



**USA RACQUETBALL BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
US OPEN Meeting  
Hampton Inn & Suites  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Wednesday, October 3, 2018  
MINUTES**

***Mission: USA Racquetball, recognized by the United States Olympic Committee as the National Governing Body for the sport, is committed to our members and the growth of racquetball from recreational play to international competition.***

***Core Values: Excellence, Customer Service, Integrity, Dedication, Communication***

**Blue = Board votes**

**Green = Action items**

**Attending:** Thurman Brooks, Jonathan Clay (Treasurer), Michelle De La Rosa (Athlete Rep), Jose Diaz (Athlete Rep), Scott Fish, Mike Kiedrowski, Cheryl Kirk (Secretary), Terry Rogers, Aimee Ruiz (Athlete Rep), Clndy Tilbury, Mike Wedel (Vice President), Dan Whitley (President)

**Not attending:** Joel Barshaw, Joanne Pomodoro

A quorum was achieved. President Whitley provided prior notice of the meeting.  
All Board USA Racquetball memberships are current.

**8:56 am Call to Order -- Dan Whitley**

Introduction of Mike Wedel as USAR Executive Director effective 11/1/18

**Roll Call -- Cheryl Kirk**

Approval of Agenda -- Cheryl Kirk

Motion by Thurman Brooks to approve the agenda as presented.

Seconded by Terry Rogers

No discussion

Vote: Passed unanimously

Approval of 9/24/18 Minutes -- Cheryl Kirk

Motion by Cindy Tilbury to approve the 9/24/18 minutes.

Seconded by Thurman Brooks

No discussion

Vote: Passed unanimously

**Welcome/Rules of Meeting -- Dan Whitley**

SafeSport case update -- details on file with the Secretary of the Board.

*For the full presentation, refer to PowerPoint slides in companion document.*

## **Communication Pathway**

**Starbucks -- comparisons to USAR**

### ***Considerations***

Growing new players (e.g., junior programs)

Support club owners, state associations, tournament directors

### ***Problems***

A collection of decisions over years and years

### ***Solutions***

Evoke heritage, tradition and passion

Talk with racquetball people

### ***What we don't do and won't do***

Don't dwell on history and success

Won't cast blame for past mistakes

## **Executive Director Presentation/Discussion -- Mike Wedel**

*For the full presentation, refer to PowerPoint slides in companion document.*

### ***First 90 Days – What to expect***

***USAR Office -- explore options***

***Staff Makeup and Training***

***Communication Tree***

### ***Strategic Planning Initiative -- create task force (6-10 members)***

Devise a three-year plan

Tie every initiative to a budget line item

Complete in time for 2020 Budget

Be transparent with the plan, share it with USAR members

### ***Budget Process***

ED/Staff Create Budget

Present Budget to Finance Committee

Present Budget to Board for Vote

## **US OPEN -- Doug Ganim**

### ***Successful 2018 turnout beyond expectations***

Some challenges: increased vendor costs and loss of sponsorships.

Net profit should be similar to last year.

### ***Future of the US OPEN***

Doug will retire from directing the US OPEN after the 2020 event.

UnitedHealthcare has renewed their sponsorship for two more years.

Offered advice on how USAR can/should proceed after 2020 -- three concurrent paths:

1. Replicate what Doug is doing.
2. Re-imagine the event.
3. Look at another city.

*Descriptions of each recommended pathway are in the Secretary's records.*

## **BREAK**

### **Membership Committee -- Scott Fish**

Looking for 1-2 more committee members; outdoor representation.

Reach out to non-tournament players.

Exploring rebranding or adjustment of membership structure.

Observation: When we went to the online magazine vs. hard copy, we lost a key way to reach our members and demonstrate value of membership.

Suggestion: Publicize outdoor court locations on the USAR website. It is expensive to have a club membership.

General programming for juniors and high schools.

Forming a State Association Council is a well-regarded concept to give the states an avenue to bounce ideas off of each other, help new states with initiatives, facilitate two-way communication. This council would represent state needs and challenges.

Suggestion: Any member of a state board should be able to attend.

### **Action Item: Form a State Association Council with possible leadership by Michelle De La Rosa.**

*Renée Gundolff joined the meeting just prior to lunch.*

### **LPRT -- T.J. Baumbaugh/Freddy Ramirez**

Spent the past year working to establish a Board of Directors.

A solid team is now working with the LPRT.

Looking for two more people to join the Board.

