

Actions of the USATT High Performance Committee (HPC)
August – September – October, 2013

Reported by Carl Danner, HPC Chair
December 1, 2013

During August, September and October, the HPC did not hold any formal meetings or conference calls. However, the following summary of its actions and discussions is offered to inform USATT members about the HPC's activities conducted by email, and through participation in the other USATT activities.

1. The format for the adult national team trials was the subject of extensive HPC deliberations. Some significant points of discussion included the number of seeded players versus qualifiers and the role of USATT ratings in seeding, the potential for defaults and how they should be addressed, whether a minimum rating should be adopted for entry and at what level, and the need to play matches between teammates or others with a relationship (e.g. siblings) early in a final round robin. Ultimately, a general consensus was reached in favor of an Olympic Trial-style event that involves running single-elimination draws over three subsequent days, with team members being selected from among daily winners and runners-up. Advantages of this format include:
 - a. the absence of any ability to manipulate the outcome through a deliberate loss (to benefit another player), and greatly-reduced concerns about the impact of injury defaults;
 - b. a reduced reliance on ratings for seedings by using the results of each day's competition as the basis for seeding the subsequent day's draw;
 - c. the balance between seeded players and qualifiers was addressed by seeding the top eight rated players into the round of 16 for the first day's event, leaving eight places for qualifiers who will then automatically be entered into the draws for days two and three along with the (remaining) top eight seeds;
 - d. players who fail to qualify on day one will have a further chance to play a second draw, with the top two finishers having opportunities to continue in the trial (the winner on days two and three, the runner-up on day three);
 - e. players of an uncompetitive level who wish to enter anyway will have two chances to qualify, but will not otherwise continue after day one;
 - f. although day one would feature a larger number of competitors and matches, days two and three would include two draws only with (at most) 16 men and 16 women, helping to make the event more manageable.
2. A bid specification for a national junior championship tournament was prepared and posted on the USATT website. The intent is to develop a title event separate from the December Nationals. A further objective is to develop a qualification series of tournaments through which players might accumulate points for junior team

membership, rather than the current reliance on Nationals results only. As of this writing, it is not known what bids may be received and whether the tournament will be held in 2014.

3. In light of the decision by some eligible players to decline participation in the World Junior Championships, the respective National Team Coaches recommended a list of replacement players based on criteria contained in the selection process. The HPC discussed the NT Coach recommendations and voted to approve them.
4. The selection process for the 2014 Cadet and Junior National teams was reviewed and approved. One significant change was that six players will be seeded into the second round, with six qualifiers to join them; this change will reduce the likelihood that a player needs to defeat a top-seeded competitor just to qualify, while also reducing somewhat the required number of matches (and associated tournament conflicts) for the highest-rated players. The intent is still to move to a multiple-event trial process for the 2015 teams (to be selected during 2014). To give notice to athletes and their families, one possibility is that the events to be considered will include the U.S. Open and Nationals, and players interested in 2015 team membership may want to plan ahead to participate in both those events.
5. An issue was raised by an athlete with regard to what notifications or opportunities regarding international competition should have been provided by USATT to a player who had finished in a high position in the National Team Trial, but not participated as a team member in the World Championships. The question was aired in a thorough discussion within the HPC. The resolution was that while the HPC agrees that every athlete should be given every reasonable opportunity to compete, the members of the current National Teams (as are identified on the USATT website) are the ones to receive the particular privileges associated with team membership.
6. Procedures for the selection of the 2014 Para National Teams were reviewed, finalized and posted.
7. The High Performance Plan was presented to USOC Staff in a meeting and conference call including Mr. Gheorghe, the High Performance Director, and Mr. Danner of the HPC. Among other comments, the USOC staff commended USATT on its performance as an organization, commended the international performance of our junior players, but also asked about the potential for improved pathways through which we might keep more players seriously training and competing as adults.
8. Messrs. Gheorghe and Danner gave a brief High Performance report to the USATT Board at its October meeting in Colorado Springs.