
**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE
USA VOLLEYBALL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Thursday, January 21, 2021 - Meeting held by video conference

Thursday, January 21st 12:00pm. ET; 11:00am Central; 10:00am Mountain; 9:00am Pacific

I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME Cecile Reynaud, Chair

a. Welcome, Meeting Guidelines, Introductions Reynaud

b. Roll Call, Directory Update, Declaration of Quorum Rachael Stafford

Present: T. Bourne, B. Rasmussen, N. Nieves, S. Bishop, C. Reynaud, D. Eldridge, E. King, C. Lichtman, J. McGhee, D. Gentile, D. Blanton, S. Kenyon, D. Peixoto, D. Donaghy, B. Baker, S. Hughes, C. Rojas*, K. Shoji*, G. Thompson (Treasurer),*

**Joined meeting after the start due to other obligations.*

Absent:

Guests/Staff: C. Vadala, R. Stafford, J. Davis, S. Smith, S. Kearns, E. Duda (new AAC Rep), N. Funk,

c. Conflict of Interest declaration for any board member Reynaud

Ms. Reynaud gave Board members an opportunity to declare a conflict of interest. Mr. Bishop asked if the definition has changed, and Ms. Stafford responded that it had not. No conflicts were declared. Ms. Stafford noted that Board members can declare a conflict on an issue when the issue comes up.

II. BOARD ADMINISTRATION Reynaud

a. *Approval of minutes (September Minutes Approved Electronically)*

The minutes were previously approved electronically.

b. *Approval of Agenda*

Motion #1, made by Gentile, seconded by Peixoto, to approve the agenda, approved unanimously.

III. BOARD CHAIR REPORT Reynaud

a. Results of electronic voting between meetings

Ms. Reynaud updated the Board on the actions electronically since the last meeting. A copy of those actions is attached.

b. Chair activities

Ms. Reynaud discussed the revisions needed to meet the new USOPC audit standards, which will be addressed specifically later in the meeting. She noted that there are some competitions occurring in certain regions of the country. She acknowledged the problems with the registration system, and hoped that those would be addressed quickly. She acknowledged the retirements over the past year, including Kerry Klostermann who she worked with on matters dealing with board governance. She also directed the Board to her written report. She noted that the NGB Assembly was excellent and very helpful. She also noted that the USOPC Board survey is mandatory, and the deadline to respond is February 5th. All documents are loaded on the Teams site.

Mr. Davis also emphasized the need to have 100% Board response to the USOPC survey, as USAV will be graded on the response level.

Mr. Davis also noted that his report can be found online.

Mr. Davis then walked the Board through a Power Point Presentation on the 2021 Mantra. He noted that in 2018 USAV adopted a mantra to become more proactive and less reactive. Given COVID and other developments, he introduced a new 2021 Mantra: Agility = Stability. USAV will work to become a more agile organization with an agile culture. For volleyball to thrive, then all levels of the sport must be agile.

As of the end of December, Total Memberships are 263,288, which is down 22% from the prior year. Full memberships are 229,688, which is down 28%. This is largely due to COVID. He noted some Regions are feeling this decrease more than others. Mr. Bishop asked how much of the decrease is due to COVID. Mr. Davis responded that he cannot really quantify this, but he thinks most of the decrease is due to COVID. Ms. Reynaud asked if there is a mechanism to track this by Region. Mr. Davis responded that the National Office has this information, and he agreed to forward that to the Board.

Mr. Davis reported that USAV continues to work with SportsEngine as a priority to fix the issues encountered with the new MMS. The system is working, but there are some issues to fix. He thanked the Regions for helping to establish strike teams to zero in on the issues that need to be addressed. Additional staffing resources from other departments have been moved to support this effort.

He then discussed officials. He noted that USAV has worked hard on communicating with that community. USAV has created a new newsletter called "For the Love" to address this as well as GoTo Meetings for officials.

USAV has launched a new platform for USAV Academy, and this worked very well with no crashes during the holidays.

Coaching education is being revamped, and this is underway. The plan is for a new head of Coaching Education to be hired in Q1 of 2021.

On SafeSport, the new MAAPP must be in full effect on January 1, 2022, but because of USAV's season, USAV will be in compliance at the beginning of the 2021/22 season. USAV had 22 cases reported to the Center in 2020, which is down from 34 of the prior year, and there have been four Regional cases reported, which is down from the 13 reported cases in 2019. He noted that lower membership may be affecting these decreases.

