

USWRA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes: July 8, 2024

Next Scheduled Meeting: August 5, 2024

Present:

- Gwen Debly – Secretary
- Mary Kiolbasa – Classifier
- Sarah Leonard – Treasurer
- Kerin Banfield – Referee
- Jen Allred – Lakeshore/USAWR
- Daniel Curtis – VP2
- Marianne Duda – Head of Referees
- Keith Newerla – VP1

Absent:

- Bob Lopez – Commissioner
- Steve Kearley – President
- Amy Bohn – Head of Classification

AGENDA

Lakeshore Foundation/USAWR:

- Development event confirmed for November 4-10 more details to come, will have a B panel for classification
- Paralympic games around the corner - we are in Pool A, game schedule has not been released yet
- Have not confirmed any other 2024/2025 dates as of now

Classifiers:

- Website updates
 - Would like to remove classification leadership for time being & update at later time with updated structure
- Season Planning
 - We would like to request that class is not included when athletes register for season; this would allow us to pull the list and ensure accuracy for entering in Sports Engine on the back end
 - Need the tournament planning call soon; timing will get tight soon for staffing
- Insurance
- Emails
 - Amy would like to set up time to chat with Gwen

Referees:

- We have staffed the low point tournaments. We are working on reimbursement for the canceled Tampa tournament
- We will staff the low point Nationals soon.
- We would like to propose a fee increase for the upcoming season. The proposed increases are as follows: Game commissioner fee would increase from \$15 per game to

\$25 per game; per diem would increase from \$15 per day to \$25 per day. If approved, we have prepared a document to represent these new rates as well as outline payment expectations.

Commissioner:

- Working on a new document with more description of what the passed proposals are and what they mean. Expect to complete by the end of July.
- I will be sending an email out to team reps soliciting interest in hosting Semifinal tournaments, preferred weekends for Semifinals are March 21-23,2025, March 28-30,2025 or April 4-6, 2025. This leaves at least three and half weeks from Semifinals to Nationals to sort rankings and put the schedule out. For the 2024 Semifinals the USWRA committed \$5,000 to each Semifinal host, we gave more than that to each host covering travel for officials, travel, stipend and per diem for classifiers and cost of 4 USWRA rugby balls. (Western Semifinals approx \$6,860 not including any disputed money and Eastern Semifinals approx \$5,520). The amount for postseason hosts is supposed to be based on the auction from the prior year. How much can I tell potential hosts the USWRA jcan contribute? If need be we can discuss this on our next call when I will be available
- Fundraising seminar by Dr. Chris Thomason works at Lakeshore - need to send info out to team reps
- Conflict of Interest statements - were they sent to all of Leadership or just new Board members (I did not receive an email)?
- Spoke with Dan Caldwell last week and he confirmed that the follow-up email was not sent to Bradley Boe's attorney
- USWRA rugby balls - We have 10 balls left (Dan Caldwell has them). I am going to order more balls with the USWRA logo on the ball. How many should I order (last time I ordered 60 and it took 3 months to receive them)? Dan is willing to continue storing the balls and shipping them out as sold or do we want someone else to do it (Keith has said he could)?
- USWRA shirts and sweatshirts - the inventory that was shipped for the postseason is still held by Mike Delancey. Dan Caldwell will be picking the shirts/sweatshirts up from Mike when he goes to get his shot clocks.
- Autographed ball by the USAWR team from the Para PanAm games is in Dan Caldwell's possession, the ball and USAWR swag (Jen to confirm items) was to be auctioned off - can we auction it off at Low Point Nationals? Yes - dc

President:

- Leadership meeting invite, agenda format feedback, new day/time
- USALPT - Equipment manager posting
- Low point rankings - after Houston tourney

VP1:

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VP2:

- U of H students - low point montage
- Promo Posters for inpatient hospitals

- Post season bid packet

Secretary:

- SportsEngine
- Improving the Website
- Increasing social media

Treasurer:

