



# December Special Board Meeting Minutes

USA Fencing (United States Fencing Association, Inc.)  
12/14/2024 10:00 AM MST

## Attendance

### Present:

Members: Donald Alperstein, Phil Andrews, Peter Barton, Emily Bian, Tabitha Chamberlin, Lauryn Deluca, Jackie Dubrovich, Andrey Geva, Molly Hill, Kat Holmes, Darryl Jacobs, Mike Joo, Selina Kaing, Damien Lehfeltdt, Christina Pachuta, Andrea Pagnanelli, Maria Panyi, Scott Rodgers, Abdel Salem

### Absent:

Members: Amanda Nguyen

#### I. Zoom Access Information

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88318762990?pwd=Gr8F1mhwPcvYO48ZEeyCbUrfNBZVRU.1>  
Passcode: 743125

#### II. Call to Order (Presenters: Damien Lehfeltdt)

- Roll Call
- General Announcements
- Opening Remarks - Chair
- Moment of Remembrance
  - Peter Westbrook
- Conflict of Interest Declaration

#### III. CEO, Operations & Financial Update (Presenters: Phil Andrews, Tabitha Chamberlin)

#### IV. Committee, Resource Groups, and Task Force Updates (as applicable) (Presenters: Damien Lehfeltdt)

##### Motion:

Motion to accept Committee Reports

Motion seconded by Molly Hill. Result: Approved by voice vote.

##### A. Hall of Fame Committee Report










 [USA Fencing HOF Committee.pdf](#)

##### B. Referees Commission Report

 [RC Report for the BOD December 2024.pdf](#)

##### C. Ethics Committee Report

 [Ethics Committee Board Report - 11-14-24.pdf](#)

- D. Division Resource Group Report
  -  [Report of the USA Fencing Division Resource Team DEC 24 BOD Final.pdf](#)
- E. International Relations Committee Report
  -  [IRC BoD Update 2024-11.docx](#)
- F. DEIB Review on Transgender Policy Changes for Informational Purposes
  -  [USA Fencing Transgender + Non-Binary Policy Proposal.docx](#)
- G. Coaches Committee Report
  -  [Report of the USA Fencing Coaches Committee DEC 24 BOD.pdf](#)
- H. Tournament Committee Report
  -  [TC Meeting Minutes Board - November 2024.pdf](#)
- I. Audit Committee Report
  -  [USA Fencing Audit Committee Report.docx](#)
- V. Consent Agenda (Presenters: Damien Lehfelddt)
  - Motion:**  
Motion to approve Consent Agenda  
  
Motion seconded by Lauryn DeLuca. Result: Approved by voice vote.
  - A. Approval of the September 15, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
    -  [Draft Minutes - Annual Meeting - Sunday - September 15, 2024.pdf](#)
  - B. International Relations Strategic Plan Integration
    -  [Task Force to Integrate Internation Relations into the Strategic Plan \(1\).pdf](#)
  - C. 2024-2026 USA Fencing Board Charter and Governance/Operational Guardrails
    - Motion:** To approve the 2024-2026 USA Fencing Board Charter and Governance/Operational Guardrails.
    - Rationale:** As part of the 2024 USA Fencing Board Retreat and ensuing culture meetings, the Board has drafted a new Charter in order to establish standards of professionalism and agreement as to where the Board will focus. The charter may be amended by a simple motion, and should be re-evaluated in 2026.
    -  [USA Fencing Board Charter Sessions v0.5 2024-10-11.pdf](#)
  - D. US SEMI Committee
    - To appoint Felicia Zimmerman to the US SEMI Committee as an ex-fficio member as a result of her role with the FIE SEMI.
  - E. Referee Development Working Group

**Motion:** To form a Referee Development Strategy Working Group. The focus of this working group will be to evaluate the Referee Development Sub-Objective of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan and develop tactics and recommendations to meet the supporting metrics and outcomes. The working group will be comprised of:

- **Board-** Damien Lehfeltd, Donald Alperstein, Jon Moss, Maria Panyi
- **RC-** All
- **RC DEIB Committee** - Annamaria Lu
- **Staff-** Shannon Jolly, Phil Andrews

**Rationale:** With the establishment of the Referee Development Goal in the Strategic Plan, a working group is needed comprising of Board, Staff, and RC members to develop tangible tactics to best support this sub-objective of the strategic plan.