On Diversity Equity and Inclusion, a staff committee was established that continues to actively meet and implement training and initiatives. He also discussed the 21-week challenge awareness initiative. USAV is participating with the USOPC on the newly formed Standing Committees for Social Justice Reform. He also discussed the USOPC's new policy to allow peaceful protest during the Olympics, which is in conflict with IOC Rule 50. USAV will not be adopting its own policy at this time, as it is likely to be dictated by the IOC.

National Team Development – Peter Vint and his team have done a revamp, which includes eliminating tryouts and instead using a nationwide scouting program. There is now an exclusive focus on post-pubescent athletes (U-15 and older). There will also be an online NTDP Academy Learning series dedicated to the holistic development of athletes. The plans have been shared and discussed with various stakeholders.

The National Beach Tour will roll out in May. The Beach Community of the RVA has been very helpful in this. There are 33 BNQs contracted for this year, which is up from 25 last year. The NBT Championship Venue is still TBD due to beach permit issues in California. USAV does have backup plans outside of California if needed.

Many Indoor Qualifiers have been changing dates due to COVID and venue restrictions. USAV is updating these dates as they arise. USAV implemented a new convenience cancellation policy with TTS (travel partner) which significantly reduces the risk of hotel cancellation for teams. This has been very well received. This involves an upfront charge and there is a greater opportunity to cancel hotel rooms.

He then walked through the schedule of Indoor Championship Events and the estimated teams expected at each event.

He then showed the Board the new rebrand for the USAV Championships, which is meant to create a consistent look and feel across the Championships, with some variations for the different Championships and the hosting city. Mr. Davis is very pleased with this effort.

The National Teams – virtually all MNT and WNT Indoor players have gone overseas to compete, and so far, all are injury free. FIVB beach qualifying procedures for Tokyo remain in question. USAV is expecting the new calendar to be released within the coming weeks. For sitting, the Men's last chance qualifier has been moved to Duisburg, Germany from May 31 through June 4. The Women have already qualified. On Beach ParaVolley, Mr. Davis announced a partnership with the Florida Region and the Norelli Family Foundation to make Hickory Point a national training center for BPV. Mr. Bishop discussed some of the plans for the national training center. Mr. Davis noted his hopes to have BPV added to the LA Games in 2028.

For the Volleyball Nation League, the Women are scheduled to play in the US on June 1-3 in Wichita, Kansas, and the Men are scheduled from May 14-16 in Evansville, Indiana, but per FIVB, this may not be possible due to the pandemic. FIVB is exploring contingency plans, including bubbles. NORCECA events remain uncertain. The Olympics and Paralympics are still planned for this summer (July 23 – August 8 for the Olympics and August 25 through September 5 for the Paralympics).

The Athletes Unlimited pro league commences in Dallas on February 27th. AU did launch its softball league this past summer. The leagues are run by players and uses a new format where individuals earn points at the end of a match, and there is a redraft of teams on a weekly basis. Ms. Lichtman noted that the matches are scheduled to be aired by Fox Sports and CBS Sports. The plan is that there will not be spectators for the time being. USAV will be getting PSAs in the broadcasts.

On the Digital side, USAV has relaunched usavolleyball.org. Mr. Davis noted it took four years of planning, and it is fantastic. He complimented the staff for their work on this, and noted that USAV now controls its own destiny digitally. USAVolleyballShop.com was relaunched on September 1 with Dyehard Fan Supply, and Mr. Davis is excited about the growth on that front. BallerTV is USAV's new partner for streaming matches at Championship events and the Sunshine Classic. USAV has also expanded TikTok to our social footprint as of this fall. We have 62,000 followers with 6.6 million views on TikTok.

With respect to sponsorships, it is a challenging environment, but we did a one-year deal with Adidas and long term deals with our other partners, including a new deal with Hyperice.

USAV has a new partnership with SLOCOACH, One on One, which provides a private volleyball instruction platform for national team coaches and athletes to help ordinary volleyball players and to charge for those services. The plan is to launch this in the next few weeks. Athletes and coaches determine their own pricing and how much they want to work. Mr. Gentile noted that a lot of clubs manage lessons as a revenue source, so USAV will need to work with those clubs to avoid conflicts and sensitivities. Mr. Davis acknowledged this, but noted that there are different markets, as One on One is not live instruction in a gym, while that is what clubs offer.

