

UNITED STATES CURLING ASSOCIATION

Directors Meeting

September 10-11, 2005

Holiday Inn Select Hotel, Bloomington, Minnesota

Final

Minutes

Present:

Mark Swandby, in the chair
Andy Anderson
Paul Badgero
John Benton (Saturday only)
Andy Borland
Geoff Broadhurst
Grayland Cousins
Nicole Joraanstad
Jason Larway
Judy Maier
Richard Maskel
Jack McNelly
Chris Moore
Jay Packard
Bob Pelletier
James Pleasants
Donna Purkey
Leland Rich
Chris Sjue
Bill Todhunter
Greg Volk
Sam Williams

Not-present:

Bob Fenson
Peggy Hatch
Art Jytyla
Caitlyn Maroldo
Dick Urevig
Georgia West
Jon Wilson

Also present:

Dave Carlson, chair, USCA Legal & By-Laws Committee
David Eaton, chair, USCA Revenue Development Committee
David Garber, Chief Operating Officer
Warren Lowe, Parliamentarian
Rick Patzke, Director of Communications
Bev Schroeder, Member Services Manager

1. Call to order. **Swandby called the meeting to order at 1:29 p.m.**

2. Welcome, introductions, & election of new directors. Swandby welcomed new directors Sam Williams (GNCC), John Benton (AAC) and Jason Larway (AAC), and guests Dave Carlson and David Eaton. **Motion by Moore, Pelletier second, to elect AAC members John Benton, Jason Larway, Nicole Joraanstad, Caitlyn Maroldo, Richard Maskel and Bill Todhunter as USCA board-elected directors. Approved.**
3. Roll call. Anderson took the roll (above) and noted there is a quorum present.
4. Appoint parliamentarian. Swandby appointed Warren Lowe as meeting Parliamentarian.
5. Additions to printed agenda. Swandby noted additions of Hall of Fame and Whistleblower items added below.
6. Approve minutes of previous board meeting. Maier requested the minutes of the April 23-24 directors meeting be amended to include the board approval of the Seattle Granite Curling Club as host of the 2007 USCA Junior National Championship. **Motion by Pelletier, Borland second, to approve the minutes of the April 23-24, 2005, USCA directors meeting with the amendment requested by Maier. Approved.**
7. Approve actions of Executive Committee Special Meetings. **Motion by Badgero, Maier second, to ratify the actions taken by the USCA Executive Committee at its meetings held June 15, 2005; June 22, 2005; June 30, 2005; and August 4, 2005. Approved.**
8. Miscellaneous items: Strategic Plan update.

Housekeeping announcement: directors were reminded, if they haven't done so, to please submit their signed Conflict of Interest form to Garber.

A. Strategic plan. Cousins reported. There has been no action to update the Strategic Plan since the USCA spring meeting. A major USCA goal this season is: "Maximize exposure through the 2006 Olympic Winter Games." After each meeting, Cousins will send directors the current Plan.

B. Hall of Fame. Maskel reported. The Athlete Curler Recognition Committee met to consider nominations for the USCA Hall of Fame and will forward a nomination to the board. Maskel reviewed Hall of Fame selection criteria and nomination timeline (June 1 annual nomination deadline). **Motion by Maskel, Joraanstad second, that the directors induct a candidate into the USCA Hall of Fame in the Curler category.** A ballot vote will be first agenda item tomorrow (Sunday) morning. Maskel distributed the candidate's nomination papers and resume for directors' consideration.

9. Finance. Anderson reported.

A. Surplus status budget. The Finance Committee notes no major budget variances for fiscal year 2005. Anderson reviewed the three USCA accounting "classes:" Base, Performance and USCA, and explained the differences and the restrictions that apply to each. The annual CPA audit has been completed. There were a small number of adjustments, and no auditor comments of concern. The committee reviewed the budget for FY2006, and notes that the break even budget is in conflict with the Finance Committee direction to have a \$20,000 budget surplus. The committee understands

and accepts the budget as approved by the Executive Committee. The committee discussed possible solutions to any continued erosion of USCA net assets, including a special assessment on the USCA Members (the state and regional associations).