## VI. New Business

### A. Independent Director Appointments (Presenters: Damien Lehfeltd)

**MOTION:** To elect two Independent Directors from a list of Marie Donoghue, Jade Burroughs, or Andrew Lee.

This election will be conducted via secret ballot. Board members will send their top two choices to the Board Secretary and Parliamentarian.

The candidate with the most votes will serve a term to end in Fall, 2026. The candidate with the second most votes will serve a term to end in Fall, 2025.

In the event of a tie, a runoff and additional round of voting will occur.

**Rationale:** Under Section 7.4b of USA Fencing's restated and amended bylaws, "There shall be three (3) independent directors...the Chair shall nominate qualified individuals to serve...subject to confirmation by the Board of Directors." The bylaws also stipulate that the Nominating Committee "may propose an alternative Independent Director candidate to the Board."

Per the Nominating Committee's report, the Committee vetted 20 candidates then conducted a thorough and comprehensive three-round interview process before arriving at the candidates listed above. The Chair wishes to thank Ms. Dubrovich OLY, Ms. Hill, Ms. Holmes OLY, Mr. Hue, Mr. Mattern OLY, and Ms. Dakova for their time and energy devoted to this nomination process.

 [Nominating Committee Report.pdf](#)

 [Marie Donoghue Bio.docx](#)

 [JadeBurroughs 2024.pdf](#)

 [Andrew Lee bio \(11.14.24\).pdf](#)

 [Andrew Lee bio.pdf](#)

Result: Jade Burroughs received the most votes and is appointed through September 1, 2026 and Marie Donoghue received the second most votes and is appointed through September 1, 2025.

B. Governance Task Force (Presenters: Damien Lehfeltdt)

**Motion:** To form a new Governance Task Force with the scope of evaluating the following areas:

- Board composition and roles
- Role of Leadership Academy in identifying future Board leaders
- Nominations and Petitions Process
- Eligibility to Serve as Chair

The composition of the task force will be as follows:

**Chair-** Damien Lehfeltdt

**At Larges-** Maria Panyi, Molly Hill

**Independents-** To be amended pending appointment of nominees in December meeting

**Athlete Reps-** TBD

A report will be produced in the May 2025 meeting to include recommendations on bylaw changes, rationale, and value proposition to membership.

**Rationale:** As USA Fencing becomes a \$16M organization with 44,000 members, it is timely to evaluate the recommendations created by the Governance Task Force (GTF) four years ago and evolve the organization's governance structure to support the rapid growth of the organization.

- **Strategic Plan Alignment:** Evaluating and potentially amending Board structure may better position the organization to holistically deliver upon strategic plan objectives.
- **Stakeholders Impacted:** Board, USA Fencing General Membership
- **Change Impact Evaluation:** The formation of the task force may be considered to have a low impact. However, recommendations made by the task force may ultimately result in high impact/high risk changes to multiple stakeholder groups. A change impact evaluation will be conducted upon the delivery of the report with recommendations for change management with the community.

**Motion:**

Motion seconded by Molly Hill. Motion to Amend (Damien Lehfeltdt): That the task force be comprised of Damien Lehfeltdt (Chair), Molly Hill, Jade Burroughs, Marie Donoghue, Kat Holmes, Andrew Lee, and 2 Athlete Representatives.

Motion to Amend seconded by Kat Holmes. Result: approved by voice vote.

Result of motion as amended: approved by voice vote.

C. Event Site Selection Inclusion Policy (Presenters: Damien Lehfeltdt)

**Motion** - To amend the USA Fencing Site Selection Inclusion Policy to allow more flexibility at the city level for those willing to offer protections to women and LGBTQIA+ members.

