

Meeting of the USA Judo Referee Commission, WESTGATE Resort, Las Vegas, May 31, 2019

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Janet Johnson (serving as the Presiding Officer)

Present were: Gary Berliner, Noboru Saito, Robert Fukuda, Calvin Terada, Janet Johnson, Sayaka Torra, Michael Eldridge, and Hector Estevez. Observers: David Williams, Barbara Shimizu, David Malek, and Ralph Palmer

Minutes of the last meeting were not presented because there was not a quorum for that meeting.

There was not a formal agenda for the meeting, but rather a list of action items to attempt to manage. These items will be numbered in the following minutes.

1. Robert Fukuda shared the request he made to the USA Judo Board of Directors for a medical leave of absence as the Chair of the USA Judo Referee Commission. He further clarified that while he intends to remain the Secretary of the PJC Referee Commission, his desire is to have Co-chairs be assigned in his absence. The recommended time period for the Co-Chairs will be either until he is able to return or until the end of the Quadrennial. Robert specifically recommended Calvin Terada and Janet Johnson to serve as the Co-Chairs. The USA Judo Board of Directors announce a bit later that they voted to accept both his request for the medical leave of absence and the appointment of Interim Co-Chairs as recommended. No questions were raised by any of the members of the Referee Commission.
2. Mr. Rajesh Karmacharya, from Nepal, requested guest referee status in the United States. It was confirmed by Ralph Palmer that Mr. Karmacharya submitted all required documents to work in the United States as an IJF Continental referee. The RC voted to approve Mr. Karmacharya's request for guest referee status. Ralph will inform Mr. Karmacharya of the decision and will provide access to the USA referee management website.
3. The need to have published requirements for guest referee status was discussed. It was agreed that procedures must be clearly laid out so that documentation and permission by the individual's national judo federation can be verified. The USA Judo national office should serve as the primary coordinator between the guest referee's national federation and the United States. Further, the USA Judo national office would coordinate with the individual so that formal USA Judo membership can be processed. **Action Item:** Develop updated guest referee procedures in coordination with USA Judo national office.
4. A formal policy for requesting family, personal and medical leave was discussed. It was agreed that the RC needs to produce and publish a policy concerning family, personal, and medical leave.
Action Item: Develop a guideline for requesting family, personal, and medical leave as an USA referee
5. Janet Johnson reported out that a Referee Manual/Handbook is currently being written. The next task includes adding documents and annual letters as examples that are distributed to referees.
Action item: Ralph will send the requested documents to Janet.

6. The RC budget was discussed and explained by Robert.
 - a. The Junior Olympics and Junior International is considered one event for stipend purposes, although they are evaluated as two separate events.
 - i. Calvin, as the Chief Referee, will be negotiating stipends for the JOs with Spencer Molnar and Keith Bryant
Covering travel and per diem expenses (similar to the Chief Referee and Evaluators assigned to a national event (\$650)) for the Referee Commission Assistant (David Malek or Ralph Palmer) to was discussed. The RC voted unanimously to allow up to a \$650 expense reimbursement for the RC Assistant to work each national event.
 - b. It was identified that more detailed RC budget spreadsheets and information was needed to look at and plan for expenses in greater detail. Calvin agreed to manage the budget as part of the Co-Chair responsibilities
 - c. Sensei Saito informed us of the process for getting the budget expenditures from the Board. We need to request an official ledger from Barbara Shimizu, who serves as the RC's liaison to the USA Judo Board.
7. Referees at the Senior Nationals are to be encouraged to thank the USA Judo Board members for the increased stipend and referee support. The stipends for the national events are now being split between the RC budget and USA Judo.
8. The Referee section of the USA Judo website was discussed at length. Calvin is going to manage the clearing of all current documents. Calvin agreed to chair a Website Update Committee. One of the critical items is to ensure that the USA Judo website maximizes the number of site visits as a performance requirement from the USOC. The USA Judo website is managed by Vaughn Anderson.
9. More accurate metadata on the Referee Reevaluation Forms needs to be added and tracked in order to accurately monitor critical action points, such as date of birth for qualifications to attain IJF Continental or International licenses. Janet is chairing a subcommittee working on reformatting the evaluation codes and developing more specific language and criteria.
Action Item: Referee Reevaluation Forms will be reviewed by Ralph to determine where the additional metadata can be collected on the form.
10. It was also identified that mandatory training for all USA International and Continental referees that are overseeing national referee examinations and evaluations so that feedback is thorough, evaluation is consistent and that all standards, processes and procedures are follow correctly.
Action Item: Review all evaluations and examinations and determine areas for improvement in order to develop training materials.
11. The USA Judo weigh in protocol needs to be posted on the website, and it needs to be modified to include spelling out that it requires a minimum of two adults conducting weigh ins in each room being used. **Action Item:** Clear the indication of the minimum number of adults working in each weigh in room with USA Judo Board.
12. There has been much confusion within our referee corps as to what PJC events they are eligible to request to attend. Robert shared that all events listed on the PJC calendar are nomination events. People wanting to self-select events need to look for non-PJC events through individual country sites.