B. Insurance Summary. The Chief Operating Officer submits an insurance summary to the committee prior to each board meeting. The USCA has switched liability insurance carriers to AIG effective with its August 19, 2005 renewal.

C. Whistleblower policy. The committee supports a proposal for a policy to provide a process and protection for individuals who allege improper actions or breach of the USCA ethical conduct guidelines. The Operating committee also supports adoption of the policy, printed copies of which have been distributed to the board for consideration and a possible vote tomorrow (Sunday).

10. Treasurer. Anderson reported.

A. FY2005 budget to actual results review. The Donation Program realized \$36,000 in revenue versus \$50,000 in the budget plan. The Base and Performance funding class accounts finished on target. The USCA class deficit finished with a \$1,000 unfavorable variance to budget plan, meaning the budget was well managed.

B. FY2006 budget. The Executive Committee approved a break-even budget, including a \$10,000 revenue line item for anticipated new revenue. The Donation program is budgeted at \$36,000, the same as last year's result, and thus has potential for a significant favorable variance.

C. CPA annual audit. The annual audit was conducted at the USCA office August 18-19, 2005, and concluded with no adverse comment.

11. Nominating Committee. McNelly reported. The committee notes the positions to fill at the spring meeting: the President, the Vice Presidents, the Secretary/Treasurer, two of the World Curling Federation representatives, and the U.S. Olympic Committee Representative and Alternate Rep positions. The committee will conduct candidate interviews in the next four months, and then meet in January to finalize its slate.

12. Chief Operating Officer. Garber commended his staff for their continued efforts and expressed appreciation for the efforts of the volunteers in conducting USCA programs. He believes that the USCA revenue growth situation is looking up after several lean years, and will report further later in the meeting. Swandby commented that the Succession Plan is well under way. Several USCA officers and athlete leaders will meet with staff at the USCA office in October to further develop staff workload planning for next season.

Vice Presidential areas, reports:

13. Championships. Cousins reviewed the role of the Championships Committee, which is a combination of the several functions under Cousins' area including Event Site Selection, Rules, Officiating, Field of Play, Format and Awards.

A. Trials format. The committee has modified the men's Trials format, which is a three-tiered event, to allow a reduction to two tiers if Trials entries drop below 32 teams, by eliminating the Preliminary Round. The committee will allow no exceptions to the 2006

Trials entry deadline. Forms and entry fees for the Men's Trials must be received at the USCA office not later than November 29 at 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time. Late entries will NOT be accepted. Sam Williams assists Cousins as USCA Drawmaster. At 6:00 p.m. November 29, Williams will begin developing the first round Trials draws, to give teams as much notice as possible to arrange their time off and travel. The draw will then be submitted to the Athlete Development Director and the AAC for their review. The goal is to post the draw by Monday, December 5, and to have seeding ballots sent out by that date. Discussion. **Motion by Pelletier, Joraanstad second, to change the Trials men's playdown entry deadline to November 29, 2005. Approved.** Swandby urged the AAC to help the USCA to get the word out about the dates and the no exception entry deadline policy. Staff will be directed to web-post a list of complete entries received at the USCA office.

B. Field of Play. Mark Shurek will be head ice maker at the Bemidji Trials. He is directed to meet the USCA standard of 24 second speed with four feet of curl. The USCA is acquiring three more sets of "sensor" handles, which when combined with the two sheets already owned, will allow use on five sheets. The USCA will try to accommodate other USCA championships. Maskel noted that the ice performance standard is a "moving target," and asked the World Curling Federation Representatives to inquire if the WCF can establish a standard for World Championship play.

C. Officiating. Cousins will in the next week continue his work with the Lowell 2006 Men's World Championship Committee on the selection and assignment of senior USCA officials to the Worlds event. Cousins anticipates that most officials at Lowell will be USCA qualified officials.

