GRADING CRITERIA
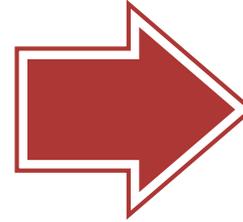
01
INTRODUCTION

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RECOMMENDATION 3 WAS TO INTRODUCE A GRADING CRITERIA.

- Grading would be in full effect from 2025 season.

- Illustrative grades for 2024 to be released at the end of the 2023 season.

- Grading criteria will be objective, easily measurable and reliable.

In October IMG received strong support from the RFL Council for the principles and direction of the Reimagining Rugby League recommendations.

THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF GRADING IS TO INCENTIVISE CLUBS TO

Grow their fanbase

Grow top-line non-centralised revenue

Run in a best-in-class way

Better engage with fans

Invest in their club and the sport in a sustainable manner

Ensure strong governance is in place

IMG & RUGBY LEAGUE GRADING CRITERIA 2023

IMG

THE AGREED CATEGORIES

A

The highest rated grade with the club guaranteed participation in the top-tier on a permanent basis (as long as the grade is maintained)

B

Eligible to participate in the top-tier only when spaces are available

C

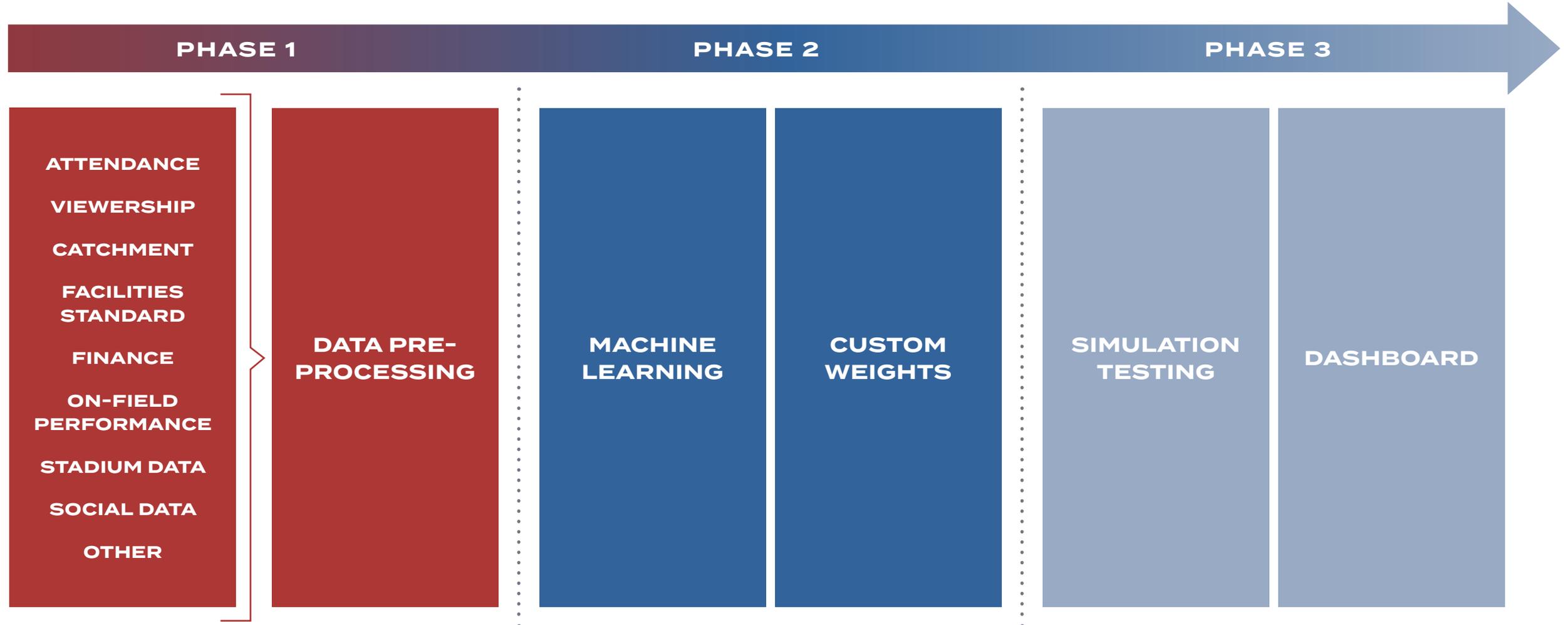Will participate in The Championship and League 1

- Minimum standards will be in place alongside the grading criteria. These will include, for example, the requirement for adherence to insolvency regulations and UKAD regulations and, in the future, the requirement for Category A clubs to run a women's team.

