



**Umpires and Referees Committee (URC)
Meeting Minutes
Las Vegas, Nevada
December 18, 2015**

A. Call to Order, Roll Call, Conflict of Interest Statements

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Joseph Yick, URC Chair, at 5:58 pm PST on December 18, 2015 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Roll call was taken, with Mr. Joseph Yick, Mr. Wendell Dillon, Mr. Saul Weinstein (via phone), Mr. Han Xiao, Mr. Doru Gheorghe, and Mr. Lee Kondo present. A quorum was noted to be present. Mr. Dennis Taylor, USATT General Counsel, joined the meeting at 6:25 pm PST. No conflicts were reported.

B. Minutes

MOTION: MOVED to approve the September 2015 Minutes.

Movant: Wendell Dillon
Second: Lee Kondo

Discussion: none

The motion passed unanimously, 5:0:0.

C. Proposed 2016 URC Budget

ACTION 1: To approve the 2016 URC Budget.

Discussion: The URC Chair noted that the 2016 URC Budget was amended for URC members to review and approve. As previously agreed, from the URC's remaining 2015 funds, three NUs were funded to attend a Canada tournament. Mr. Xiao will contact Mr. Sean O'Neill to ensure posting the approved URC Budget online.

Action was approved without objection.

The URC Chair also stated the good news that his requested increase in the officials' per diem rate to \$75/day was officially approved by USATT's Board. This was confirmed by USATT's General Counsel. It was hoped that this per diem increase would encourage higher attendance numbers for umpires and other officials at the U.S. Nationals and Open events.

D. Reimbursement of Unused Travel Funds

The URC Chair noted that Mr. Valeriy Elnatanov was given travel funds to umpire at a Canadian tournament. However, because of medical issues, he was unable to attend. Mr. Elnatanov returned these funds to URC's account.

E. NU Attendance at Canada's IU Preparation Course

After discussion with Mr. Joe Fisher, Canadian representative, the URC provided funds for Mr. Peter Chung, Mr. John Peng, and Mr. James Hall to attend the IU Preparation Course on January 7 - 8, 2016 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. These NUs will remain to umpire at the Canadian Olympic Trials and Canada Series Finals on January 8-10, 2016.

F. Selection Sub-Committee Procedure (URC Committee Procedure, Part C)

The URC Chair noted that he added an officials' appeal system, whereby officials can appeal the selection process at their discretion. Mr. Dillon noted, however, that since there is a tight timeframe for submission of names of officials, particularly for overseas assignments. He suggested an alternative to the appeal system which is that the URC Chair and Selection Sub-Committee Chairs can discuss this matter to arrive at a fair resolution for any issues that might arise.

The URC Chair recommended that officials' evaluations (e.g., umpires) be used as criteria for selection for assignments. Mr. Dillon noted that he retains records of umpire evaluations in a computer database.

Mr. Dillon will edit the Sub-Committee Procedure and distribute his suggestions for revision to URC members for discussion and subsequent vote. The Procedure was briefly discussed. It was clarified that the URC Chair selects the Sub-Committee Chair who serves at the pleasure of the URC Chair with the same term period as the URC Chair.

ACTION 2: The URC directs Mr. Dillon to revise Part C of the URC Procedure containing the Selection Sub-Committee Procedure for the URC's review, input and vote.

Action was approved without objection.

G. Selection Sub-Committee Chair and Members

The URC Chair stated that he has chosen Mr. Roman Tinzsin to be Selection Sub-Committee Chair. Mr. Tinzsin's term will begin on January 1, 2016, and Mr. Dillon will transfer relevant files and information to him. The URC will vote for selection sub-

committee members after finding no objection to any of Mr. Dillon's candidate applicants.

ACTION 3: The URC accepts all candidates on Mr. Dillon's applicant list for the Selection Sub-Committee. The URC further votes to have Mr. Robert Clyde and Mr. Scott Ryan be alternates. The other 4 candidates (and Chair) will be primary voting members.

Discussion: The four (4) elected Selection Sub-committee members were Ms. Linda Hsing, Mr. Deepak Somarapu, Mr. Lee Kondo, and Ms. Esther Aliotta.

Action was approved without objection.

