

# Board Meeting Agenda

## Scheduled Meeting

### USA Fencing Board of Directors

Sunday, September 15th at 12:30PM (MT)– Salt Lake City, UT and Zoom

Public Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83514754983?pwd=v4jNPzFvBgx4D6j37M81e8pxnlsNfl.1>

Passcode: 037606

#### **I. Call to Order**

Roll Call

General Announcements

Opening Remarks – Chair

Conflict of Interest announcements for this agenda

Moment of Remembrance – Bob Dow OLY

#### **II. CEO, Operations & Financial Update (Mr. Andrews and Ms. Chamberlin)**

#### **III. Committee, Resource Groups, and Task Force Updates (as applicable)**

- a. Tournament Committee Report ([Appendix A](#))
- b. Data Resource Group Report ([Appendix B](#))
- c. Black Card Review Group Report ([Appendix C](#))
- d. Grievance and Disciplinary Committee Report ([Appendix D, TBD](#))
- e. International Relations Committee Report ([Appendix E](#))
- f. Referee Commission Meeting Notes ([Appendix F](#))

#### **IV. Consent Agenda (Placed by Secretary; in need of sponsor)**

- a. Approval of the July 6, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes ([Appendix G](#))
- b. Approval of the minutes from the Email Vote on July 24, 2024 ([Appendix H](#))
- c. Approval of the September 13, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes ([Appendix I, TBD](#))
- d. Approval of the Updated Member Code of Conduct as submitted by the DEIB Committee ([Appendix J](#))

#### **V. Old Business**

*The following motion was tabled at the July 6, 2024 meeting and therefore must be taken from the table at this meeting. Prior to the meeting, the movant made the decision to withdraw the motion and as such, does not necessitate further consideration.*

**MOTION (Mr. Lehfelddt):** That the following amendments to the USA Fencing Amended and Restated Bylaws effective as of February 17, 2024 (“Bylaws”), be approved for publication pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, and that they be considered for adoption at the next meeting of the Board following the required comment period.

To amend Section 7.4b of the bylaws as follows:

Independent Directors. There shall be ~~three (3)~~ **two (2)** Independent Directors. All Independent Directors shall be individuals who meet the qualifications and are selected as specified in this Subsection 7.4.b.

**Rationale:** The US Olympic and Paralympic Committee only requires one Independent Director. This recommendation was set forth by the Gender Equity Task Force.

That Section 7.6.b be amended to read in its entirety as follows:

**Independent Directors.** Independent Directors shall serve two-year terms commencing on the first day of September and ending on the last day of August. ~~One Two~~ Independent Directors shall be selected in even numbered years and one Independent Director shall be selected in odd numbered years. Directors fulfilling the unexpired portion of a vacated position shall serve the remainder of that term.

**Rationale:** The US Olympic and Paralympic Committee only requires one Independent Director. This recommendation was set forth by the Gender Equity Task Force.

## **VI.** New Business

### *International Relations Committee Structure*

**MOTION 1 (Ms. Hill, on behalf of Task Force on Committees and Resource Groups):** That the International Relations Committee (IRC) be restructured to house two sub-committees for FIE and WAS, as well as have a primary committee that will draw from the two sub-committees. The sub-committees will meet regularly on their own, as will the primary committee for knowledge-sharing between the able-bodied and para-fencing communities. Members of each subcommittee and primary committee are voting unless otherwise noted below.

The primary committee will have:

- A chair (this role will be highly administrative to support the subcommittees, track deadlines, etc)
- Athlete representation from each subcommittee
- The chair of each subcommittee
- One non-chair designee from each subcommittee
- CEO of USA Fencing or their designee as a non-voting advisor
- Chair of the Board of Directors of USA Fencing as a non-voting advisor

Each subcommittee will have:

- A chair
- Athlete representation, with weapon and gender diversity as possible
- Members with experience and understanding of the respective international community
- Ex-Officio members who hold positions in the respective international community, who are non-voting advisors unless selected as a full committee member. If they lose their office and are not selected as a full committee member, they will lose their seat on the subcommittee and if applicable the primary committee unless the Board votes to add them as a continuing member.
- National Office representation (likely CEO) as a non-voting advisor
- Chair of the Board of Directors as a non-voting advisor

**Rationale:** The current structure and committee (members, athlete representatives, ex-officio members) are exclusively focused on FIE knowledge and experience. While this group contains decades and generations of fencing experience and knowledge, it is exclusively within the FIE. WAS knowledge and experience are equally as important for international relations of USA Fencing. There needs to be the same resource for FIE and WAS International Relations. WAS representation in a predominantly FIE group is not adequate.

Furthermore all members of these subcommittees are heavily involved in fencing, with most balancing domestic fencing, international events and commitments, and many with outside employment. Availability for meetings and work is difficult at best and the time demands of each community often conflict (e.g. the FIE committee is very busy this week while WAS is preparing for the Paralympic Games and would be unavailable). Two separate committees would better respect committee members' time and interests and logistically allow the most efficient work, while an overarching committee will allow for knowledge sharing and a consistent strategy across international relations for USA Fencing.

### *Budget Committee*

**MOTION 2 (Ms. Hill, on behalf of Task Force on Committees and Resource Groups):** That the following prospective amendments to Section 12.7.b of the Amended and Restated Bylaws be approved for publication pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, and

that this amendment be considered for adoption at the next meeting of the Board following the required comment period:

That Section 12.7.b. be amended to read in its entirety as follows:

b. Composition. The Budget Committee shall consist of six voting members: the Treasurer, who shall be Chair of the Budget Committee; three other members of the Board of Directors elected by the Board; and two athletes who meets the qualifications required in Appendix II, one of whom shall be female and one of whom shall have qualified as a parafencer. The Chief Executive Officer of the USFA, or another staff member designated by the Chief Executive Officer, shall be a non-voting member of the Budget Committee. **Two representatives of the general membership with relevant financial experience shall be selected by the Board to be non-voting members of the Budget Committee.** Members shall serve terms of one year.

**Rationale:** Financial experience is crucial to the Budget Committee and besides the Treasurer, the other members from the Board of Directors and athlete representatives might be limited in that regard. Drawing on our membership to fill that gap is a way to ensure that the Budget Committee has the resources it needs to make well-informed decisions.

#### *Committee Appointments*

**MOTION 3 (Ms. Hill, on behalf of Task Force on Committees and Resource Groups):** To approve the composition of Committees, Resource Groups, and Councils for the 2024-25 season as provided to the Board, details of which are provided in [Appendix L](#) which includes Chairs and Board Liaison appointments, as well as the end date of the terms for members of committees with staggered terms. If the selected members of these groups do not fulfill the requirements for their positions (e.g. Conflict of Interest forms, SafeSport training, etc) within 45 days, they will automatically be removed from their group(s) and their vacancy will be filled by the Board of Directors. Furthermore, the Chairs of each group (or Staff Liaison if there is no Chair) will maintain attendance records to be reviewed by the Board of Directors at their next September meeting to ensure compliance with Section 12.17 (sets expectation of attendance of no less than two-thirds of committee meetings).

**Rationale:** The committee task force has reviewed all 233 applications and provided the Board of Directors with recommended appointments for the 2024-25 membership year. Staggered terms were not previously tracked or enforced despite their inclusion in the by-laws, so setting explicit term expirations for the relevant committees is important to start staggering from scratch.

The mandate to fulfill the requirements in a timely manner is intended to reduce the amount of effort the National Office undertakes each year to ensure compliance with our by-laws.

The task force also emphasizes the importance of engagement and encouraging compliance with Section 12.17 moving forward, especially given that committee terms are now two years instead of one (unless otherwise noted).

*International Nominations to FIE Congress*

**MOTION 4 (Ms. Hill):**

Per the recommendation of the International Relations Committee, the following be put forward as nominees to the FIE and World Ability Sport for the 2024 Electoral Congresses, and/or recommend that these candidates be appointed as appropriate.

ComEx: Don Anthony Jr\*  
Veterans: Rita Comes\*  
Coaches: Greg Massialas OLY\*  
Athlete: Alexander Massialas OLY\*  
Medical: Jeremy Summers\*  
Legal: Lorrie Marcil Holmes  
Disciplinary Panel: Donald Alperstein\*  
Rules: Kelly Koehler\*  
Referee: Iana Dakova\*  
SEMI: Ted Li  
Fair Play: Jennifer Yamin\*  
Women's: Felicia Zimmerman OLY  
Ethics: TBD

Voting Delegate 1: TBD  
Voting Delegate 2: TBD

Wheelchair Fencing Executive Committee: None\*\*

Voting Delegate 1: Scott Rodgers PLY  
Voting Delegate 2: Beth Mahr

\*Indicates an incumbent.

\*\*World Ability Sport are likely to appoint a US individual to the Executive Committee for Wheelchair Fencing per the recommendation of the World Ability Sport Wheelchair Fencing Chair.

**Rationale:** The upcoming Electoral Congresses for the FIE and World Ability Sport respectively provide an opportunity for the United States to put forth candidates for positions in these respective International Federations. The International Relations Committee has focused on FIE knowledge and electability; and therefore for this event has put forward the incumbent occupants of these roles with a commitment to seek new potential candidates for the 2028 Electoral Congress should membership want to be considered for such positions. With respect to Commissions and Councils for WAS, these

will be appointed at a later Congress in early 2025; so nominations will be put forward to the Board for their approval/consideration at the appropriate juncture in time.

### *Compensation and Review Committee*

**MOTION 5 (Ms. Panyi):** To approve the Compensation and Review Group of USA Fencing for the 2024-25 season, to include the following which are to be appointed by the Chair with approval of the Board of Directors:

The Chair of USA Fencing  
Independent Director (1)  
Athlete Representative (1)  
At-Large Director to serve ex-officio (1)

**Rationale:** USA Fencing will review the performance, compensation, and development of its' CEO every year with an interim review every 6 months, to be completed prior to the internal staff review series. The following process shall be used by the group to review the performance of USA Fencing's CEO:

- Reviewing initial objectives provided by the hiring group of USA Fencing.
- Soliciting feedback (Positive and Constructive) from the remainder of the Board of Directors.
- Soliciting feedback, if any, from direct reports to the CEO.
- Group meeting to discuss performance of the CEO relative to the objectives.
- Delivery of the review to the CEO.
- Delivery of a presentation and report to the USA Fencing Board of Directors in executive session.

### *Hall of Fame*

**MOTION 6 (Ms. Panyi on behalf of the Hall of Fame Committee):** To submit the following list of candidates for induction into the USA Fencing Hall of Fame:

- **Dick Pew** (1964) – previously approved. Olympian, 4<sup>th</sup> Place finish in Epee at the London Olympics.
- **Herb Cohen** (1965) – Two Time Olympian, National Champion, Pan Am Champion, NCAA Champion
- **Eugene Glazer** (1966) - Two Time Olympian, National Champion, Pan Am Champion, NCAA Champion
- **Byron Krieger** (1968) passed away in a house fire - – Two Time Olympian, National Champion, Pan Am Champion, NCAA Champion
- **Neil Diamond** (1969) Long time fencing supporter and contributor to US Fencing, and the Westbrook Foundation
- **Gerrie Baumgart** (1970) – previously approved

- **Ruby Watson** (1971) Passed Away – previously approved
- **Sally Pechinsky** (1972) – Olympian – 2 time NIWFA National Champion
- **Andy Shaw** (1973) – previously approved
- **Tom Losonczy** (1975) – previously approved. – Two Time Olympian, National Champion, Pan Am Champion, NCAA Champion
- **Jon Moss** (1976) – previously approved
- **Peter Harmer** (1977) – previously approved
- **Steve Kaplan** (1978) – previously approved

**Rationale:** One of the final things the Hall of Fame Committee considers of utmost importance is to bring in a group of athletes, coaches and contributors to make up for the lost 27 years of zero inductees. Had there been inductions for those 27 years, of the 5-6 we are currently bringing in, there would already be almost 150 more deserving individuals in the Hall. This was not a good service to our athletes, coaches and contributors who have given so much to the sport.

The committee unanimously approved Chair Mormando’s suggestions to do this. The Hall of Fame Committee put together a list which was unanimously approved by the committee. The list includes 13 names. Many of which have been previously nominated. Our suggestion is to bring these honorees into the Hall in two waves with the first wave coming in at 2025 Summer Nationals in Milwaukee and the second in the following 2026 Summer Nationals. Focusing on the first group those that are in their 70, 80, and 90s. It is important to honor them while we can!

Chair Mormando also suggests that in future at the dinners, one speaker introduces each Hall of Fame inductee. This would control the time at least on that end to keep the show moving on.

Further, this group Hall of Fame induction will not interfere in the nomination and induction of the class of 2026.

Those approved will be inducted next year or the following and will be added to one of the missing years only for our records. Obviously, some were not even involved with fencing in the years I put. But that is the first 13 years with no Hall of Fame. There are still at least 14 years that we could bring in anyone we have inadvertently overlooked. This group contains athletes that have represented the USA at 11 Olympic games and contributors that have refereed at the Games.

*Proposed Bylaw Changes from the July 6, 2024 Board Meeting*

**MOTION 7 (Ms. Hill):** That the bylaw amendment proposals put forward at the July 6, 2024 Board meeting, see [Appendix M](#), be adopted.

**Rationale:** Pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, these bylaw amendments were published to the membership for review and feedback following the July 6, 2024 Board meeting. The

required 45 day comment period has passed and these proposals are now to be considered for adoption.

### *Board Meeting Recordings*

**MOTION 8 (Mr. Lehfeldt):** That the following amendments to the USA Fencing Amended and Restated Bylaws effective as of July 6, 2024 (“Bylaws”), be approved for publication pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, and that they be considered for adoption at the next meeting of the Board following the required comment period.

To amend section 7.14 of the bylaws as follows:

**Board Transparency.** Except for privileged or confidential matters taken in executive session, the Board of Director’s actions shall be available to members. Regular, Special and Emergency meetings of the Board, except with respect to matters discussed in executive session, shall be open to members of the USFA, provided that the member bears the cost of attendance. Minutes of each meeting, except with respect to matters discussed in executive session, shall be published on the USFA web site and otherwise be made available to members of the USFA. Minutes of each meeting shall include attendees at meetings, potential conflicts of interest, motions made and actions taken, Directors who recuse themselves due to an apparent conflict of interest, and a non-confidential description of any actions taken by the Board during executive session. Every reasonable effort will be made to publish the minutes within thirty (30) days of the Board meeting.

All meetings open to the public shall be recorded and posted online to the organization’s video channel at the discretion of the National Office for the public’s consumption within thirty (30) days of the Board meeting. The Chair reserves the right to request the recording be paused when absolutely necessary. The National Office shall remove recordings from applicable video channels after 365 days of being posted.

**Rationale:** In the spirit of transparency and providing additional information for the general membership’s consumption to complement the published minutes, it is recommended that recordings of the Board’s Zoom calls in public session be posted.

### *Roll-Call Voting*

**MOTION 9 (Mr. Lehfeldt):** That the following amendments to the USA Fencing Amended and Restated Bylaws effective as of July 6, 2024 (“Bylaws”), be approved for publication pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, and that they be considered for adoption at the next meeting of the Board following the required comment period.

