

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes – August 19th, 2022

Next Planned Meeting – September 1st, 2022

Present:

Michael Klonowski – Executive Director
Noah Currier – President
Bob Lopez – Commissioner
Daniel Curtis – 2nd Vice President
Kerin Banfield – Representative for Referees
Dan Caldwell – Secretary
Amy Bohn – Head of Classification
Sid Christain – Treasurer
Steve Kearley – Low Point Team Head Coach
Sarah Leonard – Low Point Team Assistant Coach

Absent:

Marianne Duda – Head of Referees
Michael Cottingham – 1st Vice President

Low Point Team Season Review:

- Michael K. opened with comments about some bad feelings that may be present on the Low Point Team based on the inability to use the low point players from Team USA. He understands that was very frustrating and knew that with the addition of the player who had to step aside for medical reasons, it made things challenging.
- Michael K. said from his standpoint of what he saw and heard, it was a great group of athletes who were focused and played hard, which says a lot about Steve (coach) and the other staff.
- Steve agreed that it was a very challenging, and he did not want to minimize the efforts of those who were on the team.
- There was a gap in talent on the team we brought and what the other teams brought.
- Steve has spoken to Joe (Delagrave) and the hope is that moving forward there will be a more collaborative approach between the Low Point Team and USAWR.
- The consensus from those who participated is that they would like to see the team move forward and compete at the national level. Steve feels there are many questions that remain in order for that to happen.
- Steve expressed the gratitude the team and staff has for USWRA and Oscar Mike for sponsoring the team. He reiterated that if the team does move forward, collaboration with USAWR will be crucial to put the best team forward.
- Daniel agreed that if we move forward we have to have that collaboration in order to bring the best team forward. Registration is not inexpensive and to move forward without taking the best players you have is not fiscally a sound idea. He loves that the Low Point Team harkens back to the origin of the sport.
- Sarah wanted to piggyback on Steve's thoughts and add that it looked to the world that everyone else took this much more seriously than the US did by not sending the best team possible.

- Daniel's assumption was that the USAWR players were not allowed to play was in order to not risk injury. Sarah agreed that is what she thinks as well. Daniel asked if there were other reasons to which Sarah said we could speculate on that but she prefers not to.
- Steve concurred that yes, he had spoken to Joe and he wanted to be protective of his players and pointed out the additional possibility of scheduling conflicts down the road.
- Amy said she was honored to be able to work with the team and also pointed out that the other teams were very transparent about the talent they were bringing from the start. She agrees that if we plan to move forward and truly compete, we need to bring forth our best. If we are not going to be able to utilize the USAWR players, we are going to really have to put effort into developing more players at that level.
- Steve agrees that if we move forward there has to be a commitment to take the best players possible.
- Noah agrees with all the comments that have been made and said at the end of the day, he is really proud of the team and how they put themselves out there. He agrees that there does need to be collaboration with USAWR in order to be successful.
- Michael K. said the timeline and talent were huge factors. Steve did point out at the start that we were already very far behind and Michael K. apologized that we did not get things moving more quickly. Now that we have a better understanding of how things work, we have the opportunity to do better next time.
- Sid congratulated the staff (Steve, Sarah, Dan & Rita) for the wonderful job they did. He said that in the future he would not vote to put together another team like we did, knowing what we do now. He did say the USA game against the Swiss was THE best game in the entire tournament.
- Dan said that it was an awesome experience and he wouldn't trade any of the players on the team for anything, but did say not having access to the USAWR players was a huge detriment. In speaking with those players, many were very interested and were disappointed they did not get the opportunity. It was a very big deal, being the first time an adaptive sport was at the World Games. Echoing Steve's sentiments, we played in the home of USAWR and did not put forth the best team we could have.
- Rita was not able to be here but took notes at a prior Low Point Team meeting and shared with Dan:
 - Budget – there were not clear parameters around the budget from the beginning. A clear budget and concise communication would have been helpful.
 - Additional note – Sid was amazing in his role. He took in receipts and provided reimbursements in a timely manner.
 - Timeline – it was difficult to get started with tryouts and training camps. We were not the direct line contact to Lakeshore so it was a slow start. Once we got in to Lakeshore, they were incredible. Huge thanks to Peggy Turner at TIRR and Oscar Mike for assisting with setting up and hosting the first sets of tryouts.
 - Moving forward – the current staff is very interesting in making this an ongoing thing. They are aware that budgeting and funding for a team may be difficult, with the staffing team that is together now and their ties to larger rehab facilities, perhaps we can garner financial support from them as well.
- Daniel said that creativity would be key and asked if there were any competitions in the books. Steve said there is a tournament in Switzerland in October that some of the players have already gotten together and asked if they could put a team together to self-

fund and attend. It was too short notice to make happen this year, but Steve would like to put it on the calendar as it is an annual tournament.

