



USA Hockey Board of Directors Meeting November 9, 2024

Attendance

Present: Mike Trimboli, Keith Barrett, Ryan Bedford, Cheri Bonawitz, Caitlin Cahow, Tom Cline, Dwayne Dillinger, Donna Guariglia, Bob Joyce, Donna Kaufman, Kris Knauss, TC Lewis, Mike MacMillan, Steve Oleheiser, John Tobin, Andy Yohe.

Absent: Julie Chu, Bill Daly, Declan Farmer, Don Gould, Jen Yung Lee, Taylor Lipsett, Kevin McKee, Noah Grove.

Staff Members: Pat Kelleher, Tony Driscoll, Casey Jorgensen, Kelly Mahncke, Bob Mancini, Scott Monaghan, Tami Tranter, John Vanbiesbrouck.

Call to Order

Mike Trimboli called the meeting to order at 7:55 AM.

Conflict of Interests

None.

President's Report

Mike Trimboli began the meeting by congratulating Donna Kaufman on the birth of her new grandchild. USA Hockey registration numbers continue to increase. Mike reviewed the schedule for recent and upcoming events to include Try Hockey for Free, the Blind Hockey Classic and the World Para Ice Hockey Championship. The first Rivalry Series game was recently held in San Jose and another game was last night in Salt Lake City. Mike and Pat Kelleher attended the Affiliate Presidents' Meeting in Minnesota that included great discussions raised by the Tier I Commission and other matters. There are some legislative proposals that the Tier I Commission would like to bring forward for the Board and Congress to approve outside of the typical legislative approval timeline and the process for doing so under our bylaws was described. Mike and Pat will be attending the Hockey Hall of Fame inductions in Toronto where four Americans will be inducted. Then he will also be traveling to Ottawa to attend a Beyond the Boards Summit that is sponsored by Hockey Canada.

Mike reminded the Board that the IIHF will be conducting elections for its Council in 2026. Mike then presented on the composition of the current IIHF Council and future new positions, including that at least three Council positions must be held by females. Mike announced that he would be running for an IIHF Council position in the 2026 elections. Pat Kelleher described the USOPC International Relations Grant, which plays an important role in long-term strategy, being active, constructive, committed partners in the Olympic movement and is intended to help strengthen our collective representation and impact as an international sports organization. This grant should be there to support USA Hockey in the election process.

Mike also shared slides showing the IIHF structure along with current USA Hockey representatives on various IIHF committees. There is an expansive partnership between USA Hockey and the IIHF for





coaching, player and officiating development. Bob Mancini described several new initiatives that USA Hockey is involved with in international hockey and assisting different federations.

Executive Director's Report

Pat Kelleher began by reviewing USA Hockey's top organizational goals from the Strategic Plan and reviewed the list of priorities for the 2024-25 season. Pat also discussed the recent NCAA rule change making Canadian Hockey League players eligible for NCAA hockey and reported that USA Hockey will continue to have conversations with the USHL and the NAHL, as well as the NHL on USA Hockey's strategy surrounding Junior Hockey and to continue to promote the American Development Model. We will also be reviewing and proposing changes to the transfer agreement with Hockey Canada and the CHL. The NHL continues to be actively involved with USA Hockey, especially with the upcoming Four Nations Tournament and the Olympics.

Pat also described the ongoing discussions surrounding the availability of PWHL players for international hockey. The PWHL will break and make players available for the 2025 World Championships and through the 2026 Olympics. At this point the PWHL has advised that it will not break their season for the Women's World Championship in April of 2026 following the Olympics or possibly in future seasons. USA Hockey is working on a one year extension of the current contract with the Women's National Team players given the uncertainty of their availability beyond the Olympics. One outcome is that there will not be a traditional residency program in preparation for the 2026 Olympics due to the PWHL schedule.

John Vanbiesbrouck and Kelley Olsen have been working on the logistics for the 2026 Olympics and Paralympics. The Sled World Championship will be in May in Buffalo. The U18 Men's World Championship will be in Dallas in April and the World Juniors in Minnesota in December and January.

Overall, the USA Hockey staff leadership has been doing a tremendous job. The information technology staff has made huge steps with the new learning management system and there is more to come with implementation. Tony Driscoll and his team have been putting in a lot of work on the USA Hockey website project.

