

Minutes

Special Meeting of the USA Fencing Board of Directors

June 9, 2011 via Teleconference

Present: Bradley Baker, Bill Becker, David Blake, Aaron Clements, Wes Glon, David Herr, Alan Kuver, Terry Kwan, Mario Rodriguez, Sunil Sabharwal, Laurie Schiller, Soren Thompson, Kalle Weeks, Alex Wood

Absent: Paula Reed

Guests: Donald Alperstein, Dan Berke, Greg Dilworth

I. General Information and Organizational Items

General announcements

Reminders:

Membership Meeting will take place the morning of July 2

Board Meeting will take place the evening of July 2

Hall of Fame Reception will take place the evening of July 3

All-Academic teams will be named on July 4

Remarks – Kalle Weeks, President

Ms. Weeks thanked everyone who joined the strategic planning session in Minneapolis and noted that good progress was made. More work is yet to be done with specifics on timelines and exact tasks. Meetings of the Executive Director Search Planning Task Force have continued. On the suggestion of Sunil Sabharwal to get in touch with the Human Resources person at the USOC, Ms. Weeks did so and was subsequently put in touch with Rich Adams (USOC liaison to governing bodies). Ms. Weeks and Mr. Adams met face-to-face. We now have a better picture of where the USOC is heading. Ms. Weeks shared our draft job description and received comments, which have subsequently been shared with the Search Planning Group.

Ms. Weeks noted that Mr. Clements, as previously appointed, will serve as parliamentarian.

II. Minutes of the May 12, 2011 Special Meeting of the Board of Directors

Motion (Mr. Baker): To approve the minutes of the May 12, 2011 Special Meeting of the Board of Directors (distributed separately)

Second: Mr. Schiller

The draft minutes were amended as below:

Corrections were noted to the attendance records of Mr. Herr (absent), Ms. Kwan (absent), the spelling of Mr. Wood's name, and Mr. Berke (present as guest).

Amendments to motions IX and X will be noted as friendly.

Motion to approve the minutes, as amended, passed.

III. Finance and Budget

Financial Reports (Greg Dilworth and Sunil Sabharwal)

An oral report was provided by Mr. Dilworth.

Financial reports from May are not yet available. Payments to volunteers from the 2010 Summer Nationals through NAC E in Portland have been mailed. The Office is working on the 2011-12 budget. The goal is to have it to Mr. Sabharwal by the end of next week for distribution to the Budget & Finance Committee.

IV. Updates from the Executive Director (Greg Dilworth)

An oral report was provided by Mr. Dilworth.

The membership trend for the past several months continues. The number of members is lower by several hundred compared to previous years. We have not caught up and expect to end year down about 1,000 from last season. One-day memberships are the likely cause. The Board has already addressed the issue through increased fees; the Office is working with RailStation to add changes to their system.

Mr. Dilworth is looking for thoughts from Board members with an eye towards trying to move people to greater use of the website for event registrations. Paper membership forms frequently are incomplete or inaccurate when initially received. The Office is planning to add a \$10 processing fee to

membership applications faxed or mailed into the Office OTHER than those received at local/regional tournaments and sent as a set from tournament organizers. The goal of the change is to drive more people to online sign-up. Unless there are any objections, the Office will start producing a 2011-12 form with these instructions.

Question: Does the \$10 fee cover the additional resources required to manually handle memberships?

Answer: We haven't analyzed that in detail. For some memberships the fee more than covers additional costs. On others, where the form is inaccurate or doesn't include all required information, it takes quite a bit longer. Since this is the first time we've done this, the thought is to nudge people to going online, rather than hammer them.

Question: So the options would be, \$60 + \$5 RailStation fee or \$60 + \$10 paper fee or \$60 at tournament?

Answer: Not familiar with a \$5 RailStation fee. Don't believe it exists.

Kris Ekeren has joined us and has been with us for ~2 weeks. From the National Sports Center for the Disabled where she was involved with grant-writing, fundraising and strategic planning. She is developing a plan for fund raising that will describe every step to be taken during rest of the cycle. The staff expects to present the plan at the Annual Meeting in September.. The Office is also working on grant applications.

The Office has been talking to iSol Partners (formerly PSA) to secure venues for the 2012 and 2013 seasons. The goal is to announce cities and day schedules for 2011-12, not including Summer Nationals, by Summer Nationals.

Question: How close are we?

Answer: We have seven of eight contracts in house. The eighth had some mistakes and has been sent back. All contracts are expected to be signed in the next few days.

Question: Has the availability of food for fencers and coaches early during competition days been taken into account?

