

## **RFU Appoints Paul Hull as Head of Professional Game Match Officials**

The RFU is pleased to announce that former England international and Premiership Rugby Head Coach, Paul Hull, has been appointed Head of Professional Game Match Officials.

Paul, a full-back during his playing days, was capped four times for England during the 1990s and was a one-club-man appearing in 289 first team games for Bristol before retiring in 1999. He remained at Bristol Bears as Academy Manager and Head Coach and also had a spell as Assistant Coach for England Saxons before moving on from professional rugby. For the past seven years he has been a Citing Officer within the disciplinary team.

In recent years Paul's passion for rugby has seen him take on roles within secondary schools, currently as Director of Rugby and Housemaster at Prior Park College in Bath, a role he has held for more than seven years. He will formally take up his new RFU role at the end of the academic year.

Conor O'Shea, RFU Director of Performance Rugby said, "We are delighted that Paul will be joining us. Tony Spreadbury left us in an incredibly strong position with a world class panel of professional referees; the challenge for us is to build on that and make them better.

"We have worked hard with PRL, Tony and others, including Wayne Barnes, to identify the person we believe will move us forward and, in Paul, we feel we have a person steeped in the game, who will understand officiating from a coaching perspective and will challenge the officials in a different way.

"In the short-term Phil Winstanley and I will support Chris White, Steve Leyshon and Gary Welsh and we hope this group will form part of the longer-term strategy of the match officials' technical development when Paul joins us full time at the end of the current season.

"As well as his coaching and playing background Paul has been part of the disciplinary process for a number of years and we believe he will bring a fresh perspective to the officials' group and to the wider game."

Phil Winstanley the Rugby Director at Premiership Rugby said: "On behalf of everyone at Premiership Rugby, I'd like to acknowledge the fantastic job that Tony Spreadbury has done over the years. He will be greatly missed, but we now move on to a new era.

"This is one of the most crucial roles in the English game and we need to have someone who can challenge and develop our existing and future match officials. We believe that Paul's background will introduce a new perspective into what is a group of world-class officials and coaches, and we believe that he is the right person to take this group to the next level."

Speaking about his appointment Paul Hull said: "Although I've been away from the professional game for a time, my involvement and passion for rugby has continued in my role as Housemaster and Director of Rugby at Prior Park College: a role I've thoroughly enjoyed and the decision to leave was tough.

"Through my work as a Citing Officer, I've got to know many of the match officials and as discussions about the role took place it became clear it was an opportunity I couldn't refuse.

“I am extremely excited to be taking on this new position. I will be joining a talented group of match officials, who are amongst the best in the world. I am very much looking forward to joining them in the summer to see how far these accomplished officials can go as a group and individually.”

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