- **Background** - In October 2022, USA Fencing committed to protecting its' LGBTQIA+ individuals and show support for its' women members by giving preference to selecting venues within states that had more inclusive laws. Original: <https://www.usafencing.org/news/2022/november/03/usa-fencing-to-give-preference-to-states-with-more-inclusive-laws-when-selecting-future-host-cities-for-national-tournaments>
- **Policy:** USA Fencing includes a wide variety of factors in its' site selection process for national events including but limited to:
  - Profitability
  - Member Experience, Satisfaction, and Cost
  - Travel Convenience
  - Square Footage Requirements (including para-fencing accommodations)

- City Interest and Availability in Hosting.
- Inclusivity

USA Fencing will give preference to sites within states that have High, Medium and Fair tallies awarded by LGBTMAP.org and avoid where possible states that have a Negative Overall Policy Tally, or “red”.

USA Fencing will also give preference to sites within states that do not have laws that endanger the health of members, or immediate family of members, and will avoid those with laws that may see a medical professional prosecuted for assisting a member in need of critical medical care, or reproductive-related medical care, using the Commonwealth Fund as its' source of information on this subject; once again avoiding where possible states with the bottom ranking policy ranking.

- **Exception**

USA Fencing will provide an exception to sites that might otherwise be excluded by this policy where city officials provide a written undertaking and plan of action assuring the protection, welfare and support of LGBTQIA+ members of the USA Fencing community, protection of the rights of Women, the rights of any other affected member group while attending such an event, and the protection of medical professionals coming to the aid of any individual needing medical attention and/or reproductive-related care.

In considering such an exception, USA Fencing must account for the overall actions of a city in relation to its own LGBTQIA+ and female residents, to the best of its ability and, working in tandem with the city, provide support resources to affected members of the USA Fencing community.

**Rationale:** This updated policy serves to take our commitment to inclusion to the city level (as opposed to the State level), allowing USA Fencing a more granular opportunities to work with cities who are in turn willing to offer the same protections that are available in states with more inclusive laws.

This policy revision fulfills both DEIB objectives within the Strategic Plan while also allowing for more financial flexibility with site selection.

*Note: These policy revisions have been vetted, reviewed, and endorsed by the DEIB Committee.*

 [USA Fencing Event Site Selection Inclusion Policy 11-15-2024 DEIB Feedback.docx](#)

**Motion:**

Motion seconded by Lauryn DeLuca. Motion to Amend (Andrey Geva): To remove use of the LGBTMAP.org from the policy. Seconded by Abdel Salem.

Result of Motion to Amend: Failed on roll call vote (For: Geva. Against: DeLuca, Dubrovich, Hill, Holmes, Jacobs, Lehfeltdt, Pagnanelli, Panyi, Rodgers. Abstain:

Salem). Roll call vote passes unanimously. Result of Original Motion as presented:

Passed by roll call vote (For: DeLuca, Dubrovich, Geva, Hill, Holmes, Jacobs, Lehfeltdt, Pagnanelli, Panyi, Rodgers, Salem).

D. Task Force on USA Fencing Transgender Policy (Presenters: Maria Panyi)

**Motion:** To create an ALL-female task force to re-evaluate and revise (as needed) the USA Fencing Transgender policy to ensure that fencing provides a fair playing field for girls and women, while also providing an inclusive fencing environment. The Task Force to be led by a female athlete, and include an NCAA fencer, a junior or cadet US travel team member, a senior travel team member, a female national coach, an NCAA college coach, and a transgender

fencer. The policy recommendations should be supported by science and represent the views of the majority of our membership.

**Rationale:** Transgender participation in women's sports remains a complex and sensitive issue. Concerns from our members highlight potential disadvantages for cisgender female athletes in areas such as college recruiting and national team selections. Empowering the diverse community of female athletes and coaches to shape the policies that best serve our sport is essential.

*Considerations:* USA Fencing acknowledges the "right to compete," but also recognizes the broader landscape, including restrictions and bans in other sports (e.g., swimming and rugby), inconsistencies in state laws, and anticipated changes under new federal leadership. The goal of this Task Force, composed of female experts in fencing, is to provide a platform for informed leadership and tailored solutions specific to our sport.

