



Free-to-Air Advisory Panel
2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH
United Kingdom

By email: freetoairevents@culture.gov.uk

For the attention of Mr. Dyer

Dublin, 20 May 2009

Dear Mr. Dyer,

Free-to-Air Events Review

Thank you for your invitation to respond to the Free-To-Air Events Review.

The International Rugby Board (IRB) is the international governing body for Rugby globally. The IRB as owners through Rugby World Cup Limited of the broadcasting rights to the Rugby World Cup (RWC) is directly affected by the UK regulatory regime governing the live broadcasting of RWC.

The IRB is willing to participate in the DCMS review panel consultation initiative and is grateful for the opportunity to engage in this process.

We request the chance to present a submission to the Panel at the meeting scheduled on the 4th of June, but in advance of this meeting I should like to take the opportunity to provide some background regarding RWC's broadcast status in the UK.

Since RWC's inception in 1987, every tournament has been carried on free-to-air TV. In 1987, the BBC held the rights. The remaining five tournaments have been carried on ITV. In 2007, 24 matches aired on ITV1 and the remainder of the tournament's 48 matches were carried on ITV4.

The current listed events rules designate that the RWC Final appears on the "A" list. The balance of the tournament (47 matches) has a "B" list classification.

To date, RWC has ensured that the tournament has been made available to the widest possible UK audience and a continuation of the reach/exposure of future RWC tournaments remains a goal of the event and the IRB.



However, unlike FIFA or IOC, which activate a multitude of valuable broadcast markets, RWC is dependent on a smaller number of markets for the generation of revenue through RWC rights sales to provide surplus funding for the support and further growth of the Game. The UK is RWC's most significant market – as such, RWCL wish to ensure there will be fair competition for rights moving forward. RWC believes the current listing classifications achieve a basis for such competition and the recommendation is that there is no requirement to amend the status of the RWC Final on the “A” list or the balance of the matches on the “B” list – in other words: no change.

I look forward to meeting with you and the review panel in person hopefully on the 4th of June (if this date is confirmed), in order to discuss these matters in further detail. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me directly by phone on [REDACTED] or by e-mail at [REDACTED] if you require further details or clarification on anything mentioned in this letter.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'D. Huw Morgan'.

D. Huw Morgan
Head of Commercial
For and on behalf of International Rugby Board

cc: Bernard Lapasset
Mike Miller