Agenda Item	Date
3.3	26 May 2021

Title
Player data, affiliation and communication (Project Touchstone – Update)

Purpose of Paper					
For Decision	☐	For Discussion	☐	For Information	☒

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Brief Summary
The purpose of this paper is to update Council on the development and roll-out of the new player affiliation process

Appendices
N/A

RFU COUNCIL MEETING
11 June 2021
Player data, affiliation and communication - Project Touchstone - Update

1.   Recap and background

1.1   Project Touchstone is a strategic project to deliver and roll out a new affiliation process for adult community rugby players, building on the successful implementation of Age Grade registration and creating a unified process for players to create and own their record for life. This will give players greater control over their own record; increase the ability for clubs, CBs and the RFU to communicate with players more effectively and with more engaging content in order to support player retention and transition; and provide better data on the health of the game to help decision-makers target interventions.

1.2   In an informal briefing on the 30th March, Council was updated on the objectives and scope of the project, including the ambition to make affiliation mandatory for all adult players from the start of the 2021/22 season.

1.3   In that informal briefing, Council fed back that, while supportive in principle of annual player affiliation, prior to approving mandatory affiliation, it would: i) need to see the proposed online affiliation process and be clear on how this works alongside effective registration and club membership; and ii) prefer the process to be rolled out on a mandatory basis through a soft launch in early-adopter CBs in 2021/22, with game-wide mandatory affiliation introduced from 2022/23.

1.4   Following the informal briefing session, the project team have continued work on the affiliation process and the development of the implementation plan for the 2021/22 season. An update on these is provided below.

2.   The affiliation process

2.1   The objective of this work is to make it as simple as possible a user experience for players and club administrators, building on the process used at scale successfully in Age Grade registration.

2.2   Development work is ongoing from a player and administrator user experience perspective. We are on track to meet the target of a fully developed process by August 2021, with internal stakeholder testing targeted for early June, followed by a period of player and club administrator testing and refinement.

2.3   We expect to be able to provide Council with a demonstration of the process in a dedicated briefing session in July. In the meantime, by way of update, development progress in the form of mobile screenshots of the player affiliation experience is provided in the appendix to this paper. Please note that this is still in development and additional functionality will be demonstrated in July, including for club administrators.

2.4   To enable as user-friendly an experience as possible for players interacting with this process, we will also be supporting clubs to tidy up the data they hold in advance of the season from the end of June and into July.
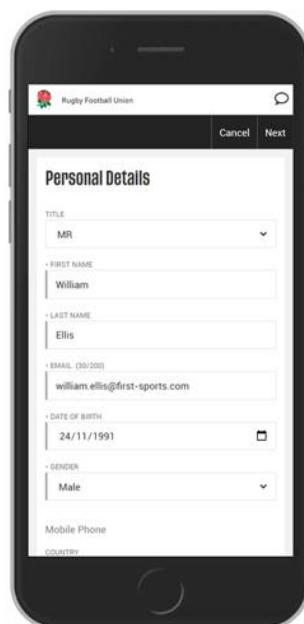
3. 2021/22 implementation

3.1 Following Council's feedback on its preference for a smaller mandatory implementation in 21/22, a series of soft launch schemes are in development for roll-out. Through these schemes, we aim to: test the new technology process in a controlled environment with limited audiences; understand the burden on volunteers and learn how best to support CBs, clubs and players to complete the affiliation process; test and learn the most effective ways to communicate with players; and maximise the use of match card submissions at all levels.

3.2 We are seeking to test the new process in engaged CBs that offer a spread of geographies, player-base size and varying levels of engagement with GMS and electronic match card.

3.3 A number of CBs have volunteered to participate in the soft launch of the mandatory affiliation process. To manage the allocation of RFU resource, we will be working closely with a selected number of CBs based on their ability to meet our objectives and criteria in 3.1 and 3.2 above and on geographical spread. Those CBs that have volunteered to participate that are not in the above group are still encouraged to roll the process out to all players, however RFU support will by necessity need to be smaller scale.