**Motion:**

Motion seconded by Andrey Geva. Result: Failed by roll call vote (For: Geva, Panyi, Salem. Against: DeLuca, Dubrovich, Hill, Holmes, Jacobs, Lehfeldt, Pagnanelli, Rodgers)

E. Financial Task Force (Presenters: Maria Panyi)

**Motion:** To create a Financial Task Force to optimize national tournament revenues while increasing honorarium/wage to essential contracted staff working at the events (e.g. referees, armorers, tournament organizers). The Task Force will consist of large regional event organizers who run profitable and efficient events, so their experiences can be adopted nationally.

*Specific objectives:*

Come up with 3 scenarios for events, including a small event with about 3000 entries, a medium event with about 6000 entries, and a large event with about 9,000 or more entries. Determine the most profitable breakdown on each scenario and recommend the best scenario for future national events. Recommendations should include, but not be limited to, size, event categories, ratios, locations, and cost-cutting measures on overhead and travel.

*Task Force:* Abdel Aziz, Igor Chirashnya, Brandon Rochelle, Emily Bian, Selina Kaing. Board liaison: Maria Panyi. National Staff liaison: Phil Andrews.

**Rationale:** Although not yet finalized, a preliminary change to national events had been developed and shared with the membership. There is a risk that reducing the size of the tournaments would significantly reduce revenues, which are critical to USA Fencing's financial health. This Task Force will assist with optimizing national event revenue while also improving critical staff compensation, which ensures both profitability and sustainability in the long run.

**Motion:**

Motion seconded by Damien Lehfeldt. Result: Failed by roll call vote (For: Geva, Lehfeldt, Panyi, Salem. Against: DeLuca, Dubrovich, Hill, Holmes, Jacobs, Pagnanelli, Rodgers)

F. DEIB Office (Presenters: Andrey Geva)

**MOTION:** To reconsider how the organization achieves the DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) advancement goals outlined in the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, particularly those within the "Continued Excellence" sub-objective of the Organizational Effectiveness Goal.

**Rationale:** While the intentions behind establishing the DEIB office are well-meaning, the following concerns have been identified:

1. Mission Drift: The primary focus of USA Fencing should be the promotion and development of the sport at all levels. DEIB initiatives risk diverting financial and human capital away from our core mission: "To grow and promote the sport of fencing in the United States, honor its rich traditions, and achieve sustained competitive international excellence."
2. Unintended Exclusion: A focus on specific demographic targets can inadvertently lead to feelings of exclusion among those outside the targeted groups and may not necessarily reflect the will of the broader membership.
3. Questionable Impact: To date, the DEIB office has not demonstrated a measurable impact on increasing membership diversity.

Proposed Solution:

1. Replace the DEIB office with a DEIB Committee. This committee would:
  - a. Focus on serving all members, as the fencing community naturally represents many minority groups.
  - b. Redirect funds previously allocated to the DEIB office toward grassroots support for minority fencers, akin to the efforts of the Peter Westbrook Foundation.
2. USA Fencing should uphold a strong commitment to the principles outlined in the DEIB vision statement: "To increase participation of all individuals regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, or disability."
3. Emphasize a decentralized approach, empowering individual clubs and divisions to promote grassroots fencing growth and serve underprivileged communities. This would shift responsibility from the national office to localized efforts that are better suited to address specific community needs.

**Motion:**

Motion seconded by Darryl Jacobs. Result: Failed by roll call vote (For: Geva. Against: DeLuca, Dubrovich, Hill, Holmes, Jacobs, Lehfeldt, Pagnanelli, Panyi, Rodgers. Abstain: Salem)

G. Personal Coach Funding Task Force (Presenters: Andrey Geva)

**Motion:** Form a task force for allocation of funds for personal coaches traveling with their athletes to World Championships.

**Rationale:**

- The USA Fencing generates much more money than in the past. It's time to use these revenues to support our fencers, their coaches, and veteran fencers who represent the U.S. in the international arena.
- This will also help ensure that each athlete, no matter their socio-economic background, has the resources to perform at their highest potential on the world stage as they represent the United States.

**Motion:**

Motion seconded by Maria Panyi. Result: Failed by roll call vote (For: Geva. Against: DeLuca, Dubrovich, Hill, Holmes, Jacobs, Lehfeltdt, Pagnanelli, Panyi, Rodgers, Salem)

H. Junior World Championship Hosting Financial Strategy (Presenters: Maria Panyi)

**Motion:** To evaluate the financial, strategic, and budgetary requirements of hosting a Junior World Championships in the lead-up to the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, with findings and recommendations to be presented by the September 2025 Board Retreat.

