

## **Decision of PRL Panel regarding the appropriate points allocation following the cancellation of the Gallagher Premiership Rugby Match between Northampton Saints and Newcastle Falcons.**

**Date:** Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2021

**Panel:**

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

### **Summary of Panel's Decision**

1. As a result of Newcastle Falcons' inability to fulfil a fixture as a result of Covid-19 and the cancellation of the Round 9 Gallagher Premiership match between Northampton Saints and Newcastle Falcons, Northampton Saints shall be awarded the win and 4 league points and Newcastle Falcons 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 Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021, Newcastle Falcons were tested as part of the Premiership Rugby testing programme and returned 2 positive tests.
3. The positive cases were immediately isolated and 2 further players were isolated through the contact tracing process.
4. On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021, Newcastle Falcons returned 2 further positive tests.
5. The positive cases were immediately isolated and 3 further players were isolated through the contact tracing process.
6. All 4 positive cases were front five forwards which created concerns around transmission and a possible outbreak could not be ruled out. However, as all 4 cases had not been identified at the same testing round, this cannot be confirmed until further testing has been completed.
7. Following consultation with local Public Health England officials and the Professional Rugby Testing Oversight Group, the match has been called off and the Newcastle Falcons training ground closed. Further testing will be conducted on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February and the results will be discussed with the relevant authorities before club training recommences.
8. Due to the closure of the training facility and the isolation of its playing squad, Newcastle Falcons is no longer able to fulfil its fixture obligations under Premiership Regulations for its Round 9 match against Northampton Saints on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

## Decision of the Panel

9. Pursuant to Covid-19 regulations set out in Schedule 5 of the Premiership Regulations a PRL Panel has been convened to determine the result and points allocation 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."*

10. In respect of the points result and the points allocation, the Panel has concluded that due to Newcastle Falcons' inability to fulfil the fixture due to Covid-19, Northampton Saints shall be awarded the win and 4 league points and Newcastle Falcons shall be deemed to have lost the match but awarded 2 league points. The match score shall be recorded as 0-0.

## Appeal

11. 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**

**13<sup>th</sup> February 2021**