3.4 The proposed CBs that will be engaged closely in this process are Yorkshire, Surrey, Eastern Counties and Cornwall. We will provide detailed information and support to these CBs in engagement sessions from June onwards.

3.5 While we are targeting mandatory affiliation in selected CBs, the affiliation process will be available on a voluntary basis for all players across the country.
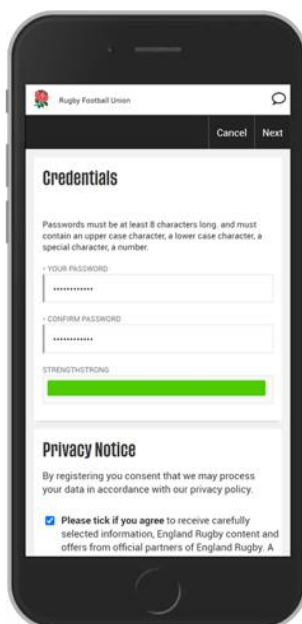
4. Next steps

4.1 Further development and internal and external testing work on the affiliation process will be ongoing through June, engaging clubs and players to gather and implement their feedback.

4.2 We anticipate a further informal briefing session in July (date TBC) to demonstrate the affiliation process to Council and to talk through implementation in more detail.

4.3 We will be approaching selected CBs for the soft launch, with detailed engagement sessions planned for June prior to the process going live in August.

4.4 Following the informal briefing in July and the roll-out of the process in CBs, we intend to provide an update at October Council on the data and learnings from the start of the season. With this information, we will seek Council approval for the proposed change to the regulations to introduce mandatory affiliation from the 2022/23 season onwards.

Appendix – Player Affiliation Process

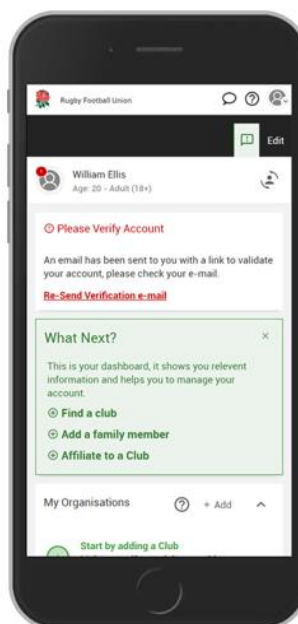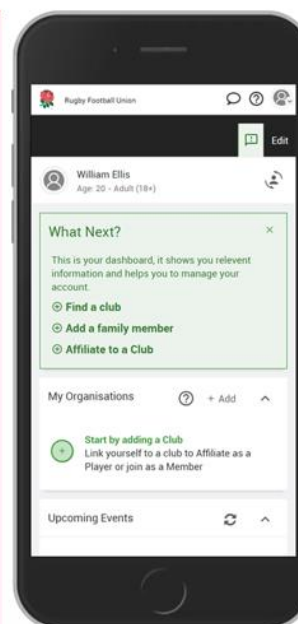
PERSONAL DASHBOARD: NEW PLAYER
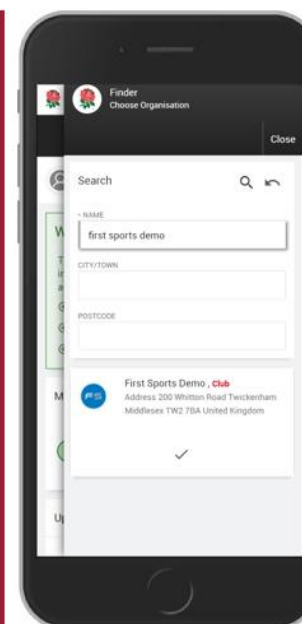
Provide Personal Details to Create Account.

Confirm Password and accept Terms and Conditions.

