

United States Curling Association
Executive Committee Meeting
April 25, 2003
AmeriSuites Chicago O'Hare Hotel, Illinois

Minutes

Present

Jack McNelly
Grayland Cousins
Phill Drobnick
Bob Fenson
Pam Finch
Peggy Hatch
Warren Lowe
Richard Maskel
Chris Moore
Donna Purkey
Mark Swandby
Jane Thompson

Not present

Ann Silver

Also present

David Garber, Executive Director
Rick Patzke, Director of Communications
Bev Schroeder, Member Services Manager

1. **McNelly called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.**

The committee went into closed session to discuss two subjects related to coaching.

2. **Approve prior minutes. Motion by Finch, Lowe second, to approve the minutes of the Special Meetings held September 15, October 31, November 12, November 14, November 19, November 27, 2002, and February 13, 2003. Approved.**

3. **Discussion.** McNelly facilitated discussion of the possible processes and timetables regarding governance proposals of the USCA Governance Task Force. The committee agreed that no action was appropriate now regarding assignment of new clubs to states/regions and elimination of the at-large club category until after the work of the Format and Governance Task Forces is completed. Also, the work of the 2006 Olympic Team Selection Task Force is contingent on proposals from the Format Task Force.

4. **Strategic Plan Status.** Hatch encouraged the officers to meet soon to enable a major re-evaluation of the USCA Strategic Plan. Moore proposed that the meeting should be held well prior to the budget setting in early June. The Format Task Force will have a proposal for one change in the Priority Issues.

5. **Treasurer.** Moore gave a preview of the Treasurer's Report he would give to the Board, including a variance-from-budget report for the current fiscal year. The overall variance is significantly positive.

6. **Executive Director.** No report.

7. **USOC.** McNelly reported. The USOC board has approved, in principle, a reduction in their board from over 100 to nine directors, and elimination of the USOC executive committee. These changes will require changes to the Ted Stevens Olympic & Amateur Sports Act, since USOC structure is governed by federal law.

8. **WCF.** Lowe will report in more detail at the board meeting.

a. WCF meetings. The World Curling Federation Assembly met in December, 2002, in Grindelwald, Switzerland and this April in Winnipeg.

b. Grants. A new WCF grant program makes available up to \$40,000 per nation through 2006. The WCF offers grants for curling development officers that pay 20% of salary for several years.

c. World championships. In 2005, the World Curling Championships will be split into men's and women's events, with a concurrent increase in the field to 12 nations for each gender. The change was driven by sponsorship and television marketing. The WCF will not pay for athlete airfares to Sweden for the 2004 Senior World Curling Championships. Hatch reported that the 2004 World Wheelchair Curling Championship will be held in Sursee, Switzerland. The USCA will need to conduct a world team selection event. August 31, 2003, is deadline to reserve the Team USA berth for Sursee.

d. Paralympics. McNelly noted that wheelchair curling has been added to the program for the 2006 Paralympic Games, and that the USCA needs to formally assume responsibility as the National Governing Body for paralympic curling. He will ask the board to make the commitment.

9. **USWCA.** Purkey reported. The U.S. Women's Curling Association has offered to host the new women's nationals event, with the proviso that each team member be a member of the same club. The USWCA web site is up and running.

10. **AAC.** Maskel reported as chair of the USCA Athletes Advisory Council.

a. AAC organization. The AAC is in the process of reorganizing itself. In the AAC elections this winter, there were three council slots open for men and three for women, but there were only two applicants for each gender (Maskel, C. Brown, Joraanstad and Pottinger). No new election is needed, but there are only eight representatives now. The positions allocated to the Nationals Teams will be eliminated as it is often difficult for these players to participate in AAC activities and they don't necessarily meet the athlete elected criteria. The AAC expects to meet in late May, and will decide then whether to appoint two new reps.

b. Officiating and Ice. Games officiating continues to be a concern with the AAC. The AAC notes that the USCA is making significant strides in improving championship ice conditions. The AAC favors more USCA emphasis on sports science leading up to the 2006 Olympic Games. Maskel is looking for a systematic, comprehensive and ongoing approach to sports science and is gathering competitive intelligence.

11. **Marketing & Operations.** Finch reported briefly, as a report will be made to the board.

a. TV. Patzke gave an overview of the television activities on NBC. Both the March and April programs were well-produced and the ratings were solid. Further shows are in the planning stages, including a joint show with luge and bobsled scheduled for early December, with the curling portion showing highlights from the November Continental Cup. Finch noted that the USCA believes the prospects for sponsorship has increased, and that the USCA will be soliciting sports marketing companies armed with TV ratings numbers.

b. Merchandising. Results are good. New product designs always welcome. XP Apparel is the USCA official merchandiser. XP has provided regular reports. USCA royalties are over \$1,100 since October this season. The USCA will participate in the USOC "OXL" member card program, after some delay due to confusion, now cleared up, over the active period for cards (i.e., expiration date) and possible higher annual costs to USCA. This fall, each USCA member will receive a membership card at USCA cost, with no expiration date. Benefits include access to several commercial discounts.

