



**U.S. Biathlon Association, Board of Directors Meeting
1:00 P.M. November 6, 2020
Meeting Minutes, Submitted by Art Stegen, Secretary**

I. Call to Order

Bob Hall called the Zoom video meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Members of the Board of Directors joining the online video meeting were: Bill Alfond, Bob Hall, Art Stegen, Phyllis Jalbert, Hap Brakeley, Sarah Konrad, Haley Steward, Susan Miller, Brian Noyes, Dexter Payne, Jerry Baltzell, and Sean Doherty. Also joining were CEO/President Max Cobb, Sara Studebaker-Hall, Tim Burke, Preston Noon, Brett Thoresdahl, Danika Frisbie and Tom Kelly. The members online represented a quorum.

III. Opening Remarks

Bob Hall welcomed the members and thanked them for joining the online Recognition and Awards presentations the previous evening. He recognized Sara Studebaker-Hall for arranging the online meetings and the staff for their efforts during the ongoing disruptions for the COVID-19 requirements and for the abundant briefing materials forwarded in advance of the meeting. As the first order of business he asked for the approval of the previous meeting's minutes which was then approved. He announced that Max Cobb's term as the Chairman of the Olympic NGB council had expired and there were excellent reports of his leadership of this important group. He stressed that there was a lot of background work in the upcoming committee reports and that the staff had done an excellent effort in solving problems in dealing with the extraordinary conditions, both in adjusting and planning. He then asked Max Cobb to give his Chairman's report.

IV. Chairman's Report

Max began his report by saying that there had been a peaceful transition of leadership on the Olympic NGB Council. Since the previous meeting in July, he told the members that much was done to continue athletes' training and that the athletes were well disciplined and stayed healthy in the face of pandemic challenges. He indicated that the IBU had reworked their calendar to minimize travel to fewer locations and had developed hotel protocols with testing requirements. He indicated that the World Cup test event scheduled for China was at risk and that any policy was only effective if followed. The U.S. team has established its own policies but there is a need for 30 other countries to cooperate and come together in support of each other.

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He explained that the IBU has changed its rules for Olympic qualification in light of the pandemic due to the fact that normal procedure requires all athletes at the World Cup events. It will now count fewer events and extend the qualification period to January 2022 with the final start quota to be formalized by mid-December. These efforts by the IBU will reduce the stress for athletes. He told the members that the staff has been authorized to make decisions about upcoming participation with a plan established for that decision making. With the focus having changed from high performance to health protection all athletes will be required to be compliant to all established safety protocols. He outlined the current methodologies for reworking programs by gathering information, analysis of that information, decision making based on that analysis, rescheduling and re-budgeting, rewriting procedures, communicating changes, managing feedback and repeating as necessary. He complimented the staff for their exceptional adjustments and support for the athletes.

Concerning the USOPC he said that \$250 million was tied to the Tokyo Olympic Summer Games and that settlement costs from the gymnastic scandal is still potentially a major liability and that \$200 million in reserve may become a target of that liability. The USOPC is already transitioning its marketing towards the LA 2028 games and that a challenging economy may have direct impact for raising funds. There is also a very challenging compressed time-line transition from Tokyo to Beijing of only 5 months that requires parallel planning at the operational levels, but that there is great confidence that each of the games will be held.

Max reported that the IBU is in a strong financial position and has managed the pandemic well. It is forwarding education programs to member nations and that investigations into previous accusations of bribery are on-going. Major doping violations have resulted in revocations of results and medals.

Max then invited Dr Brett Toresdahl to comment. He told the members that the current objective is to remain healthy and perform well. With a close watch on the local environments, the goal is to not contract the virus. It will be difficult to enforce all protocols but to minimize exposure and conduct frequent testing. This will be expensive and require appropriate equipment. Maintaining health is complicated by close contact in transportation, wax cabins, and hotels. He said that we must watch other sports to learn what works best.

