

USWRA Leadership Session – **Saturday, January 7, 2023**

Next Planned Meeting: February 9, 2023

Present:

Michael Klonowski – Executive Director
Noah Currier – President
Bob Lopez – Commissioner
Michael Cottingham – 1st VP
Daniel Curtis – 2nd VP
Dan Caldwell – Secretary
Marianne Duda – Head of Referees
Sid Christain – Treasurer
Amy Bohn – Head of Classification
Jen Allred – Lakeshore/USAWR
Kerin Banfield – Representative for Referees

Referees Discussion of Nationals – Questions/Canadians:

- Head Officials have been selected for Nationals
- A little short this year, there are a few officials who cant be there
- Will need contact info for the tournament director
- Would like to speak to Amy about classification
- Table officials – can there be a designated volunteer in charge of table officials so the refs can have one point person?
 - Noah said the same organization that did a lot of that last year will be doing it again so they will be familiar with the process
- Will there be a play in game? If Oscar Mike does not make it in, they will make it in automatically and the bottom team will not make it in. NO play in game.
- 20 officials – 108 spots so each official will get 6 games
- Crew will be finalized on Tuesday
- Trying to exchange an official to Canada – flight prices are astronomical, so is there any additional funds to help supplement the cost? The flight is \$765 and budgeted was \$600.
 - Sid thinks the grant we got from Nielsen is a little broader and can cover that
 - Daniel made a motion to cover the additional cost
 - Unanimously passed
- Banquet is planned to be on Friday
- Post season flights can be presented to Sid as one spreadsheet to be reimbursed
 - Sid recommended to get as many people as we can get on Zelle - it is an easy and convenient way to get people reimbursed, on both sides

Side Note:

- Mike K. said that with the passing of Chance Sumner, there had been requests from family to NOT have any social media postings so the league will be respecting those wishes
- Amy asked if there was a policy regarding that across the league with any player's passing?

- Mike K. said it has usually happened organically by conversation with someone close to the family
- Jen asked if the league ever sends anything out about mental health resources. We have not, but it is definitely something we can do in the future.

Classification Status Report:

- Completed Columbus – saw 12 of 33 athletes
- Has sent master list to be posted
- International educator for WWR reached out and they are looking to do Zoom trainings – there will be future trainings as well. Like the refs, are looking to do more international
- SafeSport – what is happening with that?
 - Mike was waiting to hear if people were able to get in after our last meeting
 - Dan said it has been very hit or miss, some people can get in and some can't with no rhyme or reason
 - Dan suggested to table it for this season and roll it out next year
 - Amy asked if we can just get the payment portion ready so that when they host 2 trainings they are working on for the summer so we can test it out
- Staffing Vegas, Birmingham, EC semi-finals and Nationals
- Potential training of 2 people at Nationals
- Spent way under budget for Beast of the East at Columbus (about half for each)
- Unable to staff WC semi finals
 - One request Bradley had was to see if Amy could still come out to represent classification. She is willing to go but wanted to run it past the board for financial reasons before committing.
 - Kerin thinks it is VERY important to have representation from classification at the post season tournaments. Kerin, Marianne, Dan & Bob agreed.
 - She will book a flight and attend
- Database – during the international call, it was learned they also do not have a server. Working with international to make sure that we mimic what they do so that if a build is updated, it is updated on both ends.
- Nationals – 3 full panels, plus chief of classification
 - 4 driving
 - 3 from EC
 - 3 from WC
 - Will need to know if we can get assistance with rooms on Wednesday night for classifiers to get in and be ready to go Thursday. She also asked about alternate airports. There is some leeway since it will be a day early.
 - Any team who has players to be classified will HAVE to be there a day early (on Thursday)
 - Who covers the cost of flights and stipends for post-season? Sid thinks the host covers and then are reimbursed by the league for whatever amount they can. He will double check.
- Asked to choose an AGM date sooner rather than later
 - Last year it was done after Nationals – first weekend in May
 - Bob asked if we might want to do it before Nationals