**Rationale:** Hosting a Junior World Championships aligns with the updated Strategic Plan, fosters international collaboration with the FIE, and offers valuable opportunities for U.S. fencers and referees to participate in a prestigious event on home soil. Additionally, this would compensate for the Junior World Championships originally awarded to the United States but canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing a timeline ensures a detailed budget can be prepared, allowing for effective advocacy and formal proposals to the FIE in a timely manner.

**Motion:**

Motion seconded by Abdel Salem. Motion to Amend (Kat Holmes) to include all pathways to qualification for Olympic and Paralympic games. Seconded by Lauryn DeLuca. Result of Motion to Amend: Passed by voice vote. Result on motion as amended: Passed by roll call vote (For: DeLuca, Dubrovich, Geva, Holmes, Jacobs, Lehfeltdt, Pagnanelli, Panyi, Rodgers, Salem. Against: Hill))

I. Medal Podium Political Protest Policy (Presenters: Andrey Geva)

**Motion:** No political statements or protests will be allowed at the venue, during the tournament and/or from the medal podium.

**Rationale:**

- The USAF’s mission “to grow and promote the sport of fencing in the United States...” reflects the original values of the Olympic Charter to “develop harmony.”<sup>[1]</sup> Political statements, protests and demonstrations divide rather than unite.
- Any political statement or social protest will negatively impact the group that doesn’t support it. It creates unnecessary tension in the community.
- If the USAF allows protests and demonstrations, it will not only be divisive for the fencing community but could create additional security costs and unnecessary negative press for USAF, especially if it’s allowed to proliferate.
- Fencing events are an opportunity for a diverse community to bond together as they cheer for their fencer, team or club. Attendees at events – fencers, officials, referees, parents and spectators - come together to compete and enjoy the sport. There are plenty of other places and platforms where people can express their points of view.
- Having an apolitical policy helps ensure fencing events are a place dedicated to competition where athletes can wholly concentrate on the sport.

[1] <https://www.usafencing.org/about> (Mission Statement), <https://olympics.com/ioc/olympic-values> (Olympic values)

**Motion:**



Motion seconded. Result: Failed by roll call vote (For: Geva, Panyi, Salem.  
Against: DeLuca, Dubrovich, Hill, Holmes, Jacobs, Lehfeldt, Pagnanelli, Rodgers)

J. National Anthem (Presenters: Andrey Geva)

**Motion:** Play the national anthem at the beginning of tournament days at all NACs and National Championships

**Rationale:**

- This is appropriate since the USAF represents the United States.
- We have a very diverse fencing community, including many new immigrants, and the national anthem unites us.
- Playing the national anthem helps remind fencers' of their Olympic dreams at NACs and National Championships since playing the Gold medalist's national anthem is one of the first things that comes to mind as people picture the Olympics.
- Playing the Gold medalist's national anthem has been a tradition of the Olympics since 1924.
- It's a reminder by association that the USAF is the Olympic body's recognized National Governing Body for the sport of fencing in the United States.
- Playing the national anthem is a long tradition among major sports.
- Playing the national anthem supports the USAF's stated mission to "honor [the sport of fencing's] rich traditions."<sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> USAF Mission statement: <https://www.usafencing.org/about>

**Motion:**

Motion seconded by Abdel Salem. Result: Failed by roll call vote (For: Geva, Salem. Against: DeLuca, Dubrovich, Hill, Holmes, Jacobs, Lehfeldt, Pagnanelli, Rodgers. Abstain: Panyi)

K. Cadet and Junior Travel Fees (Presenters: Maria Panyi)

**\* Motion withdrawn by Maria Panyi prior to the start of the meeting to refer this issue to the National office for further consideration.**

**Motion:** to re-assess the current travel team fees for cadet and junior fencers for the upcoming season. The goal is to ensure that the fees adequately cover the designated staff costs and that a portion of the funds is allocated to support non-funded, medal-winning athletes.

