



Minutes
USATT Board of Directors Meeting

Friday, December 15 – Saturday, December 16, 2017

Las Vegas Convention Center
Diamond 3 & 4

Friday, December 15

Chair Anne Cribbs called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. PST.

1. Roll call

The following board members attended:

Anne Cribbs (Chair), Larry Hodges, Ed Hogshead, Tara Profitt,Carolyn Savini, Rajul Sheth, Gary Schlager, Deepak Somarapu.

Also attending:

Gordon Kaye (CEO), Dennis Taylor (General Counsel and Secretary), Carl Danner (Representative of the USTTA Foundation), Mark Thompson (COO), Jörg Bitzigeio (High Performance Director), David Lally (Chair, Tournaments Committee), Kagin Lee (Chair, Rules Committee) (4:17), Lee Kondo

A quorum was established. No conflicts were reported. Roll Call/Conflict of Interest

2. Approval of Minutes from November 11, 2017 Meeting

MOTION 1. MOVED to approve the November 13, 2017 Minutes, as submitted.

Movant: Larry Hodges

Second: Ed Hogshead

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote, 8-0-0



3. Final Review and Approval of Board Book

- There was a consensus that more USATT history should be included in the document. Ed Hogshead, Larry Hodges, and Carl Danner will coordinate to draft an addition to the history section.
- A suggestion was made that a similar, maybe truncated, document should be created for committee members.
- Board Book code of conduct and social media policy for Board members to be created for signatures tomorrow as Board Code of Conduct

MOTION 2. MOVED to approve the Board Book, prepared by Melanie Herman, as the initial version of the document.

The Motion was tabled for further consideration the following day.

4. Committee Reports

Anne Cribbs voiced thanks to all committee chairs who followed instructions and submitted reports. [Note: Submitted reports are attached to these Minutes.]

In addition, the following verbal reports were received:

- Juniors Committee (still not an approved committee) -- currently working with Jörg Bitzigeio on revising the HOPES Program to better align with the ITTF Program and to be more in coordination with the Canadian Association's program. Ms. Cribbs is suggesting more female participation and is encouraging cross-training with other sports.
- Clubs Committee – the forum on Facebook now has over 100 members, but many people do not want to appear on Facebook. The Board discussed working with USOC to allow a private forum on the USOC server.
- Deepak Somarampu, David Lally, Wendell Dillon, and Larry Thoman will review, and possibly amend, the Tournament Guide in preparation for a Board adoption. Mark Thompson will facilitate their meeting. The impetus for the review was that some tournaments are being sanctioned with no room and only few tables, and some tournaments allow non-rated players to advance and some don't.

NOTICE 1. In January the Board will consider a Bylaw amendment formally adopting the Tournament Guide.



5. NCTTA Update

Mr. Somarampu distributed the NCTTA Annual Report distributed to the Board. The Report noted that TMS extended its sponsorship for another year, 199 schools are participating in the tournaments that lead to the National Championships, and that USATT and NCTTA are partnering in membership and coaching programs.

Mr. Hogshead proposed more recognition of both NCTTA and USATT volunteers.

Mr. Hogshead also pointed to NCTTA's regional organizational structure, and suggested that it would be a good model for USATT. [Note: Article VI of the USATT Bylaws already addresses the subject.]

6. Approval of US Table Tennis Association Foundation Board

In 2017, the Foundation provided USATT with a \$25,000 matching grant (matching USOC) on top of prior commitments.

MOTION 3. MOVED to approve Terry Timmins and Bill Walk for further three-year terms on the US Table Tennis Association Foundation Board, starting in 2018.

Other members of the Foundation Board are Carl Danner, John McFadden, Dell Sweeris, and Donna Sakai.

Movant: Ed Hogshead
Second: Carolyne Savini

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote, 8-0-0

7. Committee Assignments/Open Positions

Ben Nisbet will submit his recommendations for Junior Committee membership by January 1, 2018.