Mr. Davis reported on progress on a national facility. USAV is still looking at a number of opportunities in parallel for the different disciplines, including the U.S. Performance Center in North Carolina. We have signed long-term leases in Edmond, OK, Torrance, CA with ability to terminate early. Mr. Davis is also confident that we will be able to extend the lease in Anaheim if we want, although details are still being worked out.

Mr. Davis also reported on yesterday's NGB Council meeting with Sarah Hirshland of the USOPC. She said that (i) she is confident there will be a Games, and (ii) it will be different than any other Games ever held. She did not give many details. He did express concern about a recent poll in Japan where 80% oppose the Olympics coming to Tokyo in 2021.

V. AUDIT, FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT

George Thompson,
Treasurer

a. 2021 Budget

Mr. Thompson noted that the Board, in December, approved the 2021 Budget. He also noted that the AFB's goal is to lead and exceed in all areas identified by the USOPC, which will result in AFB meeting each quarter.

VI. FOUNDATION REPORT

Cecile Reynaud/
Mark Peterson

Mr. Peterson reported that the Foundation has expanded the Board size from seven to 11, including several exciting new Board members. There are three new Board Committees – Fundraising and Development, Alumni Relations, and Investment. There is a focus on growing the fund so it can spin off greater revenues for USAV. Goals include (i) increasing diversity and inclusiveness on the Board, which has already started, (ii) focusing on raising funds, (iii) continuing successful oversight of funds, (iv) engaging USAV alumni, and (v) increasing awareness of the sport, particularly where it is less prevalent, and increasing diversity in the sport.

VII. ATHLETE REPORTS

a. Indoor.

Lichtman/Shoji

Ms. Lichtman noted that most athletes are overseas, and all seasons are continuing. There have been no major injuries so far. A handful of women are training in Anaheim, mostly those coming off the season in China. Mr. Davis reported that USAV is very vocally supporting some sort of VNL play. Two years without such play would not be good leading up to an Olympics. Mr. Reynaud noted that, under new changes, athletes should represent 1/3 of the Board, and it is important for athletes to feel comfortable with all aspects discussed by the Board. Athlete viewpoints are very important.

b. Beach.

Hughes/Bourne

Ms. Hughes reported that most teams are back to training over the last two weeks, and they are grateful to have the training center in Torrance open. FIVB has not released a schedule of competitions. There is talk of a men's event in Doha, and there is an effort to organize a tournament for the women, as well, although that may be challenging. Mr. Davis reported that FIVB has said that, if there are any restrictions on any one country coming into that area, then they cannot award Olympic points at that event. There is also talk about a "Beach bubble" being organized to hold tournaments.

c. Sitting.

Rasmussen/Nieves

Mr. Rasmussen reported that he is very happy to have Nicky on the Board, as he has been pushing for this for a long time. The Men are getting ready for the qualifier. It will be a challenging tournament,

but they will be prepared. There have been questions from the men about funding and training in case they do not qualify. Mr. Rasmussen will communicate with them on these issues. Ms. Nieves reported that the Women are excited for 2021. There is no camp in January due to increasing COVID cases in Oklahoma, and the expectation is that there will be a camp in February.

d. USOPC AAC

Duda

Eric Duda, the USOPC AAC Representative, noted that the next AAC meeting will be held in February. At the last meeting in December (Mr. Duda had not been elected yet), the Council for Racial Justice recommended that two IOC rules need to be changed with respect to athlete free speech. The CRJ made two recommendations that the USOPC have rules on what is a proper demonstration with no consequences for those who decide to protest appropriately, and if someone decides to protest outside of the allowed area he or she could be punished, but it would be limited to that athlete only. Also, the AAC addressed the issue of Russian athletes. On December 17th, CAS made a ruling allowing Russian athletes to participate, and the AAC made a statement about this issue.

