



United States Quad Rugby Association

## **Agenda for Annual General Meeting March 20, 2014**

**WELCOME** and Introductory Remarks and Matters  
Team Roll Call  
Approval of 2013 Minutes

### **REPORTS**

#### **Board of Directors**

President – Gary Pate  
1st Vice President – Nick Long  
2nd Vice President – Andy Zimmer  
Secretary – Carolyn Odom  
Treasurer – Debrah Whitehurst  
Commissioner – Dave Mengyan

#### **RACs**

Atlantic North – Bill Bouffard  
Atlantic South – Dan Caldwell  
Heartland North – Sue Tucker  
Heartland South – Bob Lujano  
Mountain East – Chuck French  
Mountain West – Joe Delagrave  
Pacific North – Ed Suhr  
Pacific South – Andy Cohn

#### **Referees**

Kerin Banfield – USQRRRA Chairman

#### **Classifiers**

Paul Sawicki – Classification Head

#### **Clinics**

Ed Suhr

#### **Postseason**

2014 Postseason Review  
Regionals  
Sectionals  
Nationals

***Smashing Stereotypes One Hit at a Time***



**United States Quad Rugby Association**

**Committees**

- Wheelchair/Equipment
- Hall of Fame
- Competition
- Rules
- Web
- Fundraising
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Clinics
- Team USA/Team Force

**PROPOSALS**

- Working Lunch

**ELECTIONS**

- President
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President
- Secretary



## **President's Report**

### **Gary Pate**

The last four years have gone too quickly. When I ran for President the first time, I never dreamed my service would end due to the impending birth of twins. But when your first children are born when you are 62, it is important to capitalize on every minute you have with them. Rugby is tremendously important to me.....but my family is more important.

I know that great things have happened in our league in the last few years. I am proud of our revised Code of Conduct and our Concussion policy. I anticipate the adoption of a Diversity and Inclusion policy which will bring us into sync with the USOC. I am particularly proud that together with the Lakeshore Foundation, we hosted the American Zonals in Birmingham this past October. This was the first time this event was held in the United States and it was a huge success. Many thanks are due Lakeshore for its stellar work.

As I step aside, I know there are matters we need to address as a league:

- 1) I encourage us to re-think how post-season is structured. Every year we wrestle with finding hosts for Sectionals and the expense continues to increase. Perhaps there should be a series of qualifying tournaments; perhaps we structure like "March Madness" or play a "two and out" national championship. I urge the new Board to look at this issue anew.
- 2) We need to identify and court a national level sponsor. It would be a game-changer at so many levels.
- 3) I believe we need to examine our referee system. We have too few refs, too few clinics, too few highly qualified refs, and the expense is becoming prohibitive. I would suggest reaching out to other wheelchair sports to understand their system and see how we can improve.
- 4) We need an ongoing conversation about players who "class-out." We have situations where people have played for years, invested thousands of dollars in their career, and are removed from the sport. While this is a risk all understand, perhaps there is insurance which could be available or perhaps the league could begin a fund to purchase the equipment.....selling it to new players to recoup and replenish.

I would be remiss if I did not thank everyone who has helped, encouraged, and put up with me. I have been blessed with a great board. I have worked with two great commissioners. The Lakeshore Foundation has been of incomparable help. And most important, my wife has not merely permitted me to do this, she has supported me in every step.....thanks Crystal.

## **1st Vice President's Report**

### **Nick Long**



Not Submitted.

**2nd Vice President's Report**  
**Andy Zimmer**

Not submitted

**Secretary's Report**  
**Carolyn Odom**

Thank you to everyone here at the AGM. It's been an honor to serve on this Board over the past few years with such dedicated and devoted people who volunteer so much of their time to this sport.

I would like to echo Dave and Gary's reports – our biggest challenges this year involved finding postseason hosts and fundraising. We continue to struggle late in the season to secure postseason locations, and while we are deeply grateful to those teams who step up again and again we need all of our teams to take on more responsibility. In addition, I would like to repeat our appeal for fundraising assistance.

Thank you to Jill Farmer and her incredible team at Frazier for once again hosting our National Championships, thank you to my fellow Board members and thank you to all of our referees, classifiers and volunteers who have made this season possible.

**Treasurer's Report**  
**Debrah Whitehurst**

First, I would like to thank the other members of the board for all of their hard work and helping me through the transition of taking over the treasurer position this season. Being on the Board has certainly opened my eyes to what it takes to keep the Association up and running. It has been an honor to be able to serve with Gary and Carolyn this year and I want to wish them luck in their future endeavors. They will both be missed tremendously.

We had 41 Registered teams this past season, one of which is a developing team. Registration dues went up this season do to the increase of pay for the Classifiers. We had ten teams that paid for an International player, which those funds were/are being used for developmental rugby in the here in the United States



The biggest struggle the Association has is the rising cost of post season and fund raising. With the rising cost of travel, the membership fees aren't enough to cover post-season expenses. We still have a hard time with securing and maintaining sponsorships to off set the cost of these events.

Due to the early date of Nationals this year, our financials are incomplete. The financials you are looking at are only through 2/28/14. Our Fiscal Year ends as of March 31st, so the financial statements for this fiscal year will most likely change as we close out the 2013/2014 Fiscal Year at the end of the month once Nationals is over. I will have them posted on the USQRA website once the fiscal year has ended.

Best of luck to all of the teams who have qualified for Nationals!!

## **Commissioner's Report Dave Mengyan**

As my first year wearing the commissioner sombrero comes to a close, I find myself with an even greater appreciation for those who wore this hat before me. It's been an interesting learning curve but hopefully most of those bumps are in the rearview mirror. And while weather has caused tournaments to be cancelled before, I don't recall having two of them cancelled in the south on separate weekends. I talked to Mother Nature and she agreed to take it easier on us next year.

The new transfer rule was tested with 20 players moving around the league. And while all were able to meet the new documentation requirements, two did not qualify for postseason because their team never rostered them. We have modified the process to help teams remember to roster their transfers in the future.