Once Account created, user taken to their Personal Dashboard

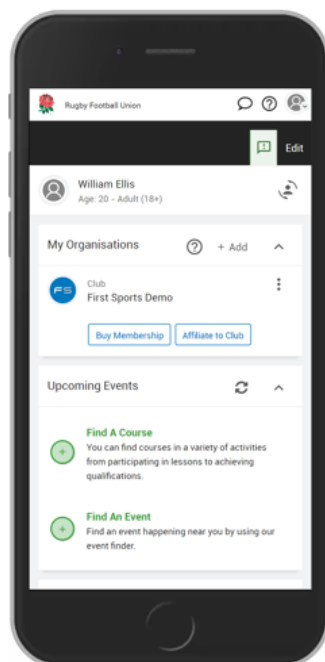**Later**...when email is verified by user the reminder is removed.

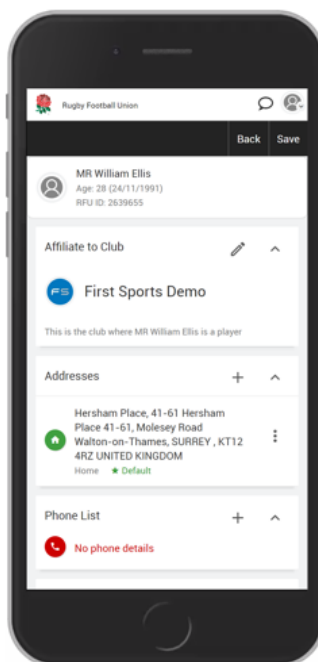**Adding a Club**...Slide in panel allows search for Club to join.

Link Accessed via ER.com or Club Send Out → **Account Creation Process Should be <30 secs**

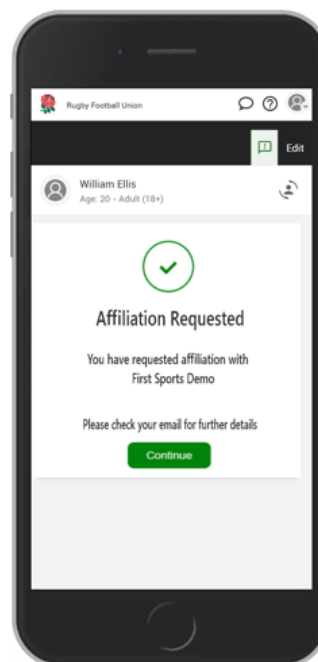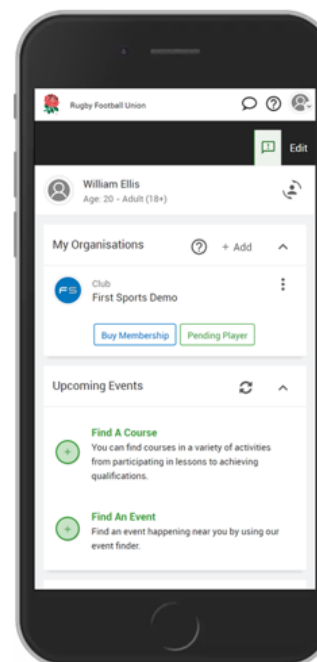# PERSONAL DASHBOARD: NEW PLAYER

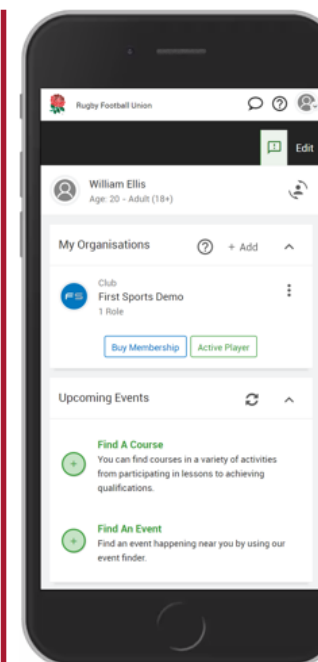Now you can affiliate. Existing Club Player/Member **start here**.

Check details and press Save to complete the Affiliation form.

Affiliation request saved and user prompted to continue

Player now **Pending** and awaiting Registrar to Approve Affiliation.

Later...when Registrar has accepted Affiliation, Player is **Active**.

If navigating via club link club will be added automatically

Affiliation Process Should be <30 secs

TEAMWORK   RESPECT   ENJOYMENT   DISCIPLINE   SPORTSMANSHIP