D. Site Selection. The committee will work to better identify the value to Hosts of hosting USCA events. Maier distributed a paper listing the 2006 event sites approved by the Executive Committee and ratified by the board. Maier encouraged directors to solicit clubs to bid on USCA events, especially for the smaller USCA events. The board applauded Maier for her excellent and exhaustive site selection work. The number of annual USCA events has increased from five to 18 in recent years.

E. Citizenship. **Motion by Cousins, Purkey second, to require U.S. citizenship for eligibility for all USCA events leading to world level competition starting with the 2006/2007 season. Motion by Anderson, Williams second, to table the motion until the spring, 2006 USCA board meeting. Approved.** Cousins will soon communicate details for discussion by directors at the spring meeting.

14. Operations & Marketing. West reported (through Garber) that the USCA Directors Reference Manual, updated and distributed at this meeting, is a work in progress and asks directors for their comments and suggestions.

A. Legal & By-Laws. Pleasants reported. The Committee has discussed amending the By-Laws to allow a Region to petition for an additional director allocation, based on their growth in membership, more frequently than every three years as currently allowed. By-law amendment language has been developed to accommodate this request using a petition to the USCA Secretary. The Committee will Notice directors with the amendment language prior to the April 2006 meeting.

B. Human Resources: Lowe reported that the committee, as part of the Succession

Plan, has met twice this weekend to fulfill its direction from the president to commence actions needed to implement the Plan effective July 1, 2006. Staffing adjustments are being studied as a high priority.

C. Finance/Audit (reported previously)

D. ACF&M. Anderson, reporting for Urevig (president, American Curling Foundation and Museum), stated that the ACF&M has been reviewing its museum materials and is making repairs and upgrades as appropriate.

E. Revenue Development. David Eaton reported. The Donation Program is being revamped and re-named, in an effort to boost program revenue. An Athlete Marketing Agreement will be proposed to the board for its approval. The merchandise contract with XP Apparel is up for renewal in November. The committee will try to increase the number of USCA licensees. There is a big need for a demographic TV viewership survey to provide data to enhance sponsor solicitation efforts.

Todhunter reported on the proposed Athlete Marketing Agreement (AMA), designed to protect USCA property rights and its athletes' commercial rights. After over a year of negotiation and development, an AMA for this season is ready for board approval. Copies of the Agreement will be distributed today for consideration tomorrow.

G. Sponsorship and Grants. Garber reviewed the status of current USCA sponsors AmerAus and AIT. He reported on pending agreements with The Hilton Family hotels; with Nike; and for a partnership with the Lowell 2006 Committee. He also provided details of a grant request to be submitted to the Chicago Community Trust by September 23. The new developments should serve to increase USCA revenue.

H. Business Plan. Garber reported that the USCA is working with Pros Consulting to develop a USCA Business Plan. Project funding is provided by the USOC. Project results are expected to be available in a full report at the spring board meeting.

15. Member Services. Sjue reported on the activities of the committees in the Member Services area.

A. Club Membership & Development Wilson is committee chair. The Olympic year member promotion packet will be mailed to clubs (with additional information on the USCA web site). The initial mailing will be in mid-September. The packet will include materials such as posters and buttons and instructions on how to maximize the effectiveness of a club's Olympic season member building campaign, especially the Open House. There will be a second mailing in late December or January, prior to the Olympic Winter Games.

Sjue noted that the July Regional Officers Conference in Bismarck had been effective as an information exchange, motivator, and information forum. The Conference included attendees from several new USCA clubs.

B. Youth Curling. Pleasants is committee chair. Participation by U.S. curlers in the Optimists Under 18 Championship in Canada has expanded, so the Host Optimists have asked the USCA to streamline their team selection process (three teams of each gender are selected).

C. College curling. Rich Larko is committee chair. The College Curling program had a successful season. A highlight: through the efforts of Rick Patzke, the national college bonspiel was televised on CSTV.

D. Training & Instruction. Jon Mielke is committee chair. The committee is developing “tool boxes” for curler access via the USCA web site to help members with various programs including lesson plans, best practices examples from other clubs, effective curler training programs, etc. The USCA junior camps remain effective, popular and growing (held or to be held this season in Eau Claire, Rice Lake, Cape Cod, Bismarck and Seattle). One behavioral incident at Cape Cod is being investigated by the Junior Athlete Development Director. The Junior ADD, Lynita Delaney, is off to an outstanding start in establishing her position and program.