H. ARE Umpire Course at 2016 U.S. Open

Pending approval of funds by the USATT Board, the URC Chair wishes to hold an ARE umpire training course at the upcoming 2016 U.S. Open in Las Vegas. Costs of inviting Canadian officials (i.e., Mike Skinner, Norman Tang) were discussed. At least 3 U.S. candidates as well as visiting umpire candidates may wish to attend this course. The examination fee is estimated to be \$30 per person.

ACTION 4: The URC Chair is authorized to investigate the possibility of holding an ARE umpire training course at the December 2016 U.S. Open in Las Vegas.

Action was approved without objection.

H. Examination Coordinator Positions

The URC Chair noted that the URC's Examination Coordinator positions were created to permit Mr. Dillon to continue in his examination administration role in which he has served since 1992. Both a Referee Examination Coordinator and an Umpire Examination Coordinator were created. Mr. Dillon decided to serve in the referee examination coordinator position capacity alone. This creates a vacancy for the Umpire Examination Coordinator position. Mr. Dillon suggested Mr. David Pech as a candidate for this position. Mr. Kondo said that he would also like to be considered as a candidate for this position, citing his experience in administering examinations in his various university Ph.D. teaching positions (e.g., Berkeley, Stanford, California State University).

The URC Chair appointed Mr. Dillon to continue to serve as Referee Examination Coordinator. The URC Chair will appoint the Umpire Examination Coordinator at a later date.

I. Clarification of Division of Responsibilities Between the Officials and Tournament Committee/Director with the Opportunity for Increased URC Communications

Mr. Kondo expressed his belief that it would be a worthwhile endeavor to clarify the distinct division of responsibilities between the officials (e.g., referees, umpires) and tournament committee, tournament director and tournament organizers, particularly in USATT's Tournament Guide. Mr. Kondo will make his proposed Tournament Guide revisions and distribute them for URC comment and input, particularly to Mr. Dillon, who is a Tournament Advisory Committee ("TAC") member, as is Mr. Kondo. Once the URC has clarified its thoughts on the division of responsibilities, it intends to obtain TAC's input on this important issue.

For example, it was discussed that the referee clearly has responsibilities for the tournament's draw and for enforcement of rules (i.e., ITTF, USATT) and precedents. The Tournament Director ("TD") primarily is responsible for facility issues, although the referee also may have responsibilities in this area (e.g., to ensure acceptable playing conditions). The importance of good communication between the TD and Referee in advance of the tournament was emphasized, to ensure that officials' issues were adequately addressed. The Tournament Guide can be edited to make the URC Chairman the point of contact for applicable referee and officiating issues.

Possible plans for increased communications between the URC Chair and officials and the USATT membership community at large regarding officiating issues was discussed. The URC Chair can post memoranda on USATT's website pertaining to officials' issues, as has been previously done by the ORAC Chair. The URC Chair suggested that informal questionnaires might be sent to officials (e.g., referees, umpires) requesting their brief input regarding how the URC might help them to improve their officiating experiences at local tournaments. Mr. Dillon suggested bringing back a regularly released "URC Chair column" on USATT's website, where various referee and/or umpire issues are raised and discussed (e.g., service rule issues and enforcement), citing Dr. Azmy's previously successful officials advisory column. The URC Chair column can also be used to answer questions of interest to the general USATT membership community.

J. New Business

U.S. Nationals officials issues (e.g., Racket Control staffing, legality of ITTF approved rubber on the LARC list) briefly were discussed. Mr. Xiao also noted that it was important to ensure in future U.S. Nationals and Open tournaments that tables were level.

The URC Chair provided news that Mr. Roman Tinszin was selected as Deputy Referee and Ms. Yelena Karstadt was chosen as umpire for the upcoming summer Olympic games, and Mr. Kagin Lee was chosen as umpire for the Para-Olympics.

The next U.S. Nationals will be held in July 2016 in Las Vegas. Mr. Joseph Lee, Chief Umpire, will conduct a Chief Umpire training course to allow others to serve as Deputy Chief Umpire and Chief Umpire at further U.S. Nationals and Open tournaments. IU and NU development was discussed.

The Selection Sub-committee will publish an officials' assignments list for overseas umpire and referee assignments for 2015, providing a copy to the URC prior to release. This list will include information on number of applicants and the amount of URC funding provided.

K. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 pm PST.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lee Kondo
URC Secretary

