



WORLD DEAF RUGBY CONSTITUTION

(Amended/Adopted October 2020; Replaced July 2023)

THIS CONSTITUTION IS NO LONGER CURRENT/VALID

This Constitution ceased to be current/valid when WDR was approved as a *Charitable Incorporated Organisation* in July 2023.

It is replaced in its entirety by a new *WDR Constitution* that was approved by and registered with the *UK Charities Commission* in July 2023

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1. Organisation Name, Vision, Mission & Values

1.1 The name of the organisation is World Deaf Rugby (*WDR*) and it shall be known by the acronym WDR.

1.2 The organisation came into being under the “*World Deaf Rugby*” name in 2016. Its predecessor was the International Deaf Rugby Organisation (*IDRO*) which had been in operation since 1998.

1.3 Consistent with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, World Deaf Rugby seeks to achieve equality through participation and the removal of discrimination against Deaf people within rugby.

1.3.1 **Vision:** A sport for all, true to its values and spirit.

1.3.2 **Mission:** Growing the global rugby family.

1.3.3 **Values:** Inherent in everything we do are our values of integrity, respect, solidarity, passion and discipline.

2. Not-for-Profit Status

2.1 WDR shall be a non-profit organisation.

2.2 All Officers, Officials, Members and other persons providing services or support shall do so as volunteers. No Officer, Official, Member or other person shall seek to make or actually make any profit, benefit or other advantage, financial or otherwise, derived from or by reason of membership of WDR or formal association with WDR.

3. Languages

3.1 The official languages of WDR shall be:

3.1.1 International Sign; and

3.1.2 English.

3.1.3 Each Member is responsible for the translation from English/International Sign to the languages of its country.

3.2 The written language for official WDR correspondence, electronic meetings and printed materials shall be English.

3.3 The official languages for WDR tournaments and WDR face-to-face meetings shall be:

3.3.1 International Sign and the sign language of the country hosting the tournament or meeting; and

3.3.2 English and the spoken/written language of the country hosting the tournament or meeting.

4. Definitions

4.1 **"Home Union"** means the country's National Rugby Union.

4.2 **"Member"** means any National Deaf Rugby Union (*or Association*) or any Regional Deaf Rugby Union (*or Association*) that has been granted membership of WDR.

4.3 **"Person"** includes a player, trainer, referee, touch judge, coach, selector or official (*whether hearing, Deaf or Hard of Hearing*) who has at any time been involved in the Game, and any other individual who has at any time been involved in the organization, administration or promotion of the Game.

4.4 **"Regional"** means a group of countries that are in close proximity in a particular geographic area.

4.5 **"The Game"** means the game of rugby union played in accordance with the laws and rules of World Rugby as adapted by WDR for Deaf and Hard of Hearing participants.

4.6 **"Deaf"** means both Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing - *i.e. throughout these rules "Deaf" shall mean both Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, but will be referred to collectively as "Deaf"*

5. Purpose

5.1 World Deaf Rugby (*and its predecessor IDRO*) were established with the aim of developing, growing and extending Deaf rugby internationally and within Member countries and raising the profile and recognition of Deaf rugby across the world. Its core purpose is to coordinate, promote, foster and support all levels of international rugby for Deaf persons.

6. Objects

6.1 To promote the participation of Deaf persons in rugby and all activities associated with rugby including World Deaf Rugby events and Regional Deaf Rugby events.

6.2 To develop/organize a program and schedule of WDR Championships and Tournaments, select and approve the host country for each event and assist hosting countries in the staging of such events.

6.3 To support international and regional Deaf rugby competitions and matches, and provide guidance on the procedures and protocols to be adopted in such competitions and matches.

6.4 To promote, develop and support the creation of national Deaf Rugby Unions in all countries who have Rugby Unions recognised by and members of World Rugby.

6.5 To act as the coordinating body for national Deaf Rugby Unions and assist in matters under dispute between any national Deaf Rugby Unions.

6.6 To promote, encourage and facilitate closer alignment, engagement and cooperation between national Deaf Rugby Unions and their Home Unions through recognition and support.

6.7 To create and foster mutually beneficial relationships with World Rugby, ICSD and other relevant international sporting bodies.

6.8 To liaise, engage and cooperate with World Rugby on behalf of all WDR members and, if requested by any Member, with that Member's Home Union.

6.9 To liaise, engage and cooperate with any relevant Government or other organization on behalf of Deaf rugby persons.

6.10 To co-ordinate recommendations for changes or amendments of the Laws of Rugby Union to adapt the game for Deaf persons, and submit the same to World Rugby for consideration and adoption. Save to the extent they are incompatible with these objects, WDR will follow, support and adhere to the objectives and regulations of World Rugby.