Freddy Ramirez now carries the title of Vice President of Marketing and Development.

Objectives:

Make tour better, increase reach and visibility.

Fundraising to have more control of LPRT events.

USAR's social media "shares" in support of the LPRT have a lot of impact.

Encourage American players to raise funds, gain sponsorships. International players receive assistance to travel to events from their

countries/federations. U.S. players don't have the same kind of support. LPRT is set up and more than happy to help any American players who are interested with fundraising via social media contacts.

Suggestion: To find more American players, consider notifying the top 20 and/or collegiate women who are continuing to play.

The USAR Board expressed support for the LPRT and its initiatives. Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) in various cities have been given LPRT contact info.

**Action Item: Renée will send the CVB contacts to T.J. so that connections can be made.**

#### **Accounting -- Thurman Brooks**

Audit is done and completed, same recommendations as last year. Audit opinion for 2018 has been delivered. The 990 is ready to be posted on the website.

#### **LUNCH**

*Michelle De La Rosa, Jose Diaz, and Renée Gundolff exited after lunch.*

#### **IRT -- Andy Kulback**

The new IRT organization purchased the IRT from prior leadership. The investor group is passionate about the sport; they want the IRT and racquetball to grow. Four more Tier 1 events than the prior year are scheduled. Prize money has increased.

Goal for this season is to change business model from a model where tournament directors come to the IRT to a model where the IRT brings the prize money and finds tournament directors and clubs in locations where it wants to be.

It has become more and more important to identify as many synergies as we can with USAR and work together.

The IRT is interested in identifying some outside sponsor benefit opportunities -- shared marketing packages, etc., to leverage our two organizations.

Dan Whitley: USA Racquetball appreciated that the IRT came in and streamed at 3WallBall.

The Men's Pro matches are being streamed in both English and Spanish this year. The Mexican Federation (FMR) is working with RKT and the IRT to stream in Spanish.

An IRT Pro Stop with World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR) could happen if a venue were identified that could support it.

### **Marketing Committee/ Transparency Plans -- Aimee Ruiz**

During the committee's first call, "how to celebrate racquetball" was discussed.

Get players and associations involved in National Racquetball Day in September 2019.

Ideas:

- Ways to get involved -- host a tournament, teach a group of people how to play, Classics with old racquets.
- Submit a form online, enter a contest to incentivize. E.g., a free entry to a national event.
- Establish a Facebook group for people involved in the celebration.
- Send people a kit that would rulebook, magazine, magnet, etc.

Challenge: WOR often pulls images from anywhere and doesn't always have permission to use. Important WOR understands the rules surrounding usage of photos, logos, and other materials. WOR may or may not come under scrutiny, but USAR will.

Idea: Feature a different state every month on the website.

**Action Item: Aimee, Dan, and Mike to discuss the website and make sure all are on same page.**

### **National Events -- Mike Wedel**

Magnet supplied in welcome bags here.

Objective:

Entice clubs to want to host national events.

In Board members' home areas, if there is a club that has enough courts to host a national event, contact Mike.

Announce calendar for 2020 sooner than we were able to this year. Need to be able to visit the clubs to see the physical plant and have dialogue with club owners and tournament directors.

Aimee: We want to make sure we continue the Leadership Series.

Suggestions: If Leadership Meetings are scheduled after the Board meetings, it would be a good time to talk about what we did and what was discussed. We should send out reports to the members on what was discussed at Board meetings.

## **BREAK**

***Jonathan Clay exited the meeting after the break.***

### **WOR and 3 Wall updates with Unity Discussion -- Dan Whitley**

*For the full presentation, refer to PowerPoint slides in companion document.*

Dan recapped his visit at 3WallBall in September.

Met with Mike Coulter, Hank Marcus, and Rick Koll.

Topics discussed: R2, HEAD/Penn, US OPEN dates, Pickleball, Handball.

Met with Vic Leibofsky, Jesus Ustarroz, and Geoff Osberg.

Many ideas generated; next steps are to make lists by October 8, then meet and prioritize.