- Clubs will be reassessed every year.
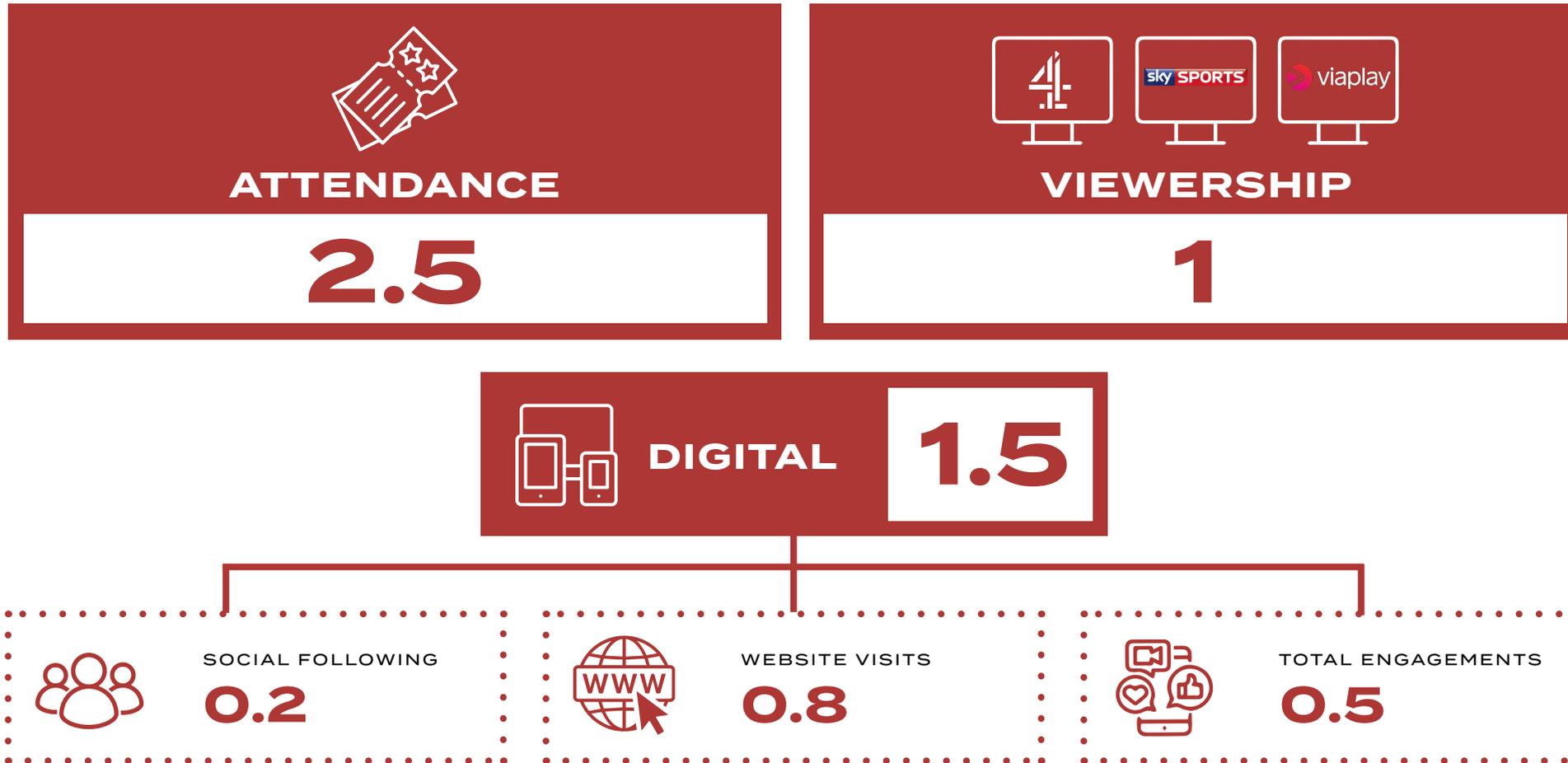
IMG