Pat Kelleher added that the USOPC has their annual assembly next week in Colorado Springs, which will be Pat's last meeting as chair of the National Governing Bodies Council, concluding a four year term.

Marketing Report

Tony Driscoll reported on the upcoming website design updates. A large focus has been security for the site and best practices especially to help advance the coaching and officiating learning management systems, improvements for customer navigation, and creating value from our resources and content. In addition, the team has been working on removing any nonactive URLs from the USA Hockey website. The team is addressing some design and implementation issues with SportsEngine. A huge component of the new website design will be regarding AI and how to integrate AI into the new learning management system. There are plans to create an advanced single sign-on system for membership registration and Tony described how that could work.





Tony discussed some setbacks in the past year in terms of sponsorships, due primarily to bankruptcy and contract breaches. In addition, there were some non-renewals of sponsorship agreements. Tony shared the Marketing Team's Strategic Plan for event revenue and increased sponsorship revenue. Digital media has proven to be a large success for promoting events. Content will continue to be a focus as brands want to align with an organization with good content. We will be hosting more events which will provide more assets available for sponsorships. Some challenges continue to be limited commercial rights and limited television and media rights. USAHockeyTV is doing very well with a database of over 46,000 people. The marketing team will continue to look at ways to enhance the customer experience in terms of video clips and game highlights. USA Hockey has also been working with Aggregate Sports to gain introductions to sponsorship opportunities to increase sales revenue. Overall, USA Hockey's asset base gives the organization a more consistent presence with assets that partners are looking to help drive their business. Tony responded to questions from the Board about strategy, staffing, and budgeting for Marketing, Communications and Events areas, and also discussed ways in which the Board and Staff can help in support of the department's efforts. Tony also reviewed the roster of our current partners and discussed recent changes in the hockey equipment industry that could affect the sponsorship market.

Legal Council Report

John Tobin reported that there is a small subgroup from the council that is looking at our arbitration process and another looking at disciplinary guidelines. Casey Jorgensen reported on Legal Council updates including the continuing increase in SafeSport reports. There is a subcommittee of Affiliate Presidents and board members who are working on how to increase efficiency and streamline the number of reports that volunteers directly handle. From mid-October through February the SafeSport Coordinators experience an exceptionally high volume of reports. There have been discussions about utilizing and outsourcing contract investigators, overseen by the national office, to handle some of the reports. Another approach is to focus on the triage aspects of reports to mitigate those that should not be handled through SafeSport (e.g., in-game infractions, complaints about officiating, parental or fee disputes).

The Colorado Amateur Hockey Association lawsuit is ongoing. Randy Kanai is currently issuing subpoenas.

Adult Council

Tom Cline congratulated his team and their work on selling out entries for Adult Nationals. A continued focus is improvement of the experience and of the benefits for Adult Hockey members, while also increasing membership numbers; Tom looks forward to collaborating with Donna Kaufman and membership as they share similar goals and directions in membership growth.

Junior Council

TC Lewis has been having discussions with the USHL and NAHL on changing their showcase timeline to benefit players. John Vanbiesbrouck reported on the effect of the NCAA recent eligibility rule change regarding Canadian Hockey League players' eligibility to participate on NCAA college teams.. Currently, there are concerns about players in season right now that might seek to transition to CHL clubs. A focus continues to be on enhancing education material for players, as well as looking at the transfer agreement and potentially contracting players.





Playing Rules Committee

Sarah Fraser, chair of the Playing Rules Committee, joined by Zoom as a guest to give an update on the recent proposals for changes to Playing Rules. Congress will vote in January to accept or decline the proposed Playing Rule changes. The Playing Rules Committee has been having discussions with appropriate Councils, Committees, or Sections to make recommendations on the proposals. Discussion by those groups took place during and after the Annual Meeting in June, and some amendments were proposed. The Board has been given a packet with the current list of all proposals. The proposals will be voted on in blocks at the Winter Meeting. The blocks will be shared with the Councils, Committees and Sections in advance. However, there will be some proposals that need individual consideration, particularly regarding the proposed rule changes to off-sides and icing. According to Sarah, the biggest areas of debate are if we change a rule like off-sides or icing, at what age would the new rules be implemented? For the proposed changes adding shorthanded icing and delayed/tag-up off-sides, the recommendations are to apply the rules at Youth 15 only and Girls 16U and above, rather than at 14U and above.