The Board will review the 2015-2016 committee responsibilities on December 16.

There was a suggestion that every 4-star tournament be required to have a table looking for volunteers for Committee membership.



The meeting recessed at 2:35

The meeting reconvened at 2:50

8. Fundraising

Mr. Schlager distributed a description of the 2800 Club, which is conceived primarily as a vehicle for funding elite athlete training. The goal is to net \$180,000. The Club program is designed for a minimum \$2800/year recommended donation.

The 2800 Club will operate on the fantasy camp concept. The formal rollout will be at the end of the 1st quarter of 2018. The “content rollout” will take place at the 2018 World Veterans Championships. USATT needs to encourage donors to take advantage of the 2800 Club’s benefits

All Board members will informally constitute content the design committee; the staffing plan is still being developed.

The table soliciting committee volunteers at major tournaments will also serve as a “giving desk.”

The Board went into Executive Session at 3:43 p.m. [Note: Minutes are not kept in Executive Session.]

The Board returned to General Session at 4:06 p.m.

9. North American Ratings System Proposal

Gordon Kaye and Tony Kiesenhofer (TTC) began discussing ratings systems, with an eye toward cross-border collaboration, in the summer of 2016. From the US standpoint, Mr. Kaye firmly believes that the ratings system needs to be changed. He believes that the primary purpose of a ratings system is to encourage tournament play. The Canadian system is a ranking system, not a ratings system. However, TTC did a study, which found that the top ten ranked players were also the ten best players.

Mr. Hodges provided historical perspectives. Twenty-five years ago, the system was inflationary. The Board considered changing the system when Dan Seemiller was USATT President. However, following protests from many members, it was tabled. Under NATT’s stewardship, the system stabilized. However, it is not perfect.



Mr. Kaye echoed that, giving the example of Jim Butler. Mr. Butler entered one tournament rated 2714. He did not have a good tournament, and his rating lost 114 points. He never gained those points back. The proposed system would not be as draconian in evaluating losses.

Among the features of the proposed system is an uneven exchange of points. Victories will add more points than a loss will subtract points. In addition, the adjustment threshold has yet to be determined. This is expected to encourage more participation because of more opportunities to gain points in an inflationary system, and bigger tournaments are expected to be bigger under the proposed system. The system will be an opportunity for tournament participants to feel good about themselves. Of course, a trade-off is that the accuracy of tournament seedings will likely decrease.

To curb inflation, ratings will be compressed every year. This will cause some players to lose points, but relative rankings will not change. To encourage more tournament play, will drop a player who doesn't compete in 90 days from the ratings publication site.

ITTF-NA is funding the development costs of the new system. USATT is seeking an off-line test comparing the new system to both the current USATT and TTC systems. (For purposes of the test, Canadian ratings will be adjusted to match their expected US levels.) After a five-month test, Mr. Kaye will report back to the Board.

The meeting recessed at 4:59.

The meeting resumed at 5:08.

10. Rules Committee Report

The ITTF is not expected to adopt Service Judges anytime soon, but USATT will continue a tournament's discretion to experiment with the concept.

The committee is working to develop penalties for continuous misbehavior.

11. ITTF-North America Initiatives

The Board went into Executive Session at 5:15 p.m. [Note: Minutes are not kept in Executive Session.]

The Board returned to General Session at 5:42 p.m.



12. Club and Membership Discussion

Many USATT club owners/operators are not USATT members; however, the clubs are USATT member clubs because they want the liability insurance. USATT needs to do a better job of explaining the value of insurance to clubs, as well as the value of membership to owners/operators. However, as a result of SafeSport the situation is changing. As of Jan. 1, no club may maintain its USATT membership unless owners, operators, and all with perceived authority over athletes are SafeSport compliant.

The meeting recessed at 5:59 p.m.

Saturday, December 16

The meeting resumed at 8:17 a.m.

