**BYLAWS of the INTERNAL ATHLETES’ COUNCIL**

**Effective Date:** May 14, 2024

**Introduction**

Pursuant to USA Luge Association (USLA) and U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) Bylaws, the USLA shall have an Internal Athletes’ Council (IAC). The purpose of the IAC is to provide athletes with a meaningful voice within the USLA’s governance structure. The IAC shall be governed by the Bylaws of the Internal Athletes’ Council.

**Section I. Mission**

The IAC exists to support the mission of the USLA, with a primary focus of ensuring productive and open communication between athletes and USLA staff and board members.

The IAC shall seek to achieve these objectives and support the mission of the USLA by:

* *maintaining positive relationships with USLA athletes, staff, and board members;*
* *representing an accurate and aggregated athlete voice to inspire and drive positive change;*
* *staying current with USOPC and USLA resources and enhancing athlete awareness of the resources available to them;*
* *protecting the interests of athletes and advocating for their interests;*
* *reporting to the Board on its activities;*
* *providing input to USLA policies, procedures, and/or other matters as requested by USLA committees, staff and Board;*
* *ensuring athlete representation by selecting athletes to participate on USLA committees; and,*
* *staying faithful to the Olympic ideals of excellence, friendship, and respect.*

**Section 2. IAC Membership**

**2.1. Number.** The IAC shall consist of seven (7) total members comprising of the following athlete representatives:

* USLA representative on the Team USA Athletes’ Commission
* USLA alternate representative on the Team USA Athletes’ Commission
* Athlete Representative to USLA Board of Directors
* Athlete Representative to USLA Board of Directors
* National Team Representative
* Junior National Team Representative
* Retired Athlete Representative

**2.2. Athlete Definition**

* 10 Year Athlete. An athlete who has competed at a high level in Luge within the last ten years. This status – high level - is defined as earning ≥ 1 FIL World Cup point.
* 10 Year+ Athlete. An athlete who has competed at a high level in Luge more than ten years ago. This status – high level - is defined as earning ≥ 1 FIL World Cup point.
* Actively Engaged Athlete. An athlete who has competed at certain high-level competitions in Luge, as defined as Olympic Games, World Championships, and/or an FIL sanctioned event in the past 24 months.

**2.3. Qualifications**

1. To be eligible to run for the election to the IAC, the following criteria must be met for each elected position:

* The USLA Representative on the Team USA Athletes’ Commission, USLA Alternative Representative on the Team USA Athletes’ Commission, one (1) Athlete Representative to USLA Board of Directors, and the National Team Representative must meet the criteria of a 10-Year Athlete.
* The Junior National Team Representative must meet the criteria of an Actively Engaged Athlete
* One (1) Athlete Representative to USLA Board of Directors and the Retired Athlete Representative must meet the criteria of either a 10-Year Athlete OR a 10-Year+ Athlete.

1. Athletes must be a citizen of the United States, at least 18 years of age by the date of the election, and be a member of the USLA as defined in the USLA Bylaws.

* An exception to the age requirement applies to the Junior National Team Representative. The representative may be under the age of 18, but must hold a spot on either the Junior National A or B team at the time of the election.

1. Athletes may not be paid employees of the USOPC, IOC, FIL, any other National Olympic or Paralympic Committee, and international or domestic NGB. The term “paid employee” shall mean anyone who is employed on a regular basis. This provision shall not apply to:

* individuals who are engaged on an occasional or temporary basis, which shall include, but not be limited to, coaching at a clinic or training camp, making a paid appearance for a sponsor, or working on a finite or discrete project, including contract work and internships; and/or,
* athletes who are still competing and receiving benefits from the USOPC or any NGB in his/her capacity as a competing athlete.

1. As per USOPC and USLA policy, athletes must be Safe Sport certified, have an up to date background check at the time of the election, and have signed and completed the Conflict of Interest Policy and Disclosure Form and signed the Code of Conduct.

*Note: an athlete desiring to serve in a paid position deemed impermissible, as noted above, may request relief if the position does not permit any perceived or real conflict of interest. The request for relief must be submitted pursuant to the Conflict of Interest Policy via the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form.*

## Section 3. Election/Selection Procedures

* 1. **Voter Eligibility.** In order to be eligible to vote in the IAC election, an individual must be eighteen (18) years of age or older by December 31 of the year in which the election is held, be a member of the USLA as defined in the USLA Bylaws, and meet the definition of a 10-Year Athlete.

