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**Wood defends the Super League licence application process and says Widnes Vikings should be proud!**

RFL chief executive Nigel Wood believes Widnes Vikings will be a great addition to Super League after last week's decision to award them a top-flight license from the start of the 2012 campaign.

Wood is convinced the Vikings can hit the ground running due to the timing of the announcement well in advance of the season and has praised their chairman Steve O'Connor for his hard work at the Stobart Stadium in recent years.

The club have already begun planning for life in Super League with the signing of ex-Wigan prop Danny Sculthorpe, after a month-long trial.

The 31-year-old brother of former Great Britain loose forward Paul Sculthorpe, is looking to get his career back on track after failing to play a single game for Bradford due to a serious bone infection.

Speaking to [PROBIZ Tryline](#) at last week's announcement at Red Hall, Wood said: "I'm sure Widnes will be delighted. Steve O'Connor and his management team need to feel suitably proud!

"I think that over the course of the last three years they've run a really efficient club, they've achieved success on the field and clearly have a facility there that is the envy of many others."



Widnes were, arguably, the biggest club to miss out on the licence awards last time round and this award comes as a result of hard work and professionalism from the Vikings, a view that is echoed by Dave Hadfield in the podcast.

Halifax and Barrow were the other two clubs in the running for the Super League licence award and this is obviously bad news for the pair. However, there is a bright side for Halifax, as they have been seen to meet many of the criteria set out in the application process and, as a result, have been put forward to round two of the procedure, which will see their bid put alongside the existing top flight clubs, with the outcome being announced in July.

A successful award for Halifax at that stage of the licence process would see two current Super League clubs missing out on a franchise for the three seasons from 2012 to 2014. If that were to be the case there would be serious consequences for the teams in question, not to mention the financial impact that would be felt by them.

The licensing system has had its validity questioned recently, not least by Bradford Bulls head coach Mick Potter in our last [PROBIZ Tryline](#), but Wood is resolute in his defence of the process.

He added: "This is a thorough process and it deserves to be a thorough process. This is about standards improvement, quality control across the whole of Rugby League.

"It's a terrific discipline for the clubs. Club feedback suggests they gain a lot from the process because it causes them to look at their clubs afresh, to evaluate where they're going well and where they need to improve."

Elsewhere, in the podcast we also hear from two other members of the RFL staff, Compliance Manager Blake Solly and Events and Projects Director Sally Bolton, as to how they fit in to the process and how they see the procedure and its relative merits for both the clubs and the RFL.

As ever, your team will also get plenty of airtime as we pack in all the recent news from Super League, while the Independent's Dave Hadfield will give you the lowdown on another round of unpredictable results and looks forward to the next round of action as well.

The programme is available to listen to on [the Independent's](#) website and through iTunes.

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