The following board members were present:

Anne Cribbs (Chair), Larry Hodges, Ed Hogshead, Tara Profitt, Carolyn Savini, Rajul Sheth, Gary Schlager, Deepak Somarapu, Erica Wu.

Also present:

Gordon Kaye (CEO), Dennis Taylor (General Counsel and Secretary), Carl Danner (Representative of the USTTA Foundation), Mark Thompson (COO), Jörg Bitzigeio (High Performance Director), David Lally (Chair, Tournaments Committee) (1:55), Kagin Lee (Chair, Rules Committee) (8:28), Lee Kondo (11:47)

A quorum was established.

13. Resumed Discussion of the North American Ratings System Proposal

The Board needs to figure out what it wants a ratings system to do. The morning discussion included: seeding of events, role of international play, role of winning and losing events, role of inactivity, role of gender, and whether elite athletes and recreational players should have the same system.

No decisions were made. Mr. Kaye will continue the testing, with adjustments based on Board input.



14. Financial Update

Discussion highlights for 2017 include:

- All memberships are up except for lifetime memberships.
- There were significant increases in junior memberships and in tournament passes purchased. [Note: tournament passes do not count as memberships]
- The number of memberships has now recovered from the drop occurring when USATT moved to \$75 annual memberships.
- The number of club memberships is expected to drop with the requirement that clubs be SafeSport compliant.
- There were significant increases in the number of tournaments, resulting increases in sanctioning fees.
- USATT now has a service in which USATT emails tournament opportunities on behalf of clubs. The cost-assessments are based on the old mailing label system.
- Entrants in the US Open are not entering as many events as in past years.
- The proximity of the World Veterans Championships will impact attendance at the 2018 US Nationals.
- Mr. Kaye is projecting 2017 revenues of \$1,720,451.17.
- USATT is budgeting for more elite training camps in 2018.
- HQ will be creating a year-round calendar as part of a USATT/club coordination effort.
- HQ expects to increase the level of direct athlete support in 2018.
- Prize money for the 2018 US Nationals is expected to increase.

The Board went into Executive Session at 10:19 a.m. [Note: Minutes are not kept in Executive Session.]

The Board returned to General Session at 10:24 a.m.

The meeting recessed at 10:30.

The meeting resumed at 10:47.

15. High Performance Program Discussion

The question is how to continue junior progress/achievements into the adult program?

Mr. Bitzigeio was brought into this country to improve performance, particularly at the adult level. The current step is tied to Team selection procedures. Currently adult teams are selected for the year on the basis of one weekend in March. Is this the best way to move forward?



USATT is moving more into actual holistic athlete training. Unlike swimming, where the only competition concern is how fast someone can do a particular stroke, table tennis must take opponents into the calculus. There are different world playing styles, such as Asian, Euro, and African. Our youth are familiar with competing against the Asian style, but are not ready for other regional styles of play. USATT athletes need to be trained to compete against the world.

USATT needs a system based on expertise and long-run goals. The top programs have players chosen by discretionary picks, not one objective competition. (Trials are often conducted, but they are primarily for show.)

The Board discussed whether the US is unique, different from the rest of the world. Mr. Bitzigeio stressed that being on a national team has to be a start, not a finish. Mr. Sheth argued for four trials throughout the year, maintaining a purely objective selection process. Mr. Bitzigeio described his principles for moving forward:

- larger, more flexible squads
- a unified National Team, not broken down into age group teams
- two positions per age group would be guaranteed by direct competition
- there would be no limit to the number of other positions, which would be selected by discretionary evaluation of selected criteria

Mr. Bitzigeio noted that, ironically, when choosing an 8-person team, the discussion is how to choose #8. People typically have no problem with the top six being on the team.

The Board also discussed whether coaches can contribute more holistically to elite development, with parental support?

Mr. Bitzigeio also spoke about coach selection. He has dissolved the previous National Team Coaching Pool, and he is transitioning into a new National Team Coaching Pool. In addition, he is planning for professional training to be available to all coaches.