- Consensus on upgrading to Google Business Plus? Most storage and features to improve meetings/AGM
- AL Registration Renewing in August, working on that now
- Move United membership renews September, working on that as well
- Review previously earmarked funds (I.e. low point/world games, Palma funds- does anyone know of any others??) - vote to be moved to savings to more accurately reflect operations

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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ACTION ITEMS

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MINUTES

Motion to approve minutes: Daniel motioned to approve, Sarah seconded

Lakeshore – Jen Allred

- Confirmed for 11/4 – 11/10 for development event
- Don't have a lot of clarity on what rules will look regarding officials (domestic vs international)
- Will reach out to Amy & Mary – will do a B panel
 - Each nation will be able to class 5 athletes
- Just had a camp this past weekend with another coming
- Waiting for the Paris schedule to be released and then will send along
- Would like to have a deeper conversation surrounding sponsorships, specifically Trulieve. This can affect the National team so just want to be sure everyone is on the same page.
 - There were some images on social media that popped up that caught Jen's attention. May need to have some more conversation about that.
 - It is possible those might have come from when we put the logos/images on the website and social media.
 - We are aware of the concerns of USAWR
 - Not currently soliciting them
 - Daniel does think it is important we get all of our ducks in a row and that all athletes are protected and the national team is protected.

- At this point: if there is no pushback from anyone, we would like to keep their logo on the footer of the website. Jen will check with the powers that be on her end to see if there is any conflict.
- Had some really good low point conversations and looking forward to a great season!

Classifiers – Mary Kiolbasa and Amy Bohn (Absent)

- Re: the website
 - For now, if we can take most of the Classifier info off the website until the restructuring happens that might be the easiest
 - Might be good to set up a meet time for Gwen & Amy to talk about the transition to a Google Drive and secure emails
- Season Planning Call:
 - When is that happening? Bob and Gwen are looking at the last week of July/first week of August. Sent out a Doodle poll asking for a response no later than July 12th. Will pick a date at that time!
 - Will add Amy, Mary, Marianne & Kerin to the Doodle Poll
- Registration:
 - To make planning easier on their end, is it possible to NOT have athletes enter their class into SportsEngine?
 - This is something we can do.
- Insurance:
 - What is the coverage for Classifiers in insurance?
 - Most likely will not set up to staff any tournaments until they have seen the documents showing what the coverage is and when it covers
 - Daniel thinks this is something we have looked at in the past and he thinks it may have been somewhat vague. This would be a Sarah question and she can work with the insurance company to get the documents needed.
 - After some of the events that took place last year, the classifiers are not comfortable with “vague” wording.
 - Sarah did agree it was somewhat vague.
 - Sarah mentioned that she would say that she would recommend what she said at the AGM: each team would provide their own insurance.
 - Sarah has another follow up with the insurance company.
 - The referees are now their own 501c3 and can apply for their own COI through the insurance company.
 - The classifiers are NOT their own organization, so they cannot do the same.
 - Most classifiers are under the assumption that they are covered. Whether there is complete coverage or not, they need to see things as clearly spelled out as they can.
 - Most likely needs to be a larger side conversation to iron that out.
 - The league in general would also like to understand what that looks like in regards to insurance coverage.
 - Daniel said perhaps we could talk about this in our next scheduled board meeting.
 - Mary reiterated that after last season, they are not comfortable moving forward without having that all clarified.

- There is some overlap happening with rugby and softball classification that can't be done that they are trying to work through as well.
 - Jen said that if they need any help from her, she is happy to participate.

Referees – Marianna Duda & Kerin Banfield

- All low point tournaments are staffed
- Working on the reimbursements for the cancelled Tampa Tournament (will most likely be able to just change flights)
- Working to staff Low Point Nationals
- Would propose to increase per diem fees from \$15 to \$25 a day. Also proposing that Game Commissioner fees would increase from \$15 to \$25 per game.
- Once this is approved by the board, there is a document that Marianne will distribute.
- In order to have a quorum, the board would like to see the document and in order to see how this would affect budgets. This document would also outline what the payment expectations are.