Answer: We've expressed that desire to iSol Partners. They've been working with hotels and telling them that this is important. There may not be 100% coverage, but there should be good coverage by next year.

The staff is continuing to work with NYAC to get everything ready for the World Cup and finalizing all plans. Mr. Dilworth thanked Michael Aufrichtig and Soren Thompson for their assistance. Individual finals will be webcast in partnership with the USOC. Finals are scheduled to start at 6:30pm EDT. More information will be available via the website and email blast.

Less than a week later are Summer Nationals, Pan-American Zonal Championships, the FIE Administrator Seminar, Hall of Fame Reception, Referee Clinics, Board meeting, and others activities. USA Fencing will have a combined total of 74 strips between Summer Nationals and the Pan-American Zonals. Mr. Dilworth encouraged anyone in Reno July 4-9 for Summer Nationals to come to Pan-American Zonals and root for our athletes. Zonals are a key event for Olympic qualification. USA Fencing has a legitimate chance to qualify a full 16-person contingent. If we do so, we're likely to be the only country with 16 athletes.

List of Hall of Fame inductees:

****ADD LIST****

The Hall of Fame reception will take place on the evening of Sunday, July 3. Tickets can be purchased via website.

Question: Do we have a sponsor for the Hall of Fame reception this year?

Answer: We do not have a sponsor at this time.

Tournament software.

Nine reviews came back with a clear leader and three other essentially equal bids. The Office is asking all four for "bottom dollar" quotes and its recommendation at this point is to discuss the possibility of a contract and see if we can come with an equitable agreement with the leading company, while maintaining discussions with others in case that's not possible. The goal is a product with which we can be happy for the next decade.

Marketing Communications

Rob Weekes will come to Reno to meet with our various commercial partners to discuss partners' needs for 2011-12. We are still waiting for a long form contract for the apparel sponsorship mentioned at our last meeting. We are pushing as hard as we reasonably can to get new apparel and uniforms with which we will be happy in the long term in time for the start of next season.

High Performance

Highlights include three senior individual world cup medals at various competitions over the past few weeks. Alex Massialas took bronze Seoul in Men's Foil and was named USOC Athlete of the Week. Nzingha Prescod also medaled at the same event. At the Stockholm epee Grand Prix, Soren Thompson placed third. Congratulations were extended to all of them. It was also noted that the Men's Epee Team took silver in Heidenheim.

World University Games: We continue to have had some problems with the selection process. Some athletes who were ineligible indicated interest and one athlete withdrew after indicating that she would participate. During the process of replacing that athlete, the wrong points list was used. The problem has now been fixed and discussions have taken place with the athlete who was incorrectly informed of selection. Continued such problems in the International group will lead to changes in responsibility in next week or so. Mr. Dilworth noted that we cannot continue to make mistakes such as this and are taking steps to make sure we don't.

USA Fencing athletes participated in the Pan-American Youth Championships, winning 33 medals. The US was declared the overall winner of the championships

Question: Are full results of the Youth Championships available anywhere?

Answer: We will look into it.

Question: How was selection done for the World Cup webcast provider?

Answer: We started having conversations with USOC several weeks ago. An alternative proposal was first seen in the last couple of days. We were already well down the road to working with a vendor selected by USOC. The alternative may well work out for future events and we will explore that option.

Question: The net effect of the Tournament Software RFP is that you'll attempt to work out a contract with the leading candidate and then present it to the Board?

Answer: Yes. We plan to talk tomorrow. If stumbling blocks are encountered then we have second, third and fourth alternatives to go to.

V. International Update (Sunil Sabharwal)

An oral report was given by Mr. Sabharwal.

The deadline to file propositions to the FIE Congress was June 2. USA Fencing has submitted three proposals for rules changes at the FIE congress:

- 1) Increase size of Arbitrage Commission to 15 from 10, reflecting the increased amount of work they are required to do given the changes in the FIE tournament calendars.
- 2) Imposing a more severe penalty for actions such as cutting off the sleeve of a plastron.
- 3) Transparent masks must come with the visor component manufacturer's verification that the material is genuine Lexan.

Proposals first go to FIE Executive Committee, which meets at end of June. The Executive Committee forwards proposals to the various commissions. Recommendations are returned to the Executive Committee, which makes recommendation for consideration at Congress.

The text of the USA Fencing propositions will be forwarded to Board.

Preparations for the FIE Congress continue with our friends in Philadelphia. Larry Probst, of the USOC, has agreed to serve on honorary host committee, as has Mayor Michael Nutter. We are currently reaching out to other individuals and corporations in Philadelphia for support and potential sponsorships.