### ***Ideas***

- Member trial: indoor member s/b able to try outdoor tournament without becoming a member and vice versa
- Tournament directors standards/guidelines
- Use USAR and WOR logos for municipal park campaign
- Junior programs and equipment programs
- Financial challenges for demographics -- hard to collect \$15 for a membership and also a \$25 entry
- R2 Festival concept
- Three-championship bundle

### ***WOR Membership***

- Autorenewal
- Price increase
- Surveys
- Value proposition
- Outdoor challenge for tournament directors
- 3 events can influence and generate LARGE % of membership renewals

### ***Takeaways***

- So much opportunity
- Extremely inclusive group

- Genuinely open to working together
- Critical to balance indoor/outdoor oversight and collaborate

### **JUNIOR RACQUETBALL PROGRAM -- Dan Whitley**

*For the full presentation, refer to PowerPoint slides in companion document.*

**Objective:** November 1st - begin an initiative like NetGeneration.

***Kids need five components to make them want to physically engage:***

Fun, Friends, Fit in, Motivation, Social Component

#### ***Competitive Environment***

Many sports compete for families'/kids' time and resources

#### ***Framework Elements***

Customer; Programs; Delivery; Engagement

#### ***How to Locate Potential Customers***

Resources listed:

Schools through PE Curriculum; Churches through fellowship and youth programs; Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts - participation badges; Bring a Friend Days for current programs; Open Houses at Clubs; Other sports cross training: baseball, softball, golf, football, soccer, track, cross country; Winter exercise; Via Municipal Park Program Guides

#### ***Impact on family involvement when a child is participating in a racquetball program.***

Parents and siblings will follow the child.

#### ***Program***

No huge commitment required; Lesson/clinics, leagues; Intramurals; Practice and Play; Team Play (various locations); Tournaments

#### ***Delivery and Engagement***

Instructor Program and Certified Instructors; State Associations; Ambassador program; USAR/WOR support/endorsement; Partner with all groups - IRT, LPRT, NMRA, MRF, etc.; CLUB OWNERS and MANAGERS

#### ***How to begin to build this?***



1. Coordinate with Stockton, Portland, and St. Louis programs. Download all formats.
2. Work with Instructor Program for 4 sessions (once a week for a month (drill and play curriculum)
3. Create a menu of competition formats for different levels of experience players.
4. **Name the program and establish marketing plan**
5. Get endorsement from all stakeholders, manufacturers, and state associations.
6. Promote to CLUBS. Use testimonials from Stockton, Portland, and St. Louis
7. Identify 3 test markets. Support launch and document "wins." Use those "wins" as next wave of testimonials to demonstrate speed of start-up.
8. Set first year goal. Work with groups to do individual plans.
9. **This is PHASE ONE of any UNITY PLAN. We can all work towards this together.**
10. Supplemental racquet drives and other support from local ambassadors can support kick-off.
11. We can begin on November 1st.

### **Team Building Exercise -- WHY? -- Dan Whitley**

*For the full presentation, refer to PowerPoint slides in companion document.*

### **Book: *Start With Why*, by Simon Sinek**

- What is your motivation or purpose?
- Values x Behavior = Culture
- How leadership chooses to treat its people impacts everything -- for better or for worse.
- This applies to board, committees, and staff to membership.
- Give people a reason to do what they do, not just a task.
- Knowing your "why" can help you act with purpose.
- Very helpful in promoting dialogue with WOR directors.

### **Board Exercise -- Why?**

WHY? Why do you play racquetball? Why are you here?

Board members each shared their "why" for being involved in racquetball and on the Board of Directors.

**Action Item: Board members to talk with members at the US OPEN and beyond. No one has a simple WHY.**

### **US Open Board Activities (Explain the week)**

Leadership Reception -- Thursday, 10/4, 7:00 pm

We can't be transparent about gossip, etc., but we can be more open about things we're doing.

### Outstanding Items

Action Item: Dan Whitley to discuss upcoming US Team Head Coach contract expirations with US Team Committee Chair Larry Haemmerle. Dave Ellis (Adult) and Charlie Pratt (Junior)

Motion by Scott Fish to approve coverage of US Junior Team first division entry fees for 2018 IRF World Juniors per budgeted expense

Seconded by Terry Rogers

Discussion: FYI, there are 24 players on the team this year x \$200 = \$4,800.

Suggestion to cover all fees. (The sum of \$8,000 would cover all fees.)

Suggestion to wait and see if additional moneys are available at the end of the year via the Team USA Challenge.

Vote: 8 yes, 1 no, motion passed

Motion by Mike Kiedrowski to adjourn

Seconded by Terry Rogers

Adjourned 4:51 pm CT

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Materials provided ahead of the meeting:

- BOD Meeting Minutes -- 9/24/18

Materials provided at the meeting:

- PowerPoint decks for Mike Wedel and Dan Whitley presentations