VIII. BYLAWS & GOVERNANCE

a. Board Policy Updates

i. Review & approval

Stafford/Andy Reitinger

- By-law edits/changes - **Approval**

Stafford/Andy Reitinger

Mr. Reitinger reported that references to “registrants” were changed to “membership.” They also updated the 33.3% athlete representation by adding the Women’s Sitting Representative. There is also reference to dual membership, which makes an individual a member in both USAV and the Region. Mr. Eldredge noted that some suggestions came in over the weekend, and those will be addressed later. He stated that the point of dual membership is not to change anything, but to reflect what has been going on.

Motion #2, coming from the Committee, to approve the Bylaws amendments (attached to these minutes), approved unanimously.

- Operating code changes - **30-day waiver & Approval**

Mr. Reitinger explained that most of the changes to the Operating Code were done to bring it into harmony with the Bylaws. SafeSport language was updated to comply with the Center’s language. Wording for the dual membership was included, and the age group definition was amended. Ms. Donaghy raised a concern about inconsistencies in the Operating Code and the need to address some language, particularly in Section 5.02(C). Mr. Baker and Mr. Reitinger agreed that these items should be addressed and will be revised for Board consideration in the next several weeks. Directors are asked to forward comments and proposed changes to Andy Reitinger and/or Rachael Stafford.

Motion #3, made by Gentile, seconded by Rojas, to waive the 30-day rule for the Operating Code amendments, approved 12-1.

Motion #4, made by Baker, seconded by Rojas, to approve the Operating Code amendments (attached to these minutes), with references to Adaptive Sports being changed to Sitting and Beach ParaVolley, approved unanimously.

ii. Assembly & constituent reports

1. Junior Assembly Report David Gentile

Mr. Gentile noted that no meeting has occurred since the last Board meeting. There is a February “touch base” meeting scheduled. Mr. Gentile is working with Mr. Davis and Ms. Lichtman on a quarterly communication to juniors.

2. RVAA Assembly Report Donaghy/Peixoto/Baker
Region Standards Update

These reports were submitted online. Mr. Baker noted that several regional policies and procedures were drafted in response to the USOPC Audit Guidelines.

3. Officials Assembly Report Carlos Rodriguez

This report was submitted online. Mr. Kenyon reported that the Officials Assembly has been working hard to get all of the representative spots filled (the last spot will be filled shortly), which will allow the Assembly to spend 2021 focusing on growth.

4. International Athletes Assembly Report Katie Holloway/
Peter Vint

Ms. Holloway discussed the background on the committee and the kinds of issues it will be addressing moving forward. There are 12 athletes currently on the IAA. She expects the IAA to meet 2-3 times per year.

5. Beach Assembly Steve Bishop

Mr. Bishop reported that Beach events have been popular during the pandemic. A lot of work is being done of BNQs and BRQs. Mr. Bishop also discussed the rebrand discussed earlier by Mr. Davis. There have been discussions about holding an international Beach ParaVolley event in Florida beginning in 2022.

b. Board Committee Reports

- i. Governance Committee Andy Reitingier

This report was provided online.

- ii. Diversity Committee Lichtman

Ms. Lichtman reported that the Committee discussed diversity at the Board level, and is pleased with the new changes. The Task Force on DI issues has been working hard, as well as the Regional Task Force. Ms. Lichtman is also working on an update to the athletes on what has been done in this area. The Committee has also been updating the gender policies and has been working with Dr. Bill Briner in this area as head of the Gender Commission. Ms. Lichtman also discussed the review process for a transgender athlete in the Regions, and there is now a requirement to complete the reviews within 10 days.

- c. Future meetings Reynaud
 - i. May board meeting date (May 27, 2021) - electronic
 - ii. Mid -year Region meeting dates
 - 1. RVA Meetings - May
 - 2. USA Volleyball Hall of Fame Induction & Boyce Banquet - cancelled
- d. 2021-24 Strategic Plan – Chris Vadala
 Operating Plan – metrics for evaluation of plan incorporation

Mr. Vadala’s report was provided online. An updated report should be sent out in a couple of weeks. USAV has created 5 new goals, one for each strategic priority. These include (i) USAV to increase content and curriculum on improving athlete health and well-being, (ii) performance goals put together by Peter and the coaches, (iii) partner with external agency to work on DEI analysis and benchmarking, (iv) focus on operational efficiency of organization, and (v) increase engagement with members and fans across all digital platforms by 10 percent. Ms. Reynaud asked if the goals include other DEI goals. Mr. Vadala indicated that this is the case.