- Sid said this played in to what he wanted to talk about in changing the fiscal year. It is better if the fiscal year is closed and there is a 30-day window to make sure that everything is in order to be presented.
 - He said that having time to close out all expenses and not have those expenses crossing over two cycles is very helpful.
 - Are we all happy with the current timeframe for Nationals? Having time between the semi-finals and Nationals so that teams have the opportunity to purchase travel.
 - Sid Christain made a motion to close the year out end of May, then standardize the AGM on the second Saturday of June every year.
 - Dan Caldwell seconded
 - Motion passed unanimously
- If we do have resources for legal assistance, it would be helpful to have that budgeted as we move forward.
- HIPAA Compliant Emails:
 - Mike K. can set up an email for every classifier, and they would have a collection spot for everyone to have access. To have HIPAA compliance, it would need to be dual authentication.
 - There needs to be a secure location for players to send all medical records prior to classification.
 - The access can be limited to certain files. It was not recommended to have players drop their information in to one location.
 - They will set up one email that everyone will be able to send their information in and then it will get saved to the protected drive.
- Guest players
 - Players who register and are not on a team for whatever reason, don't technically contribute to the classification costs
 - Amy wants to know if they should pay a "player fee" to be able to play and then have the opportunity to get the classification services that other players have access to
 - Bob said as we work toward sanctioning tournaments, we will make sure this is addressed in that document so that there is a procedure in place for how to handle those players.

Commissioner's questions about Nationals/AGM:

- With the setting of the AGM date, we can start laying out the proposal deadlines
- There has been a question regarding NEW athletes who have played through the season and have not been able to see a classification panel through no fault of their own. They should ALL be seen at Nationals which will make them eligible to play at Nationals.
 - Bob thinks the message to the teams would be, if you plan to have a player who has NOT been classified, you have to make plans to get to Nationals on Wednesday to be seen on Thursday or they will NOT be allowed to play at Nationals.
- Will go with the schedule Bob sent out in November. Once we have the teams, we will set up the games to have the best match ups on the court that will be streaming.

- Selection of Nationals hosts:
 - Mike K has drafted changed to the bid package
 - Bob is in the process of editing and finalizing
 - Once done, we will send out to begin soliciting hosts
 - Bob would like each bid to be a minimum of two years. Once bids are received, would like to work with the board and get feedback from all.
- Amy questioned if we would do the same with semi-finals hosts?
 - Bob said as soon as we had a Nationals date, he began searching for those hosts. It is necessary to have the Nationals date in order to set semi-final dates that are at least 3 weeks out to allow for teams to make travel plans.
 - Noah thought we should nail down and say that Nationals should be in those last two weeks of April. There was a lot of debate about whether it is always possible to make that happen due to Easter, school breaks, etc.
 - We will note that those last two weeks in April are our **preferred** time frame for Nationals, but we will be flexible if the right host were to bid and needed it.
 - Noah pointed out we won't be able to go much later due to the change in the fiscal year now.

Change of the Fiscal Year:

- Thinks the discussion was very good and glad we have made the decision to shift the fiscal year
- Thinks with the hiring of the ED, it might be a good idea to have some written policies for those who want to request funds
 - Mike C had two questions:
 - One, what would this look like?
 - For example, the ED could submit a budget and if the budget is approved, then the treasurer has the authority to grant those funds when requested since it was already approved
 - For any other requests, there could be a policy with certain amounts that are able to be granted without review
 - Mike K said it might be a good idea to do a board review each month for any expenditures
 - Amy said she agreed and thought it would be great to have a policy in place
 - Sid will work on writing that up
- Liability insurance went up about 30%, went from \$12,0000 to \$16,000
- There wasn't much financial activity during the month of December
- Amy asked if the board would like a financial report from the Classifiers and Referees each month. Sid said he never thought it was a bad idea to have more information. They will begin submitting to Sid each month to be distributed to the board.

Written Expenditures Policies for Leadership:

- See above

Create Organizational Chart for the USWRA (Committees and USAWR):

- USAWR:
 - Working with USAWR, grant applications, etc.
 - Jen reached out to Mike K to see if there were any grants for which we could apply for together to make us more marketable internationally.
 - Noah asked if it would be helpful to have a list of places where there is crossover and Jen said yes. She said to that point, it might be a good idea to get a MOU between USAWR and USWRA.
 - Supporting documents can be super helpful and can be formatted to make it easy
 - Amy would like to see classification included in all of that. There was much talk about the collaboration they had before in classification with USAWR.
 - Bob thinks the MOU is a great idea and definitely thinks that should be documented.
 - Jen thinks about the Toyota grant that went to the NWBA and how we as an organization could have been just as marketable to them and, to be honest, wants to compete with them and make the league more visible.
 - Amy wants to make sure that we are sure to be clear in our messaging that we are supportive of ALL levels of play. We don't want the D2 and D3 to feel as though as the support is all geared toward.
- Mike K would like to propose having a rep from USAWR on the board and to have a voting voice. He thinks it may help with collaboration.
 - Mike C said that would have to be presented to the board and have a vote from the membership.
 - He has been in support of everything said up to this point, but he would really like to see the relationship fleshed out before he would agree to changing that. It would be crucial to see what each role would be prior.
 - Jen agrees with Mike C and as we see how that looks, we can make a decision on whether being a voting member makes sense.
 - Amy said that all makes sense because the board members are voted on by the league and it is important to remember that as we look forward.
 - If there is ever a time that USA, refs and classifiers are placed in voting positions, there can be a line of governance that it is agreed that the head of classifications, refs and the USA rep are voted on by a board of their peers, then those people will fill the spots on the board
 - Mike C said there are some mechanisms we can use to allow for voting to happen with final approval by the board
- Delegation of Committees/Heads:
 - It is important to get the committees back in place, assign leadership, and have some accountability for each.
 - Constitution & Bylaws: Mike C (VP1)
 - Competition: Steve Kenny (Bob is on the committee as well)
 - Equipment: Dan Caldwell
 - Hall of Fame: Bob Lopez
 - Safety: Mike C (VP1)
 - Division: Daniel Curtis (VP2)
 - Clinics: Daniel Curtis (VP2)

