



Member, United States
Olympic & Paralympic Committee

USA Team Handball board meeting

Minutes of the 10-Jan-2024 regular meeting teleconference

Board members in attendance

- Michael Wall – Chair
- Marianne Acker
- Tracy Deforge
- Sandra De La Riva Repede
- Camille Nichols
- Mark Ortega
- Ebiye Udo-Udoma

Board members excused

- Jennifer Fithian
- Patrick Jalabert – acting as secretary

USATH Staff in attendance

- Martin Branick – CEO

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 3 pm MT by Michael Wall, Chair. Mr. Wall thanked board members for joining, and reminded them that several topics would be discussed, as detailed in the shared agenda. Mr. Wall asked Mr. Branick to record the meeting so that Mr. Jalabert could retroactively act as secretary, and take minutes for the meeting.

This meeting was opened to the USATH community as a webinar, excluding the executive session.

Agenda item #1 – CEO report

- Mr. Branick offered condolences to families of two members of the handball community who had recently passed away.
- Mr. Branick presented Try Handball, an initiative in partnership with Verizon to capitalize on the Olympic games, and the subsequent attention handball typically received.
 - The initiative, running from early July until September, would aim to retain people that showed interest in the sport. The objective would be to direct everyone to the appropriate local groups, whether clubs, the National Referee Committee (NRC) representatives, etc.
 - It was noted that, at the time of the meeting, the detailed contributions of individual groups had not been finalized. The expectation was to leverage the Paris 2024 working group, with an objective to have conversations in motion by the end of February. The overall package and network configuration would need to be completed by the end of May.
 - Mr. Ortega challenged Mr. Branick to deliver on a fully scheduled timeline by the next board meeting, considering that USATH had historically not successfully planned the lead up to Olympic events. He also volunteered to support Mr. Branick's effort in building that timeline, as did Mr. Udo-Udoma.
 - Mr. Udo-Udoma challenged Mr. Branick to clearly plan for how much the effort would be allocated towards the National team pipeline, membership base growth, and so on.
 - Mr. Wall inquired about if/how the IHF would be involved in supporting this initiative. It was noted that Mr. Branick has raised the topic with Amal Khalifa during a recent conversation.
- Mr. Branick provided a brief update on the equipment grant process, which was receiving applications, and was scheduled to stop accepting submissions by 21-Jan-2024.
- Mr. Branick discussed working groups, including the recent launch of recruitment for the additional three (3) working groups that the board had approved at the previous meeting. Applicants from the first round of submissions were being contacted, whether or not they had been retained for a role within a working group. Mr. Branick noted that, in line with USOPC expectations, all working groups would be considered as board committees and would require 33% athlete representation.
- The board discussed updates on National teams.
 - Mr. Udo-Udoma shared an update on the recent beach handball training camp, which included a significant number (25-30% estimated) of first time handball players. The organizing team was taking away some lessons learned that they were eager to work on for future events. Overall, the event was considered very successful and was already having an impact on National team pools.
 - Mr. Branick mentioned that a fully filled out calendar of National team activities was being developed for publication in order to improve overall awareness for all potentially interested athletes.
 - Mr. Branick noted that the NACHC beach qualifier was expected to be hosted in Puerto Rico, and more details were expected in the coming weeks. In line with that, Mr. Branick had recently discussed ways to reinforce the NACHC with potential support from the IHF, though nothing concrete had been agreed upon.
 - Mr. Branick discussed the search for a women's beach National team head coach, which had received nine (9) applicants to date. The objective was to proceed to interviews within the week.

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- Mr. Ortega provided a brief update on the men's indoor National team, which was hosting a tryout in Norway with a very limited domestic-based athletes participation. Mr. Branick noted that the objective was to host domestic tryouts on an increased cadence, though plans were not firmed up for 2024. It was stressed that a sense of urgency needed to be applied to this effort.
 - Mr. Branick reminded the board that the next town hall meeting was scheduled for 30-Jan-2024.

Agenda item #2 - Minutes of Board Meetings

- Mr. Jalabert had circulated the meeting minutes for the December 2023 meeting ahead of time for review.
- No changes were requested.

Motion

A motion was made to approve the December 12, 2023 meeting minutes, and was duly seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

Executive session

The board entered executive session at 3.30 pm MT, ending the recording.

Patrick Jalabert served as Secretary.