The combination of a compressed window and lack of teams willing to host a postseason tournament made the playoffs a challenge. I'd like to thank all the postseason hosts for their efforts, especially Jeremy Hannaford in Seattle and Coratio Vinson in Montgomery for pulling tournaments together at the last minute so that teams in their Section were able to compete. Hosting a postseason tournament is an opportunity for your team to raise money and to gain a stronger footing in your community. For those teams who haven't hosted a postseason tournament recently or who only co-host tournaments, I'll be calling on you to host postseason events in 2015 and 2016.

You'll notice that this year's National Championship tournament has been somewhat streamlined. Two existing sponsors decreased donations by a total of nearly \$10,000 this year,



causing us to pull back on the formal banquet and the video stream. We're working hard to generate additional resources and have already begun courting some significant new revenue opportunities for next season. If you are interested helping us here, please see me after the AGM.

Finally, I'd like to express my appreciation to everyone who has helped me transition into my new role. Coach Gumbert has been a great support, as has everyone on the Board and our committees. The time and effort they invest continues to exceed my expectations. Thank you!

## **Atlantic North RAC Report**

### **Bill Bouffard**

The 2013/2014 season had the Atlantic North Region with 6 active teams and one inactive this season with one active team being brand new NEP Wildcats: CT Jammers, NY Warriors, Magee Eagles, DC Capital Punishers, WNY Wreckers (Developmental Team) and the Tri State Vengeance (Developmental Team): The East Coast Cripples were on the down-low again this season. Four of these eligible teams withdrew from post season. The EWF New York Warriors and NRH Capitol Punishers were to proceed on to Sectionals but Sectionals were canceled due to extreme weather. A play-in game is being held at Nationals to determine the 16<sup>th</sup> seed between Brooks Bandits and the NY Warriors.

- Tournaments held:
  - ◆ Rugby Rampage (Oct 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>) – NEP Wildcats
  - ◆ Beast of the East (Nov 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>)– Philly - Magee Eagles.
  - ◆ Al Youakim Invitational – NY Warriors with co-host CT Jammers
  - ◆ Connecticut Classic (Dec 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>)– CT Jammers with co-host NY Warriors
  - ◆ Maryland Capitol Clash (Jan 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>)– NRH Capitol Punishers
- Referees
  - ◆ Bob Lopez - NY
  - ◆ Chandler Bullard – NEP
  - ◆ Josh Kearns
  - ◆ Several others (see Bob Lopez)
- Classifiers
  - ◆ Heidi Fullerton – NEP
  - ◆ Cindy Ellis- NEP



- ◆ Colleen Bittenbender
- ◆ Louise Sarofeen – NEP
- ◆ Several others (see Cindy Ellis)
- Post season host
  - ◆ The NEP Wildcats were going to host Regionals this year but with enough teams withdrawing, they decided not to host a Regional tournament so as to not force the transferring teams to travel when they were advancing on to Sectionals anyway. The Wildcats will likely try to host Regionals or Sectionals next season.
- Clinics -Nothing scheduled/hosted.
- Future
  - ◆ Our goal is to have a postseason host established before December so teams can plan ahead.

While 4 teams dropped from post season for financial and competitive reasons, two teams from our Region did move on to Sectionals. The NRH Capitol Punishers and NY Warriors both attempted to attend Sectionals in Atlanta, GA but due to really bad weather the tournament was canceled. To Sectionals had to be determined based on seeding with the 4<sup>th</sup> spot from the Atlantic or 16<sup>th</sup> seed at Nationals being determined by an elimination game to be played prior to the start of Nationals between Brooks Bandits and the NY Warriors.

### **Items of interest:**

**Post Season:** Another post season with only two teams desiring to move on. I can't say that it was all financial this year. It's the level of competition. Most of the Region is just not at a level to compete in post season.

**Recruitment/Fundraising:** We welcome a team to the Region with the addition of the WNY Wreckers (Developmental Team) from northwestern New York. They are just at the point of finding chairs and holding practices. They have not attended a tournament yet but hope to next season.

Fundraising continues to be a very big issue for teams. Travel is expensive and where each team in the Region is hosting a tournament, costs add up fast. Again this year Connecticut joined forces with New York to host a tournament in Connecticut. There is a strong drive to promote our sport by getting us into colleges and communities to do exhibitions and fundraisers. We are seeing more of this all the time. Hopefully this will translate into \$\$\$ for our sport.

That's it in nutshell for the Atlantic North!



**Atlantic South RAC Report  
Dan Caldwell**

Not Submitted.

**Heartland North RAC Report  
Sue Tucker**

Not Submitted

**Heartland South RAC Report  
Bob Lujano**

Not Submitted

**Mountain East RAC Report  
Chuck French**

Not Submitted

**Mountain West RAC Report  
Joe Delagrave**

The Mountain West Region was a little disappointing this year. The Utah Scorpions did not compete in the postseason again this year and were not seen at tournaments they normally attend. Tucson, which changed its name to the Roadrunners, tried to put together a solid team with an import from Brazil and some players transferring but unfortunately it didn't work out quite as planned. They went to Sectionals with 4 players totaling 5.5 points and fought hard to qualify for Nationals in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. U of A, fresh off its 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish in Division 2 in 2013, had to deal with some injuries this year and were unable to qualify for Nationals. The Phoenix Heat has traveled both to the east coast (Coloplast International) and the west coast (Best of the West) in search of the best rugby and have come out unscathed since November with a 20-0 record.

Tournaments Held:

- Duel in the Desert October 2013
- U of A Wildcat Clash December 2013
- Phoenix Rugby Rave February 2014



Referees:

- Andy Miller
- TJ Jackson
- See Andy for more...

Classifiers:

- Katie Milner
- Anne Hart
- See Katie for more....

Postseason Host: None this year...U of A has said they will host Sectionals in 2015 and Phoenix is putting in a bid for Division 1 Nationals for 2015

Clinics: I am in talks with the Virginia G. Piper Sports & Fitness Center to put on a clinic in late August, early September 2014.