Commissioner – Bob Lopez (Absent)

- Absent but some points from agenda:
 - Asked Sarah what we would be able to pay post-season hosts next year, but she would like to wait and see what registration looks like before committing to that.
 - Said that he would like the fundraising seminar to be discussed so we can get that information out to the teams.
 - We will ask teams to reach out to secretary@uswra.org and we will forward the information to Dr. Thomason and he will get them the information for the seminar.
 - Conflict of Interest statements did go out to all board members. That cycle runs January – December.
 - Follow up email still to be sent to Bradley Boe to collect the outstanding funds.
 - Daniel thinks we need to order the balls sooner rather than later so we will have them available for sale. If we don't have them available, teams will buy from Vesco and we would like to discourage that.
 - This leads to a separate discussion regarding what we want a storefront to look like in the future.
 - Dan is still willing and able to store and sell them, so we will let him do that.
 - Post-Season hosting dates: Mary gently requested as she was looking at the possible post-season hosts, if we could avoid the back-to-back weekends it would really make things easier for the classifiers and refs as they are requesting time off.
 - USWRA shirts and sweatshirts:
 - The latest information on what was sold recently is pretty abysmal.
 - We are currently looking for other options for a storefront moving forward.
 - In the beginning we did sell quite a bit, but it was advertised and pushed heavily.
 - There is some feedback that members of the league are dissuaded from purchasing due to the OM logo being included.

- Keith said the inventory we have is great, but to Daniel's point, the people who wanted it got it at the start and are not in need of additional items.
- Gwen said SportsEngine **does** have a storefront option and it looks as though Mike K. may have started one but it went by the wayside when OM came along.
- Mary thinks we should be able to find a storefront that would allow us to sell things regularly as well as host
- Autographed ball and USAWR items – can we auction those at low point nationals? Yes, we can do that and will just need to get the info on where to send it. Daniel said we could send to him and he will take care of that.

President – Steve Kearley (Absent)

Absent, but points from agenda:

- 1st Monday of the month will be the new leadership meeting day, 9 p.m. EST.
- Was the way the agenda was sent out accessible and work for everyone? Yes.
- Low Point rankings: would like to put out rankings after the Houston tournament
 - Who is the committee?
 - Keith thinks the thought was to get a rep from each team
- USALPT – have an opening for the Equipment Manager. We would like to open that up for people to apply and allow.
 - Will email that out and post on social media
 - Hesitate to add anything big to the website at this time, but can add the application form to the website
 - Will ask for resumes and cover letters (not sure there is a form currently)
 - What deadline? August 1st.
 - Keith asked if there was a job description and information on the commitment. Sarah said if there is, it is probably in Gwen's email.
 - Sarah said Jen probably has the information on staff selection process and the blurb for each position.
 - Jen said she would just suggest that you be very clear in what you are asking them to share about themselves.
 - Gwen said that Team Canada has a rotation of 3 equipment managers, and it is all based on who is available. The "lead" will be first choice if they are available, but if they are not, they have two backups that are available. Something for the low point group to consider.

VP1 – Keith Newerla

- Nothing to discuss at this point

VP2 – Daniel Curtis

- Thanks for posting about the UofH students
- Will be working with them on posters that we can distribute to inpatient hospitals to use as advertisement physically in a space where most rugby players have been.
- Have been working with Bob updating the post-season bid packets so there is no question regarding their accountabilities surrounding sponsors, etc.

- Gwen said that in going through her email, she found a document that Mike K. had created regarding sponsorships. Daniel said that has been reworked and restructured and it sits on the shared drive. That is what is currently being distributed.
- Mary asked, moving forward would post-season hosts have to sign a contract and yes, they will. The document is already created.

