

**Minutes**  
**USOPC Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Conducted by Telephone and Videoconference**  
**March 21-22, 2020**

A meeting of the Board of Directors (the “Board”) of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (“USOPC”) took place on March 21 and 22, 2020 via telephone and videoconference following notice duly given pursuant to the USOPC Bylaws. Present (throughout, except as indicated) were Susanne Lyons (Chair), Robbie Bach, Rich Bender, Cheri Blauwet, Beth Brooke-Marciniak, Anita DeFrantz (IOC Member, *ex officio*), David Haggerty (IOC Member, *ex officio*), Sarah Hirshland (USOPC CEO, *ex officio*), Bill Marolt, Steve Mesler, Whitney Ping, Kikkan Randall (IOC Member, *ex officio*), Brad Snyder, Kevin White, and Robert Wood. Unable to attend was Vivek Murthy. Attending Board members constituted a quorum of the Board under USOC Bylaws.

USOPC staff member Katie Bynum joined the meeting at both sessions. The minutes were recorded by Christopher McCleary, Secretary.

**March 21, 2020**

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00pm Mountain Time on March 21. She thanked Board members and USOPC staff for the extra work and attention devoted to this special meeting of the Board and the important items to be discussed around the outbreak of COVID-19 and its effects on athletes and plans for the 2020 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in Tokyo. In particular she referred to comments received from particular Board members about what should be the USOPC position on whether those Games should continue to be set on their original dates, and how and where that position should be communicated; and the need for the full Board to engage thoughtfully and carefully on these issues.

**2. COVID-19 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games**

The Chair opened the Board’s discussion by inviting an exchange of updated background information since the time of the regular meeting of the Board two days earlier. She invited Sarah Hirshland to open that exchange.

First, Ms. Hirshland updated the Board on public statements issued by USA Swimming and USA Track & Field calling for the Games to be postponed, and on background discussions related to those statements. She described ongoing work to connect and exchange

further information and views with NGBs generally and to help NGBs as they navigate current COVID-19 issues affecting athlete training and safety. Ms. Hirshland went on to brief the Board on extensive background discussions and information exchanges with the IOC, the IPC, PanAm Sports, and a number of other national Olympic committees, as the USOPC and all of these entities face similar needs to balance interests and viewpoints from across athlete and sport organization communities. She described an IOC information gathering program underway and the USOPC's support and assistance with that.

Ms. Hirshland went on to discuss communications and input received directly from athletes, their varying views and concerns, and developing USOPC plans for more outreach to the athlete community. She noted passionate athlete feelings on both sides of the issue of whether to conduct the Games on schedule, from athletes who feared risk of disease, an uneven playing field, and inadequate time and resource for pre-Games training; and from athletes who feared that any delay of the Games would have other negative effects or even make their participation impossible.

The Chair added her own learnings and perspectives from conversations with the IOC and other NOC officials, including as to developing thinking about whether postponement of the Games is feasible, and whether the Games must otherwise be cancelled outright. Board members discussed the lack of information in the public discourse about the uncertainties and difficulties that appear to be involved in Games postponement, particularly for the Games organizers in Japan, in addition to difficulties faced by athletes set to compete, and the organizations (e.g., international and national federations, Olympic and Paralympic committees, other event organizers, local organizations) that serve them around the world.

Board members discussed the rapidly changing information and viewpoints arising from all parties involved, and the growing and changing perspectives being offered by athletes in particular. Board members acknowledged calls by some for the USOPC and others to use public statements and pressure to demand particular courses of action, and the importance of the USOPC showing leadership in this regard, for the good of athletes and the Olympic and Paralympic community in the US and around the world. As well, Board members discussed the temptation to over-simplify the issues involved in doing so, and the dangers to Japan and Games organizers there that could arise from ill-considered public posturing by the USOPC. Board members acknowledged that the USOPC in particular has an influential public voice, so that these considerations are doubly important in its decision making.

Further Board discussion turned to data derived from Board member conversations with particular medical experts and developing understandings and projections for development of COVID-19 around the world. Board members agreed that the practical realities involved appeared to indicate that the conduct of a full-scale Games in July of 2020 would not be feasible, so that further USOPC discussion and work should be directed

to helping support a best-possible determination of whether and how the Games can be postponed, to avoid outright cancellation and the absolute loss of athlete opportunity that would go along with it.

In that regard, Board conversation next turned to an extensive review of possible impacts of postponement or cancellation on USOPC's ability to support athletes and the organizations that serve them, in terms of revenue and expense impacts, demands that may come from commercial partners, and possible approaches to mitigating these. Board members focused especially on how and where the USOPC may be able to help evaluation and consideration of a specific postponement plan designed to help all parties maximize the feasibility of avoiding outright cancellation and manage the extremely difficult logistical and financial challenges involved in rescheduling an event of such global size and complexity.

