs from 1 Sep -31 May each year.

<sup>19</sup> This normally occurs in September each year when the ARL inter-services matches are played and during the winter months when the ARL play in the preliminary rounds of the RL Challenge Cup.

d. The agreement that Inter-Service fixtures take precedence when there is a clash of cross-code fixtures. Players selected for Inter-Service matches should (as long as the player agrees and is available) play for the Army representative team irrespective of code.

e. The agreement that Army representative matches take precedence over other matches as long as they are incorporated into the structured season of the relevant code, this includes cross code, age group and game variants such as Army Sevens.

f. That where an irresolvable conflict exists the Chairman of each code with discuss and provide a workable solution to the matter.

### **Summary**

3. The maintenance of these principles and cross code cooperation will ensure that both codes co-exist amicably and are able to select players who are committed and unhindered by injury and other outside influences.