- Bob thinks that a board member should be on each committee, but it is not necessary that they are the head.
- Daniel also asked about whether the Low Point was going to need a committee. Mike K thinks it would be really good to have some guidance around that. Sid asked if the Low Point League could start officially after the fiscal year ends. He thinks it would help its growth and our management of it. Daniel said he doesn't think the budget portion of that has been fleshed out. Mike K said he thought it would be run through the league. We will add a committee for that. It was recommended that we ask Steve Kearley as the chair and Dan will be the league rep. Dan will reach out to Steve to ask him to take that task on. Marianne also asked if they could have referee representation on that committee as she does also have a concern about staffing. There are 7 teams committed and 4 who have committed to hosting on all 4 corners of the US. Looking at 4 tournaments and a National Championship

Tasks for ED:

- Mike wanted to start by getting a barometer of what is expected of his position, what areas can he improve on and what things he needs to step back from. What has been going well and how do we improve? His perception is that he has really gone hard toward the fundraising portion. Are there any tweaks to be made?
- Amy thinks the view when hired is that there is a LOT in the job description, but the first year would focus on fundraising to get a picture of what things would look and THEN move toward the actual management of the league.
- Dan had the question of how much time is spent on grants, but doesn't see a lot of movement, so just wanted clarification. Mike K said he recently updated it, but there has been focus on other things such as Wreck the Halls and the golf outing.
 - Have applied for 17 grants and believes he can get through the rest of the list that is there in the next few weeks.
 - He said that sometimes what makes things a little sluggish is the additional documentation needed. He finds things that shouldn't take him an extreme amount of time and then those things take longer than he expects.
 - Amy asked if perhaps we should have set up a better communication system in place. Should we have put together evaluation markers? Is there a plan in place for an annual evaluation to determine if we will renew the contract? We do need to come up with an evaluation process. Jen said that the ED at Lakeshore gets reviewed by the board and each year that process looks a little different based on what the year has looked like and what things were taking place in that cycle. She will be happy to share this year's report as it was just closed.
- Communication between the ED and the board:
 - Suggestions to improve this included:
 - Reporting to one board member weekly. Reporting to the board as a whole monthly makes it a little muddy. Agreed that there should be more structure around that. Mike K and Noah will meet weekly, also allowing Noah the opportunity to see how he can be more helpful.

- Working document to include: what has been worked on, status of grants, who has been contacted, etc.
- Reaching out after being denied a grant to see what might make us more attractive next time.
- Reach out to other ED to see what other resources might be available that we haven't tapped into yet.
- Mike K challenged the board: when he throws something out, some response would be greatly appreciated.
- Are there things leadership can do to bring in funds if grants don't come through? Mike K said that if anyone knows of any opportunities, please send them to him and he will pursue.
- It is recommended that 80% raised through Wreck the Halls go to the team that raised it and 20% to the league to be used nationally. This allows each team to use this mechanism to fundraise for their own team but also provides the league additional funding.
- Amy recommended that at Semi Finals and Nationals, Mike have those conversations with teams about what works for them for fundraising. What works one place doesn't necessarily work somewhere else.
- Daniel said that the prospectus looks great, but currently the lowest level is \$10,000 and we may need to look at having some lower rungs out there that people can review. Noah said he would be happy to share his contacts as Mike K said many of his contacts are dried up. He thinks it might be a good thing to include in the proposal that OM might do a match.
- Jen said the prospectus looked great, and that a lot of people only read those one pagers, so it might be nice to quantify what that reach will be for those packages.
- Amy is going to make an introduction to Patty, the ED for ASIA, to Mike so he can get some info from here
- Mike C asked if we have ever thought of reaching out to people who participate in Abilities EXPOS?
- Amy said every once in a while, to get together and brainstorm, might be a good idea. Feeding off of that, as we look ahead to planning future meetings perhaps we have a 2nd meeting some months where it is not mandatory