To amend section 7.14 of the bylaws as follows:

**Board Transparency.** Except for privileged or confidential matters taken in executive session, the Board of Director’s actions shall be available to members. Regular, Special and Emergency meetings of the Board, except with respect to matters discussed in executive session, shall be open to members of the USFA, provided that the member bears the cost of attendance. Minutes of each meeting, except with respect to matters discussed in executive session, shall be published on the USFA web site and otherwise be made available to members of the USFA. Minutes of each meeting shall include attendees at meetings, potential conflicts of interest, motions made and actions taken, Directors who recuse themselves due to an apparent conflict of interest, and a non-confidential description of any actions taken by the Board during executive session. **In roll-call voting, a record of how each member voted, as well as the result of the vote, will be published in the minutes.** Every reasonable effort will be made to publish the minutes within thirty (30) days of the Board meeting.

**Rationale:** Under Section 7.20c of USA Fencing’s bylaws, “procedures at meetings shall be governed by Robert’s Rules of Order (Newly Revised).”

Within Robert’s Rules of Order, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition it’s written that "In roll-call voting, a record of how each member voted, as well as the result of the vote, is entered in full in the journal or minutes." (45:52, Page 400)

It is also written that "Taking a vote by roll call...has the effect of placing on the record how each member...votes...It is usually confined to representative bodies, where the proceedings are published, since it enables constituents to know how their representatives voted on certain measures." (45:44, Page 398)

Updating Minutes publication procedures to be in line with the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of Robert’s Rules will allow for more individual accountability to our constituents and promote transparency with our members.

#### *USA Fencing Treasurer Financial Access*

**MOTION 10 (Mr. Salem):** The USA Fencing treasurer will have complete and unabated access to all USA Fencing financial information by September 30, 2024 or sooner.

**Rationale:** To enable the USA Fencing Treasurer to directly perform their duties daily more accurately and efficiently with access to all pertinent financial information. Unfettered access should lead to additional economic opportunities for the expansion of the organization.

#### *Olympic and Paralympic Survey*

**MOTION 11 (Mr. Salem):** Instructs the National Office to conduct a survey focused on the experience of the cadre and athletes involved in the 2024 Paris Olympics and

Paralympics. The survey will assess the experience of USA Fencing’s delegation in the areas of:

- Competition Experience
- Athlete Support & Resources
- Logistics & Organization
- Well-Being and Mental Health
- Media and Public Exposure
- Overall Satisfaction & Recommendations

The national office will have the authority to explore additional areas as they see fit.

**Rationale:** Under the “Competitive Excellence” and “Membership Retention” sub-objectives of the “Sports Excellence” goal of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, USA Fencing seeks to “strengthen the high-performance pipeline and deploy resources” Conducting a survey of our Paris 2024 participants will help to ensure USA Fencing operates in the spirit of continuous improvement while also advancing the Sports Goal of our Strategic Plan. The results of this survey will help us to fortify our strategic plan while enhancing the experience of our valued athletes, coaches, and staff for future international events.

#### *USA Fencing Club Insurance Policy Publication*

**MOTION 12 (Mr. Salem):** That the US Fencing make the club insurance policy available to all the club owners that have joined as club members and are due the insurance.

**Rationale:** As our strategic plan strongly recommend, it is the right and the responsibility of the club owners, their staff, and the fencers to be familiar with what is in the policy. The club owners pay for the insurance, which they must follow.

#### *Y8 Tournament Format*

**MOTION 13 (Mr. Salem):** A motion to reconsider the previously approved Y8 format tournament changes. These changes are recommended for the 2024-2025 season and are required for the new 2025-2026 season.

**Rationale:** There is no need for a new policy that could hurt our future fencers. Changes should improve the environment for young fencers and improve their overall fencing experience. Items to be considered include shorter blade length for Y8 fencers, shorter strip length and competition format.

#### *Black Card Policy Updates*

**MOTION 14 (Placed by Secretary; in need of sponsor):** To approve the Black Card Policy as presented by the Black Card Review Group in [Appendix K](#).

**Rationale:** As noted in the Black Card Review Group Report in [Appendix C](#), the Black Card Review Group is recommending these policy changes to better align with USA Fencing Complaint and Hearing Procedures and to permit flexibility to impose sanctions beyond a 2-month suspension when circumstances warrant it.

**VII. Good and Welfare**

**VIII. Adjourn to Executive Session (if needed)**

**IX. Executive Session**

**X. Adjournment**

**Reporting Dates of Committees & Resource Teams**

<b>Committee/RT</b>	<b>Date of Last Report</b>	<b>Report This Meeting</b>	<b>Board Liaison</b>
Referee Comm.	7/6/24	Yes	Donald Alperstein
Ethics Committee	5/18/24	No	Darryl Jacobs
Hall of Fame Comm.	12/16/23	No	Peter Burchard
Audit Comm.	5/18/24	No	Aimee Rice
Budget Comm.	5/18/24	No	Emily Bian
Election Comm.	7/6/24	No	Darryl Jacobs
Nominating Comm.	2/17/24	Yes	Amanda Nguyen
DEIB Comm.		No	Darryl Jacobs
IR Comm.	7/6/24	Yes	
SEMI Comm USA	10/22/22	No	Damien Lehfeltdt
Tournament Comm	5/18/24	Yes	Peter Burchard
Veterans Comm.	7/6/24	No	Abdel Salem
Division RG	5/18/24	No	David Arias
Parafencing RG	5/18/24	No	Lauryn Deluca
Sports Medicine RG		No	Kat Holmes
Sports Performance RG		No	Kat Holmes
Coaching Advisory RG	12/16/23	No	Ben Bratton
Data Science RG	12/16/23	Yes	Kat Holmes

# In Person Session 05/2024

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## ATTENDEES

Nathan Anderson, Phil Andrews, Daniel Berke, David Blake, Margaret Dull, Alan Geller, Brandon Rochelle (Chair), Adam Rodney, Peter Burchard (Board Liaison), Glen Hollingsworth (Staff Liaison)

## AGENDA & DECISIONS (in bold)

### Regular Session for 2024–2025 updates

- Div I format final recommendations
  - **New potential interim Division I formats were discussed. After meetings with national coaches at Summer Nationals, the current Division I two pool format will be used for the 2024–2025 season for Men’s Foil and Epee only.**
- Parafencing
  - Rating system
    - **Nomenclature where “Classification” is used throughout our organizational documents for fencer ratings will be changed to exclusively use “Ratings.”**
    - Should it be based on able-bodied system
      - **Parafencing will use the same ratings chart as able bodied beginning August 1**
      - **Parafencers can earn ratings for international placement using the same chart for Veteran Worlds beginning August 1**
  - Format revision
    - At the SLC NAC, Parafencing used a new trial format given the larger competitive sizes. It will be permanent moving forward:
      - **100% promotion**
      - **6 or less competitors: 1 pool, 2 rounds**
      - **7 or 8: 1 pool, 1 round**
      - **9–12: 2 pools, 2 rounds**

- 13-14: 2 pools, 1 round
    - 15-18: 3 pools, 2 rounds
    - 19+: n pools, 1 round
  - Capping regionals
    - Minimum caps
      - The committee has approved the following guidance for using caps between men's and women's events using the total number of pools of the larger event as guidance:
        - 3 pools or less: equal
        - 4-7 pools: 1 max pool difference
        - 8-11 pools: 2 max pool difference
        - 12 and up pools: 3 max pool difference
      - This guidance will be used until regular fee deadline, then organizer can clear waitlists, with best effort to clear waitlist equally mens/women
      - This policy will be reviewed yearly. Encouraged for 2024-2025, Required 2025-2026
    - For regional events, if more than 12 total events in a day, no caps are allowed. Tournament schedules should not be created such that events are projected to end after 9pm. Organizers cannot rebid more than 12 events per day if they have had previous poor performance.
    - Required beginning in 2025-2026 season.
- Qualification pathways
  - The committee reviewed a request from the Veteran committee for entry into Div I qualified events
    - **Top 4 of Vet Combined National**
  - Athletes requested Div IA be updated to allow all senior point list holders
    - **Senior point list holders will be added as a qualification pathway for 2025 Summer Nationals.**
  - IRC request for USA representing fencers living abroad to youth events at SN
    - **Pathway updated to include top 40% qualifying to JOs Cadet/Junior, Top 40% Y10/Y12/14 SN - must represent USA**
- Adult Age group 21-39
  - Formalize recommendations for introduction next season

- **2024–2025 Local, can be added to a regional event with local scope if new schedule**
  - **Two age groups created: 21–39 (Adult) and 21+ (Adult Combined)**
  - **2025–2026 Regional, National for 2026 SN**
- Pool posting the night before
  - **The Committee reviewed possible updates for posting pools the night before. Will maintain current processes for 2024–2025 with additional updates to come for 2025–2026 based on new tournament formats.**
  - **Look at self withdraw capabilities**
- Ratings chart for 64 people
  - **Revise to 63 for even pools of 7 for C3, B3, A3, A4**
  - **Look at new rating entry for around 48 competitors next season**
  - **Clarify language on fencers don't count for medical/black card in pool round, but do count for DEs.**
- Event combos for 2024–2025
  - The committee discussed the event combinations for 2024–2025.
- Any updates to AH
  - **The club restriction for Div I team has been removed.**

### **Tournament Pathway Discussion for 2025–2026 onward**

The committee had brainstorming discussions regarding the new tournament pathway framework to be announced to the membership in late August.

# Virtual Sessions July-August 2024

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## ATTENDEES

Nathan Anderson, Phil Andrews, Daniel Berke, David Blake, Meredith Delgado, Margaret Dull, Alan Geller, Brandon Rochelle (Chair), Adam Rodney, Sean Shumate, Peter Burchard (Board Liaison), Glen Hollingsworth (Staff Liaison)

## SUMMARY

As a continuation of our May brainstorming session, the committee has had several virtual meetings in July and August to discuss further refinement to the points and qualification models for our next generation tournament formats.

Initial communications to the membership will begin in August. Further refinement and publishing of actual formulas, points, etc will happen later in early Fall.

## DISCUSSED ITEMS

**NOTE: All items are not to be considered final and will be adjusted throughout the early fall as the committee continues discussions and receives membership feedback**

### **Tournament Pathway Discussion for 2025-2026 onward**

- Points list moving to a tiered “one points list system” comprised of Local, Regional, National, and Elite buckets
  - One points list for each age category that holds all results
  - Local, Regional and National have three points earning slots - your top three tournament performances
  - Elite has six positions to include international competition and elite level national events
  - Points are earned on a one year rolling window
  - To be eligible for a national event, a fencer must meet point threshold + ratings threshold for Ratings based categories (Div II, III, etc)

- Fencers will be allowed to “freeze” their position on the points list for up to one year once every four years for a major life event (surgery, pregnancy, etc)
- (Tentative) Points will trickle down at 1.5x per event type step. For example, points from a Junior event will count for 1.5x in the Cadet points lists for those also age eligible for Cadet
- National events will be split into two: Elite and national level. Elite level will be composed of the top 160 fencers in each category with a 20% cut from pools to DEs for a complete table of 128. National level will be the remainder of the qualified field to a maximum of approx 200 fencers for a combined maximum field of national and elite of around 360 fencers.
- As a new fencer, must earn a certain number of points in the lowest category (local) before continuing to the next category, and so on up the chain of local to regional to national to elite.
- As an existing regional or national level fencer, current national and regional points for the 2024-2025 season will be translated into the new points list for 2025-2026 and will decay one year from when earned using formulas to be published in the fall of 2024.
- On the recommendation of the youth review group, the TC supports no youth regional events (RYC/SYC) from the conclusion of Summer Nationals until Labor Day weekend
- Point formulas, Thresholds to qualify to national and elite events
  - Formula:  $P(x)=100*(N-x)/(N-1)$ 
    - X = Fencer’s Final Position
    - N = Size of competitive field
- (Tentative) Points are scaled using strength factors based on the strength of the competitive field. This will be a column added to the Ratings chart. At the local level for example, an E1 competition may have a strength of 0.5 while an A4 has a strength of 1.6
- (Tentative) If using an international pathway, must represent another country other than USA, and would not be allowed to fence championships. Demonstrate competitive experience (TBD). A fencer may be allowed to skip local level given certain results.
- (Tentative) National can promote to Elite instantly, relegation happens twice per year (after two NAC events)
- Add Div III at Regional Level for bidding

August 30, 2024

## **Report of the USA Fencing Data Resource Team For the USA Fencing September 2024 Board Meeting**

The Data Resource Team is working through the following list of prioritized projects. The projects listed below are data-dependent projects that have been identified as priorities for USA Fencing. The projects are open to change based on available data, appropriate deliverables format, etc.

### **Member Base Profiles**

**Description:** Supplement member data with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party research data append to build out audience profiles.

**Goals:** Provide an updated and more robust view of the entire member base along with key audience segments.

**Status:** **Completed**

### **Markets of Opportunity Identification**

**Description:** In order to grow the sport and member base, USA Fencing needs to understand where to test growth, incubator, and financial support programs. May need to supplement existing data with a club survey (ex. number of total members, max membership they can handle, etc.)

**Goals:** Rank order all US markets (DMAs or CBSAs) by growth potential by looking at overall population size/density, target audience population, distance to nearest club, financial fit, age fit, number of clubs, ability of clubs to support growth, etc.

**Status:** Assigned

### **Ad-Hoc Tournament and Points System Comparison**

**Description:** Provide answers to questions/comments posed by the Tournament Committee.

**Goals:** Provide specific answers to explanations as to why it is not feasible.

**Status:** Not Assigned/Started

### **Member Retention & Reactivation Analysis**

**Description:** Expand upon the initial EDA to identify areas of risk and opportunity, and recommend new programs, policies, marketing communications, etc. that can reduce this attrition and reactivate lapsed members. Look at attrition factors such as rankings achievement, competition results, NCAA participation, member club changes, club closings, distance to nearest club, etc. Consider survey option to collect feedback from lapsed and self-reactivated members to determine milestones and drivers. Also look at the first year or two to see how becoming competitive plays into retention, new member club programs, etc.

August 30, 2024

**Goals:** Identify and prioritize key attrition points and drivers. Identify programs and timing of retention and reactivation initiatives.

**Status:** [Not Assigned](#)[Started](#)

### **New Member Acquisition Analysis**

**Description:** Provide clarity about the new member conversion funnel, how prospective members find USA fencing, what interests them about the sport, etc.. This may require greater data collection by local clubs and/or a new member survey.

**Goals:** Identify key new membership conversion milestones and metrics, and compare them to different prospect sources.

**Status:** [Not Assigned](#)[Started](#)

### **Data Asset Evaluation & Applications**

**Description:** USA Fencing needs to better know what data gaps exist that if closed would help them make more informed decisions and improve communications programs, events, retention & activation programs, acquisition, and other areas for improvement.

**Goals:** Determine what data gaps exist, the sources of existing and potential data, how to best close those gaps, and how and where the data can be used to improve marketing performance, member retention, etc.

**Status:** Not Started

### **Marketing Communications Audience Segmentation**

**Description:** Currently USA Fencing sends all communications to everyone, with up to 6 emails delivered in a single day in addition to trigger messaging. More targeted messaging will lead to higher performing communications programs and better compliance (ex. Naked wines messaging could be excluded from those under the age of 21). Look at age segments (ex. Cadet, Juniors, Senior, Vets) for events and camps, gender, rankings for event eligibility, next/nearest event to qualify for Nationals or to help them get their first ranking, etc.