12. Member Services. Swandby reported.

a. Membership growth. The most exciting news is that the USCA has enjoyed a net increase in membership of 1,048 to date. Every region has increased membership, except for Nebraska, at minus one. Much of the growth appears due to the TV exposure during the Olympics and beyond.

b. College curling. The College Curling program remains very successful. Chair Rich Larko wants an operating committee selected from program activists, separate from the USCA, which Swandby deems OK if coupled with appropriate accountability to the USCA. All teams at the college nationals are subsidized by the program, via reimbursement of participants' travel and entry fees.

c. Training & Instruction. The Training and Instruction curriculum has been revamped. Clinics have been held. There is an urgent need to update the USCA database with certification information.

d. Youth curling. The Junior Merit Program has been revised. The "curling in the gym" program has some activity. One final application for the Junior Rocks program is being fulfilled. Patti Lank is working on a curling school program in Buffalo.

e. Member Development. To further boost member growth, Member Services is considering setting aside some travel funding for volunteers in the various regions who are reaching out to new clubs and new areas. The Membership Marketing Seminars are continuing. Two new volunteer facilitators have nearly completed their facilitators training to prepare them to conduct the Membership Marketing Seminars. Swandby listed about a dozen areas with new or revitalized clubs. Adequate rock supplies remain a concern. Swandby is considering repeating the regional officers meeting, held last fall, this season. He wants to move toward getting more information about member-building disseminated on the USCA web site.

13. Competitive Programs. Thompson reported.

a. Performance funding. No report.

b. Athlete funding. No report.

c. Ratifying actions. Thompson asked the committee to develop guidance on information needed by the committee in order for it to make an informed decision when ratifying actions of Elite Programs and/or Athlete Funding Committees (i.e., is the committee ratifying the process used, the resulting decision, or both?).

d. Junior B funding. Thompson noted that she will propose, during the upcoming budget process, that the dollars unused for the men's 2003 Junior Worlds expenses be made available to fund the Junior B qualifier for the 2004 WJCC.

e. 2004 USOC Performance Funding Plan. The PFP was submitted to the USOC April 21. The USCA will meet with USOC via conference call in early May, and should receive a preliminary response in June. It is likely that the final USOC funding totals will not be known until November (as was the

case last season).

f. Other. The Elite Programs Committee met yesterday, April 24. No Executive Committee action needed at this point. The World Team Preparation Committee does not have any funding or budget to prepare the Senior Worlds teams, nonetheless, the committee did handle the 2003 Senior Worlds team preparation work.

14. **Championships**. Cousins reported.

a. Championship sites and dates. Site Selection chair Lisa Schoeneberg and her committee are doing a great job locking in sites as much as three years out. 2004 sites include Grand Forks, Men's and Women's Nationals; Centerville, Junior Nationals; Mankato, Mixed; and Waupaca, Second Chance. Bemidji or Bismarck will host Senior Worlds selection. Utica or Belfast will host World Wheelchair selection. Junior B selection event site is to be determined.

b. Format Task Force. The Task Force has been active over the past several months. The position going into the meeting Thursday evening included several minor changes to the current world selection system, and the creation of a second club-based championship. The Task Force position changed during the meeting, where a consensus emerged that the goal of the world team selection event is to get the best U.S. teams to the worlds, not keep the event as a regional playoff. The Task Force will propose postponing the launch of the club nationals for one season to ensure the new event is done right. The strategy is, in the fall, to combine communication of the club championship together with a new open format for the world team selection event, and to promote these changes together. The "no sign-up-and-go" policy and the regional playdown schedule window will be among the "housekeeping" items presented to the board tomorrow to be effective for the 2004 Nationals. The new travel expense policy was for the most part a success.

15. **Other business**. Moore confirmed that there will be a \$2 USCA dues increase next season, as the last installment of the "over three years" dues increase passed by the board in 2001. Hatch expressed concern about an element of the Governance Task Force proposal, in which the nominating committee could be comprised of past presidents who may not be active USCA directors.

16. **Unfinished business**. There was no unfinished business.

17. **New business**. There was no new business.

18. **Motion by Moore, Hatch second, to adjourn. Approved at 12:07 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,
David Garber
Recording Secretary

Reviewed and Authorized,
R. Chris Moore
Secretary