## **Pacific North RAC Report**

### **Ed Suhr**

It was a pretty busy season in the Pacific North region. The region is comprised of five teams: Portland Pounders, Seattle Slam, Boise Bombers, Nor Cal Quake and the Sierra Storm. The Slam hosted an invitational in early October in Tacoma, the Storm hosted one in Reno in late October and Boise hosted one in November. The Pounders hosted their tournament in January, while the Storm hosted a second event in Sacramento. However, things got a little dicey when it came to Sectionals. Nobody from the Pacific section had put a bid together and it seemed like most teams were waiting for someone else to step up instead of putting forth a good faith effort to host the sectional. Thankfully, Seattle put things together on short notice and hosted Sectionals for the second year in a row.

Hosting a postseason tournament can be very challenging and every team in the section should take on this burden at some point. Any team that has not hosted Sectionals in the last few years should start looking into doing it now so that they can ascertain what is feasible with planning. These things will never happen if teams wait until the fall before exploring options and putting together the necessary infrastructure to properly host a tournament. Hosting has many benefits... teams get to showcase themselves and the sport, they get to recruit volunteers, prospective athletes and sponsors. All these things help to build a community that can sustain their team in the future. Teams need to put in the time and effort to reap these benefits.



On a positive note, we now have four active referees in the region and a number of classifiers. We need to continue to develop more referees. With the amount of activity in the region, there should be enough work to keep them busy.

All the teams in our region seem healthy and thriving. We expect all of them back next season and look forward to another competitive season.

## **Pacific South RAC Report**

### **Andy Cohn**

It was a bit of a quiet year in the Pacific South but a good one.

Many of the teams in this section started their seasons at Vegas' Helter Skelter tournament in October.

Best of the West continued to deliver quality rugby for twenty plus years with another successful event that featured national/international teams and players.

Northridge hosted a small tournament that included teams from the region.

Seven teams competed at the Pacific sectionals - Las Vegas, Nor-Cal, Sierra, Sharp, Seattle, Boise and Portland. From that Las Vegas and Nor-Cal advanced to Division One Nationals, while Sharp and Seattle will be representing the Pacific Section in Division Two. Huge thank you to the Seattle team and everyone involved for producing a quality Sectional.

## **USQRRR Referee Report**

### **Kerin Banfield**

This has been another busy and successful year for the officials in the USQRRR.

- 1. Clinics held during the past year** – The past year we conducted only one referee clinic, which was held in Reno, NV. There were a total of 6 participants, all of whom passed the written examination and got court time. Only one official was certified, Travis Adkins, primarily due to not having sufficient time to floor test the other candidates. We plan to hold a follow up clinic in the fall to complete the certification process with the other candidates. Thanks to Kelli Kaliszewski, Todd Jackson and April Wolfe for instructing this clinic.
- 2. Member Development** – Three officials passed the certification for promotion to higher level during the season. Congratulations to Kristin Little, Karen Bauthier and Matt Smith, who all earned “B” level certification.



**3. USQRRA officials at international events:**

Mitch Carr, Darren Roberts officials, Bob Lopez Technical Director – Americas Zonal Championship, Kerin Banfield and Bob Lopez officials at European Zonal Championship in Brussels, Belgium. Donna Sebok – Invitational tournament in Australia, Aaron Banfield instructed at the Maximus event in Bogota, Colombia.

4. USQRRA members officiated 929 games at 37 events (through Sectionals) during this season.
5. Our total membership stands at 45, with 39 “active” (fully certified w/ game activity in 2012-2013 season) referees:
  - 12 – “A”, 13 – “B”, 17 – “C”
  - Membership distribution by Section
    - Atlantic – 11
    - Heartland – 15
    - Mountain – 11
    - Pacific – 8

Marsha Bailey, who has served the sport as an official and RAC for over 20 years will retire at the end of the season. Aaron Banfield, who has served the sport as an official and as a past board member for 23 years will retire at the end of the season. Marsha and Aaron will be recognized at the USQRA banquet. We wish Marsha and Aaron the very best in their new phase of life!

6. For the second consecutive year the USQRRA held an advanced clinic for all officials selected to work the Nationals tournament. We plan to have another clinic this year, with each of our “A” level officials taking on a specific topic. We will focus on casebook scenarios and special situations.
7. The USQRRA Executive Board has not seen or reviewed any proposals or resolutions to be considered at this year’s AGM.
8. I have officiated the sport for 14 seasons and served on the board for over 8 seasons. This year, I have the privilege of serving the sport as Chairperson of the referees association. I have learned a lot, made plenty of mistakes, and hopefully managed to make a few positive contributions along the way. I have especially enjoyed working together with the USQRA leadership to forge what I believe is an effective and productive relationship. I have decided that the time has come for me to step aside and look for other ways to serve. I will always appreciate the relationships developed during this time, and I do plan to continue officiating as long as I am able. Thanks to everyone for your support and friendship!



Sincerely,

Kerin Banfield  
Chairperson, USQRA

### USQRA Classifier Report Paul Sawicki

	<b>201</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>2012</b>
<b>Tournaments with Official Panels</b>	<b>4</b>				
	<b>9</b>		11		9
Slam on the Sound					
Raleigh Rumble					
Iron Rumble Tournament					
Southern Slam Jacksonville					
Portland Pounders Invitational					
Phoenix-Rave tournament					
Pacific Sectionals					
Mountain Sectionals					
Nationals (2)-Div I / Div II					
<b>Atlantic Sectionals-Cancelled due to Weather</b>					
<b>Heartland Sectionals-Insufficient Classifier Availability</b>					
<b>New Players Classed</b>	<b>38</b>		46		30
			(2 were classed up, 1 was classed		
<b>Players affected by new Trunk Tests</b>	<b>3</b>		Ineligible)		
<b>Basic Classifier Workshops</b>	<b>5</b>		3		3
<b>Advanced Classifier Workshops</b>	<b>1</b>		0		1
<b>New USQRA Classifiers</b>	<b>6</b>		13		4
<b>USQRA Classifiers active this year</b>	<b>19</b>		18		18
<b>New IWRP Classifiers Trained Total:(11)</b>	<b>1</b>		1		3



	201	2013	2012
Tournaments with Classifier Representation (T-classes and replacement cards provided)	4 0	1	4

### Clinic Report

Ed Suhr

In the past year, we have held three player clinics. The first was an “Under 25” camp hosted by the University of Houston in June. The camp went very well with instruction provided by Team USA members Jason Regier and Chuck Aoki. The second was more team based and hosted in Augusta, GA in July. Amy Bohn came in to provide instruction. The third camp was held in Washington, DC in August. Troy McGuirk led the very successful camp.