7. Powers

7.1 In furtherance of its objects and only with the specific approval of the General Committee of WDR and adequate provision in place for finances, WDR shall have the following powers:

7.1.1 To purchase, take on, lease or in exchange of otherwise acquire or rent lands, buildings and any property or interest in such property;

7.1.2 To manage, work, maintain, sell, lease, exchange, surrender, dispose of or otherwise deal with and turn to account all or any of the property of WDR;

7.1.3 To borrow money and pledge any asset of WDR by way of security;

7.1.4 To lend, invest or deposit money;

7.1.5 To erect, construct, alter and maintain any buildings or chattels; and

7.1.6 To receive any gift of money or property for any of the objects of the WDR whether subject to any special trust or not with the proviso that WDR may nevertheless decline to accept any gift or takeover any property which has annexed to it any condition or obligation not approved by the General Committee of the WDR.

7.1.7 To set WDR Annual Membership Fees/Subscriptions as approved by a formal vote of the General Committee from time-to-time.

7.2 WDR owns the naming rights to all events/tournaments using *“World Deaf Rugby”* in their title including, but not limited to *“World Deaf Rugby Championships”*, *“World Deaf Rugby Sevens Championships”*, *“World Deaf Rugby World Cup”* and *“World Deaf Rugby Sevens World Cup”*. Deaf Rugby Unions who apply to WDR to stage any event so named will be required to follow WDR protocols and will then be granted the naming rights and approval to use the WDR logo for the period of the event.

8. Membership

8.1 An organisation acting as the national governing body for rugby union for Deaf persons in any country can apply in writing for WDR membership which will be granted upon receipt of such written application.

8.2 In the event that more than one such organisation claims to be the national governing body for any country, the WDR General Committee shall receive written representations from each organisation setting out their basis for asserting that they are the national governing body for that country. The General Committee shall then determine which organisation will be recognised. The decision of the General Committee shall be final.

8.3 In making its determination, the General Committee shall give preference to any organisation that is the Home Union or has been recognised by its Home Union as the national governing body for rugby union for Deaf persons.

8.4 A Regional Deaf Rugby Union (*or Association*) comprising several countries in a defined geographic area can apply in writing to become a WDR Member. Membership shall be subject to approval by the WDR General Committee.

8.5 Members may resign from WDR by written notice to the WDR Secretary.

8.6 It is a precondition of membership that all Members shall comply and be bound by the regulatory requirements of their Home Union in relation to the playing and administration of rugby union. This shall include but not be limited to the use of suitably qualified coaches, physiotherapists and other support staff, and observing all regulations for the protection of players.

8.7 Annual Membership Fees/Subscriptions will be set from time to time by a formal vote of the General Committee. These will be set in \$ USD.

8.8 Each Member shall be entitled to participate and vote in the General Committee.

9. Finances

9.1 The Executive Committee shall have responsibility for the overall management of WDR finances.

9.2 The WDR Treasurer shall be specifically responsible for managing/administering the day-to-day finances of WDR, the preparation of Annual Budgets and Financial Reports, and the presentation of such Reports for approval/adoption by the WDR General Committee.

9.3 Annual Membership Fees/Subscriptions will be set/approved by the General Committee.

9.4 Each Member shall be responsible for its own costs incurred or arising in relation to WDR.

10. General Committee

10.1 The WDR General Committee shall comprise all Members of WDR who shall each be entitled to nominate two delegates to the Committee. Each Member shall have a single vote.

10.2 The General Committee shall be responsible for:

10.2.1 The adoption and amendment of this Constitution;

- 10.2.2 The approval of WDR Policies, Protocols and Plans;
- 10.2.3 The approval of WDR Hearing Loss Eligibility Criteria;
- 10.2.4 The approval of Regional Deaf Rugby Union (*or Association*) membership of WDR;
- 10.2.5 The election of the Executive Committee Officers - *i.e. Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary & Project Officers*
- 10.2.6 The resolution of all proposals made by Members save to the extent that the General Committee has delegated authority to a sub-committee;
- 10.2.7 The creation of General Committee sub-committees with designated powers in relation to specified subjects;
- 10.2.8 The creation and approval of protocols for playing Deaf Rugby including, but not limited to, qualifying levels of hearing loss;
- 10.2.9 The approval of requests to play WDR championships and tournaments and obtain naming rights for such events, and the provision of guidance on the protocols applicable to such events;
- 10.2.10 The setting of WDR Annual Membership Fees/Subscriptions;
- 10.2.11 The approval of WDR Budgets and Financial Reports;
- 10.2.12 The approval of any intended use of the WDR Powers listed in *Clause 7.1* of this Constitution;
- 10.2.13 The approval of WDR Sponsorship Agreements
- 10.2.14 Such other matters as shall be approved by the General Committee.

