

Statement by the Championship Clubs on the latest RFU Council meeting

June 14th, 2024

The Championship has today (Friday) won the right to a realistic chance of promotion to the top-tier of the game and taken control of its destiny with the creation of a new, independently chaired Tier 2 Board of governance.

The RFU Council today approved a promotion and relegation deal that the Championship clubs have been fighting for since the beginning of 2023.

The deal means that in order to be eligible for promotion, the minimum operating standards have been relaxed to make them more achievable and the deadline for achieving those standards will be spread over four seasons. Full details will be announced in due course.

Previously, the terms and conditions of entry had been unacceptable to Championship clubs, because the amount of investment needed, and the shorter timetable, made them impracticable to a potential promotion candidate.

In its meeting today, the RFU Council also approved the new Tier 2 Board, a body with an equal representation of Championship and RFU members, chaired by an independent person. That Board will take decisions affecting the commercial exploitation of the second-tier league, hence allowing our clubs to make the most of their marketing, media and broadcasting rights.

The clubs believe these changes herald a new era for the professional game in England. They set the current 12 clubs – and all those who wish one day to join them - onto a brighter footing.

With an agreed pathway to promotion, many of the current league's clubs will now start the planning and investment that will give them a fighting chance to be the first non-P shareholder to reach the Premiership since London Welsh in 2014.

Simon Halliday, chairman of the Championship, said after the RFU Council's vote: "We have got what we came for. Now our clubs - and every club - can realistically dream of promotion to the Premiership.

"There is now a genuine path for ambitious clubs to rise; the top tier is reconnected to the rest of English rugby, and we can use our commercial potential to fund the growth that rugby sorely needs at our level.

"This is a result that brings common resolve to our sport, guaranteeing that English rugby remains open and fair from the lowest league to the highest."