We already have interest from Chicago and West Palm Beach for clinics this summer. Now is the time to decide if a USQRA clinic would benefit your team or area. If you’re interested in hosting a clinic, you can download a copy of the clinic application from the resource page or contact me at [esuhr@aol.com](mailto:esuhr@aol.com).

I have been clinic coordinator for a number of years and it is time to turn the position over to someone else. If you are interested in the position, please contact me or the Commissioner.

### Postseason Review

#### 2013 Atlantic Sectionals

Tournament Director – Matt Edens

Shepherd Center, Atlanta, GA

Date of Sectional: February 14-16, 2014

Cancelled.

#### 2013 Pacific Sectionals

Tournament Director – Jeremy Hannaford

Tacoma, WA

Date of Sectional: February 21-23, 2014

Not Submitted.



**United States Quad Rugby Association**

**2013 Mountain Sectionals**

**Tournament Director – Chuck French  
Pearland, TX**

**Date of Sectional:** February 28-March 2, 2014

Not Submitted.

**2013 Heartland Sectionals**

**Tournament Director – Coratio Vinso  
Montgomery, AL**

**Date of Sectional:** March 7-19 2014

Not Submitted.

**Wheelchair Specs/Equipment Committee**

James Gumbert, Troy McGuirk

Not Submitted

**Hall of Fame Committee**

Brad Mikkelsen

Not Submitted

**Competition Committee**

Rick Mason, James Gumbert, RACs

*Responsibilities:*

- A. Develop and present Sectional and National playoff structure to the Association by November 15*
- B. Seed representative teams on a Regional, Sectional and National level on a biannual basis.*
- C. Monitor the designation of D1 and D2 level teams in relation to postseason play.*
- D. Other duties as assigned by the Executive Committee as it relates to postseason play.*

**2013/14 Season**

**Seeding:**



The biggest challenge for the Competition Committee continues to be the seeding of registered teams on a regional, sectional and national basis.

This season's seeding process was complicated by:

1. Delayed &/or incomplete reporting of tournament results.
2. Tournament cancellations due to weather and/or poor attendance.
3. Member teams playing smaller (2-3 team) regionally based tournaments designed to meet player 2 game qualifying requirements. Several of these smaller "tournaments" were neither listed nor reported.

There is a definite need to formalize the process of listing and reporting of all Association tournaments games that are used by participating teams in order to meet player two-game qualifying requirements.

The timely reporting and posting of all tournament results is critical to the seeding process:

1. Provides those involved with the seeding process an accurate picture by which to compare teams, especially as it relates to team composition (ie. missing/guest players).
2. Provides the Commissioner with information as it relates to the two game requirement.
3. Provides all Association teams with competitive information on other teams performance, especially those from out of their respective regions.

#### **Seeding Sub-Committee:**

The Competition Committee formed a Seeding Sub-committee to look at the overall process of seeding member teams for both in-season ranking and post season competition. The sub-committee looked at defining and prioritizing the criteria to be used in the seeding process. The guidelines developed were provided to the seeding committee for guidance, and used in further development of a statistically based seeding model. The guidelines developed are listed in Addendum 1.

#### **National Seeding Model:**

The Competition Committee continued testing of a statistically based "Beta" National Seeding Model. Although the results proved promising, it requires further refinement.

#### **Future Plans**

1. **Tournament Tracking Process:** The Competition Committee will continue development of a centralized system of tracking the various aspects of all Association tournaments.
  - A. Develop comprehensive tournament tracking process in centralized location (i.e. website)
    1. Complete on-line listing of all tournaments
      - a. Date, time, location



- b. Tournament director w/ contact information
    - c. Listing of all participating teams and rosters
  2. Tournament Reporting
    - a. Final tournament results (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc.)
    - b. Individual game scores
    - c. Posting of individual game score sheets.
    - d. Means of tracking of intra-team performance (i.e. head to head, common opponent).
  3. Seeding
    - a. Provide the membership with updated seeding on a bi-annual basis
2. **National Seeding Model:** The Competition Committee will continue work on a statistically based model to be used in evaluating each team's seasonal performance in relation to seeding.
  - A. Continued refinement of the National Seeding Model (BETA)
    1. Increased statistical factor analyses
      - a. Develop a method of evaluating the relative strength of each team, considering participating players at a given tournament. This will provide a more accurate picture of a particular teams "strength" at a given tournament
      - b. Further refine the process of evaluating the strength of individual tournaments. This will provide additional means of evaluating a team's performance through the course of a season.
      - c. Develop a comprehensive method of analyzing intra-team performance.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

Rick Mason, Chair  
Competition Committee

**Addendum 1.** Seeding Guidelines: Developed by seeding sub-committee in 2013/14.

#### **USQRA - Seeding Guidelines**

- A. Initial Season Rankings**
  1. Based on previous seasons final rankings.
  2. Ranking adjustment made by the seeding sub-committee after roster submissions.
    - Adjustments based on team addition/subtractions.
    - Adjustment due date - Oct 30.
- B. Mid-Season Rankings**



1. Based on 1<sup>st</sup> half results.
  2. Utilizes National Seeding Model
  3. Updated Jan. 1
- C. Regional and Sectional Seeding**
1. Based on average of best tournament (1) result from each half of the season.
  2. Utilizes
    - i. National Seeding Model
    - ii. Input from Seeding Sub-committee
  3. If a team has only one tournament result from either half of the season, and utilizes a guest player(s) they are assigned the value of the last placed team(s).
  4. Deadline - 20 days prior to start of Regionals/Sectionals
- D. Nationals Seeding**
1. Based on average of two regular season tournaments and sectionals results.
  2. Utilizes:
    - i. Input from Competition Committee (per bylaws) comprised of:
      1. RAC's
      2. Commissioner
      3. Committee Chair
    - ii. National Seeding model
  3. Deadline – Two (2) weeks prior to Nationals
- E. Season End Rankings**
1. Based on:
    - i. Nationals Results (positions 1-16)
    - ii. National Seeding Model (positions 17+)

**General Guidelines:**

1. Only tournaments played with officially rostered players count toward national seeding.
2. Teams use alternate name when utilizing guest players. (i.e. “Portland Pounders B”).
3. All tournament score sheets are due to the Secretary within two weeks and will be posted on the USQRA website.
4. All Seeding/ranking results will be posted on USQRA website.

