

Decision of PRL Panel regarding the appropriate points allocation following the cancellation of the Gallagher Premiership Rugby Match between Worcester Warriors and Harlequins.

Date: Thursday 31st December 2020

Panel:

- Andy Higginson (PRL Chairman)
- Darren Childs (PRL CEO)
- Phil Winstanley (PRL Rugby Director)

Summary of Panel's Decision

1. As a result of Harlequins' inability to fulfil a fixture as a result of Covid-19 and the cancellation of the Round 5 Gallagher Premiership match between Worcester Warriors and Harlequins, Worcester Warriors shall be awarded the win and 4 league points and Harlequins shall be deemed to have lost the match but awarded 2 league points. The match score shall be recorded as 0 – 0.

Background to the match cancellation

2. On Saturday 26th December 2020 Harlequins played Bristol Bears in its Round 4 fixture of the Gallagher Premiership Rugby competition.
3. On Monday 28th December 2020, both Harlequins and Bristol returned at least one positive test from their players in the Round 4 match. Harlequins carried out its contact tracing against all positive tests which resulted in 13 players self-isolating, of which 4 are front row players.
4. In addition to the players self-isolating, the Club also has another 5 props unavailable due to injury. The full details of this were provided to Premiership Rugby in writing on 30th December 2020. As a result, the Club has insufficient players to fulfil its fixture obligations under Premiership Regulations for its Round 5 match against Worcester Warriors on Friday 1st January 2021.
5. Premiership Regulations state that *"In the interests of safety each team playing in the Premiership must have at least six (6) fit and able Players in the squad who can play at hooker, tight head prop and loose head prop who are suitably trained and experienced to ensure that on the first occasion that a replacement in any front row position is required (whether due to injury or consequent to a Player(s) being temporarily suspended or ordered off) the team can continue to play safely with contested scrums. In the event that a Club is unable to field those six players, the Match shall be cancelled. A PRL Panel shall determine whether this is the direct result of Covid-19 and if it is as a direct result of Covid-19, then Schedule 5 shall apply"*.
6. Following discussions between Harlequins and Premiership Rugby, Premiership Rugby is satisfied that Harlequins cannot, as a direct result of Covid-19 meet the regulatory requirements for having sufficient front row forwards to fulfil the fixture.

Decision of the Panel

7. Pursuant to Premiership Regulation 3.4(b)(i) and the Covid-19 regulations set out in Schedule 5 of the Premiership Regulations a PRL Panel has been convened to determine:

1. If the unavailability of front row forwards is as direct result of Covid-19; and
2. the result and points allocation for the match, which would be determined as follows:

*"In the event that the PRL Panel decide that a Referred Match in the League Season is cancelled, or any governmental authority recommends or requires that a Match in the Premiership League Season is cancelled (in either case, a **"Cancelled League Season Match"**), then (without prejudice to any action which may be taken under or relating to any Covid Minimum Operating Standards):*

- *the result of that Cancelled League Season Match shall be deemed to be 0-0; and*
- *four league points shall be allocated to Club who was able to play the Cancelled League Season Match and two league points shall be allocated to the other Club."*

8. The Panel has concluded that Harlequins' inability to fulfil the fixture is due to Covid-19 and Worcester Warriors shall be awarded the win and 4 league points and Harlequins shall be deemed to have lost the match but awarded 2 league points. The match score shall be recorded as 0 – 0.

Appeal

9. The decision of the PRL Panel as to whether it is one or both clubs who have been unable to fulfil the match, and the decision as to the allocation of points shall be subject to appeal under RFU Regulation 19.12.6 (and for the purposes of that Regulation, the PRL Panel shall be deemed to be a Constituent Body Disciplinary Panel).

Andy Higginson

Darren Childs

Phil Winstanley

31st December 2020