**3.1.1.** **Exceptions.** In the case of the Junior National Team Representative election, the voting pool will be comprised of Junior National Team A and B members. As such, they do not need to satisfy the age requirement but must qualify as an Actively Engaged Athlete.

* 1. **Timing of Election.** The election shall take place after the scheduled conclusion of the Winter Olympic Games, but prior to May 1.
     1. **Games Postponement.** In the case of a postponement of the scheduled Winter Olympic Games, IAC members will continue their terms until the election after the conclusion of the Winter Olympic Games.
     2. **Off Cycle Election.** In the event of a vacancy on the IAC, the IAC may hold a special election as soon as practical, and no longer than ninety (90) days. If a vacancy comes open with less than six (6) months prior to a regularly scheduled election, the IAC may elect not to utilize the off-cycle election exception.
  2. **Special Election.** A special election will take place not longer than forty-five (45) days after the approval and ratification of the IAC Bylaws. The election will fill the vacant spots of one (1) Athlete Representative to the USLA Board of Directors, National Team Representative, Junior National Team Representative, and the Retired Athlete Representative.

**3.3.1. Initial Meeting.** A meeting will occur not longer than seven (7) days after members are elected to the IAC. In this meeting, a vote will occur to determine IAC leadership. The meeting will also begin the process of working with the Nominating & Governance Committees to identify and vet eligible athletes for all open athlete representative positions in USLA committees. Finally, the meeting will select a reasonable date soon to elect vetted athletes into all open athlete representative positions on USLA committees.

* 1. **Notice Procedures.** 
     1. **Notification.** USLA’s Nominating and Governance Committee, in coordination with the IAC, shall notify via email the USLA membership of an upcoming IAC election. The notice shall contain, at a minimum, the following:
* A statement acknowledging athletes who are eligible to vote;
* A clear, concise explanation of the process by which athletes are placed on the ballots. This information must be published to the pool of eligible athletes;
* An explanation of the manner by which elections are to be conducted, including but not limited to the manner of voting, identification of the voting pool, identification of the USLA representative responsible for the administration of the election, and a specific delineation of the time frame between nominations and elections; and
* A grievance process.
  + 1. **30-Day Advance Notice.** The date of the election and deadline for candidate applications shall be designated and published at least 30 days before the election.
    2. **Deadline Extension Provision.** The IAC may extend the candidate application deadline and have a commensurate delay in the election date if there are fewer nominees than there are seats up for election.
    3. **Content of Notification.** This notice shall contain the candidate application requirements and process, nomination process, deadline for candidate application, and the Bylaws of the IAC.
  1. **Candidate Application.** 
     1. **Application Materials.** The eligible athlete candidate shall prepare the following and submit to AthleteCommission@usaluge.org:

1. written statement of intent, which shall be typed and no more than two pages. It shall include the nominee’s desired position within the IAC; and,
2. Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form pursuant to the USLA Conflict of Interest Policy; and,
3. additional disclosures (i.e. felony convictions or periods of ineligibility due to violations of anti-doping codes, Athlete Classification Code, or SafeSport violations)
   * 1. **Deadline.** Candidate applications received later than 11:59 ET will not be considered.
        1. **Incomplete Applications.** Candidate applications that are not complete will not be reviewed. The designated USLA staff member will notify the candidate of the deficiency and the candidate will have the opportunity to resubmit their application. However, it is the candidate’s responsibility to ensure a complete application. A lack of timely notification to the candidate of an incomplete application shall not serve as a reason for an extended deadline.
        2. **Conflict of Interest Disclosure Forms.** Pursuant to the Conflict of Interest Policy, the IAC and the Nominating and Governance Committee shall work through the Ethics Committee to vet candidates’ conflict of interest disclosures to determine the eligibility of a candidate.
     2. **Nomination.** Any USLA member may nominate an eligible athlete for consideration. Nominations should be directed to AthleteCommission@usaluge.org and must include rationale for their nomination. An IAC representative (or USLA staff designee) will notify the nominee of their nomination and advise them of the candidate application requirements, deadline, and any other pertinent information. The nomination will only move forward for consideration if the nominee completes the candidate application acknowledging their interest in serving on the IAC.
   1. **Election/Selection Process.** Five (5) individuals shall be elected to the IAC as follows:
      1. Elections to the IAC shall be conducted in conjunction with the Nominations and Governance Committee, the Ethics Committee and with the staff liaison as appropriate to ensure a fair and equitable election, compliant with policies and procedures.
      2. In order to be eligible to vote in the IAC election, an individual must be eighteen (18) years of age or older by December 31 of the year in which the election is held, be a member of the USLA as defined in the USLA Bylaws, and meet the definition of a 10-Year Athlete; unless specified exceptions apply. These individuals shall be known collectively as the “voting pool” or as “eligible voters”.
      3. The categories shall be as follows:

* Athlete Representative to the USLA Board of Directors
* Athlete Representative to the USLA Board of Directors
* National Team Representative
* Junior National Team Representative
* Retired Athlete Representative
  + 1. The top candidate who receives the highest number of votes in each category shall be elected.
    2. All eligible voters may vote for one (1) candidate in each of the categories, except for the Junior National Team Representative.

**3.6.5.1.** The Junior National Team Representative will be voted on by the pool of eligible voters on the Junior National A and B team.

* + 1. Ballot Counting Procedures: The counting of the ballots shall be conducted by the USLA IAC Staff Liaison (or USLA staff designee) and reviewed by a member of the IAC.
    2. Tie-breaking Procedures: Approval Voting Method Tie-Breaker:
       1. In the event a tie between two (2) or more candidates occurs for a position in which a definitive winner is required, and as a result of the tie a definitive winner for that position cannot be determined, a tie-breaking ballot shall be used.
       2. USLA IAC Staff Liaison shall create a ballot containing the slate of candidates affected by the tie.
       3. The voting procedure for the tie-breaker shall comply with the Approval Voting Method.
       4. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected. In the event more than one (1) position remains vacant, prior to the tiebreaker, the candidates with the highest point totals shall be elected to fill each of the remaining positions.
       5. In the event a tie between candidates continues, any candidate receiving fewer votes than the tied candidates shall be eliminated.
       6. The tie-breaking process shall continue for as many rounds as are necessary for the remaining position(s) to be filled.
  1. The sixth and seventh positions on the Internal Athletes’ Council shall be filled by the USLA representative and alternate representative to the Team USA Athletes’ Commission elected pursuant to the Bylaws of the Team USA Athletes’ Commission.

Eligibility requirements for the Team USA Athletes’ Commission can be found in the Bylaws of the Team USA Athletes’ Commission.

## Section 4. Terms, Term Limits and Attendance

## 4.1. Term

**4.1.1.** The term for newly elected IAC members will begin on May 1 following the election. During the period between the outcome of the election and May 1, newly elected IAC members may attend IAC Council meetings as ex-officio, non-voting members.

**4.1.2.** The term for members of the IAC shall be four (4) years with the exception of the Junior National Team Representative, which shall be two (2) years.

**4.1.2.1** The term for the members of the IAC after the first special election shall be until the normal election timeframe of after the upcoming Olympic Winter Games.

**4.1.3.** A member shall remain on the IAC until the member’s successor is elected and qualified, or until the member’s earlier resignation, removal, incapacity, circumstance that precludes service, or death.

## 4.2. Term Limits

**4.2.1** No IAC member shall serve more than three (3) consecutive terms in a single position.

**4.2.2** The Junior National Team Representative may not serve more than one term in the Junior National Team Representative role.

**4.3.3** When an IAC member is elected to fill a vacancy because of the resignation, removal, incapacity, disability that precludes service, or death of a USLA Internal Athlete’s Council member, and the remaining term is for two (2) or more years, such term shall constitute a full term. Thus, if the vacancy being filled is for two (2) or more years, following completion of the filled vacancy term, the IAC member may serve one additional four (4) year term. If the vacancy being filled is for less than two (2) years, the term shall not be a full term and the IAC member shall be able to serve two (3) additional four (4) year terms.

**4.3.3.1** The term for members of the initial IAC after the special election, and before the first normal election following the Winter Olympic Games, shall not count towards any term limits.

**4.3. Attendance**

**4.3.1.** **Attendance Requirement.** Members of the IAC shall be expected to attend all regularly scheduled Council meetings. Members shall be required to attend no less than one-half of all regularly scheduled Council meetings during any twelve-month period. Should an IAC member attend less than one-half of scheduled IAC meetings during a twelve-month period, the IAC may vote the member off of the IAC by a majority vote.

