



**Umpires and Referees Committee (URC)
Teleconference Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2015**

A. Call to Order, Roll Call, Conflict of Interest Statements

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Joseph Yick, URC Chair, at 2:06 pm PST on September 19, 2015. Roll call was taken, with Mr. Wendell Dillon, Mr. Saul Weinstein, Mr. Doru Gheorghe, Mr. Joseph Yick, and Mr. Lee Kondo present. A quorum was noted to be present. Mr. Dennis Taylor, USATT General Counsel, joined the meeting at 2:26 pm PST. Mr. Han Xiao joined the meeting at 2:35 pm.

Mr. Kondo mentioned a possible conflict regarding the agenda item concerning the creation of an examination coordinator position to administer umpire and referee qualification examinations. The Chair said that this topic will be discussed generally, but no vote will be taken today. Mr. Dillon and Mr. Kondo agreed to resolve their separate complaint matter privately, and it was removed from today's agenda.

The Chair added an additional agenda topic that the Board requested the URC's recommendations for the U.S. Nationals based upon our experiences with the U.S. Open in July. Mr. Gheorghe said these URC recommendations should be sent to the CEO.

B. Approval of Minutes from July, 2015 Las Vegas Meeting as Amended

MOTION: Moved that the Minutes from July 2015 be approved as amended.

Movant: Wendell Dillon
Second: Saul Weinstein

The motion passed unanimously, 4:0:0.

C. Approval of URC Procedures - Parts A & B only; Continued Discussion of Part C (e.g., Selection Sub-Committee)

Sections A and B of the procedures were approved as amended were already approved at the last meeting. These can be published on the USATT website. Discussion continued on Part C involving the Selection Sub-Committee.

The URC Chair said that a formal written selection sub-committee procedure needed to be written, since none now exists. The Selection Sub-Committee Chair can request a call for committee member candidates, then select at least seven (7) for approval by the URC, with 5 being members and 2 being alternates. Mr. Dillon opined that no term limit should be set for the Selection Sub-Committee Chair position since this Chair serves at the pleasure of the URC Chair.

Mr. Dillon will provide Mr. Kondo with input regarding his proposed changes to the Selection Sub-Committee procedures. The possibility of setting term limits for the Sub-Committee Chair and/or members was briefly mentioned. Mr. Kondo will then draft the next version of Sub-Committee Procedures (i.e., Part C) which can be agreed upon either by email or at the next scheduled in person meeting (e.g., December). Mr. Yick or Mr. Kondo will distribute this version to URC members for their input.

Dennis Taylor, USATT General Counsel, joined the meeting at 2:26 pm PST.

E. URC Recommendations for Improvements at the U.S. Nationals

The URC Chair will send the URC's recommendations to the CEO for improving conditions at the U.S. Nationals based upon our experiences at the U.S. Open in July 2015.

First, U.S. Open officials noted that the lighting and court sizes, particularly for feature finals and semi-finals matches (e.g., Tables 1-3, and designated Finals Venue) were not up to the required Tournament Guide standards. Thus, the URC suggests that at the U.S. Nationals lighting and court sizes should be carefully measured and ensured to comply with required standards.

Mr. Han Xiao joined the meeting at 2:35 pm PST.

Mr. Kondo said that it would help to have Mr. John Miller (NATT) provide the tournament draw schedule to the Nationals Referee and Chief Umpire about two weeks before the start of the Nationals events. This would allow umpire schedules to be created prior to arriving in Las Vegas, rather than requiring that the Referee and Chief Umpire spend hours to create the umpire schedule at the venue itself, as has been done in past years. Mr. Gheorghe noted that the rating cutoff date (e.g., 6 weeks beforehand) was critical, and the Nationals entry deadline should not be extended--this just makes it difficult for NATT to complete draws for over 1000 players.

The URC Chair will coordinate with Mr. John Miller regarding delivering the tournament draw schedule to the Nationals officials by about December 1st, 2 weeks before the tournament starts on December 14th. As Mr. Gheorghe suggested, the URC Chair will send the URC recommendations for the Nationals to the CEO by next week.