- Noah asked if the number of camps we hosted this year was enough. He wanted to know if we had had access to the players we needed and everything fell in line, would those camps have been enough to be successful. Sarah said if we had been able to get started earlier and were creative in gaining access to gyms during the season, that would help fill in the budget gaps. Steve said to answer directly, if we had the right players, the number of camps would have been sufficient. Noah was hoping that was the answer.
- Michael K. asked what kind of budget the Low Point Team would be looking for. Steve thinks that budget wise, it would be very similar to what we had this year.
- Steve said he thinks the league could have 10 – 12 low point teams based on conversations he has had, all of which would pay team dues. He also hopes that we could find some sponsors and said that TIRR is on board to host the first tournament. Their CEO is fully engaged and supportive. He thinks having an inaugural season would help provide the opportunity for sponsorships.
- Michael K. said this would be a division within the league and wants to make that that they have all the resources needed to be successful.
- Bob commended the staff for all the hard work they put in. He said in conversations he has had, he thinks moving forward there will not be the conflicts with having the USAWR players there were this year.
- Dan asked Bob if, during his communication with the World Games leadership, there been any feedback about rugby returning. Bob is in the process of providing an evaluation and has not heard anything more.
- Overall, Bob thinks it was a positive experience and if the World Games don't include it, he does think there will be other avenues outside of that. Daniel followed up by saying that if things play out the way WE would like to see them, there will be a large world championship every 2 years.
- Steve also wanted to be clear that this low point team can also be developmental. The team we had this year was an older team, but he thinks if we had top tier players playing alongside up and coming developmental guys, that could be a win-win. He understands that from a budgeting standpoint, planning will have to begin now to have something in place by next October.
- Noah said that if the space is available at the end of Nationals (end of April) that Oscar Mike will host a development camp.
- Daniel said that although Cottingham isn't on the call, he will say that there should be something available there during the summer (this is not a commitment, just a point to remember).
- Daniel thinks the team will need to be "creative and scrappy" with their fundraising efforts. He also thinks that there will need to be a very honest conversation with Lakeshore regarding their resources surrounding Team USA. He also reiterated that if we cannot play with their athletes, we do not want to spend \$50,000 to go and lose like we did.
- Amy said that when Team Force started, they were very low funded (~\$20,000) they had a Team Manager AND a Program Manager. She said those two worked very hard together in the communities they were in to find other ways of volunteering. She said

that would be something to think about in ways raise money without competing for the dollars Michael will be looking for. She has offered to share the contact information for the person who did that for them so she can share what ideas and things they did.

- Sid offered any help on providing data from this season to help prepare further budgets.
- Daniel wished the games would have been streamed, but that wasn't possible due to broadcasting rights. Dan also commended Bob and Gumby for their commentating.
- We did record each of our games and they are all available on our Hudl account. Daniel said it might not be a bad idea to create a highlight video to assist with fundraising.

Executive Director's Report:

- PULSE – USWRA Goals, Barriers, Solutions, Priorities & Methods
 - REFEREES:
 - Goals: Guaranteeing excellent, fair officiating with focus on growth of the USWRA
 - Currently able to staff all tournaments (1200 – 1300 games per season)
 - Attain/maintain an international presence
 - Barriers:
 - Limited number of referees domestically (currently 32)
 - Limited number of referees internationally (currently 4)
 - Poor retention from trainings (1 out of 5 stay more than 2 years)
 - Feedback includes:
 - Getting on-court check off/training takes too long
 - Perceptions of opportunities for growth
 - Finances (PTO/pay rate per game)
 - Limited feeling of value/appreciation for time
 - Solutions:
 - 4 clinics per year for new refs at predictable times & locations
 - 2 clinics for advanced refs
 - 1 clinic for international prep
 - Learning Management System for pre-coursework allowing for more on-court training/check-offs
 - Ensure that referee/individual's time is appreciated
 - Increase pay rate per game by \$10 at each level
 - Increase stipend for training of referees
 - Annual stipend for uniforms
 - Improved number of touches (monthly assignments/discussions)
 - Priorities for referees:
 - Uniforms: \$3,500
 - Increased rate of compensation: \$13,000
 - Increased number of supported clinics: \$14,000
 - Evaluators: \$3,700
 - Learning Management System: \$10,000
 - Total recommended spending: **\$45,000**