**4.3.2.** **Resignation and Removal.**

A member’s position on the Council shall be declared vacant upon the member’s resignation, removal, incapacity, or death. Any member may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chair, except the Chair’s resignation shall be given to the USLA CEO. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, and unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

If a member fails to attend one-half of the regularly scheduled Council meetings during any twelve-month period, unless the member is able to demonstrate to the other members of the Council that the presence of exigent circumstances caused and excused their absences, the member may be removed by the Council by an affirmative vote of a majority of the IAC, not including the voting power of the absent member.

Any member of the Council may also be removed for cause after being provided an opportunity to be heard by the Council and upon the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the total voting power of the IAC, excluding the voting power of the member in question. No member shall be subject to removal based on how they vote as a member of the IAC.

**Section 5. Leadership of the IAC**

## 5.1. Leadership Roles.

## 5.1.1. Chair. The role and responsibilities of the Chair are as follows:

## Create the agenda and facilitate all IAC meetings;

## Preside over council meetings, ensuring that all IAC members are afforded the opportunity to participate in IAC deliberations; and,

## Nominate for consideration by the IAC, athlete appointees to USLA committees; ensuring appropriate vetting through the Nominating and Governance Committee and the Ethics Committee;

## 5.1.2. Vice Chair. The role and responsibilities of the Vice Chair are as follows:

## Preside over council meetings in the absence of the Chair;

## Assume the position of Chair in the case of death, resignation, suspension or removal of the Chair.

## 5.1.3. Secretary. The role and responsibilities of the Secretary are as follows:

## Take the meeting minutes for each IAC meeting. Minutes shall include the following:

## Roll call and meeting attendance.

## Request for motions, seconds, and results of votes.

## Notations when a member or the staff liaison recuses themselves from the meeting for any reason and specifically due to a real or potential conflict of interest. A record of the call by the IAC Chair for declaration of conflicts at the beginning of each meeting must also be notated.

## An overview of discussions and of information provided to the IAC in the course of its deliberations.

## Present the meeting minutes to the IAC for vote at the subsequent meeting.

## 5.1.4. Staff Liaison. In consultation with the IAC Chair, the USLA CEO shall appoint a member of staff to be the staff liaison to the IAC. The staff liaison is not to be considered a member of the IAC nor shall the staff liaison hold a vote.

## The staff liaison shall provide administrative support to the IAC, including but not limited to the following:

## Advise the IAC in relation to any applicable policy, procedure, and/or Bylaw requirement; and

## Support the fair and equitable election and selection of IAC membership by ensuring the administrative aspects of the election and selection procedures.

## 5.2. Selection of Leadership.

## 5.2.1. Majority Vote. All leadership positions on the IAC shall be elected from its membership, by a majority vote.

## 5.2.2. Timing. The first meeting of each quadrennial should occur not longer than thirty (30) days following the IAC elections after the Winter Olympic Games. In the first meeting following the Winter Olympic Games, the IAC will hold an internal election to determine IAC leadership.

## 5.2.3 Eligibility. Athletes who are elected into the Junior National Team representative role are not eligible to serve in IAC leadership positions. Junior National Team representatives are eligible to vote on leadership positions.

**5.3. Term and Term Limits of Leadership.**

## The leaders of the IAC may serve in their elected role for as long as they are eligible to serve as a member of the IAC.

## Individuals in leadership positions shall hold office until a successor is elected or until their resignation, removal, incapacity, or death. Individuals resigning from their leadership positions may remain as a member of the IAC.

## Section 6. USLA Board of Directors

**6.1.** **Number.** Per the USLA Bylaws, Athlete Representation on the USLA Board of Directors shall consist of four (4) Athlete Directors, constituted as follows:

* USLA representative on the Team USA Athletes’ Commission
* USLA alternative representative on the Team USA Athletes’ Commission
* Two (2) athlete representatives from the IAC elected specifically to serve on the USLA Board of Directors

**6.2. Qualification.** Athletes shall meet the qualification requirements for Board membership.

At least 20% of board-voting members must be 10-year athlete representatives. The remaining athlete representatives that bring the total athlete representation to 33.3% must be either 10-year or 10-year+ athlete representatives.