Question: On the last Congress we (among others) submitted a proposal for changes to the rules related to non-combativity. Is there any reason we didn't suggest further modification to the relatively bad result from last Congress?

Answer: There's a general belief that Congress wouldn't do anything until they have more experience with the current rule. There's also a rule that you can't change any technical rules within 2 years preceding the Olympic Games.

Answer: The issue is being monitored and debated at the FIE level. It wouldn't be a surprise if the FIE rules commission comes up with a proposal to modify things after Games. People are watching the issue.

VI. Legal Update (Donald Alperstein)

An oral report was given by Mr. Alperstein.

We currently have three working disciplinary panels:

- The panel investigating a Texas spectator accused of striking a fencer had a hearing last Friday. The panel is meeting tomorrow to decide their recommendation. We should have report for Summer Nationals.
- The elite athlete panel has had a hearing. They have met and decided on recommendation and are preparing a report that will be ready by Summer Nationals.
- A hearing has been conducted for the Pennsylvania referee accused of having shaken a fencer for

having screamed inappropriately in celebration of touches. A report should be ready for Summer Nationals.

We have received a request for a panel to be appointed as a result of an occurrence in Portland. One spectator pushed another spectator. The pusher received a black card at the event. The Pushee has subsequently requested a disciplinary panel and has filed a police report. It was indicated to the requester that if we pursue internal discipline then the police may be less likely to pursue the matter. We are waiting for a response from the requester on whether they want us to proceed.

Discussions were held with Sam Cheris regarding the matter of the two clubs being investigated. Mr. Alperstein indicated he was unsure how far along the process is.

Consultations were held with Greg Dilworth and Kalle Weeks regarding the World University Games issue mentioned by Mr. Dilworth.

Question: Do we currently have any pending litigation?

Answer: No pending litigation at this time.

Question: Have matters been settled with TeamIP?

Answer: We sent them letters informing them of our suit. We have since received a check from TeamIP and have dismissed our case against them.

VII. Election Committee Report (David Blake)

An oral report was given by Mr. Blake.

USA Fencing has 8,812 eligible voters. 969 have voted so far, with 13 days to go.

There were problems with potentially misleading language in the initial email as the text indicated that the link to vote would expire in 48 hours, although one could actually use the log-on and password throughout the two weeks voting period. Additionally, voters with last name "Sch" through "Z" were not included in the initial distribution. As a result, the voting period has been extended to allow full opportunities to all eligible voters.

The Election Committee will have initial returns immediately after the voting period concludes. If there is a need for a run-off election that should happen quickly after that. Final announcement of the winners will take at Summer Nationals, although with the extended voting period, if there's a run-off election then

announcement of those results will require additional time.

VIII. Motion (Mr. Herr): To repeal the administrative rule that “No meeting of the general membership, the Board of Directors of the USFA, or the USFA Congress shall be held while fencing is in progress at a national tournament (National Championships, Junior Olympic Championships, North American Cup), or an international competition conducted in the United States (e.g., World Cup, World Championships).”

The corresponding passage in Chapter 3, Section 2, Subsection E of the Operations Manual will be amended in future editions to reflect this change.

Second: Ms. Kwan

Discussion:

The rule was put in place when the Board was much larger and many members had conflicts with the competitions. The Board and members have suffered through very late meetings at times. One and Two AM are not good times to conduct important business. The Board has been productive when meetings are at a reasonable time of day. We need to be able to get business done when still awake and we are able to do it.

We are a collegial Board and can work around issues where someone is not available. We can use that flexibility when necessary.

Reference was made to a past occurrence when a Board member had a motion not heard due to having to leave a Board meeting early to make an event check-in report time.

The rule is intended to ensure that every member of Association has opportunity to at least observe meetings. As noted, this has been a minimal impact and may not be something we should put heavy weight on, but it’s something worth thinking about.

Motion Passed.

IX. Executive Session

In executive session it was resolved by the Board that a matter involving possible misuse of Association marks and/or non-compliance with rules regarding proper requirements for the naming

and sanctioning of tournaments, compounded by an apparent unwillingness to engage in communications by a tournament organizer when initial inquiries were made, be referred to the Legal Resources Group to communicate with the individual who published the materials in question to inform him of the rules and concerns; to obtain, if possible, his acknowledgement and agreement to respect the USFA's rules and legal rights; and, if not, to recommend further action.

X. Adjournment

Motion (Mr. Baker): To adjourn the meeting.

Second: Mr. Glon

Motion Passed.