

San Jose USCA Town Hall meeting notes

Wednesday, July 28th, 2010

USCA facilitators: John Benton, Rick Patzke and Phill Drobnick

Notes taken by Gabrielle Coleman, USCA Elite Programs Committee member

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.*

- Metrics – will the USCA be measuring the value of the HPP solely on athlete performance/results, or will they look at other factors, like TV viewership or overall sport growth?
- Have we studied how other countries approach this? Are there any countries trying to develop a base of recreational curling along with their high performance athletes?
- I think the plan will be well received outside the “center of the curling world” – Minnesota and Wisconsin, because regions like ours (MoPac) are onboard already. Our big question – how do we get our good players to the national level (from an arena club)?
- How do you specifically grade each athlete-metric quality objectively? For example – are you graded on the number of push-ups that you can do in a minute? How can these evaluations be made as objective as possible?
- How do we open this program up to more people? (Right now, it feels as though a group of 20 or so people of each gender have a lock on elite curling.)
- Who assesses players? Their own coach? An objective person?
- Can these player metric evaluations be done remotely? Why do we always need to travel to the Midwest?
- We need to make better use of remote education technology. We do so much virtually – Facebook, Farmville and other games, we even bomb using drones – how can we harness this for training?
- Have curlers send video of themselves to coach for analysis
- We’re ok with one good training facility – but travel funds would be necessary.
- Face-to-face meetings/trainings are important because they help curlers to break into the social circle of competitive curling to form teams. This is one of the biggest challenges in competitive curling.
- When the USCA selects people for camps, will it be individuals or teams?
- At the elite level, players should be obliged to attend camps in person
- Curling has lived in a small area for a long time – we need to get more people access
- Where can I get coaching training in the new HPP? There’s a lot I need to learn to assess data and give players confidence that I can guide them in the new system.

- Right now, coaching in curling is more friend/consultant. In other sports, coaches have more power.
- Curlers are 40-year-old men and women, not 25-year-old kids – how does that impact the role of the coach?
- Skip was the coach, manager, bus driver – the HPP needs to break away from that.
- How were the Olympic coaches selected?
- (reacting to the idea of hiring a few coaches and asking them to assemble teams then giving them an automatic berth in Nationals) I'd like to be that coach – but I'm not sure I like (trust) a program that allows that.
- (On team selection process) There's still value to a group of guys getting together over a beer and saying – “Let's give it a go!”
- If coaches are responsible for selecting teams, how will they know anything about me and my potential if we are from different regions?
- Are we limiting ourselves to US-based coaches?
- If we “buy” 4 or 5 great coaches from other countries, will that kill coaching development and mid-level coaches in the US?
- Ice making – will we have one central training location or multiple locations with top quality ice?
- Budget – do you have a breakdown on how money is spent on general categories, like coaching, elite athletes, facilities, staff, etc?
- Will this plan have an impact on our USOC rating (the 1-3 status) or is our status based solely on our ability to win medals?
- Does our “curler lifecycle” look different from Canada's – perhaps it should because we have more people coming in at a later age?
- Will there still be intro/low level HPP training available in years 2-4 to keep the pipeline flowing?
- 2 approaches to getting discovered: 1. Have people go to camps to get discovered, 2. Have coaches travel to bonspiels to identify talent.
- At the elite level, we need to eliminate parents as coaches.
- There are also non-USCA camps like the world one in Germany.
- USCA communication sucks.
- Will we find out more specifics about what went wrong during the Olympic process? I coach and I need to learn what pitfalls to avoid.
- Players should say “I'll play whatever position it takes to win.”