10.3 The business of the General Committee shall be conducted to the extent possible electronically via e-mail. Each Member shall designate an individual to act as the point of contact for the receipt of all communications from WDR. It shall be the responsibility of each Member to ensure that the e-mail address for that point of contact remains valid and operational.

10.4 Any Member shall be entitled to make proposals for consideration by the General Committee. All such proposals shall be submitted to the WDR Secretary who shall coordinate with the proposing Member on the preparation of a formal draft resolution.

10.5 Draft resolutions shall be submitted to all Members via e-mail. All Members shall be entitled to respond to resolutions, propose amendments or present submissions either in support or against any resolution. All such proposals or submissions shall be made within 14 days of being notified of a draft resolution.

10.6 Thereafter the Secretary shall prepare the final resolution together with any proposed amendments and send them to Members via their designated point of contact. Members shall

respond with their vote within 28 days. Members not casting their vote within 28 days shall be considered to have abstained.

10.7 All decisions shall be by two-thirds majority of votes cast. In the event of no two-thirds majority, the Chairman shall have a final casting vote.

11. Executive Committee/Officers

11.1 There shall be an Executive Committee comprising seven officers - *a WDR Chairman, a WDR Vice-Chairman, a WDR Treasurer, a WDR Secretary and three (3) WDR Project Officers* - who shall have responsibility for all executive, financial and administrative functions.

11.2 The Executive Committee shall also be responsible for the submission of all matters to the General Committee, including the receipt, processing and submission of proposals made by Members. Such Member proposals shall be scrutinized prior to submission to ensure clarity and adequate supporting documentation.

11.3 All communications with WDR shall in the first instance be transmitted to the Secretary who shall have responsibility for forwarding such communications to other WDR Officers or Members as required.

11.4 Executive Committee Officers shall have the following broad roles/responsibilities:

11.4.1 **Chairman:** Leadership of the Executive & General Committees and WDR overall.

11.4.2 **Vice-Chairman:** Support to the Chairman in his/her leadership role.

11.4.3 **Treasurer:** Finances

11.4.4 **Secretary:** Documentation, Correspondence & Communication

11.4.5 **Project Officers:** Progressing specific issues of particular importance to WDR

The ***Executive Committee Officer Responsibilities*** Appendix provides further details.

11.5 Executive Committee Officers shall be appointed by the General Committee for a term of two (2) years. Officers may offer themselves for re-election on two occasions. Thereafter an Officer may only offer him or herself for re-election by a resolution of the General Committee.

11.5.1 Should an Executive Committee Officer not complete his or her term of office, the Executive Committee will arrange an *Election* and the person elected will serve out the remaining term of the Officer who has stood down.

11.6 All Executive Committee Officers shall have an ongoing involvement in Deaf rugby, Deaf sports and/or the Deaf community and knowledge/understanding of Deaf culture and language.

11.7 As the representative body for international Deaf rugby and an organisation established by National Deaf Rugby Unions for Deaf rugby players, it is preferred that one or both the WDR Chairman and the WDR Vice-Chairman shall be Deaf individuals having a hearing loss of at least 40dB average bilaterally across both ears.

11.8 However, WDR Members should consider the skills and knowledge necessary to perform these roles and, where an individual does not meet the *clause 11.7* criteria but has demonstrated a strong appreciation of Deaf culture and given exemplary service to Deaf rugby thereby acquiring equitable skills and knowledge, they may seek nomination for one or these roles.

11.9 Not more than two (2) Executive Committee Officers shall be from any one Member Union. Where possible, the posts of Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be filled by persons from different Member Unions.

12. General Committee Meetings

12.1 There shall be an **Annual General Meeting** convened by the Executive Committee to which all Members will be invited. Additional **General Meetings** may be arranged as required. The business of Annual General Meetings and other General Meetings shall include all business that might be conducted by the General Committee. Members may send up to two representatives to any Annual General Meeting or General Meeting, but shall only be entitled to a single vote in relation to any business conducted.

12.2 Not less than two (2) months prior to an Annual General Meeting or General Meeting, Members shall be given notice in writing of the meeting, shall be invited to submit discussion items and/or resolution items for inclusion on the meeting agenda and, if Executive Committee elections are required, shall be invited to submit nominations.