F. U.S. Nationals Evaluators - Wendell Dillon, Joseph Yick

URC ACTION 1. The U.S. Nationals Evaluators will be Mr. Wendell Dillon and Mr. Joseph Yick.

Discussion: Mr. Dillon will be principal evaluator, with Mr. Yick acting as assistant evaluator. Mr. Yick will use his own funds to travel to Las Vegas for this role, and no URC travel subsidy will be used for it.

Action approved without objection.

F. Referee Training Course at Nationals - Wendell Dillon

Mr. Dillon will be conducting a referee training course at the U.S. Nationals for all referees. The deadline for this course will be December 7th.

G. International Umpire Training Seminar at U.S. Nationals (e.g., BB/BBIP Level, field of play procedures, etc.) - Joseph Yick

The URC Chair said that his international umpire training seminar which will be conducted at the U.S. Nationals is designed to train higher level umpires (e.g., NUs and above). This seminar will cover such relevant topics as service calls, field of play, including march in procedures.

H. Update on URC Budget Issues

The URC Chair answered Mr. Ray Cavicchio's question regarding the URC Budget via email. Then, the USATT CEO provided detailed answers to his other budget questions. Mr. Xiao suggested that the URC budget could be published annually, perhaps as a website link in the URC minutes. He will contact Mr. Sean O'Neill regarding inclusion of website links in minutes.

In response to Mr. Dillon's question about the 2016 URC budget, the URC Chair said that he was awaiting a response from Headquarters. Mr. Gheorghe said that budgets likely will be discussed by the Board in November.

URC ACTION 2. The URC Chair will submit the URC Budget for consideration by the USATT Board by September 25, 2015.

Action approved without objection.

I. Update on the Seattle Open Issue, Rules Issue Assignment

The Seattle Open issue, involving Ms. Melody Yu, was resolved. The Rules Committee Chair referred this case to the URC. The result was that a player was "retired"--this

terminology is preferred to the term, "default," when a player has begun a match which was not finished.

J. Creation of an Examination Coordinator Position To Administer Umpire and Referee Qualification Examinations. Miscellaneous Examination Issues.

The URC Chair said that it was important to formally create an Examination Coordinator position. Under ORAC, this position has existed informally in the past, without clear guidelines. The URC Chair emphasized that the URC should discuss the Exam Coordinator position and his/her responsibilities, as well as the examination criteria, such as those involving the retaking of an examination after a candidate has failed to pass his/her first attempt. Mr. Dillon said that these re-take examination policies have not been formalized by ORAC in the past.

The URC Chair wishes to contact officials progressing to the next level (e.g., RUs as candidates for the NU examination, NUs for the IU level, IUs for the BB level). The Examination Coordinators can have the responsibility to contact these officials. Mr. Dillon agreed to give the URC Chair the names of the RUs who are or will be qualified to take the NU examination. This year, there was an acknowledged mistake made in identifying the NUs who were qualified to take the IU examination.

K. Clarification of the Division of Responsibilities at Tournaments Between Officials (e.g., Referees, Umpires) and Tournament Directors/Tournament Committees

The URC Chair noted that the URC should address clarification of the division of responsibilities at tournaments between officials (e.g., referees, umpires) and tournament directors/tournament committees. While the ITTF and USATT clearly define these separate roles in their written literature, it may be desirable to clarify these issues. Once the URC has had the opportunity to discuss these matters, the Tournament Advisory Committee (TAC) will also be invited to participate in a joint committee discussion.

Mr. Dillon observed that while referees are charged with ensuring the fairness of tournament draws, TDs/TCs may wish to encroach upon the referee's officially delegated responsibilities and do the draws himself/herself, independent of referee input. Mr. Xiao acknowledged that some TDs may wish to assume some referee responsibilities. Mr. Kondo noted that although ITTF and USATT rules clearly delineate the differing responsibilities of TDs/TCs vs officials (i.e., referees, umpires), it would be worthwhile to remind TDs/TCs of these important distinctions.

Mr. Weinstein said that while strict conformance to ITTF rules is fine for larger U.S. tournaments, for one and two star tournaments, strict conformance may not be practical--for example, there often are insufficient umpires for matches at local tournaments. This creates a dilemma for referees who wish to ensure fairness of non-umpired matches.