Secretary – Gwen Debly

- Thoughts regarding SportsEngine:
 - There are some very user friendly things as well as some that are not.
 - Gwen is still getting emails that people can see it on their computer but not on their mobile/tablet.
 - Have cut down on a little of the media that was on the main page.
 - Have asked them if it is possible to put a donation button and they said no, not with the layout we have chosen.
 - Not sure what others' thoughts are but would like to know so we can see if we need to move to something else.
 - Daniel followed up on the donate button. T
- Has been working on increasing social media presence.
 - We have a really great opportunity with the Paralympics coming up. There are 10 international athletes from this season who will be competing. Would like to do a social media post with the players in their USA jerseys, tagging each of the teams, etc.
 - Jen would be happy to collaborate on that! She is a huge fan of collaborative posts.
 - Made a note to please make sure that the Trulieve jerseys are not on display.
 - If there is any feedback, please let Gwen know! She is happy to hear any constructive feedback.
- Mary asked about DonorBox? She said she thinks it is something we might be able to post on the website? Daniel said he wasn't sure if SportsEngine would allow that. Gwen thinks we might, as there IS currently a link to make charitable donations on the page. But she has moved it down the page from where it was.

Treasurer – Sarah Leonard

- Thoughts on updating to Google Business Plus? It is \$5.04 a month. Can we get a vote?
 - Daniel Curtis made a motion to approve the funds.
 - All board members approved.
- AL registration is renewing in August.
- Move United renews in September
- We previously had earmarked funds that were condensed. Sarah said it is important to have them clearly delineated.
 - Low Point/World Games – will move to savings \$3,446.77
 - Keith motioned to approve
 - Daniel seconded
 - All agreed.

- Phyllis Palma Funds – to be used for classification after her passing. Have found \$450 that are truly earmarked. Would like to have that moved back to where it was meant to be used.
 - Daniel motioned
 - Gwen seconded
 - All approved.
- Do we know any other:
 - Hall of Fame
 - Rainy Day
 - Clinic
- Mary said she thought that the classification budget was under last year, where does that money go?
 - Sarah thinks the board can vote to use the funds in a way that benefits the league.
 - Keith said that if a donor earmarks money specifically for something, legally we need to make sure that is where it is spent. Mary asked if this would be the same...since the fees are paid by the teams during registration and not from a donor.
 - This is something that would need to be clarified. Daniel said he didn't think in the past it was something the board had voted on. We will seek clarification on this.
- Gwen wanted to address the website and some of the items that were stored there. There are AGMs there from 2011. When does too much become too much to be stored there? Is there a way we can have a league dropbox that would be available to anyone who may need it and then clean up a lot of the extraneous information that is on the website.
 - Daniel said he wanted to speak to the larger point. When we transitioned from the other website, we lost a LOT of information. He thinks perhaps we could create a folder in Microsoft Teams that could theoretically be stored and be accessible.
 - Jen said that state by state there are specific laws about how long you need to have things available (both publicly posted and readily available). She can ask her legal team as they work on that.
 - To be clear, anything that is taken off of the website will **not** be discarded, it will be saved and available upon request.
 - Would like to address at our next board meeting.

Miscellaneous:

- Daniel recommended that in future meetings, he would recommend switching up the lineup of board members so that people take turns going first/last.
- Daniel spoke about updating the Hall of Fame members on the website. He is happy to provide the information needed
- Gwen asked Jen for updated information for the USAWR web

Action Items:

- Gwen – remove most of the classifier info off the website until the restructure happens

- Gwen, May & Amy – set up to meet regarding transition to Google Drive and secure emails
- Gwen – change registration so that athlete **do not** put in their own class when they register to help with any misinformation
- Sarah – confirm coverage for classifiers to cement what is covered and what is not
- Marianne – present updated per diem and Game Commissioner fees to the league for a vote
- Gwen – email and post about USWRA equipment manager position
- Sarah/board – seek clarification on how classification funds that are not spent are able to be reallocated, IF they are
- Jen – ask legal team at Lakeshore about how long things need to be readily available to the members when they are on the website
- Jen – provide updated USAWR info to Gwen for website