

USA Field Hockey Club Task Force

Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2011

I. Call to order

Laura Darling called to order the regular meeting of the USA Field Hockey Club Task Force at 8:30 PM EDT on May 10, 2011. Laura and Steve reviewed the goals of the Task Force and recapped some of the points from the May 3, 2011 meeting that the Task Force indicated where the items of the most importance.

II. Roll call

Laura Darling conducted a roll call. The following persons were present: Brian Bernatchez, Karen Collins, Lauren Cornthwaite, Laura Darling, Tony Gulotta, Simon Hoskins, Richard Kentwell, Karen Klassner, Kathi Liszewski, Steve Locke, Andy Muir, Tina Reinprecht, Nigel Traverso and Larry Zappone. The following persons were absent: Heather Lewis and Randall Sundeen.

III. Items Discussed

1. **Define a Club** – The group seems to be in agreement that a club must be defined to assist in keeping all clubs honest and to promote the growth of the sport. Based on the input of the Task Force the following are requirements of gaining club status. A club must have a registered USAFH member in good standing as the leader. They must pay the annual club dues to maintain their club status. Club members and staff must be registered USAFH members in good standing. Only coaches registered with the club are permitted to coach at USAFH events. Clubs must promote the growth and development of the sport of Field Hockey in a positive and healthy environment. A club shall not operate under multiple names to gain positions in USAFH events. This is based off of the comments from the meeting and email exchanges throughout the week. Any additions or suggestions changes should be submitted prior to the next meeting so we can finalize our definition and submit it to USAFH as our recommended definition.
2. **Player Registration** – The group seems to be in agreement that player registration is an important step towards resolving the outstanding issues surrounding club development. The Task Force discussed the pros and cons of 1 vs. 2 registration periods. Some clubs felt there was a need for 2 periods due to the fact that not all clubs participate in both indoor and outdoor. Based on the results of the survey conducted by USAFH in March, there is only a small percent of clubs that only participate in the indoor season (126 of the 231 registered clubs completed this survey and out of those 126 clubs 4% do not participate in the outdoor season). Does this small percentage of clubs only participating in indoor indicate a need to have a 2nd registration period to accommodate those players? The player registration process needs to be defined so players, coaches, club administrators and parents know what is expected. The Task Force needs to vote on the whether there should be 1 registration period or 2, one for summer/fall and one for winter/spring. When the group decides on the number of registration periods we can then recommend what the time frame should be for the registration period(s). The suggested # of registration periods will be added to the Task Force survey for confirmation. If this is going to work as intended, then we must take a stand that a player has to declare a club to be an eligible player at any USAFH event. Players may leave this blank to allow them to play for multiple clubs.

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3. **Festival** – The Task Force has indicated that Festival is an important event that all legitimate clubs should be afforded the opportunity to be represented in. Since there are many things to be considered regarding this topic they are further broken down below.
 - a) **Eligibility** – Based on the Legacy Working Document proposed by Simon, clubs would be eligible for a certain number of registration opportunities based first on available spots then based on the number of U19 registered members with their club. There seemed to be no objection to the number of registration opportunities based on club size but some Task Force members felt there was a need for a requirement for a minimum number of members. The Task Force proposed that in order to be eligible to apply to Festival a club must have a minimum of 25 U19 registered members. This will be added to the Task Force survey for confirmation. The registration process needs to be discussed in further detail.
 - b) **Legacy** – The groups seems to be in agreement that if there is a method to guarantee all clubs at least one spot in the National Hockey Festival the legacy should be eliminated. This will be added to the Task Force survey for confirmation.
 - c) **Champion Positions** – The groups seems to be in agreement that if there is a method to guarantee all clubs at least one spot in the National Hockey Festival the champion positions should be eliminated. The Task Force seems to be in agreement that the awards ceremony should still be a part of this event and that just the guarantee of automatic entry should be eliminated. The discussions seemed to indicate that eliminating the promise of automatic entry may improve the spirit of sportsmanship also. These items will be added to the Task Force survey for confirmation.
 - d) **Age Groups** – The group seems to be in agreement that the age divisions should be left as is, U16 and U19 and should not follow the NCC. This will be added to the Task Force survey for confirmation.
 - e) **Number of Spots** – There are 196 total age group spots available for Festival. They are currently allocated to be 147 for U19 and 49 for U16. Karen Collins confirmed that the number allocated per age group could be changed annually to accommodate any changes in demand for the specific age groups. Based on the 2011 numbers, if this was done all clubs requesting entry in the U19 division would have received a spot and the majority of the clubs requesting entry in the U16 division would have received a spot. There were no objections from the Task Force on this.
 - f) **Registration Period** – There was discussions about whether to stick with the current April registration period or to make it earlier. The concerns with changing it to earlier is clubs may not have the funds to pay the registration fee. It was suggested that a non-refundable deposit be required at the “earlier” time with the balance due upon acceptance or by a certain date. The benefit of an earlier registration period is that teams would have more time to complete travel arrangements and possibly find better and cheaper airfare. The question of whether to suggest a change in timeframe for registration will be added to the Task Force survey for confirmation. If the majority of the group agrees to suggest a change we can further discuss what that time should be and submit our suggestion to USAFH.

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4. **Pool Structure** – There was discussion as to whether we keep with the same pool structure at Festival, using the model discussed by Karen Collins based on prior performance. Grouping teams together based on their performance history is causing teams who train in close proximity to each other. The problem with that is they travel great distances to play each other when they could play each other any given weekend. If this is to be a true Festival some members of the Task Force think pools should be mixed more on geographical differences in place of performance history. With the implementation of the NCC, some Task Force members feel there is no longer a need to have a true "A" pool. There was also discussion of clubs ranking themselves in categories and either having all the "1's" play each other and the "2's" play each other, etc.... or having each pool contain a mixture of "1's", "2's", "3's", etc.... We will survey the group on if they want to stick with the current pool structure or go with a new structure. If the group decides they would like to see a new pool structure we will then discuss and vote on that structure and submit our recommendations to USAFH.
5. **Women's and Co-Ed Division** – The group seems to be in agreement that this division should be left as is. This will be added to the Task Force survey for confirmation.
6. **Consequences** – The group seems to be in agreement that there must be consequences for clubs violating the rules to gain additional spots in USAFH events, teams who at the last minute drop out of these events and teams who intentionally violate any rules set forth by USAFH. The group did not discuss what those consequences should be. This can be added to the agenda for a later meeting if the group feels this needs further discussion.

IV. Outstanding Business

1. Modify as necessary and approve the proposed club definition so it may be submitted to USAFH as our recommendation.
2. Complete a vote on the proposed changes covered in the above section.
3. Finalize and submit recommendations on Legacy and Festival changes.
4. Simon will research with Terry Walsh the reasoning for the change in age divisions at the National Club Championship and report back to the Task Force.

V. Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 17th at 8:30 PM EDT

VI. Adjournment

Laura Darling and Richard Kentwell adjourned the meeting at 9:40PM EDT.

Minutes submitted by: Kathi Liszewski

Minutes approved by: *Laura Darling and Richard Kentwell*