**Goals:** Improve messaging relevancy and reduce email subscriber attrition. Identify fields that should be used for targeting and dynamic content personalization for USA Fencing email marketing communications that can be fed into the email platform. Provide recommendations to move away from "E-Blast" to targeted marketing including frequency and cadence. Integrate data privacy and consent requirements.

**Status:** Not Started

### **Donor Profiles and Opportunity Analysis**

August 30, 2024

**Description:** USA Fencing needs to better understand who donates, why, how much, when, etc. in order to better identify and prioritize donors and potential donors, improve their donation drive performance, etc.

**Goals:** Inform donation initiatives.

**Status:** Not Started

**Black Card Review Group**  
**2023-2024 End-of-Season Review**  
**Submitted to USA Fencing's Board of Directors**  
**30 August 2024**

Per [USA Fencing's Black Card Policy](#), the Black Card Review Group (BCRG) met via Zoom on August 29th, 2024, to conduct our annual review of both given and rescinded Black Cards. The group also discussed our current policies and procedures, both in terms of the issuing of Black Cards and the BCRG itself. A summary of our discussion is below.

### **Review of Recorded Cards for the Season**

The group reviewed a spreadsheet of all the Black Cards reported to and recorded by the National Office during the 2023-2024 season, provided by Tanner Gonzales. A summary of the results is provided below:

- 48 total cards across all USA Fencing-sanctioned tournaments.
  - 8 Level 2 Black Cards were awarded
    - 4 were upheld on appeal
    - 2 were downgraded to Level 1
  - 5 Black Cards were issued at one tournament
- Cards by Age:
  - 21 minors
  - 28 adults
- Cards by Gender:
  - 39 male
  - 10 female
- Cards by Recipient:
  - 12 coaches
  - 27 fencers
  - 10 spectators (8 identified as parents)<sup>1</sup>
- Cards Awarded to Fencers:
  - 21 minors; 6 adults
  - 22 in men's events; 5 in women's events
  - 16 in foil; 8 in epee; 3 saber
- None of the fencers awarded a Level 1 Black Card received a second during their probationary period.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In two cases, cards were given to both a parent and a child.

<sup>2</sup> As of 30 August 2024.

The 2023-2024 season saw the same number of regional and national events, 110. Compared to the 2022-2023 season, the number of carded fencers and the proportion of minors/adults was comparable. However, there is a noticeable increase in the number of Black Cards awarded for the 2023-2024 season. This can be attributed to the number of Black Cards awarded to coaches and spectators. The number of coaches carded increased from 5 to 12, and the number of carded spectators increased from 6 to 10. This is a reversal in the trend noted in 2022-2023, which saw a decrease in Black Cards awarded to spectators. 2023-2024 also saw a significant increase in Level 2 Black Cards, an all-time high of 8 in a single season.

In the 2022-2023 season, 14 of the Black Cards awarded to fencers were for throwing equipment (40% of all the cards given to athletes). This year, 12 of the cards awarded to fencers were for throwing equipment (44.4%). We noted that 5 cards were given for foul language (18.5%), and 1 card was given for both foul language and throwing equipment (3.7%). Anecdotally, this increase in foul or disrespectful language towards officials across tournaments this season was noted by the BCRG membership. We also noted 2 cards given for violent behavior against property after leaving the fencing area (7.4%) and 7 cards for physical violence against another person - 2 during the fencing action, the others after the bout or off the field of play (25.9%). Both trends are deeply worrying and speak to work that needs to be done by all members of the USA Fencing Community to create and support safe and mutually respectful environments.

As with the 2022-2023 season, we saw a significant number of Black Cards awarded to younger fencers. This may reflect the overall demographics of USA Fencing (i.e., the number of minors relative to the total number of fencers). As with the increase in foul language and violent behavior, this trend may also speak to a larger cultural issue that we must address.

While 48 Black Cards were issued at USA Fencing-sanctioned events in the 2023-2024 season, we did note some positive trends. None of the fencers awarded a Level 1 Black Card received a second during their probationary period. We also noted a lack of repeat offenders among carded individuals and referees. However, one regional tournament did generate 10% of the total cards for the season. We are concerned that so many incidents at this tournament escalated to the point of necessitating a Black Card. We recommend that the Regional Events Coordinator contact the tournament organizers, should this tournament be held in the 2024-2025 season, regarding communication with tournament attendees regarding USA Fencing's policies, including our [Codes of Conduct](#).

The Codes of Conduct are another resource or tool for tournament organizers to help ensure a safe and respectful environment. We discussed the challenging balancing act for tournament officials when choosing between a Black Card, typically under the purview of the referees, and a Code of Conduct violation, typically under the purview of the tournament organizers. We see an opportunity this season for USA Fencing to provide tournament organizers with additional or clarifying information on addressing Code of Conduct violations.

### **Discussion on Process and Procedures**

The BCRG reviewed and confirmed a revised *Workflow and Process* document. The revisions ensure that the work of the BCRG reflects and aligns with USA Fencing's [Complaint and Hearing Procedures](#). As before, we seek to balance transparency and fairness with efficiency and timeliness. Throughout our process, we ensure clear and consistent communication to all parties, especially the carded individuals and referees. The biggest change is that we now wish to begin with a preliminary determination, where the BCRG relies on the Black Card Forms and any additional statements from the tournament officials and carded individuals. If requested by the carded individual within five business days of receiving the preliminary determination, the BCRG will convene a hearing in accordance with the Complaint and Hearing Procedures. This hearing will result in a final determination. Carded individuals will have a right to appeal that final determination to the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee. Christina Pachuta revised the Black Card Policy to reflect this change in process, which will be submitted to the Board of Directors for review and approval.

We also made some other small workflow suggestions to the National Office staff. This includes adding some additional demographic information to the end-of-season report. We are very grateful for Tanner Gonzales and Christina Pachuta's ongoing support of our work.

## **USA Fencing International Relations Committee Report for the USA Fencing Board - September 2024 Meeting**

### **Co-Chairs – Donald Anthony Jr. and Rita Comes**

The USA Fencing International Relations Committee (USA Fencing IR) members actively communicate with each other about actions of the FIE and IOC regarding the status of the World Fencing issues in preparation for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The IR Group continues to keep abreast of international issues and shares information with USA Fencing.

Five members of the US Fencing International Relations Committee were physically present during the Paris 2024 Olympics and held various responsibilities during the event. The Committee is proud to celebrate all the accomplishments of the Athletes, Coaches and US Fencing Staff during the Paris 2024 Olympics. We also look forward to celebrating the outcomes of the Paris 2024 Paralympics.

The Pan American Youth and Veteran Championship was recently held in Costa Rica. Saul Mendoza was the Chef de Mission for the event and the event was very successful for the US participants in Costa Rica. During the 2024 Pan American Youth and Veteran Championship the US Team won 76 medals, 22 of them were Gold.

As we begin the next quad leading up to the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the US International Relations Committee is prepping for the 2024 FIE Veteran World Championships in Dubai and the 2024 FIE Electoral Congress in November 2024. Members of the USA International Relations Committee are excited to participate in upcoming FIE events leading up to LA 2028.

The USA Fencing International Relations Committee is very focused on a common goal of helping US National Team Members, cadre and US Fencing staff succeed internationally this year and for years to come. The IR Committee will be growing to include a focus on WAS with representation that reflects that important part of our sport and mission.

Donald Anthony Jr.

Co-Chair – USA Fencing International Relations Committee

Rita Comes

Co-Chair – USA Fencing International Relations Committee

## Referees' Commission 2024 Summer Meeting

August 24-25, 2023

Denver, CO

### Day 1 – August 24, 2024

Start time: 8:30 am MT

#### Welcome

Welcome message from RC Chair Tasha Martin and introduction of attendees.

Tasha Martin, Charles Astudillo, Bradley Baker, Sue Borgos, Bobby Gibbs, Kelly Koehler, Sean Shumate, Rick Swauger, Patrick Webster, Jelena Zeljkovic, Donald Alperstein, Brandon Rochelle, Tanner Gonzalez, Phil Andrews, Glen Hollingsworth

#### Misc Business

- Review and approve last year's meeting minutes  
Approved
- Review committee make-up and liaison designations  
Committee liaison assignments updated
  - DEIB Resource Group - Martin
  - Black Card Review Group - Koehler
  - US SEMI - Baker
  - Tournament Committee - Shumate
  - Tournament Scheduling – Gibbs; Shumate also a member
- Email accounts

#### National Office

- Topics from the RC to discuss w/ NO
  - Review of reimbursement process
    - Room reimbursement rates
  - Referee privacy
    - Private information has been shared inappropriately
    - Greater sensitivity required
    - Assigner contact information removed from website; distributed via email
  - Timely communication of policy changes (e.g., per diem)
  - Referee Exam
    - Platform transition
    - Item bank update
  - International referee hiring (Glen)
    - Numbers have grown
    - Having international referees helpful for tournament operations and referee development
    - Cash required for payments poses issues, especially for Summer Nationals where the numbers are higher
    - Travel expenses an issue but manageable
    - Look at re-establishing hiring thresholds/targets for international hiring
    - Moving to majority wire/bank transfers and away from cash payments should largely resolve issue
      - Clarify at availability request

- Adjustments as needed to cover wire fees
- Soft transition for October and November; transition fully in place for January
- Junior observers (Tanner)
  - Need for coverage in low-resource areas
  - Add tier of observer below CRO?
  - Referred to Domestic Development - Grassroots
- FAQ to be added to website and other website needs (Tanner/Tasha)
  - Website overhaul coming – Tanner to reach out on individual items and invites flagging items to be added to the list
  - New National Referee Guidance document from RC DEIB
    - **ACTION ITEM (ALL):** Minor edits, additions, corrections
- National event food – accommodating allergies and dietary restrictions
- Conflict management and mentorship training – demand to add online options
- Expense system rollout – incorporate international events?
- Separate room with projection capacity at Summer Nationals
- Text of the ratings update email

#### Board of Directors Update- Donald

- No chair at present and not until September meeting
- Bylaw changes made in July
  - Referees' Commission Ethics Committee codified
  - RC Chair may constitute and disband subcommittees at their discretion
- Bylaw changes proposed in September
  - Referees Commission terms and election timing not currently specified in Bylaws
  - Proposed bylaw to codify
    - Discussion of contents
    - Proposed four-year terms starting/ending August 31/September 1
      - **Recommendation of RC this be adjusted to August 1**
- Board has extended suspension from being hired as referee of Jacobo Morales with duration until September 4, 2028.
- Committee on Committees recommending Donald Alperstein be reappointed as Board liaison to the Referees' Commission
  - **Recommendation of RC that Donald Alperstein be reappointed as liaison**

#### FIE Update – Kelly

- FIE assignments for first half made; under review by COMEX
- US members on Master List have not changed
- Requested ability to have 8 US referees on Master List for LA2028 preparation; denied

#### Parafencing Update – Sean/Jon Moss

- 6 new national parafencing referees
- 3 US referees selected for Paris 2024 Paralympics (Shumate, Zeljkovic, Curtis)
- Referee development and logistics
  - 8 referees for LA2028 – may drop to 4

- Increase para fencing seminars and participation
- Identify regional para fencing referees

#### US SEMI – Kathy/TBD

- US SEMI is meeting concurrently with the RC meeting

#### Athlete Rep – Rick

- Committee Report
  - Six athletes in 2024 Paralympic Games
  - Additional opportunities for para fencing: walk and roll, four para fencing regional circuit tournaments, youth
- New business

#### BREAK

#### International Assignments and Development – Kelly

- International Assignment Process Overview
- EFC referee requirements changed at start of season (unbudgeted)
- EFC added (enforced) maximum age limit for referees (60)
- Exam Selection Overview: FIE/WAS
  - 1 WAS candidate, 3 licenses, 100% pass rate
  - 4 FIE candidates, 3 licenses, 60% pass rate
  - \$5,000 in candidate stipends provided
- LA2028 focus moving forward
- Increase athlete representation and formalize on-boarding
- On-going issues
  - Age outs
  - USA Fencing database

#### Ombuds group – Bobby

- Committee report
  - Field concerns – working conditions (national, regional), policy clarifications, referee advancement, abuse/harassment, ensuring consistent professionalism in cadre, improving communication between referees and assigners/other tournament personnel
  - Referee Bill of Rights/Expectations and Hiring Conditions for regional tournaments
  - National Office provided funding for ombuds website
- Increase compensation for triple N2 referees
- Training/Awareness of referee professionalism
- Bill of Rights
- Emphasis panels
- Communication with assigners about on-the-fly event decisions

#### LUNCH

#### Tournament Committee Updates – Brandon

- New Y8 format – updated announcement coming
- Foil/Epee format (only to be used in MF/ME)
- Adult ae category
- Ratings chart (formerly classification chart), 64-person thresholds adjusted to 63
- Revised pool sizes for parafencing
- Fencer ratings now issued like able bodied and using same ratings chart
- Regional tournaments
  - Equity of caps between men's and women's events
  - End times to be planned for no later than 9pm
  - Accountability metrics for ensuring bid elements are reflected in tournaments
- No regional youth events (RYC/SYC) from the conclusion of Summer Nationals until Labor Day
- Upcoming revisions to tournament framework to be announced soon

#### Domestic Assignments – Sean

- Committee members: Sean Shumate, Mary Frye, Mark Stasinos, Anne Crocket, Kelly Koehler
- Quarterly meetings
- Updates on new coordinators, hiring officials, and assigners
- Additional people to be trained in hiring and coordinator roles
- Continued issue with referees coaching, avoiding conflicts of interest
- Still require de-escalation training
- Call to Strip form finalized and in use; review of reports from 2023-24
  - 64 forms from 45 referees
  - 15 calls (24%) overturned
  - Require education on form completion and finding rules in rulebook for citations

#### Domestic Development Close Out Summary– Patrick

- Review the status of Observations across the country on the regional and local level
- Push list review of R1s who have been identified for development slots at NACs
- Review of SN - Shadow Program Postmortem report

#### Domestic Development – Grassroots – Charles

- Tracking activity of regional and local refereeing
- Tracking observations
- Identify which regional events have CRO/CRI coverage
- Guidance for CRO/CRI regarding use of observation forms, rating change recommendations, etc.

#### Domestic Development – National – Jelena

- Filling out committee
- Assessment program
- Athlete rep assignments

#### Rules and Examinations – Bradley

- Referee Working hours

- Most referee days 9-11 hours
- Relatively few much longer/shorter days
- Tournament make-up could substantially shift distribution of working hours
- Rules
  - Knicker handedness
  - Rules updates
    - M Section
    - 2023 FIE Congress

#### Online Question Submissions – All

- Review and respond to questions received
  - Revert to old timing – There is no proposal to change the timing
  - Costs of refereeing internationally?
    - At cadet level, EFC license
    - If working at both FIE and EFC level, USA Fencing covers one
    - While refereeing events, similar to domestically with travel, honorarium, per diem covered
    - Individuals pay for referee exam travel but partial offset by \$1,000 stipend from USA Fencing
  - More information regarding covering target – will be addressed by IA&D and DD:N
  - Request for additional training regarding equipment checks for uniform fit, plastrons, chest protectors in a respectful and age appropriate manner – will be addressed
  - Request for additional information regarding protection of referees threatened with legal action or harassed online or in person
  - Request for additional information on not being hired for national tournaments and when a referee can know they are not going to be hired for a tournament
  - Can referee ratings exceeding the level of the fencing be awarded? Referee ratings require demonstrated performance at a given level

ADJOURN – 5 pm MT

## Day 2 – August 25, 2024

Start time: 8:30 am MT

### Referee Bill of Rights

#### RC Ethics – Tasha/All

- Updated complaint process
- Review of Workplace Code of Conduct, Referee Code of Ethics, and Referee Contract
  - Addition of clause related to refusal to work/refusing assignments

#### Potpourri –

- Pre-NAC calls – brainstorm on educational topics – All
- Quarterly Newsletter – Tasha
- Random rules questions that aren't really rules questions – Bradley
- Bringing back referees – Donald
- Tracking system for assignments – Donald

#### Referee Rating Degradation

- Adopted 2023 Referees Commission Summer Meeting for implementation after 2024 meeting
- Ratings will decrease one level after four (or more) years of non-renewal
- N1->N2->R1->R2
- R2, L1, and L2 ratings do not degrade for non-use
- Ratings changes to be implemented after 2024 renewals and upgrades

Visions/goals/expectations for the upcoming season (60 minutes) – this is leftover from last year, but might as well discuss it

- Review ratings renewal/award process
- Improved communication with cadre
- Foster collaboration in the referee cadre
- Subcommittee meetings
- NAC attendance
- Responsiveness
- Other.....

