



**U.S. Biathlon Association, Board of Directors Meeting  
Pineland Farms Conference Center - Saturday May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
Meeting Minutes, Submitted by Art Stegen, Secretary**

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman, Larry Pugh called to order the Board of Directors meeting of the U.S. Biathlon Association at 8:30 A.M. on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at the Pineland Farms Conference Center, New Gloucester, ME.

**II. Roll Call**

Members of the Board of Directors present were: Larry Pugh, Charles Kellogg, Roger Hartley, Bill Alford, Phyllis Jalbert, Art Stegen, Chad Salmela, Jerry Baltzell, and Rachel Steer. Absent from the meeting were Michael Dubie and Jeremy Teela. Members present represent a quorum. Others presents were Ed Williams, Max Cobb, Andy Shepard, James Upham, Tom Zelko, Gary Colliander, Barbara Baltzell and Susan Stegen. Joining the meeting via telephone conference call were Per Nilsson, Mikael Lofgren, Bernd Eisenbichler and Piotr Bednarski.

**III. Opening Remarks**

Chairman Larry Pugh recognized Major General Michael Dubie of the Vermont National Guard as a new Board of Directors member representing Group E. The Board of Directors is now complete. Larry welcomed him and is pleased to have him as a member, however due to a conflicting commitment; he was unable to attend this meeting, sending Lt. Colonel Tom Zelko as his representative, but without a vote. Max Cobb has been in contact with General Dubie and has been providing him with updates.

Larry thanked the members present for their attendance and the committee work that had been accomplished in the days preceding the meeting. He reminded members that although committee membership is designated, committee meetings are open to all members of the Board of Directors.

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Larry Pugh made a motion for acceptance and approval of the previous regular Board of Directors' meeting minutes (November 11, 2006). The motion received multiple seconds and approved.

**V. Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Max Cobb began his report to the Board by stating that "finishing the first year of a reorganized Association and revised By-Laws, we are fortunate to celebrate the results of a men's top-ten finish in the Nations Cup standings, a 40% improvement in the Nations Cup points, Tim Burke's season of top 30<sup>th</sup> place

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finishes in 75% of the World Cup races, and with 1½ months left in the fiscal year, within budget.” He also commented that “most importantly, the athletes recognize the new level of professionalism and support.”

A. Recent Achievements: Max reviewed the recent achievements; the most important of which was the hiring of the High Performance Director, Bernd Eisenbichler. Bernd has worked with the program as the primary wax technician over the past 10 years and has brought a higher level of professionalism to the international efforts. Max asked Bernd to review the steps that he has taken towards his role providing oversight and direction of the National Team. Bernd pointed out how the BOD member attendance at the World Championships was a big change for the staff and the team and a clear step forward for the Association. Their presence provided a support and a sense of expectations not previously known. He told the group that the goal of podium performances is realistic and that we must now set the levels higher behind the team and among the staff, and that expectations should be raised for development. He feels hope that these will happen soon and that the process has begun with a recent meeting in Colorado Springs.

B. Up-coming Preparations: Max asked coaches Per and Mikael to review the preparations for the upcoming season. They felt that the two weeks camp at Colorado Springs was a perfect two weeks for the first training camp of the season and a much earlier start than last year. It provided base training for marksmanship at Colorado Springs and intense high altitude training at Durango, CO. The next camp will be at Lake Placid in July, followed by a camp in Sweden in August, one in Utah in October and back to Sweden in November which will lead into the 2008 competitive season.

Looking to the 2008 season, Max reviewed the general training outline that supports 6 athletes on the National team which will be coached by National team Coaches Per and Mikael in a program similar to last season, and a Development team which will participate in a residency program at the USOTC in Lake Placid. James Upham will lead the Development group that will follow a training program designed by the National team coaches and be funded through the USOC. Bernd pointed out that the National and Development teams will be following “one philosophy” and “one system” of training. This system will be established for all levels of athletes with links from the National team and thereby establishing a “standardized” and unified program across the spectrum. The National team will start the early World Cups with the Development group starting at the European Cup and working up in a competitive pathway towards the World Cup level. A full team will participate at the World Championships. Max explained that the competitive program is now fully staffed and planned, to include a nutritionist, medical supervision, physical therapy and a ski service team, and that his attention, which was prioritized on athlete performance last year, will now shift towards organizational concerns.