Max then gave a sports report with a prerecorded video presentation from Lowell Bailey. The report explained that it has been a busy summer and fall with staff supported activities at regional locations due to the lack of training camps. There was virtual contact with the coaches in Europe with Mike Gibson serving local needs. It explained that the ban on the use of fluorine-based ski waxes and protocols for the next season had been postponed until the following year, however work towards that future has already begun by testing new methods. Concerning the fall training, no selection trials were held and that 6 athletes of each gender were chosen for European training and 5 would be chosen for the first World Cups that will have 4 start positions for each gender. The Lake Placid Olympic Training Center is still off-line and that planning around the pandemic includes USBA and IBU guidelines. The stress of the pandemic has potential impacts on mental health and will require increased USOPC support,

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financial increases for individual rooming, increased team size, logistical, and testing challenges due to constant changing conditions. With reduced World Cup sites, the team will travel directly to Finland for the first two events. The IBU Cup has been canceled for December and scheduled to start in January. He concluded by saying that everything appears ready with team gear, team vehicles and a new team RV ready to go.

Max then asked Tim Burke to report on development. Tim explained that there was no annual Talent ID camp or any other national camps and everything was moved to virtual training camps which enjoyed great regional support and distance coaching. He said there will be many changes to the race schedule, a shorter IBU Cup schedule, a cancelation of the IBU Junior Cup events and the Junior European Championships. Team trials present a challenge and that would require a move towards more discretion in face of constant changing regulations.

He told the members that with the increased start positions at the IBU Cup, the intention is to send a full team of 6 for each gender. Also, the Paul Smith College program has started and there is high interest in the program. Craftsbury has completed a roller ski loop and that the Van Hoevenburg venue is nearly ready.

Danika Frisbie reported on the BKL project, team management strategies by using ICS (Incident Command System used by FEMA) methodology by establishing key elements, roles, and briefings (weekly reporting). The Regional Cup (the revised NorAm Cup) required a shift in approach which now will focus on just having domestic racing and there will be a request to IBU for local support.

V. Athlete's Report

Haley Stewart reported on the update to team selection which was included in the materials previously sent to the Directors, to which Max requested Board approval. A motion to approve was made and it was approved. Haley then reviewed the 2020 Athlete Representative election which is planned for mid Nov/Dec. She indicated there needs to be an effort to expand the pool and eligibility of candidates which might include those who have participated in the IBU Cup. Max asked for a motion of this suggestion which was made and approved. Haley then told the members that the athletes appreciated improved transparency and communication and concluded her report by saying that the work on an Athlete Contract has been temporarily suspended due to the pandemic.

VI. Committee Reports

Brian Noyes gave the Finance Committee report by reviewing the revised budget previously distributed to the Directors. He explained that there was a cash balance of \$150K, but with that figure actually \$137K which includes the audit showing a loss of \$4K. Since the budget was approved at the previous meeting, the adjusted budget did not require additional approval by the Board.

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Bob Hall reviewed his efforts with the Foundation Board saying his effort to increase membership was going well with 6 members set to renew and that he was pursuing 30 additional leads. He reported that the podcasts and other efforts were helpful and are getting good responses from the current and potential members. Due to the current environment Alllyn Michalek is no longer under contract to work towards finding potential resources. He explained that corporate sponsorship is facing especially difficult times and that a key need is to focus on key messages.

Dexter Payne gave a report on the Governance/Bylaws committee by noting that new legislation will require increasing athlete representation on the Board of Directors and all committees from 20 to 33%. For this reason, the committee recommends increasing the number of Directors from 12 to 15 and expanding the 10-year rule for 2 additional Athlete Representatives. He also indicated that USOPC will require term limits for all positions to 3 four-year terms and a requirement for clarification on how to remove Directors. Additionally, the committee suggests updating committee assignments, changing the name of the Safety Committee to "Sport Safety", including "Ethics" to the Nominating and Governance Committee, and having no requirement for a committee Chair of the Audit Committee.

Tom Kelly reported on communications and promotion efforts by hosting a training workshop with concepts about "Telling your story", that included "uniqueness, personality and willingness" to tell the story, especially in the social media presence. He explained how a "circle of success" brings sponsoring values and how to organize content into "buckets" (personality, events, culture, publicity, and life-style) and thinking strategically about what to post.

VII. Strategic Plan

Sara Studebaker-Hall gave an update on the Strategic Plan indicating that it is near finalization. The work has involved athletes and did not anticipate many additional changes in the mission and vision. She expects that it will be distributed in the near future.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for West Yellowstone, MT, March 27, 2021 in conjunction with the scheduled National Championships. The meeting was adjourned into Executive Session at 4:00 PM.