#### Executive Session

- Review of CRO/CRI List
- Review of Referee Ratings

# Board Meeting – Draft Minutes

## Scheduled Meeting

### USA Fencing Board of Directors

Saturday, July 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm ET – Room B144-145, Columbus Convention Center

#### I. Call to Order

**Present:** David Arias, Donald Alperstein, Emily Bian (Treasurer), Peter Burchard, Lauryn DeLuca, Molly Hill, Kat Holmes, Mike Joo, Selina Kaing, Damien Lehfeldt, Amanda Nguyen, Andrea Pagnanelli, Abdel Salem, and Peter Barton (Parliamentarian).

**Absent:** Ben Bratton, Darryl Jacobs, and Nzingha Prescod.

**USA Fencing Staff:** Phil Andrews, Tabitha Chamberlain, Glen Hollingsworth, Christina Pachuta.

**Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** Donald Alperstein disclosed a potential conflict related to the Motion regarding the reduction in the number of Special Board Members on the Board as he currently sits in that position.

#### II. CEO, Operations & Financial Update (Mr. Andrews and Ms. Chamberlin)

#### III. Committee, Resource Groups, and Task Force Updates (as applicable)

- a. International Relations Committee Report ([Appendix A](#))
- b. Referee Commission Report ([Appendix B](#))
- c. Veterans Committee Report ([Appendix C](#))
- d. Election Committee Report ([Appendix M](#))

**The Chair accepted the reports.**

#### IV. Consent Agenda (Mr. Arias, as Chair)

- a. Approval of the minutes from the May 18, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting ([Appendix D](#))
- b. Approval of minutes from May 31, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting ([Appendix E](#))
- c. Approval of minutes of the June 2, 2024 E-mail Vote ([Appendix F](#))
- d. Approval of the Bylaw changes put forward for comment at the May 18, 2024 Board of Director's Meeting ([Appendix G](#))
- e. Appointment of Ethics Committee Chair ([Appendix H](#))

- f. Approval of Updates to the 2025 MAAPP ([Appendix I](#))
- g. Approval of updated Member and Spectator Codes of Conduct ([Appendix J](#) and [Appendix K](#))

**Second:** Kat Holmes

**Result:** Passed by voice vote subject to minor editorial changes to item (g).

## V. New Business

### *Bylaw Amendments Recommended by Task Force on Committees & Resource Groups*

**MOTION 1 (Mr. Arias):** That the following amendments to the USA Fencing Amended and Restated Bylaws effective as of February 17, 2024 (“Bylaws”), be approved for publication pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, and that they be considered for adoption at the next meeting of the Board following the required comment period.

1. That Section 12.4 of the Amended and Restated Bylaws concerning committee composition be reorganized and changed to read in its entirety as follows by removing the language stricken and by adding the language indicated red:

Section 12.4. Composition. All individuals serving on committees shall be members of the

USFA in good standing who meet the qualifications for At-Large Directors, and unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, may, but need not be, Directors.

- a. Athlete Representation. All committees shall include no less than one-third Athlete members selected by the Athlete Council who meet the qualifications required by Appendix II, as applicable. ~~Diverse representation on committees will be considered in the composition of each committee.~~ On any committee that oversees selection of athletes, coaches, or staff for para-fencing Protected Competitions, at least half of the athlete members must have met the requirements set forth in Appendix II by competing in a para-fencing event.
- b. Gender Representation: Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws and to the extent practicable while maintaining standards for qualified committee personnel, it shall be the goal of USA Fencing to appoint committee members whose gender reflects their proportion within the general membership of USA Fencing. For the purposes of achieving this aspiration, non-binary individuals shall be considered to be of the gender with which they identify.
- c. Para-fencing Community Representation: Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws and to the extent practicable while maintaining standards for qualified committee personnel, it shall be the goal of USA Fencing to include

in each committee's membership at least one representative from the parafencing community. For the purposes of achieving this aspiration, "parafencing community" shall include parafencing athletes, referees, coaches, and others who have demonstrated knowledge of parafencing and support for parafencing athletes.

- d. Ethnic Diversity: Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws and to the extent practicable while maintaining standards for qualified committee personnel, USFA shall strive for ethnic diversity in committee membership and shall encourage committee participation by members who belong to minority ethnic groups.

**Rationale:** USA Fencing seeks to embrace, promote, and have the advantage of diverse representation and participation. USA Fencing has also identified among its goals the advancement of parafencing and parafencers. These changes, proposed by the Committee Review Task Force, incorporate those objectives in the organization's Bylaws. Subsection a of the proposed revision to section 12.4 is merely organizational by creating a separate subsection addressing athlete representation, while the language stricken from the current formulation of the section is expanded and explicated in the subsequent subsections addressing gender and parafencing representation. The latter is expanded to include individuals invested in parafencing beyond athletes as a means of growing this element of USA Fencing. Subsection d is new and is intended to embrace and effectuate USA Fencing values such as those articulated in Bylaw Sections 7.2.l and 7.2.m and other Board adopted policies.

2. That Section 12.7.b of the Amended and Restated Bylaws, concerning the Budget Committee, be amended to read in its entirety as follows by removing the language struck through and in red and by adding the language underlined and in red:

- b. Composition. The Budget Committee shall consist of ~~threesix~~ voting members: the Treasurer, who shall be Chair of the Budget Committee; three other members of the Board of Directors elected by the Board; and ~~antwo~~ athletes who meets the qualifications required in Appendix II, one of whom shall be female and one of whom shall have qualified as a parafencer. The Chief Executive Officer of the USFA, or another staff member designated by the Chief Executive Officer, shall be a non-voting member of the Budget Committee. Members shall serve terms of one year.

**Rationale:** The Committee Review Task Force believes that the Budget Committee as presently constituted does not provide the representation that will best facilitate its work and assure alignment with the Strategic Plan. The proposed amendment doubles the size of the Budget Committee from three to six voting members. It assures that the athletes represented on the committee, who are greatly affected by its work, include a parafencer and at least one female. Note that an amendment to Section 12.4 proposed by the Committee Review Task Force

provides that for the purposes of populating committees and meeting diversity goals, non-binary individuals are to be considered to be of the gender with which they identify.

While the general recommendation is to enlarge the terms of committee members to two or four years, depending on the committee, the Task Force believes that due to the nature of the Budget Committee's work, it makes sense to preserve one-year terms for this group. To the extent continuity is desired, that can be accomplished by reappointing the Treasurer to that position and reappointing Directors or Special Board Members to subsequent terms on the Budget Committee.

3. That Section 12.9.b of the Amended and Restated Bylaws concerning Nominating Committee composition be reorganized and changed to read in its entirety as follows by removing the language stricken and by adding the language indicated red:

b. Composition. The Nominating Committee shall comprise six members of whom two athletes, who meet the requirements in Appendix II, shall be selected by the Athlete Council for two-year staggered terms and four shall be selected by the Board of Directors, with one drawn from each of the following groups for staggered two-year terms. The first selection of the Nominating Committee after the effective date of these Bylaws will provide that one-half of those selected shall have an initial one-year term and the other half will have an initial two-year term:

- i. ~~Past presidents or chairs of the Board of the USF&A~~ current or former At-large Director with at least four years' service on the Board or a former officer with similar experience;
- ii. Either a coach with a demonstrated record of producing fencers who perform at a high level or a principal of an established operating fencing club;
- iii. Active officials (referees, armorers, bout committee members, Referees' Commission members) who have regularly staffed national tournaments during the two years preceding their appointment; and
- iv. Current or past Independent Directors.

And that the first sentence of the concluding paragraph of the section be amended to read as follows:

The Chief Executive Officer ~~or another member of the professional staff designated by the Chief Executive Officer shall serve as a resource at the request of the Nominating Committee.~~ shall be a non-voting ex-officio member of the Nominating Committee.

**Rationale:** The proposed amendment effectuates two changes. The first replaces the existing position reserved for a past president or chair of the Board with a broader pool of candidates consisting of experienced At-large directors and past officers (President, Board Chair, and

Treasurer). Experience has proven that there may at times be two few past presidents and board chairs to fill the position appropriately and replaces that requirement with experienced serving or former At-large directors or past officers. The second change makes it clear that the CEO (or their designee) is not a member of the committee and does not participate except in a supportive role to the extent the Nominating Committee needs and requests.

4. That sections 12.18 and 12.19 of the Amended and Restated Bylaws regarding Terms of Service and Term Limits for committee members be reorganized and changed to read in their entirety as follows by removing the language struck through and in red and by adding the language underlined and in red:

**Section 12.18. Terms of Service.**

- a. Unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws and except for the Referees' Commission, appointed committee members shall serve terms approximating four years, from the date of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors nearest their appointment until the later of the succeeding Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors in the fourth calendar year thereafter or Elected committee members shall continue to serve until their successor has been elected and qualified.
- b. In the event a committee member is selected to fill a vacancy resulting from the removal, resignation, or ineligibility to serve of a committee member, the newly selected individual shall serve the unexpired portion of the vacated term, but for the purposes of Section 12.19, the individual shall be deemed to have commenced service on the date of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors nearest their appointment.
- c. Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Referee's' Commission shall serve terms commencing on September 1 of the year in which they are selected and ending on August 31 four years later, with the Chair, Ombudsman, and Vice-Chairs of Domestic Development – Grassroots and Domestic Development – National being selected in the years when the Summer Olympic Games are regularly scheduled to be held and the other members of the Referees' Commission selected in the even numbered years between regularly scheduled Summer Olympic Games. The acceleration or delay of the Olympic Games shall not affect the terms of Referees' Commission members.
- d. The Board of Directors and the Athlete Council shall provide for staggered terms for the members each body selects by designating one half of its appointees chosen in 2024 to serve two-year terms.

**Section 12.19. Term Limits.** Beginning with ~~the adoptions of these bylaws~~ the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors in 2024, and unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, a committee member shall be permitted to serve up to eight (8) ~~one (1) year~~

terms consecutive years on a given committee, after which they are ineligible for service on that committee for a period of ~~two~~one (21) years. After ~~two (2)~~a one (1) year gap in service, the individual shall be eligible for reappointment to that committee and the limitation period shall begin to run anew. The Board of Directors may in its discretion exempt particular individuals from the limitations set forth in this section.

**Rationale:** The Committee Review Task Force recommends that committee member terms be lengthened and limited. Underlying that recommendation is the conclusion that annual appointments of committees, as is currently the case, is unduly burdensome on the Board and staff and that one-year terms are insufficient to orient new members to the committees' work and allow them to become effective contributors. By the same token, the Task Force believes that turnover in committee membership is essential for the introduction of new ideas and maintaining commitment, and for educating successors to leadership positions. The foregoing proposed amendments strike a balance between these objectives and provide for continuity by staggering the terms of committee members.

The Bylaws prescribe two-year staggered terms for members of the Audit Committee, Election Committee, Nominating Committee, and Ethics Committee. The proposed amendments do not change that. At present, the Board governs the terms and elections of Referee Commission members. All other committees are appointed annually. The proposed amendment to Section 12.18 prescribes four-year staggered terms for all committees for which other arrangements are not specified in the Bylaws. Provision is made for interim appointments to fill vacancies in the committee membership. Terms would run approximately four years, from the Annual Meeting of the Board closest to a member's appointment until the Annual Meeting four calendar years later. The Budget Committee is expected to be the subject of another proposed amendment that will revise the composition of that committee and provide for the terms of its members.

The terms of Referee Commission Members are not stated in the Bylaws and have been set by the Board at four years since the inception of the Commission. This amendment would codify that system and provide for the election of approximately one-half of the Commission in each even-numbered year.

The current Bylaws limit committee member terms to eight years, and the proposed amendment to Section 12.19 does not change that. It does, however, change the waiting period after a member "ages out" before they are eligible for reappointment from two years to one, and it allows the Board to make exceptions in cases where a position requires special expertise or other qualification that justifies the continued service of a member beyond the standard eight years.

**Second:** Damien Lehfeltd

**Motion to bifurcate Motion 1 into two parts to consider Sections 1-3 and Section 4 separately (Ms. Hill)**

**Second:** Peter Burchard

**Result:** Passed by voice vote

**Result of vote to pass Section 1-3 as written:** Passed by voice vote

**Motion to split Section 4 into two parts to consider an amendment to term length and exceptions to term limits separately (Ms. Hill)**

**Second:** Damien Lehfeltd

**Result:** Passed by voice vote

**Motion to amend Section 4 to reduce term length for committee members from 4 years to 2 years (Ms. Hill)**

**Second:** Kat Holmes

**Result:** Passed by voice vote

**Motion to approve Section 4 with the amended term length**

**Result:** Passed by voice vote

**Motion to amend Section 4 to remove the power of the Board to provide an exception to term limits (Ms. Hill)**

**Second:** Damien Lehfeltd

**Motion Withdrawn (Ms. Hill and Mr. Lehfeltd)**

**Motion to approve all remaining portions of Section 4**

**Result:** Passed by voice vote with one opposition

### *Special Elections*

**MOTION 2 (Ms. Hill):** That the following prospective amendments to Section 7.6 of the USA Fencing Amended and Restated Bylaws be approved for publication pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, and that this amendment be considered for adoption at the next meeting of the Board following the required comment period:

That Section 7.6 be amended to read in its entirety as follows:

Vacancies on the Board of Directors. Except for vacancies among the Athlete Directors, for which provision is elsewhere made in these Bylaws, vacancies on the Board of Directors, whether resulting from death, disability, resignation, disqualification, removal or otherwise, shall be filled for the balance of the vacated term by a resolution of the Board of Directors appointing to the vacant position a person who meets the qualifications specified by these Bylaws for the position being filled. **Where an At-Large Director has 50% or more of their term remaining, an exception shall be made where instead of appointment, the balance of the term shall be filled by a special election using the processes described elsewhere in these bylaws. The percentage of the term remaining shall be determined based on the calendar date on which the seat was vacated, rounded to the nearest integer percentage. Between the time of the resignation and the special**

election, the Board may choose to appoint an interim At-large Director. The vacated term to be completed by a Director appointed or elected pursuant to this section shall not be counted for the purposes of term limits.