**2013/14 Seeding Sub-Committee Members:**

- Joe Delagrave
  - Randy Gilmer
  - Heather Schultz
  - Justin Stark
  - Andy Zimmer
  - Rick Mason, Chair
- Ex-officio: Dave Mengyan, Commissioner; Gary Pate, President



### **Rules Committee**

James Gumbert, Bob Murray, Dave Ceruti, Marty Frierson

Not Submitted

### **Web Committee**

James Gumbert, Dave Mengyan, Jason Regier, Bill Bouffard

Not Submitted

### **Fundraising Committee**

Nick Long, James Ezell, Bob Murray

Not Submitted

### **Constitution and Bylaws Committee**

Carolyn Odom, James Gumbert, Gary Pate, Nick Long, Rick Mason

A slow year with only three proposals submitted by athletes and none from the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. There were some growing pains with the institution and execution of the many amendments from last year, but we are very pleased with the results. We welcome your feedback on last year's changes.

### **Team USA**

Mandy Goff

While 2012 did not exactly pan out as we had hoped, 2013 proved to be a monumental and extraordinary year for USA Wheelchair Rugby. There were sixteen athletes named to the 2013 training squad, only five of those were athletes that returned after the London Paralympic Games. Of the remaining 11, all but two had been a part of Team Force at some point. This is a prime example of how successful the current athlete development pipeline is and reinforces the need for it. In addition to the new team chemistry, we were facing the harsh reality of finding an assistant coach. After careful review and a lot of discussion, Sue Tucker, long time USQRA club coach and Force assistant coach, assumed the role and we knew she was going to be a great fit.



The season began in April shortly after the conclusion of the USQRA season and we knew it would be a rebuilding and developmental year. Little did we know we would compete on three continents and win three gold medals. The team held four training camps at Lakeshore Foundation in preparation for the Denmark Wheelchair Rugby Challenge in June and the 2013 Americas Championships in September. The initial plan was to host a camp each month from April to September, but early in the summer we were approached by Australia to attend their Tri-Nation Series in September. Not only did they extend an invitation to attend, they were going to cover all costs with the exception of our flights. The offer was too good to pass up and we knew there had to be a way to make it happen, so cutting a camp in June, September, and decreasing the recruiting budget made it possible.

As stated above, we originally had planned for two international competitions in 2013 and were blessed with a third. The first held in Denmark, just nine months after the devastating defeat against Canada and loss of our number one spot, this tournament proved to be redemption time for USA. Finishing 5-0 for the tournament, USA defeated the current Paralympic Gold medalist, Australia, in the final game to clinch the championship and that coveted number one spot. In addition to the first place finish, Chad Cohn was voted best class one, Derrick Helton as best class two, and Chuck Aoki as best class three.

Training camps continued through the summer and the young team continued to gel and feed off the high of our experience in Denmark. Late in July, it was decided that the same team who competed in Denmark would travel to Australia to compete in what would now be the first competition of its kind. The Australian Paralympic Committee (APC) made a decision to showcase the sport, make it a ticketed event, and host the tournament outdoors in the Sydney city center right in front of St. Mary's Cathedral. The tournament did not come without issues, extreme heat in the day and chilly temperatures at night, but it truly was a monumental event and games between USA and Australia hosted sellout crowds with people watching from behind the gated court. With two easy wins over New Zealand, USA had their work cut out for them against the Aussies. They split the two pool games, 1-1, and met again in the finals where USA claimed victory and proved once again that we belong on top.

With two great tournaments under our belts, and tenacious training time together for six straight months, USA still had to face the elephant in the room; the rematch against Canada. We knew it was inevitable and would take place at Americas Championship. We were on home soil, prepared and poised to defend our Americas Championship title. USA went 6-0 through the tournament and our first match up against Canada came on day three. It had been over a year since we had seen them on the court and we would not stop until we won; that we did! The team met back with them in the gold medal game and came away with a convincing win, 63-40, making it three straight Americas Championship gold medals. Victory never tasted so sweet! Again, we had three athletes that were individually recognized; Chad Cohn was voted best class one, Derrick Helton as best class two, and Chuck Aoki as best class three.



At the conclusion of a fantastic season, the discussion of USA Wheelchair Rugby and current High Performance Managing Organization (HPMO), Lakeshore Foundation, relationship was back on the table. Mentioned in the 2012 report, USA Rugby had expressed an interest in the possibility of taking over as a National Governing Body (NGB) in the future. The conversations continued throughout the 2013 and in October, all parties, including the USOC High Performance Team, met and decided that the best thing moving forward for the 2014 season was more of a partnership between the three. Lakeshore would remain the HPMO, and it was the goal of USA Rugby to help promote our sport through raising awareness, fundraising, and creating sponsorship opportunities. To date, they have begun the restructure of the USAWR website, developed a strategic plan to include the three pillars of the partnership, added the team to the USA Rugby Trust website to receive donations, and secured in kind sponsorships through Gatorade, and BLK for product, uniforms, and apparel. They continue to promote our team in presentations with current and future sponsors, and the future looks very bright.

This past December, USA hosted the 2014 Selection Camp and invitations were sent to 36 athletes (according to the selection procedures), 27 of those accepting and nine who declined (two of those who accepted, later declined last minute due to personal reasons). There were three athletes who protested themselves for an invitation and of those, only two got the required paperwork and video into the committee by the deadline; both were extended an invitation and accepted. Two athletes who accepted the invitation to tryouts later had to file for medical exemptions, of which both were granted. During the two and a half day tryout camp, 27 athletes competed for what would in the end become 16 spots on the 2014 National Team Training Squad. Of the two medical exemptions, only one was given a spot on the training squad. The selection committee consisted of one administrator, three coaches, and one player representative. Those members were USAWR Program Manager, Mandy Goff, USAWR Head Coach, James Gumbert, USA Force Head Coach, Dave Ceruti, USAR Assistant Coach, Sue Tucker, and former USAWR Paralympic Gold Medalist and former team member, Will Groulx. The committee made the decision to name 16 to the training squad and name 12 to the World Championship team on or before July 13, 2014. With ten returning from the 2013 team, we welcome back three from the London 2012 team, and two new Team Force athletes. One former athlete from the Beijing Gold Medal team was named to the squad, but due to a USADA sanction that had not yet been served; this athlete had to reenter the testing pool and serve a two year suspension and will be ineligible for national team and USQRA level play until 2016. At the conclusion of the suspension, we have high hopes that he will return to tryouts and compete for a spot to attend the Rio 2016 Games.