C. Recruiting and Development: Max asked Piotr to summarize his efforts in development and recruiting. Piotr joined the staff in October and has been visiting with clubs and coaches around the country. He told the group that he was getting development plans organized and looking for the best methods of recruiting for all groups, clubs, high schools and colleges. He explained that there were multiple points

in the development process and feels that efforts towards plugging a big hole with college-age athletes who disappear after development as a junior is being made. University of Vermont and school programs in Anchorage, AK and Duluth, MN are cooperating in trying to maintain relationships with biathlon coaching. Algis Shalna has also established relationships with Dartmouth and Middlebury Colleges to have periodic biathlon coaching available to biathlon skiers, however college programs are still problematic and present difficult problems for recruiting. Another identified problem area is Alaska, which Piotr explained will become a focus point for the coming season. The 2008 World Junior team trials will take place in Anchorage, and Piotr pointed out that no coaching programs for biathlon exist in Alaska. He also felt that the U.S. National Championships should become a priority for all groups of athletes, juniors to masters, and that there should be increased pressure and a presence at all biathlon events.

Chairman Larry Pugh reminded the group that as the new Board of Directors took control of the Association, the number objective was to reach podium performances with the second priority being the development of future athletes. Bill Alford asked the coaches, Bernd and Piotr if there was anything the Board of Directors can do to improve success and what they might do to help. Piotr responded by saying that the top priority for development is to jump-start the Alaska program and that will take resources.

D. IBU Issues: Max identified some IBU changes that will have an impact on the number of starts allowed at the World Cup races. Television broadcasting wants changes in the format of the competition. Since IBU revenues come primarily from television, the IBU made some proposals that were problematic, that would require trials for all but two U.S. athletes. A more sympathetic system was proposed by Max, keeping 4 men and 2 women starts. There still may be another change in 2008, however for now the field size at World Cups will be reduced from 120 men to 90. The current proposal before the IBU Executive Committee is: Top-60 athletes can start in fixed order with the best athletes starting in group 2 (31 to 60), and the next best in group 3 (61-90). Those outside the top 60 on the IBU World Cup points list (61+) must compete in a "qualification competition" each week to enter the World Cup and start in the first group (1-30). There will be increased support for athletes at European Cups.

Another IBU issue needing attention is the marketing agreement that must be signed between USBA and IBU marketing for the 2009 World Cup to be held at Ft. Kent. Max explained the nature of how the rights for World Cups are owned by IBU, who sells those rights to a marketing firm, which then must sign agreements with the National Federations, who in turn make agreements with the host organizing committee's and television rights. The agreement with IBU for the Ft. Kent World Cup must be signed in the very near future.

Max continued his report of IBU issues with a review of the Vancouver Hospitality opportunity. The IBU has offered USBA and Biathlon Canada the chance to run a hospitality program at the 2010 Vancouver Games. He provided the members with a draft Project Framework developed by the IBU Secretary General, Michael Geistlinger in April. The benefits to USBA would be access to Olympic family housing, tickets, accreditation, driving and parking passes; access that could only be matched by