**Rationale:** In some unexpected cases, an At-Large seat can be vacated before its term expires. Given that these seats are intended to provide a voice directly elected by the membership, this amendment would allow for a special election to fill any vacated seats. This will be run “as expeditious[ly] as possible” by the Election Committee according to the pre-existing Section 9.9c. However there will still be a lot of work involved and running an election takes time (the past few years the process has ranged from 6 to 8 months), so to ensure that the seat doesn’t sit too empty for too long, the Board may appoint an interim Director. However in cases with less time remaining in the term, the effort and time required to run a special election become more of a burden, hence allowing for a full appointment if 49% or less of the term is remaining. The percentage of the term has been based on when the seat is vacated and not by the date of the special election so that this provision cannot be used to manipulate whether a vacated seat is appointed or elected.

**Second:** Damien Lehfeltdt

**Motion Withdrawn (Ms. Hill & Mr. Lehfeltdt)**

### *Virtual Board Meetings*

**MOTION 3 (Mr. Lehfeltdt):** That the following amendments to the USA Fencing Amended and Restated Bylaws effective as of February 17, 2024 (“Bylaws”), be approved for publication pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, and that they be considered for adoption at the next meeting of the Board following the required comment period.

Section 7.10. Regular Meetings. The Regular Meetings of the Board of Directors shall consist of one Annual Meeting and two Scheduled Meetings. Regular Meetings shall be ~~conducted in person upon~~ with not less than thirty (30) days’ notice.

**Rationale:** The existence of virtual meeting tools grants the flexibility to hold meetings remotely as needed while not losing an iota of productivity in doing so. Section 7.10 as written provides too much rigidity when it comes to the Board’s ability to hold meetings remotely. Instituting this clause would save the membership potential money.

*Motioner’s Note: The above proposed bylaw amendment has been read and supported by our incoming colleagues Mr. Geva and Ms. Panyi.*

**Second:** Kat Holmes

**Result:** Passed by roll call vote with 6-yes, 2-no, and 1-abstention

### *Independent Directors*

**MOTION 4 (Mr. Lehfeltd):** That the following amendments to the USA Fencing Amended and Restated Bylaws effective as of February 17, 2024 (“Bylaws”), be approved for publication pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, and that they be considered for adoption at the next meeting of the Board following the required comment period.

To amend Section 7.4b of the bylaws as follows:

Independent Directors. There shall be ~~three (3)~~ two (2) Independent Directors. All Independent Directors shall be individuals who meet the qualifications and are selected as specified in this Subsection 7.4.b.

**Rationale:** The US Olympic and Paralympic Committee only requires one Independent Director. This recommendation was set forth by the Gender Equity Task Force.

That Section 7.6.b be amended to read in its entirety as follows:

**Independent Directors.** Independent Directors shall serve two-year terms commencing on the first day of September and ending on the last day of August. ~~One~~Two Independent Directors shall be selected in even numbered years and one Independent Director shall be selected in odd numbered years. Directors fulfilling the unexpired portion of a vacated position shall serve the remainder of that term.

**Rationale:** The US Olympic and Paralympic Committee only requires one Independent Director. This recommendation was set forth by the Gender Equity Task Force.

*Motioner’s Note: The above proposed bylaw amendment has been read and supported by our incoming colleagues Mr. Geva and Ms. Panyi.*

**Second:** Lauryn Deluca

**Motion to table (Mr. Lehfeltd)**

**Second:** Peter Burchard

**Result:** Passed by voice vote

*Board SafeSport and Conflict of Interest Requirement*

**MOTION 5 (Mr. Lehfeltd):** That the following amendments to the USA Fencing Amended and Restated Bylaws effective as of February 17, 2024 (“Bylaws”), be approved for publication pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, and that they be considered for adoption at the next meeting of the Board following the required comment period.

**Section 7.5. Qualifying Affirmation, SafeSport, and Conflicts of Interest Declarations.** No person shall be qualified for selection or service as an officer or Director of the USFA except upon execution of a writing acceding to the following statement: “As [Chair of the Board] [Treasurer] [Special Board Member] [Director]

[other] of the United States Fencing Association I agree and undertake to adhere to high ethical standards and to avoid conflicts of interest as outlined in the Conflict of Interest Policy of USA Fencing. I acknowledge my fiduciary duties of loyalty and care to the United States Fencing Association and understand that those duties supersede my personal interests and the interests of any individual, group, faction or entity. I pledge to devote the full extent of my knowledge, experience and ability in good faith to advance the purposes, objectives, integrity and betterment of the United States Fencing Association.

Each member of the Board of Directors shall have an active SafeSport clearance prior to the start of the USA Fencing fiscal year, as well as a completed Conflict of Interest declaration submitted to the Secretary of the Board. No member of the Board who has failed to complete these requirements shall be permitted to participate and vote in meetings until compliant.

**Rationale:** All Committee members, referees, coaches, volunteers, etc. are required to have a SafeSport clearance in order to participate. It is important that we, the Board hold ourselves to the same standards.

*Motioner's Note: The above proposed bylaw amendment has been read and supported by our incoming colleagues Mr. Geva and Ms. Panyi.*

**Second:** Peter Burchard

**Result:** Passed by voice vote

### *Board Meeting Recordings*

**MOTION 6 (Mr. Lehfeldt):** That the following amendments to the USA Fencing Amended and Restated Bylaws effective as of February 17, 2024 (“Bylaws”), be approved for publication pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, and that they be considered for adoption at the next meeting of the Board following the required comment period.

To amend Section 7.14 of the bylaws as follows:

**Board Transparency.** Except for privileged or confidential matters taken in executive session, the Board of Director’s actions shall be available to members. Regular, Special and Emergency meetings of the Board, except with respect to matters discussed in executive session, shall be open to members of the USFA, provided that the member bears the cost of attendance. Minutes of each meeting, except with respect to matters discussed in executive session, shall be published on the USFA web site and otherwise be made available to members of the USFA. Minutes of each meeting shall include attendees at meetings, potential conflicts of interest, motions made and actions taken, Directors who recuse themselves due to an apparent conflict of interest, and a non-confidential description of any actions taken by the Board during executive session.

Every reasonable effort will be made to publish the minutes within thirty (30) days of the Board meeting.

All meetings open to the public shall be recorded and posted online to the organization's video channel at the discretion of the National Office for the public's consumption within thirty (30) days of the Board meeting. The Chair reserves the right to request the recording be paused when absolutely necessary.

**Rationale:** In the spirit of transparency and providing additional information for the general membership's consumption to complement the published minutes, it is recommended that recordings of the Board's Zoom calls in public session be posted.

*Motioner's Note: The above proposed bylaw amendment has been read and supported by our incoming colleagues Mr. Geva and Ms. Panyi.*

**Second:** Kat Holmes

**Motion to amend to clarify that the use of the term "discretion" in the second to last sentence is meant to refer to the type of video channel used to post the meetings (Mr. Lehfeldt)**

**Second:** Peter Burchard

**Result:** Passed by voice vote

**Result on Motion as amended:** Defeated by roll call vote 2-yes, 6-no, and 1-abstention

### *Special Board Members*

**MOTION 7 (Mr. Lehfeldt):** That the following amendments to the USA Fencing Amended and Restated Bylaws effective as of February 17, 2024 ("Bylaws"), be approved for publication pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, and that they be considered for adoption at the next meeting of the Board following the required comment period.

To amend Section 6.1d of the bylaws as follows:

**Special Board Members.** The Board of Directors may, from time to time and in its discretion, appoint ~~one or more~~ **no more than two (2)** Special Board Members, subject to majority approval of 8 Directors present and voting. Special Board Members shall serve as non-voting members of the Board of Directors, advise the Board of Directors, assist the Chair of the Board in the discharge of the duties of that office and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board of Directors. No person may assume the position of Special Board Member until they have executed the Qualifying Affirmation provided in Article VII.

**Rationale:** Under the current bylaws, there is no limit to the number of Special Board Members appointed by the Board. In order to keep the composition of the Board tight and meetings

streamlined, it is recommended to cap the number of special board members to no more than two.

*Motioner's Note: The above proposed bylaw amendment has been read and supported by our incoming colleagues Mr. Geva and Ms. Panyi.*

### **Motion not taken up.**

#### *Member of Honor Award*

**MOTION 8 (Mr. Lehfeldt):** To create a new USA Fencing “Member of Honor” award issued by the Board of Directors to recognize outstanding and exceptional volunteer members of the USA Fencing community for their significant contributions, dedication, and service to the sport of fencing.

This award acknowledges those who have made a lasting impact on the sport through their volunteer efforts, leadership, mentorship, and promotion of the values and spirit of fencing.

No more than two (2) individuals may receive this award during a USA Fencing fiscal year. Any member of the Board of Directors may submit a nomination for this award, which must be approved by the Board via a 2/3 supermajority vote. The following criteria should be considered when assessing a Member of Honor candidate:

- **Leadership:** Served in various leadership roles within USA Fencing, including, but not limited to: Board roles (national and divisional), committee roles, commission roles, and successfully guided the organization through significant milestones and challenges.
- **Mentorship:** Actively mentored fencers, coaches, and officials, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment that has enabled the growth and development of countless individuals within the sport.
- **Promotion of Fencing:** Worked tirelessly to promote the sport of fencing at the local, national, and international levels, advocating for the sport's inclusion and recognition.
- **Volunteerism:** Dedicated countless hours as a volunteer, contributing their time and expertise to ensure the success of various fencing programs, competitions, and initiatives.
- **Advocacy and Ethics:** Upheld and promoted the highest standards of ethics and sportsmanship within the fencing community, serving as a role model for athletes and peers alike.

A new “Member of Honor” page will be created on USA Fencing’s website, with location to be determined by the USA Fencing Communications staff.

**Rationale:** The “Member of Honor” is a prestigious distinction offered by the Federation Internationale D’Escrime (FIE) that seeks to “...celebrate the heroes of fencing, past and present...and pay tribute to them for their exceptional performances and contribution to the sport of fencing throughout the century.”

By acknowledging these exceptional members, the award aims to highlight the importance of volunteerism, mentorship, and ethical conduct in advancing the sport. It serves not only to honor individual achievements but also to inspire others to strive for excellence and commitment to the values that define USA Fencing. This award plays a crucial role in fostering a strong, supportive, and vibrant fencing community, ensuring the continued growth and success of the sport.

**Second:** Kat Holmes

**Result:** Passed by voice vote

### *Social Media Policy*

**MOTION 9 (Mr. Arias, as Chair):** To approve the USA Fencing Social Media Policy attached as [Appendix L](#).

**Rationale:** USA Fencing wishes to encourage the responsible use of social media platforms as a medium for our community to interact with each other and with the organization in a positive manner. This policy provides that individuals engaging in unacceptable, harassing, threatening, or otherwise inappropriate comments on social media against fellow members of USA Fencing may be subject to disciplinary action.

**Second:** Kat Holmes

**Motion Withdrawn (Mr. Arias and Ms. Holmes)**

**Motion to amend the agenda to add a motion for a bylaw amendment which would adjust the Athlete Representative appointments to coincide with recent changes to the USOPC Team USA Athlete Commission Elections (Mr. Arias)**

**Second:** Kat Holmes

**Result:** Passed by voice vote

**New Motion (Ms. Holmes):** That the following amendments to the USA Fencing Amended and Restated Bylaws effective as of February 17, 2024 (“Bylaws”), be approved for publication pursuant to Bylaw Section 14.2.a, and that they be considered for adoption at the next meeting of the Board following the required comment period.

Section 7.4. **Composition and Qualifications.** The Board of Directors shall include twelve

(12) Directors, and such other persons as are designated non-voting members by these Bylaws. Directors shall be citizens or permanent residents of the United States. Prior to their selection or election, Directors shall disclose any felony convictions, and any other period of ineligibility to serve in sport organizations, such as findings of anti-doping violations or SafeSport violations that were not reversed on appeal. The voting Directors shall be classified and qualified as provided in this Section.

- a. Athlete Directors. There shall be four (4) Athlete Directors comprising not less than 33 1/3% of the elected and appointed Directors. All Athlete Directors shall be voting members of USA Fencing in good standing:
  - i. No person shall serve as an Athlete Director unless they meet the requirements of Athlete Directors as provided in Appendix II.
  - ii. The four (4) Athlete Directors shall be selected of as follows:
    - A. USFA's representative(s) to the USOPC Athlete Advisory Council; and
    - B. The remaining Athlete Directors shall be elected according to the methods established by the Athlete Council.

If not otherwise seated as a Director, USFA's alternate representative(s) to the USOPC Athlete Advisory Council shall sit with the Board of Directors as a non-voting member.

**Section 8.2. Terms, Classification and Composition.** The Athlete Council shall be composed of ten or eleven athletes as follows:

- a. Term: Members of the Athlete Council shall be selected following the selection of the USOPC Athlete Advisory Council Representative and Alternate. Members of the Athlete Council shall be seated for one Quadrennium or until replaced, whichever is later. For the purposes of this section, a Quadrennium shall commence upon the earlier of the close of the Olympic Games in which fencing is contested or the first day of September in the last year of the Quadrennium and shall continue until the earlier of the close of the following such Olympic Games or the final day in August in the last year of the Quadrennium. The acceleration or delay of the Olympic Games shall not affect the term of the Quadrennium.
- b. Classification of Members. Members of the Athlete Council shall fall into the following categories:
  - i. USOPC Athlete Advisory Council Representative(s) and Alternate(s).
  - ii. Weapon Representatives. One member of the Athlete Council shall be selected to represent each of the six internationally recognized weapon and gender categories, making a total of six Weapon Representatives. Such members shall be selected by those athletes qualified to serve in each recognized weapon and gender category as specified below.
  - ~~iii. Parafencing Representatives. Two Parafencing Representatives, one from each gender, shall be selected by all parafencers who are qualified to serve as specified in Section 1.e below.~~

~~iv-iii.~~ iii. Should a member of the Athlete Advisory Council be elected to serve as a member of the USOPC AAC Leadership group, that member shall become an ex- officio voting member of the Athlete Advisory Council.

- c. Qualification to Serve: All members of the Athlete Council must satisfy the criteria set forth in Appendix II. Prior to the selection, representatives shall disclose any felony convictions and any other period of ineligibility to serve in sport organizations, such as findings of violations of anti-doping codes or SafeSport violations that were not reversed on appeal.

**Rationale:** The USOPC’s recent change to its’ Team USA Athlete Commission elections will mean that USA Fencing will be now be electing 1 representative and 1 alternate for able-bodied fencing and 1 representative and 1 alternate for para-fencing. This is an increase from previous elections in which only 1 representative and 1 alternate were elected total. These proposed changes will allow for the two elected Team USA Athlete Commission (1abled-bodied and 1 para) to be automatically appointed as Athlete Representatives on the Board of Directors. This change also ensures that 2 para-fencing individuals are guaranteed seats on the Athlete Council as a result of their election to the Team USA Athlete Commission removing the need to have a specific Para-fencing Representative category on the Athlete Council.

**Second:** Peter Burchard

**Result:** Passed by voice vote with 7 or more directors voting yes

**Motion to amend the agenda to add a motion for a bylaw amendment which would allow Athlete Representatives to be eligible for the Board Chair position (Ms. Deluca)**

**Second:** Kat Holmes

**Result:** Defeated by roll call with 5-yes and 4-no. A majority of all voting Board members (7) is needed to permit an amendment to the agenda.

