



**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
July 21 and 22, 2012  
Aurora, CO**

*These minutes reflect key decisions made during USA Ultimate Board meetings, as well as associated discussion points*

**Board members present:**

|                   |                               |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| Gwen Ambler       | At-Large Rep, Vice President  |
| Greg Downey       | Appointed Director            |
| Matt Farrell      | Appointed Director            |
| Kathy Hendrickson | Mid-Atlantic Rep, Treasurer   |
| Mike Kinsella     | Central Rep                   |
| Colin McIntyre    | At-Large Rep                  |
| Sandy Park        | Appointed Director, Secretary |
| Mike Payne        | Northwest Rep, President      |
| Ben Slade         | South Rep                     |
| John Terry        | At-Large Rep                  |

**Call-in**

Mandy Eckhoff

**Also present:**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Tom Crawford     | Chief Executive Officer                              |
| Melanie Byrd     | Director - Membership and Sport Development          |
| Andy Lee         | Director - Marketing and Communications              |
| Will Deaver      | Managing Director - Competition and Athlete Programs |
| Julia Echterhoff | Manager - Administration and Finance                 |
| Mike Lovinguth   | Manager - Education and Youth Programs               |
| Anna Schott      | Manager - Membership and Sport Development           |
| Matthew Bourland | Manager - New Media                                  |
| David Raflo      | Manager - Events                                     |
| David Mares      | Manager - Membership Development                     |

**Agenda items involving Board decisions**

- Initial 2013 budget
- 2012.8 Ineligible Member List Proposal
- Club restructure plans
- Master's restructure plans

**Saturday, July 21, 2012**

- *President Mike Payne called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m.*

### **2013 Budget Summary**

See appendix A

Mike entertained motion, Ben: moved, John Terry: second

Approved: 9-0-0

### **2012.8 Ineligible Member List Proposal**

Proposed by: Mike Kinsella, USA Ultimate Board of Directors, Conduct Committee Chairman

**Background:** USA Ultimate, as the national governing body for the sport of Ultimate in the United States, is widely recognized as a leader in all aspects of the sport. This includes, but is not limited to, leadership in coaching development and player safety. In 2012, USA Ultimate began requiring background checks to be completed for all coaching memberships. This proposal regards the creation of an “USA Ultimate Ineligible Membership” list, which USA Ultimate can use to track and publish names of members who are banned from membership privileges. This list is the next logical step for the organization to take to ensure that general membership is aware of coaches, players, and members who have been banned from participation, with the overall goal of increased member (specifically youth member) protection.

Models for the proposed “Ineligible Membership” list include USA Swimming’s “Individuals Permanently Suspended or Ineligible” list, and USA Gymnastics’ “Permanently Ineligible Members” list. *USA Swimming “Individuals Permanently Suspended or Ineligible” List:*  
<http://www.usaswimming.org/ViewMiscArticle.aspx?TabId=1963&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en&mid=10011&ItemId=5107>

*USA Gymnastics “Permanently Ineligible Members” List:*  
[http://usagym.org/pages/aboutus/pages/permanently\\_ineligible\\_members.html](http://usagym.org/pages/aboutus/pages/permanently_ineligible_members.html)

### **Proposal**

This “Ineligible Membership” list would identify an ineligible member by name, USAU member ID, city of residence, and include a reference to the violated section of the USA Ultimate Conduct Policy or Coaching Ethics Policy documents, which has caused the member to become ineligible. This reference to the Conduct Policy or Ethics Code provides a general description of the nature of the offense, but is not specific to the point of violating conduct case confidentiality. The USAU “Ineligible Membership” list is to be publicly accessible on the USA Ultimate website.

**General Discussion Points:**

- How do other organizations handle this? Can there be a way to check with the organization to double check a person instead of having the list published and searchable.
- Gymnastics publishes a list in their magazine
- Should only get put on if it is a long term periods of time instead of just roster violation
- Need to be careful since we don't know the larger community well...we might be giving the community a false sense of safety thinking if someone's name is not on the list, they are OK.
- Ineligible for membership might be a better title
- We need more research
- A different approach would be a positive spin and instead have a certified coach list

**Pros Discussed:**

- Creates single point of reference for USAU staff and membership regarding members who are ineligible, where currently there is none
- Strengthens USAU's public image as an organization that seriously regards and values player safety
- Provides an accessible resource to youth organizations and parents if questions arise about a specific member.

