

## **USWRA Leadership Meeting: February 3, 2025**

**Next Planned Meeting: March 3, 2025**

### **Present:**

Bob Lopez – Commissioner  
Amy Bohn – Classification, Policy & Procedure  
Gwen Debly – Secretary  
Meagan Rowe – USAWR  
Steve Kearley – President  
Mary Kiolbasa – Head of Classification  
Christopher Newman – Associate Head Classifier  
Daniel Curtis – VP2  
Marianne Duda – Head of Referees

### **Absent:**

Keith Newerla – VP1  
Kerin Banfield – Referee  
Sarah Leonard – Treasurer

### **Motion to approve January minutes:**

- Bob motioned to accept; Gwen seconded
  - Update Classification as they are listed incorrectly

### **Secretary (Gwen Debly):**

- Social media posts have been well received
- Behind on updating the website due to illness

### **USAWR (Meagan Rowe and Jen Allred):**

- Had selection camp in January
- Brought 20 athletes on board
- First camp with those athletes is this week
- Have been working on WWR Inquiry we were looking at last week. Have not heard back but will continue to follow up.
  - Amy also added some more details to what was already listed.
  - She asked them to reference the section/rule where it is written if they allow someone to play who has previously classed out. We want to follow something specific.

### **Classifiers (Amy Bohn & Mary Kiolbasa):**

- Mary will now serve as Head of Classification
- Christopher will now serve as Associate Head of Classification.
- Amy will serve as Policy & Procedure on the Classification Board
- They are working to host their own fundraisers which will not be associated at all with the contracts that may come to fruition with the league.

- They are already in the hole with the creation of their own 501c3, so this will allow them to help fill the coffers.
- Full meeting with all classifiers last month followed by a meeting of just the board.
  - They will not classify for the remainder of the season.
- Christopher received the COC for players from Bob as he was trying to get some background on how players (and members of the league in general) are held accountable for their behaviors.
  - A question as they move forward to separate themselves: How are we going to improve the safety and wellbeing of classifiers?
  - There are 23 current classifiers, and they need to start recruitment. It is hard to do that when we have no policy in place to discourage things such as what happened last year at semi-finals and we may be putting them in a bad situation. Referees can eject a player if they feel it is necessary, but the classifiers do not have that same protection. Steve agrees that having a policy would be helpful.
  - This is one reason that the classifiers feel it is important to separate themselves, in that they feel that it is difficult for the league to equally support both the players and classifiers in situations like this without some bias.
  - Christopher is currently looking for some background from the past 5 years in how the league has handled situations like this.
  - Steve does think that having something specific in place is a good idea.
- Steve would still like to have ongoing conversations with classification to see if there is somewhere we can meet in the middle regarding having classification/provisional classification in the post-season. We can be flexible in how that is presented, but he thinks it is important as a league that we try to find some middle ground, especially for those new players who are taking part in the league.
  - Christopher is not comfortable doing anything outside of regulation regarding classification.
  - Secondly, the decision by the USWRA to create something like that for Nationals is entirely up to the league, and if we are not going to have a “valid” panel, Christopher is not interested in doing it at all. He feels that it is going to create more problems than solutions. He also feels it puts the integrity of classification in question. He would be curious to hear what the league feels that they can get players to buy into that will meet everyone’s need and not create further issues.
    - Bob said that regardless of whether there is a panel of any sort, people will be unhappy in some way or another.
    - He does feel it is important for players to be looked at. The only other choice is to not allow them to play. Having an educated person looking at them is a much better solution than not allowing them to play or play based on the opinion of someone who is not trained to classify.

**Referees (Marianne Duda):**

- Will discuss post-season Wednesday of this week. Still need a few more for Nationals.
- Have not had a chance to discuss the changes proposed by WWR and are hopeful they can do that this week.

**Commissioner (Bob Lopez):**

- Had to move one semi-final date due to a conflict with Team USA
- Has sent out important dates to the team reps so there will be no questions
- Regarding flights for semi-final, please make sure they are less than \$400 and less than \$450 for Nationals. If we cannot find them for that amount, please let Bob know so we can work with that.
- We are hoping to have the next Nationals host nailed down by this year's Nationals in order to make an announcement this year. He did make clear that anyone who is interested, we need to host in **April** for several reasons. Bob will continue to reach out to potential hosts.

#### **President (Steve Kearley):**

- New storefront is 99% done, just fine-tuning a few final things
  - Hoping to do a soft opening, sharing the link with leadership
  - Steve is really excited about the options we have
  - We will be able to rotate options
- World Games
  - They removed Low Point Rugby this year, we just found out recently
  - Steve has reached out to request a refund for the entry fees we played
- The Low Point Team is excited to compete, looking ahead to Switzerland in October
  - It is a high-level low point competition
- Next Low Point Camp is March 6 – 9, 2025
  - Currently have 14 coming to camp
  - Hoping to cut that down to 10, 8 players with 2 alternates
- Ongoing discussions with classification
- Conflict with USA and semi-finals that caused us to move one of our semi-final dates. USA scheduled a camp on the date we previously had scheduled. How can we avoid this in the future since this is not the first time this has happened?
  - Do we have a merged calendar?
  - Do we have a point person for each group (USWRA & USAWR) to confer prior to any decisions being made?
  - We were very fortunate that Portland was able to reschedule, but we could have been in an unfortunate situation if that had not been the case.
  - Meagan agreed and said that sometimes what gets hung up on their end is that the USOPC must approve their calendar prior to receiving their allocation and they cannot post those dates until that allocation comes in.
    - Meagan asked if it would be helpful if they shared the draft dates so that we can work around those when scheduling post-season tournaments. Bob said yes, even if with one person so that those dates can be worked around.
    - Meagan asked that we please recognize that it is often out of their control.
    - Amy asked if it is possible for USAWR to post black-out dates so that those dates that we may have chosen. Meagan said it is possible to try.

#### **VP 2 (Daniel Curtis):**

- Waiting to hear from sponsors
- Have gotten the go ahead on Spinergy wheels

- Hoping to get another Melrose and Vesco chair