02
THE CRITERIA

THE METHODOLOGY

PHASE 1		PHASE 2		PHASE 3	
ATTENDANCE VIEWERSHIP CATCHMENT FACILITIES STANDARD FINANCE ON-FIELD PERFORMANCE STADIUM DATA SOCIAL DATA OTHER	DATA PRE-PROCESSING	MACHINE LEARNING	CUSTOM WEIGHTS	SIMULATION TESTING	DASHBOARD

91 VARIABLES
3,367 DATA POINTS

THE FIVE GRADING PILLARS

PILLAR		RATIONALE	MAX SCORE	% OF TOTAL
1	FANDOM	+ Need to attract more fans at home/in stadia/digitally. + Improved fan engagement critical to retain existing and new fans. + Key driver for both club and central revenues.	5	25%
2	PERFORMANCE	+ On pitch performance remains the basis for participation and is key to overall club success. + Drives fan awareness and engagement.	5	25%
3	FINANCES	+ Reflects success of fan engagement and business performance. + Rewards sustainable investment and sound financial management.	4.5	22.5%
4	STADIUM	+ Critical to stakeholder experience – both in stadia and when viewing from home/digitally. + Need to compete with other sports and events.	3	15%
5	COMMUNITY	+ Clubs awarded for foundation – participation growth and community engagement. + Indicator of club fan base potential. + Incentivises investment in large potential markets.	2.5	12.5%
TOTAL			**20**	**100%**

1 FANDOM

OBJECTIVE: Assess clubs on the size of their fan base and reward growth.

ATTENDANCE
2.5

VIEWERSHIP
1

DIGITAL 1.5

SOCIAL FOLLOWING	WEBSITE VISITS	TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS
0.2	0.8	0.5

5
MAX SCORE

25%
OVERALL WEIGHTING

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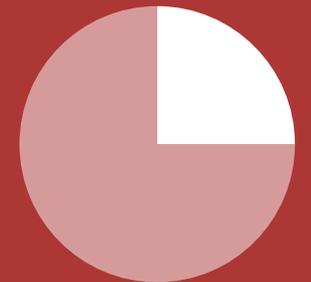
PERFORMANCE

OBJECTIVE: Clubs to remain incentivised to perform on the field.
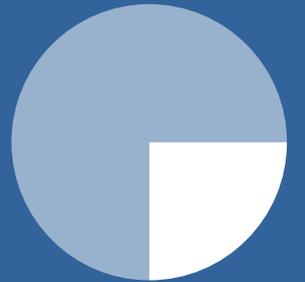
LEAGUE PERFORMANCE

4

SUPER LEAGUE
0.75

CHALLENGE CUP
0.25

CHAMPIONSHIP
0.25

LEAGUE 1
0.1

1895 CUP
0.1

Teams are ranked 1–36 based on where they finish in the leagues and playoffs for the last three seasons.

Teams are awarded bonus points for winning the league and cup competitions.

5
MAX SCORE

**25%**
OVERALL WEIGHTING

3 FINANCE

OBJECTIVE: Make clubs financially stable, have diversified revenue streams and reward profitability.

TYPE	CRITERIA	MAX SCORE	WEIGHTING
REVENUE DIVERSIFICATION	NON-CENTRALISED TURNOVER	2.25	50%
	NON-CENTRALISED TURNOVER AS % OF TOTAL TURNOVER	0.75	17%
PROFITABILITY	ADJUSTED PROFIT	0.5	11%
SUSTAINABILITY	BALANCE SHEET STRENGTH	0.5	11%
	INCREASE IN OWNER INVESTMENT	0.5	11%
TOTAL ALL		**4.5**	**100%**