## **VI. Good and Welfare**

Next meeting will be the Annual Meeting and Board Retreat to take place in Salt Lake City September 13–15, 2024

**Motion to Adjourn to Executive Session (Mr. Arias)**

**Second:** Damien Lehfeldt

**Result:** Passed by voice vote

**Executive Session Adjourned**

**Scheduled Meeting Adjourned**

### Reporting Dates of Committees & Resource Teams

<b>Committee/RT</b>	<b>Date of Last Report</b>	<b>Report This Meeting</b>	<b>Board Liaison</b>
Referee Comm.	7/6/24	Yes	Donald Alperstein
Hall of Fame Comm.	12/16/23	No	Peter Burchard
Audit Comm.	5/18/24	No	Aimee Rice
Ethics Comm.	5/18/24	No	Darryl Jacobs
Budget Comm.	5/18/24	No	Emily Bian
Election Comm.	7/6/24	Yes	Darryl Jacobs
Nominating Comm.	2/17/24	No	Amanda Nguyen
DEIB Comm.		No	Darryl Jacobs
IR Comm.	7/6/24	Yes	(Temp) David Arias
SEMI Comm USA	10/22/22	No	Damien Lehfeltd
Tournament Comm	2/17/24	No	Peter Burchard
Veterans Comm.	7/6/24	Yes	Abdel Salem
Club and Member RG		No	David Arias
Division RG	5/18/2024	No	David Arias
Mar/Comm RG	5/18/24	No	Darryl Jacobs
Parafencing RG	5/18/24	No	Lauryn Deluca
FenceSafe RG	5/18/24	No	Nzingha Prescod
Sports Medicine RG		No	Kat Holmes
Youth Development RG	5/18/24	No	(Temp) David Arias
Sports Performance RG		No	Kat Holmes
Coaching Advisory RG	12/16/23	No	Ben Bratton
Data Science RG	12/16/23	No	Kat Holmes

# Email Vote Minutes

## USA Fencing Board of Directors

Via E-mail on July 24, 2024

The following motion was voted on by e-mail vote on July 24, 2024:

**MOTION (Mr. Arias):** To Establish a USA Fencing Parents' Council.

### USA Fencing Parents' Council Charter

#### I. Purpose

The USA Fencing Parents' Council is established to support and enhance the experience of parents and youth fencers by fostering two-way communication, providing resources, advancing our strategic plan, and promoting a positive and inclusive environment within the USA Fencing community. The Council aims to serve as a liaison between parents, coaches, athletes, and the USA Fencing organization, ensuring that the needs and concerns of families are addressed.

#### II. Objectives

**Strategic Plan:** Provide recommendations to the Board and USA Fencing to advance the objectives of the [2024-2028 Strategic Plan](#), namely: getting parent satisfaction to 80% or higher, 25% of parents as members of USA Fencing, and other areas where the voice of the parents may be of value.

**Communication:** Serve as a conduit between parents, coaches, athletes, and USA Fencing.

**Support/Education:** Create educational resources and support to parents and athletes to enhance their fencing experience.

**Advocacy:** Represent the interests and concerns of parents, guardians and minor-aged fencers to the USA Fencing organization.

**Engagement:** Promote active participation and engagement of parents and guardians in the USA Fencing community.

#### III. Membership

1. **Eligibility:** Membership is open to all parent members of USA Fencing, or any other valid membership type who serve as a parent or guardian to a minor-aged fencing athlete.

2. **Composition:** The Council will be comprised of six (6) parents or guardians who meet the eligibility criteria stated above.

3. **Terms:** Members will serve terms pursuant to those established in Sections 12.18 and 12.19 of the Amended and Restated Bylaws.

#### **IV. Decision-Making**

Per section 12.20 of the bylaws, the Parents' Council may make recommendations to the Board of Directors, Committees, or the CEO, but does not have the authority to make decisions for or to bind USA Fencing.

**Rationale:** The Board of Directors' approval of Councils provides a unique opportunity for the creation of a Parents' Council. Parents are a critical stakeholder in the organization's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, and creating an advocacy body for them will allow for better advocacy, communication, and advancement of USA Fencing's strategic objectives.

**Result:** Passed by a vote of 11 yes and 1 abstention

# USA Fencing Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish the United States Fencing Association's ("USFA") expectations for all those engaged in this great sport of fencing. It is a set of policies intended to promote a positive environment and good sportsmanship. By practicing these shared values we can create a culture that empowers and supports all members of the fencing community.

Except as provided by law, sanctions implemented by organizations outside of USFA, including international bodies such as FIE or WAS, do not limit the applicability of this Code of Conduct or the ability of USFA to impose additional sanctions. This includes sanctions for conduct that occurs at international events. USFA's authority under this Code of Conduct and other references such as the Athlete Handbook are not conditional in any way on any sanctions applied for international conduct, including if those international sanctions are set aside, reversed on appeal, or in any other way not implemented.

This Code of Conduct applies to the following individuals at all times: all members of USFA, Board of Directors members, officers (including division officers), committee members, task force members, working group members, resource team members, hearing panel members, volunteers, employees of USFA, officials, athletes, coaches, spectators, contractors, and others appointed or authorized to act on behalf of the USFA (collectively, "Members").

The USFA's Codes of Conduct requires all participants in USFA activities to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As Members of USFA, we all must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Specifically, compliance with the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act ("the Act"), the USOPC Bylaws, all USFA policies and procedures, and state and federal laws.

As a Member of USFA, you are committed to fair competition and respect for other Members, including athletes, coaches, referees, volunteers, tournament officials, spectators, and fans. You understand that sportsmanship is a key tenant of competition and will exhibit the qualities of sportsmanship at all times.

This Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to, following the below requirements:

- Act in a sportsmanlike manner consistent with the spirit of fair play and responsible conduct;
- Conduct yourself in a dignified, professional manner relating to emotions, language, attitude, and actions.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all opponents, coaches, referees, officials, administrators, parents, fencers and spectators regardless of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, [age, disability](#), gender [identity, sex](#), ~~or~~ [sexual orientation](#), [or any other characteristic protected by law](#).

- Engage in no verbal, written, or physical threats or have any unwanted physical contact with others.
- Respect your competitors and other members of the fencing community in person, via electronic or phone communication, or social media. Accordingly, you will not bully, harass or otherwise be disrespectful or disparaging to others.
- Act appropriately and remain orderly so as to not disturb the smooth running of any competition, regardless of the outcome, and not taunt or disturb others.
- Support the referees, coaches, and event organizers by trusting their judgment and integrity so as to not affect the good order of any competition.
- Refrain from engaging or encourage others to engage in malicious or threatening language either verbally or in writing. To include hard copy, electronic communication, e-mail or on any social media sites. Refrain from tagging individuals in social media posts with the intent to harass.
- Remember that at all times you are an ambassador for the sport of fencing, whether in or out of competition.
- Report all Code of Conduct violations.
- Support clean competition, including an environment free of doping, and will follow all applicable rules related to anti-doping as established by the United States Anti-Doping Agency, the World Anti-Doping Agency and the Federation International d'Esclime.
- Abide by all applicable USA Fencing rules and regulations, including but not limited to the Athlete Handbook, and Fencing Rulebook, FenceSafe Handbook, USA Fencing MAAPP, and the US Center for SafeSport Code.
- Adhere to the rules governing fair play and competitive manipulation per the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions, and the International Paralympic Committee Code of Ethics.
- Adhere to all applicable state, federal, and foreign laws, as applicable, including those governing the possession and use of drugs and alcohol and providing of drugs to any person and alcohol to minors.
- Refrain from physically contacting a referee, tournament organizer, or others in any way that can be interpreted as unwelcome or in an aggressive or confrontational manner.
- Act as a role model by positively supporting athletes and not shouting instructions that disturb order on the strip

- Encourage all competitors in a positive manner, and remember that in competition, the use of profanity and objectionable gestures are offensive and are prohibited.
- No USFA employee, contractor, or agent of USFA shall assist a Member or former Member in obtaining a new job (except for the routine transmission of administrative and personnel files) if the individual knows that the Member or former Member violated policies or procedures of the US Center for SafeSport related to sexual misconduct or was convicted of a crime involving sexual misconduct with a minor in violation of applicable laws or the policies or procedures of the US Center for SafeSport per Section 220524(a)(10) of the Act.

## **REPORTING & RESOLUTION**

A violation of this Code of Conduct may be grounds for action, which could result in sanctions up to and including termination of membership.

Code of Conduct violations must be reported promptly through our online reporting portal which can be accessed here, to the Athlete Safety & Compliance Manager at [c.pachuta@usafencing.org](mailto:c.pachuta@usafencing.org), or to the Grievance and Discipline Committee at [Grievance@usafencing.org](mailto:Grievance@usafencing.org). Reporters are permitted to submit reports anonymously. All reports will be reviewed and resolved per our Complaint and Hearing Procedures which can be found here. The Grievance and Discipline Committee in coordination with the USFA Senior Manager of Compliance (“Manager”) will determine whether to resolve the matter via an informal compromise or mediation or proceed with formal disciplinary action. If an informal compromise or mediation is pursued, the Manager will investigate and provide notice of a resolution. If formal disciplinary action is pursued, the matter will be decided by a panel of disinterested Members pursuant to the Complaint and Hearing Procedures. Respondents will be afforded an opportunity to be heard on the merits before the panel prior to the imposition of any sanctions. Athlete Representatives will make up 33.3% of the panel. Temporary measures, such as a temporary suspension, may be imposed as necessary for the good of the sport of fencing and the protection of USFA or its Members. For questions regarding procedural review of complaints, please reach out to Athlete Safety & Compliance Manager at [c.pachuta@usafencing.org](mailto:c.pachuta@usafencing.org).

## **ANTI-RETALIATION**

It is the right and responsibility of all Members to report violations or suspected violations of this Code of Conduct. All Members, good faith reporters or any person who participates or is involved in the investigation or adjudication of claims of violations (“Covered Third-Persons”) is protected under this Code of Conduct from retaliation. An individual who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith or a Covered Third-Person is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of membership.

No individual who in good faith reports a violation of the Codes of Conduct shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse membership consequences. “Retaliation” means any adverse

or discriminatory action, or the threat of an adverse or discriminatory action, including removal from a training facility, reduced coaching or training, reduced meals or housing, and removal from competition, carried out against a protected individual as a result of any communication, including the filing of a formal complaint, by the protected individual relating to the allegation of physical abuse, sexual harassment, or emotional abuse with (a) the US Center for SafeSport (b) a coach, trainer, manager, administrator, or official associated with the corporation (c) the Attorney General (d) a Federal or State law enforcement agency (e) the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or (f) Congress.

Retaliation may be present even where there is a finding that no violation occurred, but retaliation does not include good-faith actions lawfully pursued in response to a report of a violation. In addition, no Member nor USFA itself shall take or threaten to take any action against an athlete as a reprisal for disclosing information to or seeking assistance from the Office of the Athlete Ombuds as outlined in the Ted Stevens Act.

A copy of the full USFA Whistleblower & Anti-Retaliation Policy can be found [here](#).

### **ACTING IN GOOD FAITH**

Anyone reporting a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and that prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and will be considered a Code of Conduct violation.

### **SANCTIONS**

USFA may impose the following disciplinary measures in furtherance of this Code of Conduct:

- a) Warning;
- b) Reprimand;
- c) Establish a period of probation, with or without conditions;
- d) Deny, grant, suspend, or restore the eligibility or right to participate;
- e) Public censure;
- f) Private censure;
- g) Deny, grant, suspend or restore membership in USFA for a definite or indefinite period of time, with or without terms of probation, or expel any member of USFA, including, without limitation, any administrator, athlete, coach, trainer, manager, official, officer, Board Member, spectator, chair or member of any committee or sub-committee;
- h) Assess actual costs to the prevailing party;
- i) Forfeiture of tournament results;
- j) Assess sanctions in any combination of the foregoing or assess any other remedies, including reasonable fines, deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

## RESOURCES

For information on the Code of Conduct, including any of its provisions, contact Athlete Safety and Compliance Manager at [c.pachuta@usafencing.org](mailto:c.pachuta@usafencing.org) or [EthicsCommittee@usafencing.org](mailto:EthicsCommittee@usafencing.org).

USOPC INTEGRITY UNIT - Through its Speak Up Policy, the USOPC Ethics and Compliance team seeks to empower athletes, USOPC employees and volunteers, NGB employees and volunteers, and other individuals within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement to raise and report their concerns.

Any individual may report concerns confidentially, or anonymously, online using the USOPC Integrity Portal.

### **Team USA Athletes:**

**ATHLETE OMBUDS:** The Athlete Ombuds Office provides free cost-free, independent, and confidential advice regarding Team USA athlete rights, grievance procedures and any other guidance pertaining to selection procedures and can assist in mediating disputes between athletes and USFA.

To contact the Athlete Ombuds Office:

Website: <https://www.teamusa.org/athlete-ombuds>

Phone: (719) 866-5000

E-mail: [ombudsman@usathlete.org](mailto:ombudsman@usathlete.org)

**USFA REPORTING PORTAL** - For additional resources and to access the USFA online reporting portal please visit: <https://www.usafencing.org/fencesafe-report>

# USA Fencing Black Card Policy

In order to provide a safe environment for all USA Fencing members, including athletes, coaches, parents, referees and spectators, the USA Fencing Board of Directors approved updated black card policies, effective October 18, 2019 and amended most recently on ~~December 3, 2022~~[September 15, 2024](#).

Per the Black Card Retention and Review Policy, black cards issued at tournaments at all levels will be tracked and monitored by the National Office and Ethics Committee. This includes local, regional, and national tournaments.

All tournament organizers are to send any black card reports at the conclusion of the tournament to the USA Fencing National Office. This may be done either during the results upload through the USA Fencing database or via email at [information@usafencing.org](mailto:information@usafencing.org).

All black cards must be reported and will be tracked, including black cards that were issued at the strip and later rescinded. Black cards given and rescinded will be recorded and must: 1) include the reason for the initial black card, 2) include rationale for the removal for the card clearly provided and 3) be stored in the black card database to be reviewed by the National Office and Ethics Committee.

In certain situations, as detailed below, a Black Card Review Group may be convened. The Black Card Review Group is comprised of two members each from the Tournament Committee, Athlete Council, Referee Commission and Ethics Committee to review both given and rescinded Black Cards annually and convene as needed in the cases of Level 2 and multiple Level 1 black cards received inside of the probation period.

## Level 1, Standard Black Card

Standard Black Cards are those issued given for disrespect of referees, staff or other official personnel, unsportsmanlike conduct, throwing of equipment, disruptive behavior, issues of safety and other incidents that are neither administrative nor so extreme or severe as to warrant a Level 2 Black Card. Standard black cards shall be recorded and stored in the USA Fencing National Office database and result in a follow-up email from the USA Fencing National Office (with copies to the Ethics Committee and Black Card Review Group), advising the individual that: 1) the black card has been recorded, 2) the individual has been placed on probation for 12 months from the date of issuance of the black card, 3) the black card will be reviewed by National Office Staff and Ethics Committee, and 4) an additional Level 1 Black Card received during the probationary period will trigger a review by the Black Card Review Group, which can determine that the repeated violation warrants a Level 2 Black Card sanction of the individual.

## Level 2, Severe Offenses

Level 2 Black Cards are those issued for extreme or severe offenses including but not limited to repeated Level 1 offenses, deliberate physical violence, verbal and verifiable threats, and verifiable cheating.