USA will host four training camps during the 2014 season, all hosted at Lakeshore Foundation, and two international competitions. Canada Cup will take place June 16-22, 2014 in Vancouver, BC and the IWRF World Championships August 1-10, in Odense, Denmark, where USA will defend its 2010 title and possible automatic qualification for Rio 2016. In addition to the two



competitions, Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby will be attending our May camp and give us yet another prospect for a “friendly” competition against a quality team. We look forward to their visit and continue to build our international relationships for possible future opportunities. We continue to work closely with the USOC High Performance team to improve the High Performance Plan (HPP) each cycle. Our top priorities remain support for national team training camps and competitions, to include high performance services (strength and conditioning, sports psychology, Dartfish), direct athlete support (DAS) for the athletes, an increase for staff support, and Team Force training camps and competitions. We remained the same this year on the support for DAS, which is positive, but we were cut substantially in overall allocation. While we are grateful to receive any funding from the USOC, this year will be extremely difficult and we will depend a lot on outside donations and support, much of what USA Rugby will be helping with.

In September, the USOC rolled out opportunities for NGB’s to apply for VA funded grants to include the addition of military athletes as a potential pipeline for Paralympic sport and future games. Lakeshore and USAR worked together and submitted a proposal and were awarded a grant for the 2013-14 sessions. The letter of intent included deliverables such as a site visit/demonstration at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in order to recruit potential athletes, to include an invitation for a few to attend a future national team or Force training camp, and to be matched with mentor athletes currently training on the team. It is the hope that one or two could emerge and be invited to a future selection camp. Beyond just the athlete pipeline, we will also use this opportunity to develop one or two coaches through our coaching certification program and send one current or former athlete to the National Wheelchair Veterans Games in August to serve as an ambassador for our sport.

A new addition to the team this season is a staff position dedicated specifically to strength and conditioning. Over the past two years we worked closely with ADAPT training out of Portland, but the cost far outweighed the benefit for us. We definitely learned a lot from the services they provided, but it just didn’t fit with what we were looking for. In October we released a volunteer staff opening for the position and interviewed four very qualified candidates, including one internal staff candidate, and came out very happy with our decision. We are pleased to welcome Steve Pate, Paralympic Gold Medalist, to the USAWR staff and know that with his experience and passion for training, he will continue to develop our athletes and keep us poised to remain the number one team in the world.

It is amazing how much difference a year’s time can make, and we truly have experienced the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. Through it all, we remained together as a family, weathered the storm, and came out on top. We continue to learn and grow every single day and through dedication and commitment, USA will move forward in a positive manner consistently striving for excellence.

## **Team Force**



## Heather Campbell

I accepted the team leader position in July 2013. In August of 2013 we named Mr. Dave Ceruti the head coach and in October 2013 named Mr. Chris Cook as the assistant coach.

October 23<sup>rd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> 2013 started the season for Team Force with tryouts held at the Lakeshore Foundation. 31 athletes submitted a request for an invitation to attend and all were granted the opportunity. Over the course of the three days cuts were made starting on day two, with the final team being announced after the last session on the 26<sup>th</sup>. 12 players were named to the squad as well as three alternates. In addition to players, staff also tried out and four members were selected. In addition Ms. Kris Gratias was brought on for medical support. The selection committee included Dave Ceruti (Force Head Coach,) James Gumbert (USA Head Coach,) Gary Pate (USQRA President,) Justin Stark (Player Rep,) Mandy Goff (USA Team Leader,) and myself. The team members and staff are under a two-year commitment to the team.

November 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> 2013 we hosted our first training camp at the Lakeshore Foundation. All players named to the team as well as the alternates attended. Additionally Coach James Gumbert attended for additional coaching support.

Force was scheduled to attend the Knock and Roll Tournament in Florida in January, but due to lack of participation the tournament was cancelled.

We will hold two more training camps this season- April and June at the Lakeshore Foundation. Both of these camps will be joint camps with Team USA. Two of our players, Cj Brown, and Lee Fredette have been named to the USA squad and will be vying for a spot for their upcoming tournaments. If they don't get named to a spot they will continue their play with Force.

Team Force has ordered team gear to include jerseys, sweatshirts, and polos for use when we travel to tournaments. The gear for staff was paid through the Force budget while the players purchased their own. The logo was updated for use moving forward.

We are in the planning stages to attend the Switzerland Preparation Tournament in Zurich, Switzerland in July. We will travel on 5-6 July, train 7-9 July (both with private team practices, and two friendly's with team Switzerland,) rest on 10 July, compete 11-13 July, and travel home on 14 July. Teams in the tournament at this point include Finland, Germany, Great Britain, and Switzerland. The team is busy fundraising and working hard to make this tournament an option for all team members.

The Swiss Preparation Tournament will be our last event for this season. At the completion of the tournament we will begin plans for the following season- camps and tournaments.



## PROPOSALS

### **Autonomic Nervous System Dysfunction**

Submitted by:

Shawn Meredith, Assistant Coach Texas Stampede

This proposal:

Amends the bylaws.

The specific provision that will be changed:

Bylaws, Article III, Section 1, Player Classification

State the language of the proposal:

“A player exhibiting significant Autonomic Nervous System dysfunction (consistent with a complete cervical spinal cord injury) shall receive a half-point deduction.”