4.5
MAX SCORE
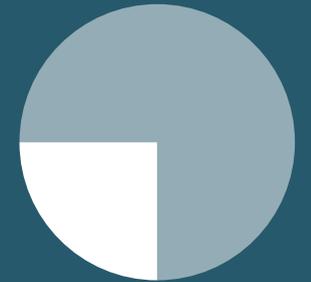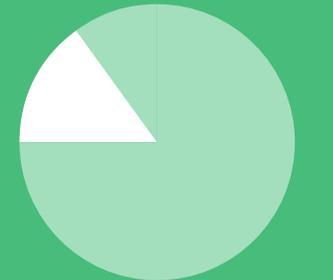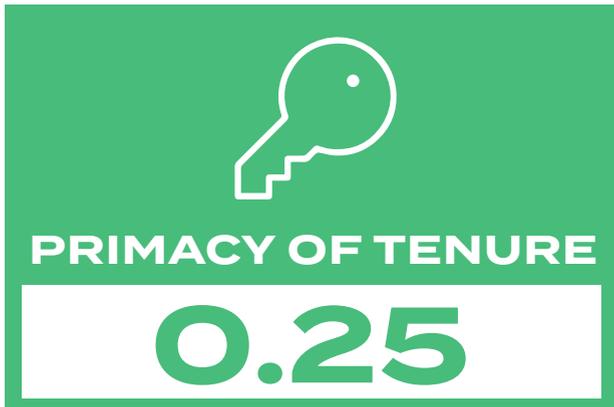
22.5%
OVERALL WEIGHTING

5 COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE: To maximise growth of the sport in the largest markets to generate new fan bases.

AREA POPULATION ÷ NUMBER OF CLUBS IN THE AREA

AREA POPULATION:
Defined as the population of all cities and towns (i.e. of built-up areas or their subdivisions).
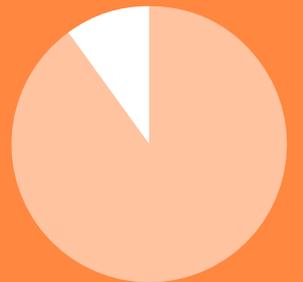
1.5

FOUNDATION:
Annual turnover of the foundation as a proxy for the community and participation activities.

1

2.5
MAX SCORE

12.5%
OVERALL WEIGHTING

DATA TAKEN FROM THE 2021 CENSUS.

RANKINGS

RANK	TEAM	SCORE	LEAGUE
A1	TEAM A	17.5	SUPER LEAGUE
A2	TEAM B	17.0	SUPER LEAGUE
A3	TEAM C	16.5	SUPER LEAGUE
A4	TEAM D	16.0	SUPER LEAGUE
A5	TEAM E	15.5	SUPER LEAGUE
A6	TEAM F	15.0	SUPER LEAGUE
B1	TEAM G	14.5	SUPER LEAGUE
B2	TEAM H	14.0	SUPER LEAGUE
B3	TEAM I	13.5	SUPER LEAGUE
B4	TEAM J	13.0	SUPER LEAGUE
B5	TEAM K	12.5	SUPER LEAGUE
B6	TEAM L	12.0	SUPER LEAGUE
B7	TEAM M	11.5	CHAMPIONSHIP
B8	TEAM N	10.0	CHAMPIONSHIP

CATEGORY A

CATEGORY B

CATEGORY A
>15 PTS

CATEGORY B
>7.5 PTS

CATEGORY C
<7.5 PTS

DATA & CONTROLS

A short handbook will be provided to all clubs to explain the grading criteria. This will include:
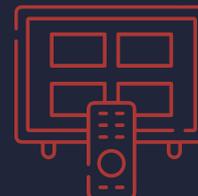
A summary of what is included in each of the five pillars of the criteria

Data requirements reflecting what the clubs will need to provide and by when

Full list of sources for all third-party data included in the model

Controls that will be in place to ensure data provided is accurate (e.g. attendance audits, social media data)

03
NEXT STEPS

IMG

NEXT STEPS

1 Vote will take place at the RFL Council Special General Meeting on April 19th.

2 June/July discussions will take place with clubs using current data to explain the model and their current score.

3 End of 2023 season, the 2024 (illustrative) gradings will be released for all clubs.

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