While the Tournament Advisory Committee (TAC) may receive input and complaints regarding tournament quality (e.g., lighting, space problems), TAC may not receive information regarding such officials' issues as enforcement of service and coaching rules, or tournament seeding requirements. Officials should send the URC Chair information regarding these latter kinds of issues from officials (e.g., referees, umpires) either in the form of either a tournament report or, alternatively, via answers to a questionnaire. At least for 4 and 5 star tournaments, referees should be asked to send tournament reports to the URC Chair. For smaller tournaments, a referee report or answers to a questionnaire could be sent in at the referee's discretion.

The URC Chair commented that at the U.S. Nationals and Open, players sometimes say to officials, "why is the umpire calling my serve as illegal? in my part of the country, no one calls my serve." The upcoming umpire training at the U.S. Nationals will, in part, address possible inconsistency in enforcement of the service rule nationwide. The topic of the clarification of division of responsibilities between TDs/TCs and Officials will be discussed further at the URC's next December meeting. After sufficient discussion, this topic will also be raised with the Tournament Advisory Committee (TAC), to be addressed as a joint endeavor between the URC and TAC.

L. 2015 Budget Update

The URC Chair said that the URC had about \$300 remaining in its budget for 2015. He asked for suggestions via email on how these funds might be productively spent.

M. URC Chair Is the Designated Recipient to Receive Referee Tournament Reports and Correspondence from Officials, TDs, TCs, and Others

The URC Chair said that the URC should address the question regarding who should be the recipient for any tournament reports from officials, tournament committees and others. It was agreed that the URC Chair should be the recipient of these reports, particularly if they address issues concerning officials (i.e., referees, umpires). These tournament reports should be distinguished from reports sent to tournament sanctioning coordinators or TAC. The URC Chair can send a communication to referees giving reporting information and procedures. This communication can be in the form of a referee questionnaire or form. If needed, an instructional CD can also be created for distribution. While the URC might make it mandatory for the referee to file a brief report for high star tournaments (e.g., 4-5 star), for other tournaments, these reports might be made optional, at the referee's discretion. URC's main goal in having reports is to encourage communications between officials at tournaments and the URC to enable us to support our officials and facilitate their work at tournaments.

URC Action 3. The URC Chair will be the designated recipient to receive referee tournament reports and correspondence from officials, tournament directors, tournament committees, and others.

Action approved without objection.

The Tournament Guide also could include a section regarding issues that can be addressed by officials in their tournament reports to the URC Chair.

Mr. Xiao noted that it might be worthwhile to question referees and players regarding their opinions of these tournament reports. Mr. Kondo mentioned that a questionnaire can be sent to referees asking to receive their input regarding how the URC might support their efforts in their officiating roles nationwide. In particular, referees likely wish to attract more umpires to participate in their tournaments--umpire shortages are a common problem. The URC plans to jointly work with the TAC on some of these issues.

N. URC Chair/Committee Responsibilities To Include Review of Officials Performance, Including Possible Disciplinary Actions

This issue was not addressed at this meeting and optionally may be raised at a later meeting.

O. Umpires' Travel Compensation

URC Action 3. The URC will request that Mr. Valeriy Elantanov reimburse the URC for the amount paid for his airline travel since he did not attend the Canada Open due to an emergency.

Discussion: The URC Chair said that \$435.00 travel compensation was given to Mr. Elantanov for the Canada Open, but he could not go because of a surgical procedure. The airline ticket purchased likely can be used within a year for other travel with a change ticket fee. Another possibility raised was to request that Mr. Elantanov pay out-of-pocket for his next overseas umpiring trip.

Approved without objection.

Mr. Gheorghe said that for the U.S. national team, players generally are reimbursed for travel after the event is completed. However, since many officials book their tickets in advance and require reimbursements sooner, the URC might wish to request that the CEO authorize earlier reimbursements for these airline tickets.

P. Old Business

None.

Q. New Business

None.

R. Next Scheduled Meeting

The next meeting will be held at the U.S. Nationals in Las Vegas in December.

S. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 pm PST.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lee Kondo
URC Secretary