

OPEN LETTER TO PLAYERS

Toulouse, April 19th, 2007

The management committee of the French Rugby National League has confirmed at its last meeting, on April 5th, its decision to not engage any professional French rugby clubs in the European competitions organised by the ERC the next season although the Rugby French Federation (RFF) has proposed to cease the near total of its actions among the ERC to the French clubs in order to find a solution to this conflict.

But this proposition from the RFF, to which we have been very sensitive, has not been accepted as it didn't answer the previous formulated expectations, namely the recognition of the professional clubs by the European as well as international authorities.

Therefore, despite the fact that we are very attached to this competition and that we are conscious of the issue of such a decision, we have decided to participate to this withdrawal of the French clubs in order to defend the place of the French professional rugby in clubs on a European and international level.

Indeed, for several years and despite many attempts, the higher authorities of the European and international rugby have always refused to negotiate and consider the numerous problems of the professional sector : application of the text 9 from the IRB rules about the availability of the players (national team selection), schedule, representation of the professional sector within the authorities, dissociation of disciplinary sanctions, setting of permanent spaces for the international matches, ...

The result of this absence of communication and dialogue has ended up, for the last seasons, in the elaboration of overbooked sport calendars with the superposing of competitions and generating not only an important number of two matches per week, but also making the necessary time of rest difficult.

We wish to set a sport calendar which would not only preserve your health but also would guarantee the quality and the legibility of the different competitions.

So, added to the desire to obtain a recognition of the clubs thanks to a participation to the ERC shareholding, it's the future of the French professional rugby clubs and the 900 professional players as you that we have wished to protect in giving our support to the National Rugby League.

That's why, despite the fact that you have already clearly expressed yourself during our last meeting on Thursday, March 15th, we may appeal to you and mobilize you subsequently, if necessary.

The PROVALE management committee