

Actions of the USATT High Performance Committee (HPC)
February, 2013

Reported by Carl Danner, HPC Chair
March 17, 2013

During February, 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.

1. On February 4th, the USATT Board chose Carl Danner for a two year term as Chair of the HPC. In turn, Mr. Danner nominated Sean O'Neill, Stellan Bengtsson, and current HPC members Jasna Rather and Attila Malek to serve two year terms. The Athletes Advisory Council nominated current HPC member Han Xiao and Mitchell Seidenfeld to serve two year terms. On behalf of the HPC, Mr. Danner thanked and congratulated HPC Chair Ross Brown and members Pam Fontaine, Gao Jun and Bob Fox for their service. By email vote the USATT Board subsequently confirmed these nominees to the HPC.
2. The HPC was advised that vacancies exist for Paralympic National Team Coaches, and that National Team Coaches for able-bodied players also could be reviewed – although no decision has been made yet as to which of these positions may be open for applications. The HPC asked USATT headquarters for clarification of its role in hiring, reviewing, and defining the roles and job descriptions for these coaches so that it can initiate its parts of the process. The HPC anticipates taking some actions starting in March, in combination with some other committees and as directed by the CEO and USATT Board. Practically speaking, those interested in applying to become National Team coaches should be advised that applications may be opened for some or all of these positions relatively soon, and that those now holding the positions will be eligible to re-apply as well.
3. USATT High Performance Director Doru Gheorghe shared the schedule of international events to which USATT proposes to send able-bodied teams in 2013. Because of budget pressures, the available funding is \$219,000, which unfortunately is not considered adequate for achieving our high performance goals. HPC members reviewed the schedule, which was then distributed by Mr. Gheorghe to national team members.
4. The Youth Olympic Games will be held in August, 2014. The ITTF has developed a complicated qualification system through which each national association (including the U.S.) can potentially qualify one boy and one girl (only) for the YOG. During 2013, there will be six ITTF junior circuit tournaments designated as qualification events; competitors will earn points based on their performance, and the top 16 subsequently will compete in a playoff event from which the top 4 will qualify for the YOG. As well, the top 3 eligible boys and girls as of the February, 2014 ITTF world junior rankings will qualify, provided that they competed in at least one of the 2013 qualifying events.

Further qualification opportunities will occur during 2014, and athletes are encouraged to review this process on the ITTF website.

5. The HPC was tasked with developing a YOG selection process for subsequent review and approval by the AAC and USOC. This process will have two purposes: (1) to determine which boy(s) or girl(s) to fund to participate in YOG qualifying events, and (2) to determine a priority list for other boys or girls who also wish to enter such events without USATT funding – given that there will be limits on the number of entrants from each national association. Funds are budgeted to support the participation of one boy and one girl in each of the six 2013 “Road to Nanjing” ITTF qualifying events. After discussion, the HPC asked USATT HP Director Mr. Gheorghe to draft a selection process based on a combination of high-level ITTF world rankings (in light of the world top 3 criterion), the results of a YOG team trial to be held at the 2013 U.S. Open, and the results of the junior team trial in December at the Nationals. The HPC then forwarded this draft selection process to the AAC for its review and approval, which is needed per USATT Board direction. The final selection process also will require USOC approval. Athletes and their parents interested in the YOG thus should plan for the possibility of a special trial to occur on the first day of the U.S. Open.

6. Following the National Team Trials, the USATT national coaches submitted their choices for coaches’ picks to the teams. Women’s team coach Mr. Gheorghe chose Tina Lin. Men’s team coach Stefan Feth recommended Kunal Chodri, but also observed that he had a conflict of interest in that Mr. Chodri (and also Kanak Jha, another possible contender for the team) trains at Mr. Feth’s academy. Mr. Feth thus asked the HPC to make the coach’s pick instead. After its own discussion and independent consideration, the HPC voted unanimously to select Mr. Chodri, and HPC Chair Mr. Danner commended Mr. Feth for his high ethical standards in the matter.

7. Mr. Danner consulted with Mr. Gheorghe with regard to changing the dates of the Nationals to place less of a burden on the families of our young athletes from having to miss the last week of school in December. Mr. Gheorghe determined that the existing contract with the Las Vegas Convention Center appeared to permit the event to start on Wednesday and conclude on Sunday, rather than start on Tuesday and conclude on Saturday as in recent years. This would amount to a small improvement of one day less off from school, while not disrupting the overall event schedule. Mr. Danner’s recommendation to move the tournament to Wednesday through Sunday was discussed by CEO Mike Cavanaugh, Board President Mike Babuin and others, and accepted.