State the reason the proposal should be passed:

The wheelchair rugby classification system has been developed to ensure fairness and inclusion of all levels of players. Originally, only players with quadriplegia resulting from spinal cord injuries were eligible to play. The inclusion of players with different types of disabilities has allowed the sport to grow, becoming faster and more exciting. However, the current classification procedure evaluates a player’s voluntary muscle function and does not address Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) impairment. Players with ANS dysfunction have limited ability to regulate heart rate, blood pressure, and body temperature in response to exercise, thereby negatively affecting sport performance.

Focusing solely on voluntary muscle function puts players with ANS impairment at a disadvantage compared to players with an intact ANS within the same classification.



## **Proving Player Participation**

Submitted by:

Lee Browning

This proposal:

Amends the Bylaws

The specific provision that will be changed:

Article III, Section 7

State the language of the proposal:

“All teams that agree to enter a tournament are obligated to stay for all of the team’s scheduled games. If a team has to miss a game(s), they must notify the Tournament Director as soon as possible. When a team does not show up to their scheduled game(s), the Tournament Director will/must notify the USQRA. The USQRA will impose fine on the offending team. The fine will act as compensation for the verifiable monetary obligations that result from the missed game(s). These verifiable monetary obligations exist no matter what the reason for the missed game(s).

The fine will include the following amounts: referee cost, cost of the tournament location for the game(s) missed, if the opposing team(s) has to stay for an additional day at the tournament in anticipation of playing the game(s), the opposing team’s cost for staying the extra night at the hotel, and, if this situation causes a break in the contract with the host hotel, any penalty that the hotel imposes on the Tournament Director. Other verifiable monetary obligations could be added if warranted. The fine and the list of verifiable expenses will be included in the game results and will be posted on the USQRA website to notify future Tournament Directors.

The offending team must pay the fine before the beginning of the postseason games. If the offending team does not participate in postseason games, the fine will be added to their registration in the following season. When the fine is paid, the USQRA will compensate the tournament’s organizing entity. The tournament’s organizing entity will compensate any other entity that was affected. Neither the USQRA nor the tournament organizing entity will be liable until the fine is paid by the offending team.”



State the reason the proposal should be passed:

When teams leave tournaments early it is an unnecessary and added expense to the tournament host. It is a disappointment to the fans and reflects poorly on the sport as a whole.

## **Profound Deafness**

Submitted by:

Craig Mills

This proposal:

Amends the bylaws.

The specific provision that will be changed:

Article V, Section 10

State the language of the proposal:

“After a muscle bench test and classification has been assigned (up to a maximum classification of 4.0 in conjunction with an in-game review and proof of audiogram) to a player, his/her classification shall be reduced by 0.5 points with proof of submission of audiogram proving profound or severe or total hearing loss in both ears. The audiogram must have been performed within the last calendar year by a certified audiologist and will also be required for submission at every reclassification afterwards until permanent classification has been assigned or decided upon.

If a player with proven profound or severe hearing loss is in fact classified at 4.0: with the 0.5 deduction applied for deafness after submission of his/her audiogram, the USQRA shall deem that player eligible for USQRA regular-season play ONLY and can be listed as an ALTERNATE only for his/her rostered team. This player will not be eligible for any USQRA postseason, national team or sanctioned IWRFF play at any time.”

State the reason the proposal should be passed:

This bylaw should be passed because there are, at times, very unique situations/conditions/disabilities that does not simply fall in line with normal



classification procedures, and as such, in my very rare and unique condition, with the combination of my profound deafness, hereditary peripheral neuropathy and diminished muscle function should put me in line with a 3.5 classification. I wish to set standards for those ultra-rare and unique disabilities and conditions to be also open for consideration for classification.

I also would like profound/severe deafness to be included for possible classification consideration because it absolutely affects on-court gameplay. I cannot understand just by listening to their speech/voice, if I am not looking directly at their face. I (or any individual with profound/severe hearing loss) will mostly rely heavily on lip reading, and/or in addition with American Sign Language... the majority of us have success communicating by using face-to-face dialogue. Trying to lip read a teammate's instruction on the court by having to face them or pay focused attention to communicate, that will take away from/affect gameplay and will likely affect my chair position/transitioning and often at a disadvantage, since chair positioning and transition play is vital in this game. This game also heavily relies on immediate, on-court communication so that everyone is on the same page on offense/defense. I do miss out on that exchange of information and do not have that immediate skill/advantage at my disposal. That disadvantage alone warrants a .5 deduction in my opinion, and I ask for it to be added and considered as such.

## **Diversity Plan**

### **I. BACKGROUND**

It is important for the USQRA to reflect the demographic changes which are occurring in the United States. Our organization is committed to providing opportunities for full participation of all eligible people through the creation of a Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Plan which includes policies, best practices, and programming which will position the USQRA to increase athlete participation and fan base.

### **II. VISION**

USQRA strives to provide and increase the participation of all eligible individuals without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, or mental or physical disability. We feel strongly that a diversity of thought, perspective, and experience is instrumental in growing the sport of wheelchair rugby.

### **III. DEFINITION**



The USQRA defines Diversity as embracing any collective mixture of differences, similarities, and related tensions as we strive to develop and maintain more inclusive and high performing environments.

Inclusion is defined as creating and maintaining an environment in which contributions and strengths are recognized, optimized, and valued in a way which generates opportunities for adaptability, problem solving, growth, and increased success.

#### IV. STRATEGY

USQRA hopes to increase participation from communities which have historically had low participation as athletes, staff, referees, classifiers, sponsors, or fans by proactively working towards a greater focus on D&I throughout all aspects of the organization.

Objective: Achieve increases in athletic performance, business results, and operational excellence through the incorporation of D&I best practices and program innovation.

##### Initiatives:

- a. Assess the current state of recruitment efforts for diversifying the talent pipeline for athletes, staff, referees, and classifiers.
- b. Increase the retention of diverse talent by increasing an inclusive environment
- c. Attempt to create sources of revenue for both the creation and implementation of D&I initiatives and operating costs.
- d. Increase awareness of D&I issues and successes.

##### Implementation:

- a. Assess the current demographics and recruitment practices, collecting data for racial, ethnic, gender, age, veteran, and disability type for players, staff, referees, and classifiers.
- b. Establish an annual review to determine compliance and progress, and to re-assess the D&I plan and program.
- c. Provide annual and “as-needed” diversity training.
- d. Identify grant opportunities or sponsorships.
- e. Assure media communications have diverse representation.
- f. Assess the current “Code of Conduct” to assure its reflection of and compliance with this policy.