On the Operating Plan, the final draft is due from each department on February 12th. Fourteen departments will be submitting plans.

For Future Key Strategies, if there is something that comes up down the road that would be worthwhile, this will be memorialized and there will be a placeholder for it.

Goals will be evaluated monthly by each department.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Upcoming board chair election process

Reynaud

Ms. Reynaud noted that there will be a new Chair this summer. She asked the Governance Committee to put together something on the process, which Ms. Reynaud read to the Board. This involved (i) nominations, (ii) sharing nominations with the Board, (iii) at the May meeting the election will be held, (iv) nominations from the floor are possible, (v) questions of the candidates, then (vi) ballots cast electronically through Simply Vote. Results would go to George Thompson, who will announce the new Board chair. Ms. King raised whether nominations from the floor are appropriate and could be awkward. Mr. Gentile agreed, and also suggested that candidates leave the room during the Q&A process so they cannot hear other candidates’ answers. Mr. Baker noted that questions for candidates would be done separately. Ms. Reynaud asked if April 30th would be an appropriate day for nominees to declare whether they will be candidates. Mr. Gentile noted that, in case no candidate agrees to run, then nominations from the floor should be accepted.

Ms. Reynaud also noted that anyone up for re-election to the Board would have to be re-elected by April 30th so they could indicate their interest in running for Chair. Mr. Davis asked if the RVAA learned any lessons that would be helpful for USAV. Mr. Kenyon and guest Nancy Funk, who was invited to address the Board by Ms. Reynaud, discussed the RVAA process. Ms. King asked if the Board Chair needs to be independent. Ms. Reynaud noted that there is no requirement, but to get a grade of “exceeding” in this area, the Chair would have to be independent.

Mr. Reitingger addressed the issue of when the Chair takes office. The Governance Committee had previously put forward wording providing the Chair takes office immediately after election, which was voted down. Mr. Eldridge provided language that would call for the new Chair to take office when the current chair’s term ends.

Motion #5, made by Gentile, seconded by McGhee, to waive the 30-day requirements for Bylaws, approved unanimously.

Motion #6, made by Gentile, seconded by King, to accept the language to revise the Bylaws for the Chair-elect to take office upon the expiration of the existing Chair's term (see below for language), approved unanimously.

The office shall be filled by a majority vote of the Directors present at a properly called meeting of the Board. The newly elected Chair-ELECT assumes the position **of Chair the day following the conclusion of the current Chair's board term** ~~immediately and shall serve until the next Chair is duly elected or until his/her term as a Director expires.~~ The Chair may be removed by the affirmative vote of three-quarters (3/4) of the total voting power of the Board of Directors.

Board Composition Restructure Task Force Recommendations/Discussion

Reynaud

Ms. Reynaud discussed the report of the Task Force and its recommendations for the changes to the Board. The Task Force recommended a Board of 18 members, comprised of 1/3 athletes, 1/3 independents and 1/3 sport/assembly/members, and the Treasurer would be a non-voting member of the Board. A list of the 18 proposed Board members are included the Report from the Task Force, which is attached.

Mr. Bishop noted that several goals of the Task Force was to stay within the USOPC's recommended maximum of 18, but also to try to find a medium in Independent Directors between the USOPC's "leading" number of 50% and the 33% for "exceeding." The Board discussed the issue of the USOPC AAC Rep serving on the Board and how that works with the other six athlete representatives. This could lead to a situation where USAV ends up with 19 Board members, which would exceed the maximum number of Board members recommended by the USOPC.

Ms. Reynaud indicated that she will reach out to others who may have input, and she encouraged Board members to send her any ideas they may have.

Motion #7, made by Rojas, seconded by Lichtman, to go into Executive Session, approved unanimously.

Motion #8, made by Bishop, seconded by Peixoto, to come out of Executive Session, approved unanimously.

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Reynaud reported that the following topics were discussed in Executive Session:

- Rules for participation by non-Board members in meetings.
- Corporate Ethics & Eligibility Report
- Legal Review & SafeSport Report
- Personnel Committee Report

Rachael Stafford
Rachael Stafford
Brent Rasmussen

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion #9, made by Rasmussen, seconded by Bishop to adjourn, approved unanimously.