Recess at 5:30 pm; reconvene at 8:03 am Sunday.

The board observed a moment of silence in memory of the 9/11 anniversary and the Hurricane Katrina victims.

16. Votes. Ballots were distributed for votes on three subjects:

A. Hall of Fame. Ballots were distributed and collected for counting by two monitors.

B. Whistleblower policy. **Motion taken from the table. Approved.**

C. Athlete Marketing Agreement (AMA). **Motion by Pelletier, Sjue second, to approve the AMA in principle. Discussion. Approved.**

17. Competitive Programs. Moore reported.

A. Overview. From the end of the curling season until now is a busy time for Competitive Programs as the USCA works to develop the USCA/USOC Performance Partnership Agreement for the season. In an Olympic season, the focus is on the Olympic team. Moore reviewed major programs including the Athlete Development Director; Assistant ADD; Early Ice (Bemidji, Green Bay, Poynette and Rice Lake); Field of Play including “sensor” handles purchases, ice making and rocks; the “Dart Fish” video analysis hardware and software; and support for the Olympic and World Teams.

B. Paralympic athlete selection process. The Paralympic team will be selected as individual athletes in December in Utica due to the small number of Wheelchair curling athletes. Diane Brown has been selected as Paralympic Team Leader.

C. The 2006 season Incentive Program has the potential to pay out \$15,000 each gender for men’s and women’s teams. To qualify for payouts, a team must finish in top 40% of the World Curling Tour rankings and must qualify for the finals of the 2006 Trials event, among other requirements. Nine men’s and three women’s teams have applied for the pool, and all will likely be accepted in the program, however further discussion is needed with some teams whose application indicates that they may not meet the minimum schedule requirements without adding events.

D. Coaching. Lynita Delaney has done a fantastic job heading up the USCA Coaching Committee. A “Coaching Experience” clinic in Rice Lake September 17-18, 2005,

funded by a USOC grant, will match eight emerging coaches with eight experienced mentor coaches. USCA coaching resources are being upgraded. Leland Rich has assisted in setting up a USCA web site as a coaching resource.

E. Paralympic Coach selection. The USCA solicited applications for the position of Paralympic Coach; three applications were received. The Coaching Committee reviewed the applications and proposed a selection to the Elite Programs Committee, which has ratified the decision. Moore will notify the board by email as soon as the applicants are notified. The nomination is then submitted to the USOC for final approval.

F. World Team Preparation. Joraanstad and Todhunter will co-chair the World Team Prep Committee this season. Plans include development of a WTP checklist; and a long term plan for World Team Leader development, including development of the qualified Team Leader pool, through programs such as a new “apprentice” program.

G. Olympic Team Training. The team met in April in Colorado Springs, with the full range of USOC support staff, including Sports Science, Sports Psychology, Nutrition and Fitness; received Media training; and worked on their season scheduling. The schedule includes an aggressive competition schedule, with a scouting trip to Torino and Pinerolo this fall. The team has terrific support from the USOC. Team Leader McNelly, ADD Lukowich and coaches Doese and Fenson attended a USOC May summit in Torino.

18. USOC. McNelly reported. The USOC has provided great support for our Olympic team on all levels. The governance avenue to the USOC is via the National Governing Body (NGB) Council. The USOC has favored representation on the Council by NGB Executive Directors and Presidents. In view of this, McNelly proposes appointing the USCA COO and President as the USCA representatives to the NGB Council on an interim basis, until the governance question is more settled. Other point of possible contention is the USOC ideal governance model, namely a very small board which for the USCA would include athletes, independent directors, WCF reps and USCA constituent directors. The USCA-USOC staff to staff working relationship is excellent.