13. Discussion surrounding the addition of current age or year of birth to the reevaluation form to more clearly know who might be eligible or not eligible for advancement occurred. At this point, it will not be added until the new evaluation format and form is developed.
14. We had lengthy discussion about the concept of “fast tracking” young and highly talented referees. The RC voted to approve cases for fast track trial where a referee successfully works three consecutive events and earns a rating higher at the three events than their current rating, with the recommendation of at least two RC members. That individual would be eligible to attend one higher rated event than their current rating. He/She would be considered for immediate advancement if they earn the rating at or above the level of the special invitation event. For example, an N2 earning three consecutive N3 ratings, with at least one of these events being an N2 event, could be invited to work an N3 event. If that individual earns at least an N3 rating at that N3 event, his/her rating would be immediately raised, rather than having to wait until the next calendar year.
15. A discussion was held about the need for special recognition of those referees attaining and sustaining N4 status, especially since they can no longer test for PJC. A motion was made by Calvin Terada and seconded by Gary Berliner to commission the design and creation of a special patch so that it can be distributed to N4 referees who have sustained that level for a minimum of two years. The specifics of how and when these will be distributed was not discussed. This has been added to the list of our action items to address.
Action Item: Ralph Palmer will develop a mock-up of the patch which will be distributed for Commission approval.
16. The topic of the RC developing a longer term strategy for referee recruitment, retention, and sustainability was discussed, especially given the wide demographic profile and geographic distribution in the United States. Long term referee availability and ability to volunteer, remain healthy, and safely travel was also discussed. Use of special status such as, Emeritus, was discussed. It was agreed that Emeritus status recommendations should remain confidential until the RC has assigned the person to engage in that discussion with the individual. The RC voted and approved the action to begin tracking more carefully Emeritus status concerns as national referees are reevaluated. Any time three (3) consecutive recommendations are received by the RC, a discussion will take place by the RC to determine a course of action.
Action Item: The RC will consider adding a line for recommendation to Emeritus status on the evaluation forms.
17. The RC discussed the need to develop a formal mentoring program. The RC recognizes the need to help referees effectively set attainable and reasonable goals and objectives. The RC also needs to address the gender and regional biases that are sometimes evident.
18. In order to streamline the process and be more efficient concerning nominations by the PJC and the IJF. A motion was made by Calvin Terada and seconded by Gary Berliner that IJF and PJC referee nomination be approved automatically by the RC and immediately processed rather than vote on them before the individual is allowed to accept the nomination. The RC recognizes that it is an honor for those individuals to be nominated, and they have already been vetted as members in good standing when they appeared on the eligible lists. The RC authorized Janet to send out the congratulations and reminders letter promptly after

receipt of the nomination information, after confirming that the nominee is currently a member in good standing.

19. The RC voted and approved the requirement that in order to be considered for IJF Continental examination a minimum of two (2) consecutive years as an N4 is a minimum requirement.
20. The RC discussed minimum requirements for N4 and higher rated referees to be considered for self-requested international travel. The RC policy is intended to be for elective international travel and NOT for IJF or PJC Nomination events. The RC voted to approve that for all referees requesting elective international travel, the individual must work the Youth National Championships, Junior Olympics, and/or the US Open (at least one) per year. If the evaluation is acceptable the individual will be eligible for consideration to work elective international events. This “eligibility” will be effective immediately after working a listed evaluation event with an acceptable rating. This eligibility will be valid for one year, or until the same event occurs again. Evaluators at President’s Cup, Senior National Championships, Youth National Championships, Junior Olympic Championships, and the US Open MUST be USA Judo Referee Commission members. The one-day National Championship and President’s cup events will not be used for consideration of elective international travel eligibility. All working IJF International referees will be evaluated at the three “eligibility events”.

Action Item: Please note...A new evaluation form needs to be developed for IJF A referees at the three “eligibility events”.

Action Item: This information needs to be disseminated to all N4, IJF B and IJF A referees.

21. Calvin Terada led a Strategic Planning discussion. The self-evaluation process and other three steps in the strategic planning process were introduced. Our strategic plan will need to align with USA Judo’s long-term goals. It is hoped that we can have a retreat to work on this.
22. It was agreed that our next meeting must occur prior to the President’s cup as we have a tremendous amount of work to do. Again, the possibility of a working retreat was mentioned.
23. It was noted that Keith Bryant would like copies of the minutes as they become available.

NOTE: A one (1) hour executive closed-door session was held between 12-1PM. Given that individuals were discussed and the notes included names and possibly actions that could be considered sensitive in nature, these notes are captured on a separate document. The RC meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.

We would like to thank Ralph Palmer and David Malek for their assistance in recording and notetaking during the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Johnson & Calvin Terada, Interim Co-Chairs
USA Judo Referee Commission