Fundraiser Feedback:

- Daniel said Giving Tuesday would be a great day to circle on the calendar and find a way to really push that!
- Daniel liked the idea of the 80/20 split.
- Dan asked if we are set up as an Amazon Smile recipient and we are. We get small chunks from them each month (\$20 - \$30). Have we given any thought to pushing that during the holiday season? Mike K said we have done that, but didn't think we got much from it. Daniel said it might be a good idea to add a link to that to the bottom of the FCP.
- Kerin said perhaps if we asked people to change to Amazon during a certain quarter, in order to get people to think about that differently.
- Mike C said he supports the Smile Amazon account, but he doesn't know how much traction we would get on it.

- Dan said he wasn't sure the timing was great. The holiday season is a harder time to get people to donate and it also coincides with times in parts of the country where it is very cold. There was mention of moving to the beginning of the season, Kerin also asked if there was a possibility of scheduling it so it wrapped up around Nationals so that a lot of the swag could be handed out at Nationals.
- Surrounding fundraising, there was some conversation surrounding Bingo. Specifically, in partnering with local Bingo locations. Also, perhaps a big ticket raffle annually, for example a car.
- Mike asked Sid why we are incorporated in FL instead of AL. John Bishop had everything set up. Amy recommended if Mike K is looking for documents, John might be a good person to contact. He said he has and was unsuccessful. He has a call in to the state of FL as he has all the renewals but has not been able to locate the original documentation.

Grant and Golf Outing Updates:

- August 21, 2023
- Currently building the website
- Working on getting the sponsorship packets together
- After these are all set up, what Mike would like is for everyone on the board to reach out to those who know people who do business in the area, or have companies who do business in that area
- Noah will help out where he can, as will Jamie
- Would like to put together a promo video as soon as possible. Daniel says we need B roll and testimonials. It needs to be done with a good camera and audio. Daniel had things lined up in TX but Metal and Muscle fell through. Where are the next tournaments? Who has a connection with someone who has the ability to film and audio and edit those? Mike K thinks we have a lot of B footage and could get some more in Jax when they are there. Will need the driving questions. Can we have the players and staff sign media releases? The waiver already signed has a media caveat so we can use that. Dan/Suzy will send the current rosters we have to Mike K so he can go over the rosters and pick some people who might be good. Daniel said it might be a good idea to talk to one of the moms if any of those chosen are younger side. Mike K asked if the guy in TX would be willing to put together the video again, and Daniel said that wouldn't be his first preference. They haven't spoken in the last couple of years since there hasn't been a lot of fundraising. It might be better to move forward with the OM team.

35th Anniversary Plans:

- Mike K would love to know if anyone has ideas of ways we can commemorate that.
 - Daniel said one of the notes he had from last year is that if we are going to have a gala, if there is not going to be anything actively happening, there can be a reel showing moments through the history, along with the history of the sport for those who may not be as familiar. Including the pics of all the HOFers, pics from each year, etc. He said seeing the evolution over the years is really eye-opening for those who are newer to the sport.

- Terry Vinyard has been posting a lot of videos from the early years. The videos are not of the best quality, but might be worth looking through.
- For the 30th, we created a video.
- Amy said the FB page about Old School Pioneer Wheelchair has LOTS of great pics.
- Daniel said his only feedback would be that when you start embedding videos into a PPT the file size begins to get too large and it lags.
- Mike K said maybe at Nationals we could have a table with a few Hall of Famers there. We could hand out to keychains with a QR code that takes you to the video. Amy said perhaps something that was a little more quad friendly, so maybe a caribiner. Daniel said we could perhaps also have a memory book where people can write their memories of the sport. Amy mentioned that perhaps if we were going to do this, we could post something where people could send pics in for those who aren't on FB. She also said old equipment and jerseys on display might also be a good idea.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Guest players, insurance
 - There are currently not as many players not registered with a team
 - Dan is against guest players in general and would be just as fine if we didn't allow them
- Still need to set up equipment committee
 - Has anyone taken photos of illegal and legal ball holders?
 - If everyone could keep that on their radar, that would be great

Tournament sanctioning:

- Dan and Bob have been working on this. Dan would pretty much like to mimic what the NWBA does. He will pull the sanctioning form they currently use and we can tweak.
- At some point Sid will need to be pulled in to the conversation regarding those Canadian/Guest players.
- Proposing that Canadian teams would pay \$100 - \$150 per year to allow them to be covered under the insurance.
- Amy asked if the tournaments were sanctioned, would they need to follow US rules?
- Sid says having them all registered in our system would be helpful. Both the teams and players.
- Thoughts:
 - No guest players
 - No ineligible players
- Mike C asked guests players as anyone not affiliated with the league or affiliated with the team
 - Dan's suggestion was that if a guest player was required for a team during a sanctioned tournament, the team who took in the guest player's game would NOT count and the other team's would
- Dan & Bob have talked about moving toward requiring scoresheets typed up so they are legible. Most definitely they do not need to be written in pencil as they are too light to be

able to be read once they are scanned. Amy said that classifiers have moved to erasable pens.

- Mike K had talked to some folks who were willing to build some electronic scoresheets that can be used on Ipads. There were questions about whether these would be league sponsored ipads and will there be wifi so they are dependable.
- Daniel said we should move forward with asking teams to fill out the names portion of the scoresheet now so it will be commonplace by next year when we sanction.
- There was conversation regarding the NWBA's policy of letting league sponsors have a guaranteed table at events. Dan stated we had not had that issue at our tournaments, but Amy did report that when she was Magee, it was not an issue of the conflicting sponsors, it was who the sponsoring organization of the team would allow to be there and there were some vendors who they would not approve.

HIPAA Compliant data and emails:

- Mike K and Amy will continue to hammer these details out

Low Point League Plans:

- Dan, Rita Penniman, Steve Kearley and Sarah Leonard have been meeting monthly with Bob joining when he can.
- The interest has been good.
- The change in fiscal year may provide some challenges, but Sid said he didn't think that would be the case. He will be able to defer those registration funds to the next year.
- They have another meeting in about 2 weeks; then will set up a call with the interested teams.
- Once things begin to take shape, we will send out another request to garner more information from players.
- We need to determine a registration fee. We will not be using classification, so won't need to
 - How is the insurance based. It is based on the number of players and number of tournaments.
 - Dan was looking at \$400 - \$500 registration fee. It will be a 3 – 4 month season. Bob chimed in and said that the bylaws now state that the registration fee will be \$500. \$750 for teams with an international fee, IF it is determined we will accept any.
 - Dan said he wouldn't be opposed to allowing Canadian teams, but Bob said that might be a goal for future years.
 - In relation to international players, Mike K said he would recommend against international players. He said many of the low-pointers who are getting involved due to having more opportunity to play and often lose that when international players come in.
 - Daniel said something that might be worth discussing is the desire to possibly attend a tournament in Switzerland next year.
 - When budget was originally discussed, the numbers were around \$40,000 - \$50,000.
 - It will be important when the conversations take place this time that it is clear that this league will be self-funded.

- Sid asked if there was any way to include low-point rugby in the Nielsen request. Daniel said he thought there might be some ways we could offset some of the cost the summer of travel to Switzerland by sponsoring clinics and development.
- Daniel asked Dan if we could resend the applications for the flow-through grants to team reps. The deadline was December 31st, but he has only gotten 3 applications. He would like to extend the deadline to February 28th.
- Mike K said we need to make sure we get Team USA on board with these clinic dates to make sure we are getting talent there to help build that timeline. Daniel said he thinks that the host should be the first priority and if we can get Team USA involved, that is great.
- Noah asked if all tournaments had been following the new transportation guidelines. There was a question about whether we could post this on the website and speak on behalf of each team regarding the transportation.

Future Meetings and Plans:

- There has been conversation about keeping the first Thursday meeting and then meeting again 2 weeks later.
- Noah said he would be happy to do lunch meetings
- Mike C said it would be difficult for him to do additional meetings
- Dan said he thinks we should keep the 1st meeting as planned and then have the 2nd meeting a separate meeting per month.
- There was a question about lunchtime meetings, but that is hard with varying lunch times on separate time zones.
- Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 2nd which is a travel night for the Lakeshore tournament. That meeting will be on February 9th.
- Daniel said that we got a \$100,000 grant, which is split in to \$50,000 this year and \$50,000 year.
 - Motion to move \$50,000 into a high yield interest account.
 - Mike C seconded.
 - Sid will call the bank and take care of that.
- Joe Bongiovanni will be in touch with Sid to get the refs set up under the USWRA banking blanket