Taking these subject matter areas into account, Board members next discussed an online athlete "town hall" meeting being facilitated that evening by the USOPC AAC and several Board members. In particular, discussion centered on the kinds of information participating Board members might best be able to offer to athletes in this forum, and taking advantage of this unique opportunity for extensive and direct input from athletes across the country. Board members agreed on specific plans in this regard and promised to report back to the full Board at the next day's session of the current meeting.

Finally, Board members returned to an impassioned discussion on differing Board member views and ideas on how, when, and with exactly what goal the USOPC should issue a public statement of its position on Tokyo Games conduct, postponement, or cancellation. Board members again exchanged strong views on the USOPC's responsibilities in this regard, both in order to play its role as an Olympic and Paralympic community leader in efforts to get to the best possible result, and in order to be public enough in its work and views to give greater confidence and comfort to athletes and others affected by the current crisis.

### **3. Recess**

The meeting was put into recess at approximately 3:25pm.

**March 22, 2020**

### **4. Meeting Resumption**

At 1:00pm Mountain time on March 22, the Chair called the telephonic meeting back into session, noting that there had been significant further developments since the previous day's session and thanking Board members for again bringing engagement, passion, and open minds to the work at hand.

## **5. COVID-19 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games**

At the Chair's invitation, Board member Steve Mesler updated the group on the online athlete "town hall" meeting held the previous evening.

Mr. Mesler reported that the meeting had been very successful in bringing a large number of athletes into an interactive and helpful session. He estimated the total attendance at more than 300 and noted that additional non-athlete individuals who sought to join had to be turned away in order for the platform and meeting format to function. He reflected on the spirited and engaged discussions and debates at the meeting and the overall benefits to participants. He also reported on athlete 'straw poll' results from the meeting, which had been reported publicly since. Other members of the Board who participated in the session echoed Mr. Mesler's thoughts and praised him in particular for his role and efforts in helping to bring the event about and to such success.

Board discussion focused on a number of specific take away's from the meeting, including athletes' desire for more communications and updates as they arise, particular concerns involving information on athlete support and funding in the current environment and opportunities for better information coordination among the USOPC and NGBs as they each attempt to update athletes in various ways.

Mr. Mesler and other Board members went on to discuss public comments issued that morning by the IOC, and initial reactions from athlete leaders and others. Board members noted that the IOC statement went a long way in giving athletes a better sense of the IOC's compassion for their challenges in the current environment and their desire for clarity on Tokyo Games plans, and more detail on some of the difficult challenges faced by Games organizers and the IOC in attempting to orchestrate a feasible postponement plan. Board members agreed generally that the statement showed meaningful progress and that background work from athlete leaders and USOPC Board members contributed to this.

Further Board discussion on the IOC's statement and approach concerned its four-week estimate for further specifics on plans and the challenges presented by that time frame, particularly for athletes. Board members discussed approaches for further athlete information and support in the meantime, and further steps to support coming to a concrete plan for Tokyo Games as quickly as possible.

Next, Sarah Hirshland briefed the Board on a dedicated USOPC athlete survey underway directed at a number of important data points on training impact, athlete needs and plans generally, and other matters of importance to athletes. She summarized the survey's good progress in its first hours, and plans to assemble and deliver to the IOC the results of that survey within several days so that it can factor into the work overall. Board members discussed the data received, including both quantitative and narrative


responses from athletes and the power of these comments in helping the USOPC plan for particular athlete support and approaches in coming days and weeks.

Finally, the Board engaged in a continued discussion of exactly what should be the USOPC's next step in terms of a public statement on the developing Tokyo Games matter, and what further work it should engage in directly with other sport organizations. Board members discussed up-to-the-minute input received from other sport leaders, domestically and internationally. They exchanged views and ideas based on different communication scenarios and the benefits and dangers inherent in each. They agreed generally on an approach for an immediate public statement and a more detailed communication to the IOC, including by providing the new athlete survey data. Board members offered further ideas for ways in which they can individually and collectively help the substantive process of seeking a feasible means of planning for and carrying out a Games postponement best calculated to preserve athlete safety and opportunity, and the important task of providing best-possible athlete information and support in the meantime.

## **6. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15pm.

This document constitutes a true and correct copy of the minutes of the March 21-22, 2020 meeting of the Board of Directors of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Christopher McCleary  
Secretary

June 19, 2020  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date