19. Athletes Advisory Council (AAC). Joraanstad reported. The AAC wishes to thank Maskel for his many years of excellent service as AAC chair. Applause. New AAC reps on the USCA board are Benton, Larway and Maroldo. The AAC proposes that Olympic team coaches be given priority for the post-Olympic White House visit for available allocation spots. Todhunter will research USOC policy for these allocations.

Todhunter reported as USOC AAC Representative. He was part of the USCA review and approval group for the Paralympic athlete, team leader and coach selection procedures. Todhunter and alternate USOC rep Joraanstad have been appointed to the USOC-AAC Anti-Doping Committee, which works to improve athlete education and helps to ensure a level playing field through anti-doping policy and procedures. Todhunter will attend the next USOC AAC meeting September 30-October 2 in Denver.

20. World Curling Federation (WCF). Anderson reported. The USCA WCF reps attended the last WCF General Assembly in Paisley, Scotland, last March and will attend the WCF Semi-Annual General Assembly in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany in early December. The next Annual General Assembly, including election of WCF officers will be held in Lowell next April.

Anderson discussed possibilities for the elections. One policy issue coming up is an eventual change to the Zonal Qualifying System for Worlds (national placement at Worlds are the basis for Olympic qualification). It is expected that the WCF will adopt a new system as is used in several other team sports, which will require U.S. to qualify for Worlds annually. There has been no further word on adding a singles curling discipline to the Olympic program.

Rich reported that WCF development programs are at the end of their quadrennial financial cycle, and are expected to be re-activated just after the Torino Olympic Games. The level of play in new curling nations is rapidly improving.

Lowe noted that 57 men's and women's teams will compete in the European Championships in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, with this total likely to grow. All these nations compete for eight men's and eight women's European berths at Worlds, a tougher process than Canada and USA face.

Swandby asked Lowe to comment on the WCF building loan program. Lowe noted that the WCF receives its income from the International Olympic Committee once every four years, about two months after the Olympic Winter Games. This lump sum must last for the next four years. The WCF received \$8.2 million after the 2002 Games, and expects to break even after the Torino Games, in time for the next IOC payment. Lowe expects that the WCF development programs will be renewed in some form, perhaps increased, as the WCF expects its next IOC payment may be increased if the 2006 Games are a success. Meanwhile, the loan program is on hold until at least April, 2006. WCF emphasis for the program is on developing areas with no curling facilities, such as was the case with the Potomac Curling Club loan.

21. U. S. Women's Curling Association (USWCA). Purkey reported. The USWCA will meet in Albany in two weeks. New members are the Lake Placid and Columbus (Ohio) curling clubs. The USWCA will select its next Scots Tour team members at the Albany meeting.

22. Open board action items. There were no open board action items.

23. Unfinished business. Swandby asked Maskel to announce the Hall of Fame ballot results: **Lisa Schoeneberg has been elected to the USCA Hall of Fame in the Curler category. Motion by Moore, Todhunter to destroy the ballots. Approved.** Swandby will notify Schoeneberg. A site and date for a ceremony for Schoeneberg's induction will be determined.

Pleasant commented on prospects for a Mixed Worlds and asked Maskel to comment on his research into the subject. Supporters are working to inaugurate an informal (unsanctioned) world mixed event. Supporters expect that a successful informal event would help boost support for a WCF sanctioned event. Supporters have support from national champions from several nations to have a competition next season, and have an interested site. The European Curling Association will have their first Mixed Championship in Andorra next season, which may also provide some impetus for the project.

Pelletier reported that Potomac curlers had been invited to have a curling booth at the National Scouts Jamboree last summer. The booth was a great success, very popular, with over 1,200 scouts visiting the booth. The next similar event is planned for 2010.

24. New business.

Next USCA Board of Directors meeting. Swandby announced that the spring USCA directors meeting will be held April 21-23, 2006, at a site to be determined. Swandby encouraged the directors to attend, volunteer and support the Lowell 2006 Men's World Championship event.

25. Adjourn. **Motion by Anderson, Badgero second to adjourn. Approved at 9:11 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,
David Garber
Recording Secretary

Reviewed and authorized,
Albert Anderson
Secretary