## Candidate Biographies

**President – Bob Lujano**



To whom it may concern:

My name is Bob Lujano. I have been involved in wheelchair rugby for over 15 years and part of wheelchair sports for over 20 years. I am writing to express my interests in being part of the USQRA board. I am currently a RAC for the USQRA.

My interests lie in wanting to be part of our growing sport at a capacity that goes beyond playing. I do aspire to be the president of the board if this position is needed. My qualifications range from being part of the Atlanta Paralympic Organizing Committee (APOC), in which I was a Venue Director for the 1996 Paralympic Games. I also held a job as a Recreation Specialist in which I wrote and implemented recreation programs. My experiences as a wheelchair rugby player in the USQRA, led to being selected as Paralympic Athlete for the 2004 Paralympic Games in Athens, Greece, in which we won a bronze medal.

My current position as an Information Specialist for NCHPAD details disseminating resource information to people with disabilities. I also am in charge of our blog website Endless Capabilities in which I have to produce daily posts. I also produce videos for our website and research best practice information. I am also part of the inclusion movement to integrate adaptive sports at the scholastic and university levels.

I am available to send references and a bio if needed. I appreciate this opportunity.

Sincerely, Bob Lujano

### **1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – Nick Long**

Greetings,

My name is Nick Long and I am submitting my name for re-election as First Vice President of the USQRA.

I have been involved with the sport of quadrugby for the past twelve years as a player with the Michigan Storm or the Grand Rapids Thunder teams. I have coached both teams for a majority of that time. It has also been my pleasure to serve as the First VP for the past two years.

Outside of rugby, I am also the president of Fusion Medical which has been a sponsor of the USQRA for several years. I am also the board President for a local adaptive sports organization called Michigan Sports Unlimited.



If selected, I hope to continue to serve the quadrugby members for an additional four years and also hope to become even more involved in new team development and also expanding our fundraising efforts.

Sincerely,

Nick Long

### **1st Vice President – Joe Delagrave**

Playing rugby since 2006  
USA National team member since 2009  
2013 USA Co-Captain  
RAC from 2011-present  
Attended the AGM 2010-present

I have had a great experience in the USQRA the past 7 seasons. There are a lot of things in the league I love and a few things that need change. This sport has given me so much and I'd like to give back in the form of running for Vice President and hopefully make the sport better during my time on the board.

Thanks  
Joe

### **Secretary – Chuck Aoki**

#### **SUMMARY**

Dedicated and accomplished Paralympic athlete in wheelchair rugby and bronze medalist from the London 2012 Paralympic Games. Comfortable in all professional settings, from an office setting to being in the field. Flexible, hard working and a great communicator. Known for ability to easily adapt to changing situations. Utilizes a passion for people and for interacting with clients to succeed.

#### **EDUCATION**

**Bachelor of Science**, Education. Metropolitan State University, St. Paul, MN, College of Education and Human Development. Anticipated graduation date, May 2014

#### **EXPERIENCE**



**Minnesota North Stars Wheelchair Rugby Club**, Golden Valley, Minnesota 2007-2009;  
2012-Present

**Captain**

- Coached Division II National Champions, 2009.
- Showed strong leadership and teaching ability to players both older and younger.
- Developed and executed a successful game plan that resulted in winning a national championship.

**USA Wheelchair Rugby**, Birmingham, Alabama 2008 - Present

**Athlete**

- Gold medalist at 2009 and 2011 American Zonal Championships
- MVP of 2011 Championships.
- Gold medalist 2010 World Wheelchair Rugby Championships.
- Member of 2012 U.S. Paralympic Team, bronze medalist.

**International Paralympic Committee**, Bonn, Germany. 2013-Present

**Blogger**

- Serve as Blogger for the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), writing articles about experiences as a Paralympic athlete.
- Write for The Paralympian magazine, a publication of the IPC with world-wide readers from many different countries.

**Courage Center**, Golden Valley, Minnesota 2009-Present

**Volunteer**

- Served as assistant coach for a Varsity level wheelchair basketball team.
- Supervised disabled youth in a week-long camp and supervise numerous youth athletic activities.
- Display strong leadership and motivational abilities when working with children in various situations, including both physical activities and social interactions.
- Received positive feedback from many parents and from the youth on motivational and educational skills utilized to engage participants.

**Tucson Wheelchair Rugby Club**, Tucson, Arizona. 2009 - 2012

**Athlete**

- Division I National Champions 2011, 2012.
- 2011 Player of the Year, United States Quad Rugby Association (USQRA).

**Edina Hennipin County Library**, Edina, Minnesota. 2009

**Book Club Leader**

- Designed and implemented activities for a book club for male children, ages 10-11.



- Demonstrated strong leadership and interpersonal skills in working with children.
- Encouraged boys to read; received positive feedback by parents.

**Minnesota Twins Baseball Club**, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

2007

**Human Resources/Stadium Operations Intern**

- Organized and dated numerous documents for the Human Resources department.
- Assisted with on-field activities including game day entertainment and pregame interactions between players and fans.
- Assisted in daily office operations, including emails, phone calls, and document management.
- Provided an energetic and positive presence in the office on a daily basis.
- Finished assigned project, scheduled to take for the entire summer, in two weeks.

**MEDIA APPEARANCES AND RECOGNITION**

- Local TV Appearance on WCCO-TV, Minneapolis, MN, with local TV personality Mike Max.  
<http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2013/06/29/mpls-man-takes-murderball-skills-to-london-paralympics>
- Voice of America News.  
[http://www.voanews.com/content/profile\\_wheelchair\\_rugby\\_athletes\\_josaon\\_reiger-and\\_chuck\\_aoki/1504534.html](http://www.voanews.com/content/profile_wheelchair_rugby_athletes_josaon_reiger-and_chuck_aoki/1504534.html)
- Example of blog for IPC, titled, “Every Sport Matters”.  
<http://www.paralympic.org/blog/chuck-aoki-every-sport-matters>