

## Madison, Wis., USCA Town Hall Meeting

Aug. 4, 2010

*USCA facilitator: Rick Patzke  
Notes taken by Mark Swandby*

***To the reader:*** *Not everyone quote/comment is attributed to a particular person, but efforts have been made to identify all comments or statements made by the USCA representative facilitating the meeting.*

Rick Patzke gave the presentation. 23 people attended, 21 were members of the Madison Curling Club.

Comments from attendees:

- There are no details yet as to how to fulfill the goals of achieving the elite level
- There is a lot of good in the plan, but there is a lack of flexibility and communication in the implementation
- Each team is unique, the plan wasn't tailored to individuals, for example, in the fitness plans
- There needs to be more 2-way communication in the initial development of the program, especially between curler and non-curler
- There was a lack of curling expertise in the staff who put the program in place before the curling staff was hired; need to hire curling expertise before develop the plan VS There was a lot of curling expertise when the plan began in 2008 and ongoing; the USOC wants to see sport high performance expertise utilized
- The model uses a camp format. Teams are unique, does a camp format improve these skills; training needs to recognize uniqueness with individual flexibility; a better format is to bring the expertise to the teams individually rather than to a camp of multiple teams
- Suggest that sessions be set up that the teams can choose from based on their perceived needs; the teams should choose people to help the team, not apply USCA-picked staff to the team
- Suggest funding for teams so they can hire their own coaches to accompany the team during the season so the coach can be continuously available; it is better to bring expertise to the teams and let them pick their own staff (for teams willing to follow the program and be held accountable) VS the USCA/USOC needs to be able to see that they are getting value from the coach
- Curlers are not professional athletes, they are older and have jobs and families; can't fit curlers into that USOC-driven model
- Did not feel that the USCA/USOC had what was needed to get them better; would go to Canada for opportunity to gain experience against the best in the World, if had the time and the money to do so
- Discussion of individual funding versus team funding: before there was not measurement or resources, could still use team model if resources were available; could use the old model of team funding if more teams were given more money to go to Canada for ice and

competition; this should continue to be part of the system, some combination; individual funding would eliminate teams if not all team members are following the program; unequal funding amongst team members would harm team chemistry

- Teams in the past were not held accountable; if funded, teams would agree to be accountable, but there should be collaboration as to how the accountability principles and criteria are determined
- Local ice conditions in U.S. are not good enough; need to play often on world class ice
- Camp scheduling needs to take into account the teams' competitive schedules; in many cases the schedules have already been set for 2010-11 due to early bonspiel entry deadlines
- Suggest that overall USA competitive strength compares well with the world if 5-6 teams could be exposed to elite-level experience
- Request access to HPP program by non-funded athletes
- Reconsider the playdown system, for example having the Olympic trials separate from the national championships; sudden death playdown may not select the best team; additional paths to participation in the national finals competition such as based on season record
- Need to use Canada as an asset to improve the level of play by having the team and coach go there together for good competition and good ice
- Need to deepen the pool of athletes; use TATT expertise to run camps that non-elite individuals pay to go to improve their skills; elite individuals could be subsidized
- Selecting teams for funding based on past record means they have to stay together; this may not be the best for the team
- Suggest the funding selection process should include face-to-face interviews with the curlers and more collaboration and feedback from teams during the process
- Basing the HPP program on the 2008 coaching cadre is limited data and short of ideal; there needs to be ongoing, not one-off, development of the program