- CLASSIFIERS:
 - Goals:
 - Ensure that current and new athletes are fairly and consistently classed in a timely manner while supporting growth in the USWRA
 - Attain/maintain and international presence
 - Barriers:
 - Limited number of panels due to costs
 - Limited number of active classifiers
 - Need for more support for classification leadership
 - Limited number of international classifiers
 - Solutions:
 - Increased funding for classification
 - Improve recruitment and retention practices
 - Improve structure for recruitment of leadership for classifiers
 - Database/classification technology reimagining
 - Increased dues for classification
 - Ensure that classifiers' time is appreciated
 - Increase stipend for training of classifiers
 - Increase weekend rate
 - Annual stipend for uniforms
 - Increase training opportunities/improve path for development
 - 4 clinics per year for new classifiers at predictable times and locations
 - 2 clinics for advanced classifiers
 - 1 clinic for international prep
 - Learning management system for pre-coursework allowing for more practical training/check-offs
 - Classification leadership –nominations and elections
 - Database update
 - Priorities:
 - Uniforms: \$3,500
 - Increased rate of compensation: \$22,000
 - Increase number of supported clinics: \$14,000
 - Learning Management System: \$10,000
 - Total recommended spending: **\$50,000**
- ATHLETES/COACHES:
 - Goals:
 - Global growth/improvement/development of athletes and coaches
 - Collaboration with USAWR for talent pipeline
 - Ensuring athlete safety
 - Attain/maintain an international presence
 - Barriers:
 - Lack of athlete/coaching clinics
 - Lack of standard curriculum for clinics
 - No current stand-alone safety committee

- No abuse training/protocols
- Limited funding for international exposure of developing athletes
- Solutions:
 - Improve training opportunities/path for development:
 - 4 clinics per year for novice athletes/coaches at predictable times and locations
 - 2 clinics for advanced athletes – talent development
 - Learning Management System for pre-coursework allowing for more on-court training
 - Collaboration with USAWR
 - Establish permanent safety committee
 - Concussions, abuse protocol, transmittable diseases
 - Establish with SafeSport
 - Training for leadership, classifiers, referees, coaches and support staff
 - Re-establish developmental team opportunities
 - One international competition/tryouts/training camp
- Priorities:
 - Creation of permanent safety committee
 - SafeSport: \$2,000 - \$4,000
 - Clinics: \$24,000
 - \$500 stipend for each instructor and travel/hotel covered
 - Developmental team – 1 year cycle: \$40,000
 - Total recommended spending: **~\$68,000**
- PRIORITIZED NEEDS AND GOALS:
 - IMMEDIATE:
 - Creation of new classification database
 - Increased support of classification leadership
 - Creation of permanent safety committee
 - SafeSport: \$2,000 - \$4,000
 - Ref/Classifier Uniforms: \$7,000
 - Total Recommended Spending: **\$11,000**
 - INTERMEDIATE
 - Increased rate of compensation for referees and classifiers: \$35,000
 - Referee and classifier clinics: \$28,000
 - Athlete/Coaching clinics: \$24,000
 - Total recommended spending: **\$87,000**
 - LONG TERM:
 - Developmental team – 1 year cycle: \$50,000
 - Low Point Team – 1 year cycle: \$50,000
 - Executive Director – 1 year cycle: \$100,000
- IDENTIFYING METHODS OF FUNDING PRIORITIZED NEEDS/GOALS:
 - Immediate priorities - \$11,000:
 - Explore using current levels of funding to support
 - Intermediate priorities - \$87,000:

- Revisit Nielsen funding
- Corporate sponsors
- Grant opportunities
- Long term priorities - \$200,000:
 - Private donors

Additional comments on Executive Director's report:

- Increased rates for referee pay would be supported by the league, subsidizing what tournament directors currently pay
- Bob said that the referees and classifiers should be handled independently. ED can help with broad strokes as needed, but there are people in place to take care of their needs.
- Michael K. found a Google option (Tables) that he proposes we can use for the new classifiers database. Amy feels very strongly that prior to deciding on anything she wants them to speak to a developer/programmer to make sure that whatever platform is decided on will be user friendly and editable moving forward. She wants to learn from the past mistakes on the current database.
- Amy also said that nominations and elections for classifiers are not a good use of time now as we will have to align with what is done internationally.
- Noah appreciated the work done on the report and said what he would like to see in the next meeting is movement on those last few slides. Information on the cycles of some of those grants. Michael said he has been researching those organizations who have donated to organizations like ours. He said it has been slow going, but he is starting to get some traction and should have more to report in two weeks.
- Daniel wants to be sure that any increases we make for refs and classifiers are something we can sustain
- Daniel feels the lowest priority is the LMS, based on cost. He isn't sure what is being used now. Michael K. said the cost for the LMS is a set-up fee and will be consistently less moving forward.
- Michael K. pointed out that each of the expenses can be staggered
- SafeSport:
 - Amy asked whether we want to require classifiers to do
 - Michael K. and Daniel said YES
 - Recommendation to start with the board, classifiers and coaches with minors on their team
 - Final decision: ALL coaches must complete SafeSport at their own expense. Classifiers and board will be covered by USWRA. Referees **may** be covered by the league.
 - ALL SafeSport must be completed by Friday, September 30th.
- Registration:
 - Sid recommends we move to \$950 for registration
 - Sid also recommended we increase the cost for international players, but Bob reminded us that the cost for that is written in the bylaws and cannot be changed.

- Bob recommended that next year we propose at the AGM to move registration cost and international player registration away from the bylaws to something determined by the EC.
- Daniel reiterated the need to vote to provide some flexibility in increasing the registration cost for international players
- Daniel said that when collecting demographic data, it might be worth asking coaches/team reps who else is participating with their team, even if they didn't roster to use that information in grant applications
- Bob asked if there was a way to distinguish if players had an international classification as well and Michael K. said he would add it
- Amy asked if we could determine if players were over 45, 55, etc. Michael K. said we did do that at one point but stopped. She said when the age changes mid-season, the database has to be updated. Bob said there are very few who cross over mid-season and he can update the list monthly once it is compiled.
- Sid sent Noah a document earlier showing where we are with registration fees and based on percentages where we could be. Daniel asked that moving forward those documents be sent to the full Executive Committee.
- Bob said we need to make a decision regarding the registration fee as it opens in 2 weeks
- Michael K. has set up the registration because he realized when he met with Bob & Dan he learned things that didn't need to be in there and wouldn't be helpful
- Bob asked what teams will need to do to register this year. Michael K. said they will need to sign in to their SportsEngine account and go from there.
- Amy asked to insure that in the diagnosis category to be sure they can select more than one diagnosis.
- Their classifications will NOT autofill from last year
- Amy asked to add the following choices under the "classification" section:
 - Non-Classifiable
 - Non-Eligible
 - CNC (Classification Not Complete)
 - N (New)
- Bob also said that ideally we would want to know if their classification was US or International
- It is recommended that registration be sent out to the board members so they can register and provide feedback
- Current registration:
 - \$450 for teams (+375 for classifier fees) = \$825 total
 - \$350 for developmental teams
 - \$750 for international players
- Increase in insurance costs is estimated to be between 6% - 8%
- Recommendation to increase registration to a total of \$950 per team (\$450 registration fee + \$500 classification costs, knowing we will receive pushback.
- Daniel Curtis moved to approve the increase of registration fees to \$950, Dan Caldwell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- Bob said as we begin asking donors for money, we have to be VERY clear in our books what we are charging and where it goes.

- Amy's budget last year was \$20,000 and she is asking for \$43,000
- Additional registration info from other sports:
 - Wheelchair BB (based on 10 players):
 - \$600 for league
 - \$200 for conference
 - \$30 each player
 - \$60 each staff
 - \$500 to play in National Tournament
 - \$1,840 to include nationals play
 - Power Soccer:
 - Conference teams:
 - \$850 to register at beginning of season
 - \$200 for each player, coach and support staff to attend conference Cup
 - \$2,450 to include play conference cup attendance
- Rugby can charge \$450 per team for each postseason tournament
- All tournaments have been added to the website but many are missing crucial details. Dan will send out an email requesting the information. Bob asked to please request a tournament date from those who have not provided them yet, too.
- Amy asked Michael K. to send one more reminder to the league regarding retirement from WWR.
- Residency survey results close today. Currently there are 124 responses that range across the board.
- Amy pointed out a reminder to Michael K. a point in the job description for ED under fundraising to work with the team to see what smaller things might work in their markets to bring in some smaller dollar amounts as well. She told him about a boating fundraiser she just saw done in Maine and reiterated that the grants will be great but we are going to have to dip into some smaller pockets as well.
- Daniel proposed setting up a conversation with Gumby as he had some great ideas regarding fundraising that he might still be willing to share.