becoming a multi-million dollar sponsor. As the time to start booking reservations needs to begin, Max felt there is a need to know the relationships and possibilities. This potential opportunity was discussed at the last BOD meeting and again with a meeting with IBU at the World Championships in Antholz. The groups served would be the IBU Executive Board, the IBU Technical Committee, IBU Staff, USBA Board and Guests, USBA Sponsors, USBA potential sponsors, Biathlon Canada guests and sponsors. The goals of this effort would be to build a stronger relationship with IBU, to provide an unparalleled Olympic experience for the USBA Board of Directors, guests and sponsors and to leverage the program to recruit new and future sponsors, currently and after the games. Larry explained that there is now a need to develop a business plan and a sense of approval from the BOD to continue exploring this opportunity and a need for final approval by July. He suggested that the management and planning be outsourced to an outside contractor with oversight by the BOD. Jerry Baltzell made a motion that the BOD continues to move forward exploring the opportunity and a final decision to be made in July. Rachel Steer seconded the motion and it was approved by the members.

E. 2008 World Championships: Concerning the 2008 World Championships, Östersund, Sweden (8-17 February) Max concluded his report by announcing the plans to offer similar program to the very successful one for Board members at the 2007 World Championships. He also reported that a partnership with the WCN network would continue.

## **VII. Financial Report**

Max Cobb reported that the projected end of year FY 07 (Fiscal Year 2007) budget will be in balance and an aggressive request for a 25% increase to USOC has been submitted. The reorganization of USBA helped to set the USOC baseline funding for the quadrennial and a response from the USOC is expected within two weeks. In addition, a request for extra funding for special projects in the High Performance Plan has been made that can immediately help the athletes. Bernd explained that the special projects were designed to continue to develop a more professional approach to the international efforts, including ski grinding, ski testing, nutrition, wax specialists, massage and related medical support for the National team. Also included were projects to develop a unique rifle barrel supplier and a laser infrared training system. The FY 08 budget has a conservative starting point and will most certainly need revision depending on the USOC response. Chairman Larry Pugh requested that final approval for the FY 08 budget be delayed until July when the USOC funding decisions would be known. A year-end FY 07 estimate and a tentative FY 08 budget forecast were provided to the members.

In other related USOC funding issues, studies show declining television viewers in the 18-34 year-old demographic. Attempting to improve this, the USOC is reaching out to the National Governing Bodies by increasing the Joint Marketing fees in return for the television rights to U.S. National Championships. The Joint Marketing Agreement will be replaced by a Sport Content agreement, which should result in improved USBA revenues; fewer sponsor restrictions, and more exposure of biathlon at USOC expense. Ed Williams was working with Max concerning the legal aspects of the new agreement.

Following Max's report on the changes to the Joint Marketing Agreement, Bill Alford suggested that there may now be a need for broadcasting experience within the BOD or the staff. Following some discussion on the subject, it was suggested that Max continue to have conversations with the USOC media experts to determine how best to deal with the increasing pressure and needs for broadcasting expertise.

### **VIII. Athlete's Report**

Chad Salmela reported that the athletes have just completed what they feel was a successful first training camp. They feel there is currently great leadership from the organization and have great confidence in the staff. The volume and intensity of their training has improved and Jay Hakkinen will now train with the National team. He reported their motivation is high and all the National team athletes feel better funded and supported.

### **IX. International Competition Committee**

The ICC forwarded a list of their recommendations for National team and National Development group nominations for the coming season and requested approval by the BOD. Chairman Larry Pugh made a motion to accept the ICC recommendations, and the motion was seconded and approved. The National Team will include: Tim Burke, Jay Hakkinen, Lowell Bailey, Jeremy Teela, Lanny Barnes, Tracy Barnes and Denise Teela. The National Development Group will include Haley Johnson, Beth Ann Chamberlain, Caitlin Compton, Sara Studebaker, and Zach Hall, with Kevin Patzoldt and Annalies Cook participating in the summer activities and Brian Olsen provisionally named, based on review after the July training camp.

### **X. Ethics Committee**

The Ethics Committee reported that Ethics disclosures were distributed to BOD members and will be to be returned by the members.

### **XI. Audit Committee**

Phyllis Jalbert reported that the committee is awaiting the management letter at a later date following the conclusion of the fiscal year on June 30<sup>th</sup>. The committee is also working towards learning more about the checks and balances methodology with the auditing firm.