There is a pending amendment from the Safety & Protective Equipment Committee (SPEC) to the rules for neck laceration protectors that would add a BNQ certification as approved certification. The Playing Rules Committee has also been working with the Disabled Section to review the neck laceration protection language as it applies to all Disabled Hockey disciplines. The rules for neck laceration protectors that were ratified by Congress in June apply to Sled Hockey, but there are five remaining disciplines within Disabled Hockey that were not addressed. The change was looked at as a modification of Playing Rules and made effective immediately following a review by the Playing Rules Committee.

International Council

Dwayne Dillinger noted the upcoming busy schedule for international events. The World Junior team camp will take place in December to begin the defense of last year's gold medal. Annie Camins will be joining the International Council from the PWHL. The Sled team prevailed recently in Czechia. The women's U18's will take place in Finland in January and the men's U18s will be hosted in Dallas in April. The 2026 World Junior Championship will be hosted in Minneapolis. There is a lot of attention and logistics going into the upcoming Four Nations Tournament and the team will be announced on December 4th.

Membership Council

Donna Kaufman reported that membership numbers continue to grow with increases in all categories. Try Hockey for Free was very successful this year with over 300 participating sites. While Try Hockey for Free is highlighted two weekends per year, there are some areas that operate the events at other times. There is continued efforts to establish a leadership summit.

Youth Council

Keith Barrett and Bob Mancini shared reports containing updates on player development targets and initiatives. There is continued work with NHL partnerships to grow youth hockey. A large focus is continued advancement of coaching and officiating education. The number of returning officials continues to rise with this being the second consecutive year of record number of registered officials. The officiating education and training programs have been adapting to also incorporate on-ice training. The Player Development Managers have been working hard to make on-site visits and Zoom calls with





officials and coaches across the country. There has also been increased emphasis on incorporating mentorship programs for coaches and officials. There is a subcommittee comprised of USA Hockey staff and Coaches in Chiefs that are working to reduce the costs of coaching education and create an overall better program that will be implemented next year.

Keith Barrett reported that Girls' Player Development Camps continue to improve. The Select 17 Festival was a large success. National Championships discussions will be taking place soon and Keith reviewed the goals of the events, namely to recognize the value of USA Hockey membership through the national championships, to provide a national championship that accurately represents the importance of USA Hockey as the pinnacle of the season, and to create the best possible tournament experience for all participants and attendees.

Keith also described the economics of the national championships. Reimbursement of expenses for officials do not cover their costs. There will be a service charge to hosts that will now cover their costs. Team registration fees for National Championship tournaments will be increasing in 2025 and future increases are planned based on anticipated higher expenses.

Legislative Proposals

Casey Jorgensen spoke on the five legislative proposals that are brought before the board now, outside the normal legislative proposal approval timeline, due to the upcoming Learning Management System (LMS) changes, the need to continue expiring pilot programs, and to address critical recommendations from the Tier I Commission, including a recommendation for a moratorium on new Tier I programs. Bob Mancini and Keith Barrett reviewed those coming from the Tier I Commission and why they are important to address at this time. John Tobin made a motion to move all five legislative proposals to the Winter Meeting agenda for consideration (2nd Kris Knauss). Motion was approved.

Old Business

USA Hockey has two representatives on the USOPC's Team USA Athletes' Commission. These athletes also serve on USA Hockey's Board and Congress. Taylor Lipsett has been serving as the primary representative and Julie Chu as the alternate representative. Both Taylor and Julie were eligible for reelection for the upcoming four-year term beginning in January 2025. Taylor ran unopposed and was elected by acclamation. Julie expressed that she was unable to run for the primary position and was also elected by acclamation to the alternate position. They were commended by the Board members for their continued dedication to USA Hockey.

New Business

None.

Adjournment

Bob Joyce moved to adjourn the meeting (2nd Caitlin Cahow). Meeting adjourned.