Level 2 Black Cards may trigger sanctions [in accordance with the Complaint and Hearing Procedures](#). ~~that~~[This](#) could include, but not be limited to, competitive penalties within the Rules

of Competition such as temporary exclusion from tournaments for a period of up to two months which could be extended for egregious acts. Such sanctions will be determined ~~in the first instance~~ by the Black Card Review Group. In the interest of the timeliness of Level 2 Black Cards, ~~The~~ Black Card Review Group shall make a preliminary~~its initial~~ determination upon written submissions ~~required~~ from the issuing referee and Head Referee or from the Bout Committee, and from any written response thereto that the carded individual may timely submit. The Black Card Review Group shall endeavor to issue a preliminary decision to the carded individual within 10 business days them receiving the black card. Following the ~~initial preliminary~~ determination, the individual who received the card shall have the right to request a hearing, as set forth below. Such a hearing shall be requested within 5 businesses days of receipt of the Black Card Review Groups preliminary decision. In the event a hearing is requested, the Black Card Review Group shall determine whether any tournament exclusion initially imposed shall be stayed pending the outcome of the hearing. As used herein, “individual” shall refer to the parent or guardian of record of any carded individual who is a minor.

A hearing will be conducted before members of the Black Card Review Group who meet the requirements for a disciplinary panel as set forth in the Complaint and Hearing Procedures. If the individual does not request a hearing, then he or she shall be deemed to have accepted the preliminary determination as final. Any hearing requested by the individual shall be conducted under the procedures set forth in the Complaint and Hearing Procedures. Following such hearing, the Black Card Review Group members who conducted the hearing shall issue a final determination, which may adhere to the preliminary determination or may impose measures either more or less stringent. Any suspension of membership privileges shall be subject to Board review as set forth in the Bylaws. The individual shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the Complaint and Hearing Procedures.

Promptly following a determination of the Black Card Review Group that upholds a Level 2 Black Card, the USA Fencing National Office shall transmit a follow-up email to the carded individual (with copies to the Ethics Committee and Black Card Review Group), advising the individual as follows:

1. The black card has been recorded.
2. If applicable, a sanction has been issued and recorded. The sanction(s) shall be described in detail.
3. The offending individual has been placed on probation for 24 months from the date of issuance of the black card.
4. Any additional black cards received during the probationary period will trigger (i) the offending individual’s removal from the entirety of the tournament in which the subsequent black card was received, (ii) a renewal of the 24 month probation period beginning from the date of the issuance of the additional black card, and (iii) review by the Black Card Review Group for possible additional sanctions.
5. Failure to abide by any sanctions imposed by the Black Card Review Group shall be considered severe misconduct and the violator shall be referred to the ~~Board of Directors~~Grievance and Disciplinary Committee for disciplinary action.
- ~~6. The individual may, within 5 business days of receiving the follow-up email, appeal the~~

~~Group's initial determination via email to the National Office, Ethics Committee and Black Card Review Group. A hearing will then be conducted before members of the Black Card Review Group who meet the requirements for a disciplinary panel as set forth in the Athlete Handbook. If the individual does not demand a hearing, then he or she shall be deemed to have accepted the initial determination. Any hearing demanded by the individual shall be conducted under the procedures set forth in the Athlete Handbook. Following such hearing, the Black Card Review Group members who conducted the hearing shall issue a final determination, which may adhere to the initial determination or may impose measures either more or less stringent. Any suspension of membership privileges shall be subject to Board review as set forth in the Bylaws. The individual shall have rights of appeal according to the procedures set forth in the Athlete Handbook.~~

The Black Card Review Group reserves the right to defer any case that may involve a violation of USA Fencing Codes of Conduct, Fence Safe Handbook, or other applicable policies to the Grievance and Disciplinary Committee for review.

### **Additional Tracking of Rescinded Black Cards**

Black cards given and rescinded will be recorded. The referee issuing the rescinded black card, and the Head Referee for the relevant event must each, separately, submit a written report that sets forth in detail: 1) the reason for the initial Black Card, 2) the rationale for rescission of the black card and 3) any disagreement with such rescission. All such reports shall be stored in the Black Card database and available to be reviewed by the Referees' Commission, National Office and Ethics Committee.

### **Black Card Review Group**

The Black Card Review Group shall be comprised of two members each from the Tournament Committee, Referees' Commission and Ethics Committee and ~~two~~<sup>three</sup> athletes selected by the Athlete Council. It shall review both given and rescinded Black Cards annually, and it shall convene promptly to review and conduct required proceedings with respect to all Level 2 black cards. The Black Card Review Group shall create, update, and maintain internal guidelines for how various black cards should be handled for how hearings will be conducted. The Black Card Review Group shall react timely when reviewing cases.

# Task Force on Committees and Resource Groups

## Report to the USA Fencing Board of Directors

September 2, 2024

### Task Force and Application Process

The members of the Task Force for 2024-2025 were Molly Hill (Chair), Donald Alperstein, David Arias, Lauryn DeLuca PLY, Alice Dungey, Katharine Holmes OLY, and Damien Lehfeldt.

The Task Force formally met three times on July 17, August 6, and August 22 with informal calls and emails in between. Working with the national office, the Task Force amended last year's application form to allow for applicants to select any number of committees they wanted to apply to. The call for applications was posted on July 23 and the deadline was August 7th. An extension was given until August 16th for attendees of the Olympic Games.

A form for feedback from last year's committee members was also created and distributed to better inform this year's selections. Staff and board members were also welcome to fill this form out for committees to which they were liaison. Board members also were sent a form to submit preferences for liaison assignments. Then committees were delegated to each Task Force member to draft a list of selected applicants to then be reviewed and modified by the team as a whole.

Athlete composition will be determined separately by Katharine Holmes, Lauryn DeLuca, and the Athlete Advisory Council (AAC). A number of athletes applied through the standard process which is acceptable but those who were not selected had their names passed along to the AAC for consideration for the Athlete slots.

The RC Liaisons and Staff Liaisons listed below have been determined by the Referees' Commission and the National Office respectively.

Staff members essential to this project were Christina Pachuta, Phil Andrews, Bryan Wendell, and in fact all the staff members who provided their feedback on committee composition. Thanks are also due to Selina Kaing, Chair of last year's Task Force, for her establishment of the spreadsheet format used to facilitate this year's process as well.

Call for applications:

<https://www.usafencing.org/page/show/7388675-apply-to-join-a-usa-fencing-committee-or-resource-group>

### Notes on Review Process

- The new checkbox for "Willing to serve anywhere" as well as allowing candidates to select more than three committees served very useful and saved time when trying to perfect the composition of committees.
- Further modifications to the form are recommended, namely a location option for those not living in the United States, information about preferred pronouns, and collection of a USA Fencing member number or selecting a checkbox that says "Not a member but willing to

become one if selected.” A checkbox for “knowledge or experience with para-fencing” would be helpful as well.

- A social media push and email blast in two phases (July 23 and August 6) resulted in increased applications from the community in two waves. There were difficulties working around the Olympic Games but the communications team was very successful in their efforts.
- Some committee members from last year did not understand that they needed to reapply every year. This continues to be an issue each year. It is recommended that in future application cycles a specific email is sent to committee members before the application is released explaining this process.
- Engagement and succession planning were two key issues considered by the Task Force. Most of the recommendations for committees are a mix of old and new members. The by-law amendment about term limits begins this fall and is not retroactive, but the Task Force urges committees to emphasize succession planning and mentorship of the next generation of volunteers. As for engagement, the by-laws already provide for an attendance requirement but adherence to those guidelines will be key with terms shifting from one year to two years. The motion put forth by the Chair of the Task Force mandates attendance tracking to support this goal.
- The Budget Committee does not currently allow for any community members and yet applications were collected for the Budget Committee. As a result of this process, the Chair of the Task Force is putting forth a motion to formalize seats on the Budget Committee for community members with experience in finance.
- To reduce the burden on the national office and allow the committees to begin their work as soon as possible, the motion put forth by the Chair of the Task Force requires that selected members of committees complete all requirements of membership, Conflict of Interest form, background check, and SafeSport certification within 45 days or they will be removed.

## Applicant Summary

USA Fencing received 233 applications (135% increase from the prior year which only received 99). 103 unique applicants (44% of the applicant pool) were selected for 123 positions across 19 committees, resource groups, and councils.

The most popular committees were the Tournament Committee (49), International Relations Committee (49), and Ethics Committee (48), though notably the option “Willing to serve anywhere” (48) was equally as popular. The least popular committees were the Hall of Fame Committee (10), Audit Committee (12), Nominating Committee (12), and Election Committee (14).

Diverse representation is a key value of our organization as highlighted in the strategic plan and recent by-law amendments to mandate diversity in committees when possible. Below are summaries of the demographics of applicants and selected committee members with a few highlights noted:

- 58% of applicants identified as White which is significantly lower than 71% of applicants last year, and this facilitated efforts for more diverse committee compositions. Note that for the below table of ethnicity demographics the total is greater than 100%. This is because applicants were counted more than once if they identified as more than one ethnicity.
- 70% of applicants fell into the veteran age categories (41 or older) which is a drop from last year’s 78%, showing a slight engagement from our younger membership.
- The number of applicants who consider themselves to have a disability dropped from 15% to 10% but those who chose not to answer rose in equal proportion.

- Gender identity was similar to last year's applicant ratio.

<b>Age</b>	<b>% Applicants</b>	<b>% Selected</b>
18-20	2%	1%
21-30	8%	8%
31-40	16%	15%
41-50	21%	22%
51-60	23%	24%
60 or older	26%	22%
Prefer Not to Answer	4%	6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Gender Identity</b>	<b>% Applicants</b>	<b>% Selected</b>
Female	38%	42%
Male	56%	51%
Non-Binary	2%	2%
Prefer not to Answer	4%	5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>% Applicants</b>	<b>% Selected</b>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%	0%
Asian/Asian American	13%	13%
Black/African American	8%	10%
Hispanic/Latino(a)/Chicano(a)	6%	5%
Middle Eastern or North African	1%	2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2%	0%
Not Listed	3%	3%
Two or more Ethnicities	13%	11%
White	58%	60%
Prefer Not to Answer	12%	12%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>117%</b>	<b>116%</b>

<b>Identify as person with disability?</b>	<b>% Applicants</b>	<b>% Selected</b>
No	82%	81%
Prefer not to answer	6%	9%
Yes	12%	10%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Task Force Recommendations

Committees		2024-25 Committee Members	2024-25 Chair	2024-25 Board Liaisons	2024-25 Ex Officio / Advisors	2024-25 Staff Liaisons	2024-25 RC Liaisons
1	Audit Committee	Ben Bratton (2025) Darryl Jacobs (2026) Tetyana Klepko (2025) Charles (Chuck) Wemple (2026)	Charles (Chuck) Wemple	Mike Joo		Tabitha Chamberlin	
2	Budget Committee	Emily Bian Maria Panyi Andrea Pagnanelli Nzingha Prescod	Emily Bian	Selina Kaing	Voting ex-officio: Emily Bian  Non-voting advisors: Maureen Suzanne Downey Solomon Liou	Tabitha Chamberlin	
3	Coaches' Committee	Jennifer Kay Oldham Allen Evans Tsvetelina Hristov Greg Domashovetz Victoria Isaacson, OTD, OTR/L Dwight Smith	Allen Evans	Andrey Geva		Brad Suchorski	
4	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Committee	Christopher Collado Dawn Wilson Andrea Munoz Nicholas Harvey (chosen by DEIB Committee)	Nzingha Prescod	Lauryn DeLuca		Shannon Jolly	Tasha Martin
5	Election Committee	Oppong Hemeng (2025) David Hitchcock (2026) Mark Segal (2025) April Alford (2026)	David Hitchcock	Damien Lehfeldt		Bryan Wendell	
6	Ethics Committee	Gregory Husisian Kelvin Mai Kathy Vail Amanda Nguyen	Gregory Husisian	Molly Hill		Christina Pachuta	
7	Grievance & Discipline Committee	Mark House Kenneth Gauvey David Eldridge Sarah Hall Kaufman	Mark House	Peter Barton		Christina Pachuta	
8	Hall of Fame Committee	Simon Pitfield Nikki Franke Victoria Kuznetsov Valerie Asher Kamilla Gafurzianova Justin Tausig	Kamilla Gafurzianova	Abdel Salem		Phil Andrews	
9	International Relations Committee	Overall	Kelly Koehler Jennifer Yamin (John) Scott Rodgers Sean Shumate Felicia Zimmermann	Kelly Koehler	Andrea Pagnanelli	Non-voting ex-officio: Phil Andrews or designee Chair of BoD	Phil Andrews
		FIE Sub-Committee	Kelly Koehler Jennifer Yamin Iana Dakova Don Anthony Saul Mendoza Felicia Zimmermann	Jennifer Yamin	N/A	Non-voting ex-officio: Jeremy Summers Carl Borack Lori Marcil-Holmes Greg Massialas Rita Comes Donald Alperstein Phil Andrews or designee Chair of BoD	N/A
		WAS Sub-Committee	Donald Alperstein Theodore Li Sean Shumate Kathy Walters (John) Scott Rodgers	(John) Scott Rodgers	N/A	Non-voting ex-officio: Cat (Bouwkamp) Howard Gil Pezza Gary Van der Wege Jon Moss Phil Andrews or designee Chair of BoD	N/A
10	Nominating Committee	Harrison Hue (2025) Andrea Pagnanelli (2026) Iana Dakova (2025) Cody Mattem (2026)	Committee selects Chair	Molly Hill	Non-voting resource: Phil Andrews or designee	Christina Pachuta	
11	U.S. SEMI Committee	David Blake Theodore Li Joseph Moore Alice M Kee Irene Edgerton Albert Merritt Liz Morey Brian Rosen Kathy Walters Ron Herman Jacob Golson	Kathy Walters	Abdel Salem		Shannon Daugherty	Bradley Baker
12	Tournament Committee	Maggie Dull Nathan Anderson Brandon Rochelle Alan Geller Jennifer Salmon Laura Johnson Richard Weiss David Blake Dan Berke	Brandon Rochelle	Damien Lehfeldt		Glen Hollingsworth	Sean Shumate
13	Veterans Committee	Valerie Asher Jane Carter Kate Sierra Will Chang Jonathan Bartlett Thomas G. Mahnken Ken Gauvey Marsha Ellen Reichman	Valerie Asher	Maria Panyi	Voting ex-officio: Rita Comes	Phil Andrews	

Resource Groups							
14	Data Resource Group	Justin Smith Nick Ferrara Helen Hu Fuchang Yin Katarzyna Trzopek Jonathan Bartlett Don Tam Zachary Hoffer Charles Alexander Marc Shull	Marc Shull	Kat Holmes		Brad Suchorski	
15	Divisions Resource Group	Dan Berke Shanna Davis Dennis Kolakowski Jennifer Nollner Brenda Waddoups Richard Weiss Dominique Hance David Galler Stephen Janoski		Donald Alperstein		Brad Suchorski	
16	Paralympic Development Resource Group	Stacey Breidenstein Sean Shumate Nova Gregory David Arias Jill Feldman Kamilla Gafurzianova		Lauryn DeLuca	Voting ex-officio: head coach TBD	Beth Mahr	
17	Sports Medicine Resource Group	Adam J. Thompson Kelcie Wittman Jasmine Brewster Piper Mariam Zakhary Mia Chao Laura Johnson		Kat Holmes		Peggy Chin	
18	Sports Performance Resource Group	(John) Scott Rodgers Harrison Hue Holly Buechel Ipek Irem Ulku Kelly Koehler Natalie Dostert Dagmara Wozniak		Nzingha Prescod		Kate Reisinger	
Other							
19	Parents' Council	Heather Shankwiler Eric Kaplan Gregory Huisian Zhimin Zhang Mark E Hanssen Allison Wade	Heather Shankwiler	Ben Bratton		Phil Andrews	
20	Referees' Commission			Donald Alperstein		Glen Hollingsworth	

## **Bylaw Amendments Put Forward for Membership Comment** **from the July 6, 2024 Board Meeting**

### **Task Force on Committees and Resource Groups Bylaw Amendments**

1. That Section 12.4 of the Amended and Restated Bylaws concerning committee composition be reorganized and changed to read in its entirety as follows by removing the language stricken and by adding the language indicated red:

Section 12.4. Composition. All individuals serving on committees shall be members of the USFA in good standing who meet the qualifications for At-Large Directors, and unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, may, but need not be, Directors.