1. Review the current travel team fee structure, specifically for cadet and junior fencers, and adjust to account for increased travel costs yearly (e.g., CIP or actual cost-based).
2. Ensure that the fees fully cover designated staff expenses and that any surplus is directed toward subsidizing successful athletes who have earned medals but are not otherwise funded.

**Rationale:** Travel costs have risen over time while international travel team fees have remained stagnant. This adjustment will ensure that team expenses are fully covered while also providing financial support to successful athletes who achieve medal results but do not have funding.

L. Travel and Expense Policy (Presenters: Maria Panyi)

**\*Motion withdrawn by Maria Panyi prior to the start of the meeting.**

**Motion:** To develop a comprehensive travel and expense policy to enhance financial oversight, streamline processes, and ensure consistent compliance across all organizational travel, including squads, international relations (IR), referees, staff, and Board members.

**Key Policy Areas:**

**1. Cost Controls:**

- Where possible, flights should be booked through a designated travel vendor (e.g., Cain Travel) for cost-efficiency and accountability.
- Travel partners and hotels should be prioritized based on best value, balancing cost and service quality.
- Implement expense caps, such as parking limited to \$25/day, and encourage room sharing or having individuals contribute 50% of the room cost unless otherwise approved.

**2. Booking Deadlines:**

- Establish strict deadlines for travel arrangements (flights and hotels) to help secure the most affordable options and improve logistical planning.

**3. Pre-Approval Requirements:**

- All non-standard expenses, including entertainment and meal invitations, should be pre-approved. Requests should include the business purpose, attendee list, and estimated cost.
  - The **Chair of the Board** should approve expenses related to the CEO.
  - The **CEO** or the appropriate reporting authority should approve all other requests.

**4. Exception Handling:**

- Any deviations from the policy should be formally escalated with clear justification and require written approval before reimbursement.

**5. IRS Compliance:**

- Ensure that all travel and expense policies align with IRS Travel Guidelines to maintain regulatory compliance and minimize audit risk.

**Rationale:** Consolidating and standardizing travel policies across all groups will improve financial control and transparency. Prioritizing travel partners and hotels that offer the best value, ensuring centralized vendor use, and aligning with IRS guidelines will foster consistency, cost-effectiveness, and regulatory compliance while reducing administrative complexity.

**M. US Fencer Priority Registration (Presenters: Maria Panyi)**

**\* Motion withdrawn by Maria Panyi prior to the start of the meeting to refer this issue to the Tournament Committee and National office for further consideration.**

**Motion:** to prioritize U.S. fencers in the registration process for USA Fencing sanctioned tournaments and ensure that the U.S. National Ranking System reflects only U.S. fencers. It aims to establish clear guidelines for the inclusion of international fencers and maintain the integrity of national rankings and competition structures.

- 1. Priority Registration:** All USA Fencing sanctioned tournaments, *especially capped events*, will have a priority registration period for U.S. fencers (U.S. citizens and permanent residents). After this period, registration will open to international fencers, with their registration closing one week before the event.
- 2. National Points:** International fencers and U.S. fencers representing another country in an international event will not earn U.S. national points. Only U.S. fencers participating in domestic events and representing the US in international events will be ranked in the U.S. National Ranking System.
- 3. Seeding List:** A Master Seeding List should be created for internal use only, including both U.S. and international fencers. This list will be *only* used for tournament seeding purposes.

**Rationale:** USA Fencing must prioritize U.S. athletes in alignment with its mission. This approach mirrors the practices of other combat sports in the US, including boxing, wrestling, judo, and taekwondo, where international participants may compete in domestic events but are excluded from earning national points or appearing in national rankings. Such policies

ensure equitable competition and provide U.S. athletes with opportunities to excel and gain recognition within their national system. Similarly, many European and Asian fencing nations, such as France, Italy, Korea, Japan, and China, do not honor international points, or award national points in their rankings to international fencers representing other countries.

N. National Event Site Selection (Presenters: Maria Panyi)

**\* Motion Withdrawn by Maria Panyi prior to start of meeting.**

**Motion:** To revise all applicable policies and practices to ensure that national events are selected based on the following criteria: (1) profitability, (2) accessibility, and (3) safety. These three criteria should be the principal considerations that take the greatest weight over any other considerations. While considering competing locations, only when these three criteria for competing locations are the same, USA Fencing may take into consideration other criteria.