The meeting recessed at 12:22.
The meeting resumed at 12:53.

16. USA Table Tennis Major Events Discussion

In general, these events are 30-40% more populated; however, the numbers are being affected negatively by the calendar switch, moving the Open to December and the Nationals to July.



Ironically, the reason for the switch, the school calendar, is working. More juniors are attending the Nationals.

The stagnation of foreign attendance at the Open is puzzling. Prize money is not the problem. The Open gives higher prize money than any ITTF Challenge Event in the world.

Moving forward, Mr. Kaye is looking hard at returning to a one East, one West geographical structure. In addition, he is planning to design a qualification system for the Nationals. He expects that will increase participation considerably and increase sponsorship possibilities.

Parenthetically, the 2018 World Veterans Championships is now sitting at 3800 entrants.

17. USOC Update and Discussion

The USOC is funding the startup of USATT's new coaching program. Coaching Committee Chair Larry Hodges will be in Colorado in January for meetings with both USATT and USOC coaching staff.

18. ITTF Update and Discussion

In mid-January, USATT will be hosting an ITTF future events working group. One potential outcome is a restructuring to implement regional qualifying for world events.

Gordon Kaye is now the President of ITTF-North America.

19. SafeSport

The Board heard a description of Congressional discussions designed to tighten the SafeSport program.

The Board reviewed the draft of USATT (SafeSport) Policies and Procedures 2.0.

The Board discussed the lack of current way to check an individual's SafeSport status. No action was taken.



MOTION 4. MOVED to approve Mark Thompson as USATT’s Athlete Protection Officer.

Movant: Larry Hodges
Second: Deepak Somarapu

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote, 9-0-0

MOTION 5. MOVED to terminate approval of the December 30, 2013 USATT SafeSport Policies and Procedures 1.0, and to approve the December 16, 2017 USATT SafeSport Policies and Procedures 2.0, pending prescribed edits.

Movant: Carolyn Savini
Second: Tara Profitt

[Note: the prescribed edits concerned the description and examples of Sexual Misconduct.]

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote, 9-0-0

The meeting recessed at 2:03.
The meeting resumed at 2:15.

20. Legal Update/Executive Session

The Board went into Executive Session at 2:16 [Note: Minutes are not kept in Executive Session.]
The Board returned to General Session at 3:37

21. Athlete Support and AAC Involvement

Ms. Profitt led a discussion of the many issues regarding athlete involvement with committees and governance, in general. The Board discussed suggestions for increasing involvement. Ms. Cribbs and Mr. Danner will be working with Ms. Profitt on the issue.



22. Discussion Regarding General Assembly

Mr. Hogshead distributed the proposed agenda. The Board approved, without objection.

MOTION 6. MOVED to approve the Board Book, prepared by Melanie Herman, as amended.

Movant: Ed Hogshead
Second: Deepak Somarapu

[Note: edits included:

- adding D&O insurance, in appendix A
- delete the last sentence of the duty of dissent
- add a statement regarding Illinois law establishing the limited liability of nonprofit Board members, in appendix B
- change support comment to one supporting the right of the Board to have made a particular decision
- oversight of management, add "Shall be at the Board's discretion shall result" at the end]

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote, 9-0-0

23. Old Business

The next Board meeting will be a teleconference on January 15, 2018. Projected agenda items include:

- approval of the 2018 budget
- distribution of the 2017 balance sheet
- consideration of a bylaw amendment regarding the Tournament Guide
- potential amendments to SafeSport program

In addition, Mr. Taylor will:

- send the Board the list of committee members
- send the Board the list of AAC-eligible athletes, as of the 2016 election
- request opinion from the Nominating and Governance Committee regarding whether David Lally would be eligible to serve as an Independent Board member



24. New Business

USATT does not have a records retention policy. Such a policy will be investigated. Also, USATT needs to collect records of past disciplinary actions.

The meeting adjourned at 4:39 p.m. PST.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dennis Taylor
Secretary