- a. Athlete Representation. All committees shall include no less than one-third Athlete members selected by the Athlete Council who meet the qualifications required by Appendix II, as applicable. ~~Diverse representation on committees will be considered in the composition of each committee.~~ On any committee that oversees selection of athletes, coaches, or staff for para-fencing Protected Competitions, at least half of the athlete members must have met the requirements set forth in Appendix II by competing in a para-fencing event.
- b. Gender Representation: Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws and to the extent practicable while maintaining standards for qualified committee personnel, it shall be the goal of USA Fencing to appoint committee members whose gender reflects their proportion within the general membership of USA Fencing. For the purposes of achieving this aspiration, non-binary individuals shall be considered to be of the gender with which they identify.
- c. Para-fencing Community Representation: Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws and to the extent practicable while maintaining standards for qualified committee personnel, it shall be the goal of USA Fencing to include in each committee's membership at least one representative from the para-fencing community. For the purposes of achieving this aspiration, "para-fencing community" shall include para-fencing athletes, referees, coaches, and others who have demonstrated knowledge of para-fencing and support for para-fencing athletes.
- d. Ethnic Diversity: Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws and to the extent practicable while maintaining standards for qualified committee personnel, USFA shall strive for ethnic diversity in committee membership and shall encourage committee participation by members who belong to minority ethnic groups.

**Rationale:** USA Fencing seeks to embrace, promote, and have the advantage of diverse representation and participation. USA Fencing has also identified among its goals the advancement of para-fencing and para-fencers. These changes, proposed by the Committee Review Task Force, incorporate those objectives in the organization's Bylaws. Subsection a of the proposed revision to section 12.4 is merely organizational by creating a separate subsection addressing athlete representation, while the language stricken from the current formulation of the section is expanded and explicated in the subsequent subsections addressing gender and para-fencing representation. The latter is expanded to include individuals invested in para-fencing beyond athletes as a means of growing this element of USA Fencing. Subsection d is new and is intended to embrace and effectuate USA Fencing values such as those articulated in Bylaw Sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.m and other Board adopted policies.

2. That Section 12.7.b of the Amended and Restated Bylaws, concerning the Budget Committee, be amended to read in its entirety as follows by removing the language struck through and in red and by adding the language underlined and in red:

b. Composition. The Budget Committee shall consist of ~~threesix~~ voting members: the Treasurer, who shall be Chair of the Budget Committee; three other members of the Board of Directors elected by the Board; and ~~antwo~~ athletes who meets the qualifications required in Appendix II, one of whom shall be female and one of whom shall have qualified as a para-fencer. The Chief Executive Officer of the USFA, or another staff member designated by the Chief Executive Officer, shall be a non-voting member of the Budget Committee. Members shall serve terms of one year.

**Rationale:** The Committee Review Task Force believes that the Budget Committee as presently constituted does not provide the representation that will best facilitate its work and assure alignment with the Strategic Plan. The proposed amendment doubles the size of the Budget Committee from three to six voting members. It assures that the athletes represented on the committee, who are greatly affected by its work, include a para-fencer and at least one female. Note that an amendment to Section 12.4 proposed by the Committee Review Task Force provides that for the purposes of populating committees and meeting diversity goals, non-binary individuals are to be considered to be of the gender with which they identify.

While the general recommendation is to enlarge the terms of committee members to two or four years, depending on the committee, the Task Force believes that due to the nature of the Budget Committee's work, it makes sense to preserve one-year terms for this group. To the extent continuity is desired, that can be accomplished by reappointing the Treasurer to that position and reappointing Directors or Special Board Members to subsequent terms on the Budget Committee.

3. That Section 12.9.b of the Amended and Restated Bylaws concerning Nominating Committee composition be reorganized and changed to read in its entirety as follows by removing the language stricken and by adding the language indicated red:

b. Composition. The Nominating Committee shall comprise six members of whom two athletes, who meet the requirements in Appendix II, shall be selected by the Athlete Council for two-year staggered terms and four shall be selected by the Board of Directors, with one drawn from each of the following groups for staggered two-year terms. The first selection of the Nominating Committee after the effective date of these Bylaws will provide that one-half of those selected shall have an initial one-year term and the other half will have an initial two-year term:

- i. ~~Past presidents or chairs of the Board of the USFPA~~ current or former At-large Director with at least four years' service on the Board or a former officer with similar experience;
- ii. Either a coach with a demonstrated record of producing fencers who perform at a high level or a principal of an established operating fencing club;
- iii. Active officials (referees, armorers, bout committee members, Referees' Commission members) who have regularly staffed national tournaments during the two years preceding their appointment; and
- iv. Current or past Independent Directors.

And that the first sentence of the concluding paragraph of the section be amended to read as follows:

The Chief Executive Officer ~~or another member of the professional staff designated by the Chief Executive Officer shall serve as a resource at the request of the Nominating Committee.~~ ~~shall be a non-voting ex-officio member of the Nominating Committee.~~

**Rationale:** The proposed amendment effectuates two changes. The first replaces the existing position reserved for a past president or chair of the Board with a broader pool of candidates consisting of experienced At-large directors and past officers (President, Board Chair, and Treasurer). Experience has proven that there may at times be too few past presidents and board chairs to fill the position appropriately and replaces that requirement with experienced serving or former At-large directors or past officers. The second change makes it clear that the CEO (or their designee) is not a member of the committee and does not participate except in a supportive role to the extent the Nominating Committee needs and requests.

4. That sections 12.18 and 12.19 of the Amended and Restated Bylaws regarding Terms of Service and Term Limits for committee members be reorganized and changed to read in their

entirety as follows by removing the language struck through and in red and by adding the language underlined and in red:

Section 12.18. **Terms of Service.**

- a. Unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws and except for the Referees' Commission, appointed committee members shall serve terms approximating two years, from the date of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors nearest their appointment until the later of the succeeding Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors in the second calendar year thereafter or Elected committee members shall continue to serve until their successor has been elected and qualified.
- b. In the event a committee member is selected to fill a vacancy resulting from the removal, resignation, or ineligibility to serve of a committee member, the newly selected individual shall serve the unexpired portion of the vacated term, but for the purposes of Section 12.19, the individual shall be deemed to have commenced service on the date of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors nearest their appointment.
- c. Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Referee's' Commission shall serve terms commencing on September 1 of the year in which they are selected and ending on August 31 four years later, with the Chair, Ombudsman, and Vice-Chairs of Domestic Development – Grassroots and Domestic Development – National being selected in the years when the Summer Olympic Games are regularly scheduled to be held and the other members of the Referees' Commission selected in the even numbered years between regularly scheduled Summer Olympic Games. The acceleration or delay of the Olympic Games shall not affect the terms of Referees' Commission members.
- d. The Board of Directors and the Athlete Council shall provide for staggered terms for the members each body selects by designating one half of its appointees chosen in 2024 to serve two-year terms.

Section 12.19. **Term Limits.** Beginning with ~~the adoptions of these bylaws~~ the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors in 2024, and unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, a committee member shall be permitted to serve up to eight (8) ~~one (1) year terms consecutive years~~ one (1) year on a given committee, after which they are ineligible for service on that committee for a period of ~~two (2) years~~ one (1) years. After ~~two (2) a one (1) year gap in service~~ a one (1) year gap in service, the individual shall be eligible for reappointment to that committee and the limitation period shall begin to run anew. The Board of Directors may in its discretion exempt particular individuals from the limitations set forth in this section.

**Rationale:** The Committee Review Task Force recommends that committee member terms be lengthened and limited. Underlying that recommendation is the conclusion that annual appointments of committees, as is currently the case, is unduly burdensome on the Board and

staff and that one-year terms are insufficient to orient new members to the committees' work and allow them to become effective contributors. By the same token, the Task Force believes that turnover in committee membership is essential for the introduction of new ideas and maintaining commitment, and for educating successors to leadership positions. The foregoing proposed amendments strike a balance between these objectives and provide for continuity by staggering the terms of committee members.

The Bylaws prescribe two-year staggered terms for members of the Audit Committee, Election Committee, Nominating Committee, and Ethics Committee. The proposed amendments do not change that. At present, the Board governs the terms and elections of Referee Commission members. All other committees are appointed annually. The proposed amendment to Section 12.18 prescribes four-year staggered terms for all committees for which other arrangements are not specified in the Bylaws. Provision is made for interim appointments to fill vacancies in the committee membership. Terms would run approximately four years, from the Annual Meeting of the Board closest to a member's appointment until the Annual Meeting four calendar years later. The Budget Committee is expected to be the subject of another proposed amendment that will revise the composition of that committee and provide for the terms of its members.

The terms of Referee Commission Members are not stated in the Bylaws and have been set by the Board at four years since the inception of the Commission. This amendment would codify that system and provide for the election of approximately one-half of the Commission in each even-numbered year.

The current Bylaws limit committee member terms to eight years, and the proposed amendment to Section 12.19 does not change that. It does, however, change the waiting period after a member "ages out" before they are eligible for reappointment from two years to one, and it allows the Board to make exceptions in cases where a position requires special expertise or other qualification that justifies the continued service of a member beyond the standard eight years.

### **Virtual Board Meetings**

Section 7.10. Regular Meetings. The Regular Meetings of the Board of Directors shall consist of one Annual Meeting and two Scheduled Meetings. Regular Meetings shall be **conducted in person upon** ~~with~~ not less than thirty (30) days' notice.

**Rationale:** The existence of virtual meeting tools grants the flexibility to hold meetings remotely as needed while not losing an iota of productivity in doing so. Section 7.10 as written provides too much rigidity when it comes to the Board's ability to hold meetings remotely. Instituting this clause would save the membership potential money.

### **Board SafeSport and Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

**Section 7.5. Qualifying Affirmation, SafeSport, and Conflicts of Interest Declarations.** No person shall be qualified for selection or service as an officer or Director of the USFA except

upon execution of a writing acceding to the following statement: “As [Chair of the Board] [Treasurer] [Special Board Member] [Director] [other] of the United States Fencing Association I agree and undertake to adhere to high ethical standards and to avoid conflicts of interest as outlined in the Conflict of Interest Policy of USA Fencing. I acknowledge my fiduciary duties of loyalty and care to the United States Fencing Association and understand that those duties supersede my personal interests and the interests of any individual, group, faction or entity. I pledge to devote the full extent of my knowledge, experience and ability in good faith to advance the purposes, objectives, integrity and betterment of the United States Fencing Association.

Each member of the Board of Directors shall have an active SafeSport clearance prior to the start of the USA Fencing fiscal year, as well as a completed Conflict of Interest declaration submitted to the Secretary of the Board. No member of the Board who has failed to complete these requirements shall be permitted to participate and vote in meetings until compliant.

**Rationale:** All Committee members, referees, coaches, volunteers, etc. are required to have a SafeSport clearance in order to participate. It is important that we, the Board hold ourselves to the same standards.

### **Athlete Director Representatives**

Section 7.4. **Composition and Qualifications.** The Board of Directors shall include twelve (12) Directors, and such other persons as are designated non-voting members by these Bylaws. Directors shall be citizens or permanent residents of the United States. Prior to their selection or election, Directors shall disclose any felony convictions, and any other period of ineligibility to serve in sport organizations, such as findings of anti-doping violations or SafeSport violations that were not reversed on appeal. The voting Directors shall be classified and qualified as provided in this Section.

- a. Athlete Directors. There shall be four (4) Athlete Directors comprising not less than 33 1/3% of the elected and appointed Directors. All Athlete Directors shall be voting members of USA Fencing in good standing:
  - i. No person shall serve as an Athlete Director unless they meet the requirements of Athlete Directors as provided in Appendix II.
  - ii. The four (4) Athlete Directors shall be selected of as follows:
    - A. USFA’s representative(s) to the USOPC Athlete Advisory Council; and
    - B. The remaining Athlete Directors shall be elected according to the methods established by the Athlete Council.

If not otherwise seated as a Director, USFA’s alternate representative(s) to the USOPC Athlete Advisory Council shall sit with the Board of Directors as a non-voting member.

Section 8.2. **Terms, Classification and Composition.** The Athlete Council shall be composed of ten or eleven athletes as follows:

- a. Term: Members of the Athlete Council shall be selected following the selection of the USOPC Athlete Advisory Council Representative and Alternate. Members of the Athlete Council shall be seated for one Quadrennium or until replaced, whichever is later. For the purposes of this section, a Quadrennium shall commence upon the earlier of the close of the Olympic Games in which fencing is contested or the first day of September in the last year of the Quadrennium and shall continue until the earlier of the close of the following such Olympic Games or the final day in August in the last year of the Quadrennium. The acceleration or delay of the Olympic Games shall not affect the term of the Quadrennium.
  
- b. Classification of Members. Members of the Athlete Council shall fall into the following categories:
  - i. USOPC Athlete Advisory Council Representative(s) and Alternate(s).
  
  - ii. Weapon Representatives. One member of the Athlete Council shall be selected to represent each of the six internationally recognized weapon and gender categories, making a total of six Weapon Representatives. Such members shall be selected by those athletes qualified to serve in each recognized weapon and gender category as specified below.
  
  - ~~iii. Parafencing Representatives. Two Parafencing Representatives, one from each gender, shall be selected by all parafencers who are qualified to serve as specified in Section 1.c below.~~
  
  - ~~iv.iii.~~ Should a member of the Athlete Advisory Council be elected to serve as a member of the USOPC AAC Leadership group, that member shall become an ex-officio voting member of the Athlete Advisory Council.
  
- c. Qualification to Serve: All members of the Athlete Council must satisfy the criteria set forth in Appendix II. Prior to the selection, representatives shall disclose any felony convictions and any other period of ineligibility to serve in sport organizations, such as findings of violations of anti-doping codes or SafeSport violations that were not reversed on appeal.

**Rationale:** The USOPC's recent change to its' Team USA Athlete Commission elections will mean that USA Fencing will be now be electing 1 representative and 1 alternate for able-bodied fencing and 1 representative and 1 alternate for parafencing. This is an increase from previous elections in which only 1 representative and 1 alternate were elected total. These proposed changes will allow for the two elected Team USA Athlete Commission (1abled-bodied and 1 para) to be automatically appointed as Athlete Representatives on the Board of Directors. This change also ensures that 2 parafencing individuals are guaranteed seats on the Athlete Council as a result of their election to the Team USA Athlete Commission removing the need to have a specific Parafencing Representative category on the Athlete Council.