**Definitions:** (1) *profitability* is defined as yielding the highest financial gain (revenues-expenses) of running the event with realizable financial projections based on available historical data and partnership advantages. (2) *accessibility* is defined as making the events accessible to as many people as possible with reduced travel time and considering a fair geographic distribution of the events during each year, with specific considerations on direct flight/airline hubs from major fencing communities in the east and west coasts. (3) *Safety* is defined as safe cities with published authoritative low crime rates of each city.

**Rationale:** USA Fencing policies to focus on financial sustainability and the interest of a vast and diverse membership to reduce costs to all participants, strive to partner with accessible locations, and ensure the personal safety of its members.

O. Tournament Format (Presenters: Andrey Geva)

**\* Motion withdrawn by Andrey Geva prior to the start of the meeting.**

**Motion:** Adopt the new proposed tournament format that will serve fencers for upcoming seasons and many years to come (see attached).

**Rationale:** The number of participants at NAC is growing every season. The national tournaments are becoming large and unwieldy, creating frustrations for organizers, referees, athletes, coaches and parents. We need to come up with a format that balances manageable event size, accessibility, and opportunity without negatively impacting overall NAC revenues.

P. Youth Council (Presenters: Damien Lehfeltd)

**\* Motion withdrawn by Damien Lehfeltd prior to the start of the meeting.**

**Motion:** To establish a USA Fencing Youth Council with the following charter:

**USA Fencing Youth Council Charter**

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of the USA Fencing Youth Council is to empower youth fencers to advocate for their peers, enhance the fencing experience for young athletes, and provide valuable input on issues, events, and programs that impact the youth fencing community. The Youth Council will serve as a bridge between young athletes and USA Fencing's leadership, contributing to the development of a positive, inclusive, and supportive environment within the sport.

**II. Objectives**

- **Advocacy:** Represent the interests and concerns of youth fencers to USA Fencing's leadership.
- **Fun Brokers:** Provide recommendations on how to maintain fun in fencing as the sport grows in size and competitiveness.
- **Community Building:** Promote camaraderie and inclusiveness among youth fencers across the country; enhance youth participation in USA Fencing events and initiatives
- **Education and Awareness:** Provide resources and organize programs on topics like sportsmanship, injury prevention, and academic balancing.

**III. Membership**

- **Eligibility:** Candidates must be active USA Fencing youth members between the ages of 12 and 18.
- **Composition:** The Council will be comprised of eight (8) athletes, ideally, but not bound to an even mix between youth eligible athletes and Cadet-aged athletes
- **Terms:** Members will serve terms pursuant to those established in Sections 12.18 and 12.19 of the Amended and Restated Bylaws.
- **Application Process:** Youth Council applications will be sourced by the National Office, with selections to be made by the CEO and Chair.

#### IV. Decision-Making

Per section 12.20 of the Bylaws, the Youth Council may make recommendations to the Board of Directors, Committees, or the CEO, but does not have the authority to make decisions for or to bind USA Fencing.

**Rationale:** The Board of Directors' approval of Councils provides a unique opportunity for the creation of a Youth Council. Youth fencers are a critical stakeholder in the organization's governance body for them will allow for better advocacy, communication, and advancement of USA Fencing's strategic objectives.

- **Change Impact Evaluation:** Low. The Council will be an advocacy body for USA Fencing's largest stakeholder group. This group will have the authority to make recommendations, but not serve as a decision-making body; thus, it may be considered a low risk/low impact motion.

#### VII. Good and Welfare

Next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for February 15th at the Junior Olympics in Charlotte, NC.

#### VIII. Adjourn to Executive Session (as needed)

##### **Motion:**

Motion to move to Executive Session

Motion moved by Damien Lehfeldt and motion seconded by Lauryn Deluca. Result: Passed by voice vote.

#### IX. Executive Session

#### X. Adjournment

#### XI. Reporting History of Committees and Resource Teams

 [Reporting Dates of Committees of Resource Groups.pdf](#)