



Member, United States
Olympic & Paralympic Committee

USA Team Handball board meeting

Minutes of the 14-Nov-2023 regular meeting teleconference

Board members in attendance

- Michael Wall – Chair
- Sandra De La Riva Repede
- Tracy Deforge
- Patrick Jalabert – acting as secretary
- Camille Nichols
- Mark Ortega
- Ebiye Udo-Udoma

Board members excused

- Marianne Acker
- Jennifer Fithian

USATH Staff in attendance

- Martin Branick – CEO

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 2.05 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. Jalabert to 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

- National team activities
 - The Men's indoor National team had recently returned from the Pan American games, with a 4th place finish (first Final Four in 20 years). The team was taking some lessons learned from the result, including in terms of preparation and organizational support. It was unclear if there would be a second chance opportunity for the team, following that result. Mixed messaging had been received on the topic, which made it challenging to accurately plan for the team's schedule and corresponding budget. It was noted that the USOPC typically allocated contingency funding for last minute needs for qualification chances, which USATH could potentially request support from if/when needed.
 - The Women's indoor National team had a training camp scheduled in North Carolina, to continue building the team for future events.
 - USATH was still expecting to bid to host the continental beach championships, required to be organized in Q1-2024. Work was still on-going to determine the best location for the bid.
 - It was noted that a beach handball exhibition would be hosted ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic games (July 26-29th).
 - An effort was on-going to build a youth team for the youth Olympic games in Dakar (Senegal) in 2026, which would include beach handball. This also involved engaging the USOPC to determine what, if any, support would be available.
 - Mr. Ortega raised the need for working groups to refine and update the scope of the high performance plan for each category (men/women, indoor/beach, etc.) as the LA 2028 Olympics drew closer.
- Play LA / LA 2028
 - It was noted that there had been no official communication regarding the sports that would be included in the LA 2028 Olympic games, though there was seemingly no reason to believe that beach handball would be added.
 - Mr. Branick provided an update on the Play LA initiative, including the IHF's expected involvement in helping develop coaches in the area. The exact focus was not yet determined at the time, but the expectation was that several age groups would be offered the opportunity to learn the sport.
 - Mr. Branick reported on his conversation with the LA 2028 organizing committee, and noted that a dedicated sports manager for handball would be hired in early 2025. While the efforts would be focused on the games themselves, though anything that could be kept as a legacy building block could be discussed in due time.
- IHF congress
 - It was officially documented that both the men's and women's indoor team would receive wild card entries for the 2025 and 2027 world championships.
- 2024 membership offering and benefits
 - Mr. Branick had shared a short update ahead of the meeting, including the benefits and P&L of different scenarios. The financial aspects had been reviewed and approved by the audit committee.

- While the bulk of the discussion was tabled for executive session, Mr. Branick did provide some context regarding discounts that could be made available to members on equipment and merchandising. The vision included providing a potential equipment grant program, to help start and grow upcoming programs.

Executive session

The board entered executive session at 2.45 pm MT, ending the webinar.

- Mr. Branick presented the details of the information that had been circulated on membership benefits, for review and challenge by the board.
- The board discussed membership offering, and constituents to target to grow the sport locally and Nationally.

Action item

Mr. Wall was tasked with sending the MOU to Mr. King and the USHU.

Motion

A motion to approve the proposed reduction in membership was made, and was duly seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

Motion

A motion was made to approve refunding the additional paid dues to members who already paid their membership dues for 2023-2024, either as a refund, an additional year of membership, or a discount voucher for merchandise.

Action item

Mr. Branick was tasked with issuing a press release on the adjustment to the membership fee and possibilities for refunds to members who already paid their membership dues for 2023-2024.

- The board discussed scheduling an in-person meeting in early 2024.

Action item

Mr. Branick was tasked with leading the effort to schedule the in-person meeting.

- Ms. Nichols reiterated the need for engaging a fundraising committee to lead fundraising efforts from the outset of 2024.

Motion

A motion to adjourn was made at 3.40 pm MT, and was duly seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned.

Patrick Jalabert served as Secretary.