



USLA Board Meeting  
Zoom Meeting  
Wednesday, June 23, 2021  
4:00PM EST

Members Present: Ms. Erin Warren, Ms. Nonie Manion, Mr. Bob Hughes, Mr. Matt Mortensen, Mr. Don Simkin, Mr. Chris Mazdzer, Mr. Ken Yonemura, Mr. Adam Berlew, Ms. Erin Hamlin.

Members Absent: Mr. Scott McIntyre

Staff Present: Mr. Jim Leahy, Mr. Mark Grimmette, Mr. Robert Fegg, Mr. John Owen

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:03PM by President Ms. Erin Warren

Ms. Warren called the meeting in response to the recent concerns presented by Mr. Chris Mazdzer on the state of USA Luge's technical development program.

Prior to the meeting Ms. Warren asked Mr. Leahy and his sports performance leadership team to prepare a document, which was delivered prior to the meeting to each board member and is included in the minutes. The mission is to walk through the goals of the technical testing & development programs as well as some of the specific initiatives that the Sport staff are pursuing.

Mr. Leahy addressed the Board and stated that the presentation that was about to take place was extremely confidential. He further stated that he felt that after the presentation by the sports staff, the Board will have a better understanding of the issues being addressed.

Mr. Leahy then opened the floor to Mr. Grimmette, Mr. Fegg and Mr. Owen. The following outline was the guideline for an open discussion.

1. Staff Technical Projects Roles and Responsibilities
  - a. The Sport Program Director has the overall birds eye view of the technical program to ensure that projects and initiatives support the High Performance Plan.
  - b. The National Team Head Coach is the head decision maker for the technical projects, but decisions are made in close communication with the National Team Sled Technician.
  - c. Supporting staff technical project roles and responsibilities
2. Avenues of Communication
  - a. Informal Athlete Feedback: Critical technical information is learned through athlete-coach interactions throughout the year. These conversations are less formal but occur almost daily.

- b. Coaches Post-Season Assessment: Coaches aggregate and synthesize feedback/data from the informal athlete feedback sessions to determine a prioritized agenda of equipment needs.
  - c. High Performance Plan Development: Athlete meetings with coaching staff and Sports Program Director provide critical information to guide the direction and goals for the technical projects. These goals then become part of the High Performance Plan that is submitted to the USOC.
  - d. Weekly Technical Meetings: Primarily used to manage and track the progress of technical projects. These meetings are also used to discuss equipment testing results, as well as to align on the overall direction for the technical program. Attendees include: Mark Grimmette, Robert Fegg, Gordy Sheer, Lubo Mick, Pat Anderson, and Jon Owen.
  - e. Sponsor/Vendor Technical Meetings: These meetings are used to manage project progress with our various sponsors and vendors.
  - f. Head Coach Athlete Meetings: Bi-weekly sessions where athletes can align with the Head Coach and ask any outstanding technical and logistics questions.
  - g. Project Management Tools: Technical project management team uses collaborative software for tracking work and ensuring visibility to Sports Program Director and Head Coach.
3. Priorities – the technical program priorities are driven by the goals and information contained in the High Performance Plan. An athlete’s team status will also impact technical program priorities.
- a. High-Performance Plan goal for 2022.
  - b. The best opportunities for these medals.
4. Technology Project Goals
- a. 2022 – Select projects that support the athlete’s confidence in their equipment and align with Head Coach and Sports Director’s opinion on what it will take to deliver medals in the ’22 Olympic Games. Key opportunities include:
    - i. Wind Tunnel Testing: The goal of the wind tunnel test is to provide an objective evaluation of the National Team equipment, so that athletes can make informed decisions about what equipment to slide with next season.
    - ii. Computational Fluid Dynamics: Experimentation method
    - iii. Kufen Improvements: Flexibility is an important kufen characteristic for performance. Evaluate our current fleet of kufens and build new kufens to improve this characteristic.
    - iv. Bridge splay characteristics: Evaluate our current sleds for splay and make adjustments, if needed.
  - b. General Goals
    - i. Digitize sled parts: Create a digital representation of all new sled parts. The goal of this initiative is to improve both collaboration and production of sled parts.
    - ii. Standardize equipment: Success for this initiative is measured simply by whether a set of steels can be shared across our fleet of sleds.
  - c. 2026 Considerations
5. Risks:

- a. Resource Limitations Inhibit Technical Project Funding: Due to resource limitations (time and money), we must focus on the projects that we think will have the most impact. Risk exists when we can't get to every worthwhile technical project.
    - i. Coaching Time is Limited: Coaches are spending only 20% of their time on individualizing sleds for athletes. The other 80% of their time spent on equipment is split between building new sled parts and reconditioning sleds. Ideally, these percentages should be reversed.
  - b. Supplier Lead Times Can Be Unreliable: When company suppliers cannot meet date requirements, coaches must produce parts which further distracts them from other coaching duties.
  - c. Equipment Testing Capability: Limitations exist in testing equipment. Facilities, track time and testing methods are all factors in testing capability.
6. USA Competitive Advantages
    - a. Dow Bridges
    - b. Dow Kufens

A very lengthy discussion took place between Board members and Sport staff via the outline took place.

With no other questions and no additional business to discuss, Ms. Warren asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Bob Hughes, second by Mr. Don Simkin.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50PM