12.3 Not less than one (1) month prior to the Annual General Meeting or General Meeting, Members shall be given notice of writing of:

12.3.1 The meeting agenda listing discussion items and items proposed for formal resolution;

12.3.2 For a face-to-face meeting, the location, venue, date and time at which the meeting will be held; or

12.3.3 For an electronic meeting, the dates and timeframe over which the meeting will be held.

12.3.4 The list of nominees for Executive Committee positions and the voting process.

12.4 The business of Annual General Meetings shall include:

12.4.1 *Executive Committee Report* on the overall business of WDR

12.4.2 Receipt and adoption of the *WDR Financial reports*

12.4.3 Approval of *Audited Annual Accounts* and the annual *WDR Budget*

12.4.4 Approval of annual *Membership Fees/Subscriptions*

12.4.5 Consideration/voting on Agenda items proposed for formal resolution

12.4.6 Discussion on other Agenda items

12.4.7 Election of *Executive Committee Officers (if required)*

12.4.8 Other business

12.5 **Emergency General Meetings** may be called at any time by the Executive Committee or by a minimum of five (5) Member Unions. Members shall be given not less than fourteen (14) days notice of any such meeting. Emergency General Meetings shall deal with only ONE specific emergency issue which shall be circulated to Members prior to the Meeting.

12.6 At both face-to-face and electronic meetings Members shall be entitled to nominate a proxy by advising the Secretary by email not later than 24 hours before the commencement of the meeting.

13. Qualifying Hearing Loss

13.1 The level of hearing loss to qualify/be eligible to play in WDR events shall be a minimum of 40dB average bilaterally across both ears.

13.2 Only fixtures and competitions adopting a qualifying hearing loss of a minimum of 40dB average bilaterally across both ears shall be used to assess world rankings.

NOTE: *Where Deaf rugby players participate in international events staged by another organization - e.g. ICSD, Regional Deaf Rugby Unions, etc. - they will need to comply with the hearing loss eligibility/qualification criteria specified by that organization.*

APPENDIX

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

CHAIRMAN

Leadership of the Executive & General Committees and WDR overall:

- Chair Executive Committee meetings and General Committee meetings
- Delegate tasks as necessary
- Ensure work is completed within deadlines
- Act as a central point of contact for decisions outside the meeting arena
- Agree the content of formal correspondence sent on behalf of the organization
- Represent the organisation in meetings with external bodies or authorise another Executive Committee Officer to do so
- Administer, update and moderate the WDR Facebook Page and other social media

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Support to the Chairman in his/her leadership role and functions including assisting the Chairman as required and/or acting on behalf of the Chairman if the Chairman is absent.

TREASURER

Finance:

- Establish appropriate financial structures and processes
- Manage and Administer WDR finances on a day-to-day basis and overall
- Regularly report on WDR finances
- Prepare Annual Budgets and Financial Reports

SECRETARY

Documentation, correspondence and communication:

- Coordinate/organise General Committee meetings - *i.e.* circulate meeting dates, times and locations, receive Agenda items, prepare Agendas, prepare requisite background Papers, run formal voting processes (*resolutions & elections*), and record/circulate Meeting Reports
- Manage incoming and outgoing correspondence, action as appropriate and/or forward to other WDR Officers or Members as required
- Create/update policy and other formal WDR documents
- Prepare Discussion Papers on particular issues/matters as required
- Communicate/liaise with WDR Member organisations and provide regular updates on WDR issues and developments
- Liaise with Regional Deaf Rugby Unions/Associations
- Prepare Annual and Other WDR Reports

- Manage the WDR Website including creating and updating Website content

PROJECT OFFICERS (3)

Progressing specific issues of particular importance to WDR from time to time:

Project Officers will be allocated responsibility by the Executive Committee for progressing one or more Projects that are considered to be of particular importance to the development of WDR and Deaf rugby. Each Project Manager will be expected to work on his/her Project(s) either on his/her own or by setting up a small Sub-Group of volunteers to assist him/her, and regularly report progress/outcomes to the full Executive Committee.

Initial Projects identified as needing to be worked on immediately are listed below. Over time, additional/new Projects will emerge that WDR needs to address or that are seen as potentially beneficial to WDR and Deaf rugby. **Initial Projects** include:

- ***Deaflympics:*** Developing a plan for getting Deaf Rugby Sevens included in the *Deaflympics* and progressing what needs to be done to make it happen.
- ***National Deaf Rugby Database:*** Compiling information/data from National Deaf Rugby Unions on participation in grassroots and elite Deaf rugby in each Member country, audience sizes, what each Member is doing to develop/grow Deaf rugby in their country, perceived barriers to expanding participation/audiences and what they are doing to overcome such barriers.
- ***World Deaf Rugby Championships/Tournaments:*** Developing a “*WDR Event Guideline*” to assist countries who wish to host a WDR Championship or Tournament by providing information on the protocols/procedures to be followed and advice on the planning and organization of such events - *including “Deaf”-specific requirements.*
- ***Sponsorship & Marketing:*** Identifying and pursuing Sponsorship opportunities; Negotiating, putting in place and administering Sponsorship Agreements; Developing marketing strategies and approaches to increase participation in Deaf rugby, enhance WDR recognition and promote WDR Championships/Tournaments.

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