**Cons Discussed:**

- Publishes names of our ineligible members for all to see, publicly on the internet
- Maintenance of list responsibility would fall to USA Ultimate Staff and Conduct Committee, with oversight from USAU Board
- Uncertainty if this list should include "permanently" ineligible members only, or all members who are currently ineligible (e.g., if a player gets suspended for roster violation on her college team, does her name go on the list next to a coach who was found to have done ... with a kid?)
- Publishing of names of ineligible members could expose USAU to risk of charges for defamation and/or libel; it's a big deal to put someone's name on this list. It is recommended the organization

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <p>proceed with extreme caution before putting someone's name on the list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of any conduct decisions going forward, member must be notified in list of sanctions that name will be placed on "Ineligible Membership" list, and specifically for what violation of Conduct/Coaching Ethics policy.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b><u>Overall Rationale:</u></b></p> <p>A vote was not taken and the topic was tabled. More research needs to be conducted. Proposal will be revised and re-submitted for summer Board meeting.</p> |  |

- *Closed session with Board and Tom.*
- *Meeting adjourned 6pm*

**Sunday, July 22, 2012**

- *President, Mike Payne called full meeting to order 8:30pm*

**HQ topics for Board decision**

**Club Restructure**

- Focus on Club Teams (and masters team) not focusing on College or recreational/local teams
- Triple Crown, 4-tier system
- Tournament play vs. match play
- Promote by providing outside organization with a brief and they can frame it for our members along with the strategic plan.

- It is a flexible plan that will be assessed after a couple years
- Staff will provide a communications plan to the Board

Vote to approve and move ahead with club restructuring plan

Ben: moved, Gwen: seconded, 9-0-0 approved

### **Masters Restructure**

Background: Over the last several years, the age-limited divisions for older players have presented some interesting issues and challenges, including:

- Masters Open Division continues to raise level of play and interest from former high level players/teams
- Masters Open Division continues to be relatively stagnant in terms of growth over last 10 years (35-38 teams)
- Masters Open Division piggy-backs on Club Sectionals, creating need for special rules/oversight to minimize competition problems Demand for Grand Masters (40+) Division led to creation of well-attended summer event
- Demand for Masters Women's Division led to creation of sporadically attended summer event (largely dependent on timing)
- Location, size, and format of Club Championships, which currently includes Masters Open, limits ability to showcase our top-level Club teams (OWX)
- In response to these issues and in conjunction with changes being made to the Club Divisions (OWX), the Masters divisions were evaluated and a number of revisions were proposed for the 2013 season and beyond.

Changes proposed included:

- Move Masters Open Division out of Club Championship event in order to provide more flexibility to showcase top OWX teams through that event
- Combine 3 "Masters" divisions into a single season with a single championship event tailored to this subset of players
- Increase size of Masters Open Championship from 12 to 16 teams
- Change geographic scope of regional qualifying events to create larger, more viable, more competitive tournaments
- Depending on timing of new Masters Series, potentially allow players to compete in both the "Masters Series" as well as the Club Series, while preventing players from "double dipping" in both Masters and Grand Masters (as is done currently)

### **Feedback**

Feedback was collected from players via survey and conference call focus group. Feedback was primarily provided by players who are invested in the current structure and enjoy playing in it for a number of reasons, including the timing, the ability to double-dip Masters Open and GM, and the excitement around being part of the top club ultimate event of the year. Not surprisingly, the reaction to many of the proposed changes was less than enthusiastic. Masters Open players want

to be at the Club Championships, and many Grand Masters players like the opportunity to play in two different age-limited championship events. However, in order to move forward with plans to showcase the Club OWX divisions, including the Club Championship event specifically, it is critical that the size of the event be scaled down. When presented with a number of options for how to do this, there was a general understanding even among Masters players that moving Masters Open was a reasonable option. Further, as new age-limited divisions for older players emerge and develop, it is clear that the experiences players in these divisions are looking for are more similar to each other than they are to those in the Club OWX Divisions. This was reflected in feedback about interest in extensive travel, structured regular season events, time devoted to practice and training, and important elements of events like family/vacation. With this in mind, it seems clear that by holding these age-limited divisions together, a competition and event structure could be tailored to better suit the desires of participants.

#### Approved Summer Format

- 3 month Masters-specific season (May-July)
  - Pre-series events in May/early June, including existing club “pres-season’ tournaments
  - Regionals in late June/early July
  - Championship in late July
  - Provide opportunity for Masters and Club OWX players to double-dip by having non-overlapping seasons
- Masters players can join Club OWX teams for the fall after playing Masters Series
- Masters teams can participate in Club OWX Series if desire to extend their season
- Age-eligible Club OWX players can form/join Masters teams in early summer and bolster participation in the division
- Potential influx of younger Masters players could push older Masters players to choose Grand Masters, bolstering participation in that division
- Masters Women event only viable if held in July or earlier b/c of player overlap with Women’s/Mixed
  - Bring men and women together into one big division-specific event
  - Create events/structure that is tailored specifically to older players/teams at a time of year that doesn't conflict with other important opportunities to help the sport develop.
  - Free up the fall for older male/female players to stay involved in other ways
- Club coaching opportunities
- Observing opportunities
- Fans/spectators
- Fall youth/college team development

Vote to approve and move ahead with Masters Restructure  
Gwen: moved, John Terry: seconded, 9-0-0 approved

*Being no further business, President Mike Payne adjourned the meeting at 12:12 p.m.*