



**UNITED STATES CURLING ASSOCIATION  
Board of Directors Meeting  
July 10, 2017  
Teleconference**

Approved July 27, 2017

### Call to Order

Chairman Rich Lepping calls the meeting to order at 1:02pm C.D.T.

#### 1. Roll call

##### Board Members

**Present** – Russ Brown, Jeff Hannon, Mark Hartman, Joel Leneker, Rich Lepping (Chair), Catharine Persinger, Doug Potter, Courtney Schmidt, Roger Smith, Nick Wellen, Craig Brown, Bill Stopera, Beau Welling.

**Absent** – Matt Gamboa, Cyndee Johnson, Scott Stevinson, Dean Gemmill, Jessica Schultz, Monica Walker, Jennifer Stannard, Hawley MacLean, Sean Silver.

**Quorum** – 13 Board members being present and 11 being required, we have a quorum.

##### Non-Board

**Committee Members** – None.

**Staff/Non-Board Executives** – Jenny Biadasz, Derek Brown, Terry Davis, Tom Doherty, Christy Hering, Victor Huebner, Simone LeMarche, Gordon Maclean (recording), Kim Nawyn, Rick Patzke.

**Guests** – None.

#### 2. The Chair reviews why we are meeting:

- a. There has been a lot of activity in the past couple of months, including that involving the 2018 U.S. Olympic Team Trials discretionary team selection and the work done by the U.S. Olympic Team Selection Committee. The Trials selection activity includes quite a bit of chatter, both via emails and social media. Five board members indicated concerns regarding the Olympic Trials selection process. The CEO was asked to put this meeting together. He will walk us through the selection process and review what our next actions may or may not be. All of this is directly related to the Team Birr request to be included as a discretionary selection in the upcoming Olympic Trials.

#### 3. The CEO reviews the selection process and where the current situation might lead:

- a. Selection process and procedures.
  - i. Process began right after the previous Olympic Games, during which an Olympic Team Selection Procedures Committee worked closely with the U.S. Olympic Committee. That committee included Rick Patzke, Derek Brown, Leland Rich, Phil Drobnick, Ann Swisshelm, Doug Pottinger, and Cassie Potter. The process was finalized and the procedures published in April 2016, and amended with minor changes in March 2017.
  - ii. Two teams qualified for the Trials directly by meeting the published qualification criteria, one men's, one women's. The procedures state that there may be discretionary team selections, and that there be a minimum of three teams each competing (three men's teams, three women's teams), and a maximum of five men's teams and four women's teams, with the provision that the committee

reserves the right to not add any teams greater than the minimum if they feel it is in the best interest of international competitive excellence.

- b. The Olympic Team Selection Committee consists of Rick Patzke, Derek Brown, Leland Rich, Phil Drobnick (as Men's National Coach), Ann Swisshelm (as Women's National Coach), Bill Stopera and Dean Gemmell (both representing the AAC). Discretionary selections had to be finalized by May 15, 2017. Selection criteria taken into consideration was that which is published in the procedures and based on: Performance and results in 2016 and 2017 World Championships, 2015-16 and 2016-17 World Curling Tour results (Year-to-Date and Two-year Order of Merit), and 2016 and 2017 National Championships, with most recent results taking priority.
- c. Ultimately, three discretionary men's teams and two women's teams were selected.
- d. Team Birr, represented by Attorney Marcus Beyer, is requesting that the Olympic Team Selection Committee consider adding Team Birr to the Olympic Trials men's field. The committee is reconvening this evening. Response should be announced within the week.

**4. Discussion** - The process is as follows:

- a. When the committee makes its decision, that will be communicated to the Team Birr attorney. If the decision is to reaffirm the selection committee's previous decisions on discretionary selection, Team Birr will still have the opportunity to file an official grievance per Article 15 of the USCA By-laws, in which case the USCA will hire outside council for the grievance hearing. Complicating matters is that Team Birr and its attorney have been reaching out for support directly to the Board and public through social media. The important thing at this point in time is that the Board be made aware of the facts related to the issue, as those are difficult to communicate through emails and social media.
- b. The Board spent a significant amount of time debating specifics of the matter and potential implications of what has been on social media by Team Birr's attorney versus what was considered by the selection committee. It was noted several times that the committee had significantly more information to consider than has been included in the Team Birr letter, and the committee's deliberations are considered confidential.
- c. The grievance process as outlined in Article 15 of the USCA By-Laws was reviewed.
- d. The status of Rich Ruohonen, current 5<sup>th</sup> on the McCormick team, relative to this action was discussed.

**5. Meeting Adjourns 1:44 pm C.D.T.**