### **XII. Marketing Committee**

Andy Shepard reported that it is an exciting time to work with the Board of Directors and that the upcoming 2009 World Cup at Ft. Kent (12-15 March) and the 2010 Winter Olympics at Vancouver (18-28 February) will provide the potential to establish "brand identity" for biathlon in the U.S.A. USBA's assets are now coming together and have value for potential marketing. He suggested that professional marketing firms be contacted concerning the upcoming international events and would soon prepare a proposal to several of firms.

He told the group that biathlon has grown so much in Europe that made-for television events, such as the World Team Challenge in Düsseldorf, Germany now exist. The firm that organizes that event has approached the IBU to see if such an event could be done in the U.S.A. IBU has contacted USBA about facilitating the hosting of such an event in New York City, with full rights to the USBA with the intent to further develop biathlon interest in the U.S.A. This marketing group, WPP-Group M feels the U.S.A. has the basis for a potentially strong target audience and Andy believes that in order to take the sport nationally, international help could be the key. There is a meeting scheduled with WPP in two weeks and the Marketing Committee plans to provide additional information back to the BOD in five weeks. This effort points again to the need for a person with media experience on the staff.

### **XIII. Fundraising Committee**

Bill Alford reported to the BOD that The Annual Fund Campaign met its \$25,000 goal; however a small percentage of the membership participated. This year's effort will attempt to reach a greater number of members. The 2006 Golf Fundraiser was extremely successful in meeting its goal of \$30,000. Andy Shepard provided preliminary plans for the 2007 Golf Fundraiser which will again be held at the Falmouth Country Club. Changes in this year's plan have a goal of increasing the net revenue by 77%. A strategy of having "Team Captains" recruit 80 golfers in foursomes, hole sponsorships, a dinner sponsor and an improved auction are the important parts of the plan. The scheduled date for the event is September 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **XIV. Club Development Committee**

Bill Lilly provided the BOD with a report recommending the development of a Master's Championship. A working group that was formed to address this issue made the following recommendations:

- A. Two masters classifications: Masters (40-49 years) and Veteran (50+ years). This would be a change from the current age groups listed in the Coaches Education program.
- B. The Masters Championship is a part of the single National Championship events that includes Juniors, Seniors, and Masters.
- C. The distances and event formats should be the same as the senior class.
- D. The site of the National Championships should be rotated.
- E. The National Championship should be held toward the end of the season.

These recommendations do not require BOD approval.

### **XV. Education Committee**

Max Cobb reported that Matt Sabasteanski has accepted the responsibility for the Officials education. Art Stegen reported that there now is a need to bring the Coaches Education materials in line with the National team coaches and High Performance

Director's wishes for a unified and standardized philosophy and work towards getting those concepts in the field so that coaching concepts are coordinated at all levels.

**XVI. Safety Committee**

Jerry Baltzell reported that the Safety Committee has developed a Safety Incident Reporting Form that will hopefully provide the committee with a way of reviewing safety concerns and developing strategies to identify and avert potential safety violations. The Safety DVD developed by the National Guard is to be distributed, with copies sent to all BOD members. Safety certifying officials will be identified and updated.

**XVII. Compensation Committee**

Charles Kellogg requested the meeting adjourn to executive session for a discussion of compensation and staff issues.

**XVIII. Other Business**

Rachel Steer reported on the progress of the Kincaid Park's renovation of the biathlon range along with other project plans taking place in Anchorage, AK. As Chair of the fund-raising committee, she explained that plans are to have the biathlon range completed in time for the up-coming season's World Junior Team trials scheduled for that location. Rachel offered the members an opportunity to view a copy of the project's plans.

**IX. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the Board of Directors meeting is set for September 18, 2007 at the Pineland Farms Conference Center, following the annual Golf Tournament on September 17<sup>th</sup>.

**X. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 A.M.