**6.3.** **Role and Responsibilities.** The function of the Board and therefore the roles and responsibilities of the athlete representative to the Board of Directors shall be as promulgated in the USLA Bylaws.

**6.4. Tenure and Term Limits.** The tenure and term limits of athlete representatives shall be as promulgated in the USLA Bylaws.

**6.5. Election/Selection.**

* The USLA representative on the Team USA Athletes’ Commission shall be elected per the Team USA Athletes’ Commission Bylaws.
* The two (2) additional USLA Board of Director representatives will be selected based on the IAC election results as described in the IAC bylaws.

**6.6. Vacancy**. In the event of a vacancy on the Board, the next highest vote receiver in the same category from the election in which the athlete was elected will assume the vacant position only if the election was held within six months of the vacancy. If the vacancy occurs after the athlete has served for six months or longer, an Off Cycle Election will be held.

**Section 7. USLA Committees**

**7.1 Designated & Standing Committees.** Per USOPC bylaws, athlete representatives will equal at least 33.3% of all USLA Designated & Standing Committees. The committees are as defined by the USLA bylaws.

**7.1.1 Composition & Eligibility.** At least half of the athlete representatives must be 10-Year Athlete representatives. The remainder must be either 10-Year or 10-Year+ representatives.

**7.1.2 Selection.** In conjunction with the Nominating and Governance Committee, the IAC will develop a list of eligible candidates to serve as the Athlete Representative for any open Designated & Standing Committee positions.

Following the vetting process, members of the IAC will then vote on which athlete shall fill the open Athlete Representative position.

The majority vote wins. If there is a tie, the IAC will hold a subsequent vote from the list of athletes with a tied vote.

If more than one position is open on a committee, a separate vote will be held for each position.

**7.2 Other Committees.** Per USOPC Bylaws, Actively Engaged Athlete representatives must equal at least 33.3% of all Other USLA Committees.

**7.2.1 Composition & Eligibility.** Athlete representatives on Other Committees can be either 10-Year Athletes, 10-Year+ Athletes and/or Actively Engaged Athletes.

**7.2.2 Selection**. In conjunction with the Nominating and Governance Committee, the IAC will develop a list of eligible candidates to serve as the Athlete Representative for any open other Committee positions.

Following the vetting process, members of the IAC will then vote on which athlete shall fill the open Athlete Representative position.

The majority vote wins. If there is a tie, the IAC will hold a subsequent vote from the list of athletes with a tied vote.

If more than one position is open on a committee, a separate vote will be held for each position.

## Section 8. Procedures

The USLA Internal Athletes’ Council shall establish procedures for conducting its business and affairs. Such procedures shall be published and available on the USLA website.

The Chair of the IAC will be responsible for arranging at least three (3) mandatory meetings. When appropriate, IAC members may attend the meetings via teleconference.

The 1st IAC meeting will be held in the Post-Season, 2nd meeting will be held in the Mid-Summer, and the 3rd meeting will be held in the Pre-Season.

Emergency meetings may be held at any time to address important athlete issues as determined by the IAC. These issues may include certain requests from the USLA CEO.

Ordinarily, all IAC meetings shall be open to members, and where appropriate, non-members. However, in the event the IAC Chair, with the consent of a majority of the IAC members in attendance, deems it appropriate to (a) exclude non-members at an open meeting for any reason, then the USLA Athletes’ Advisory Council Chair declares the meeting closed; or (b) convene.

During the IAC meeting, the IAC Secretary will be responsible for keeping track of the meeting minutes and submitting those minutes to the USLA management to be posted on the USLA website in a timely manner.

## Section 9. Compensation

Per USLA Bylaws, the IAC members shall not receive compensation for their service. USLA shall pay for the reasonable expenses of all members of the IAC to attend IAC meetings. In addition, USLA shall pay for the reasonable expenses of the four (4) athlete Board Directors to attend USLA Board of Director meetings.

## Section 10. Conflict of Interest

Athlete representatives are subject to the USLA Conflict of Interest Policy. This policy calls for an annual disclosure, a disclosure in the event of a material change in circumstance, and/or as new conflicts arise.

Pursuant to the USLA Bylaws and USLA Conflict of Interest Policy, at the start of each IAC meeting, members must declare conflicts with any anticipated agenda item. The call for disclosures and any such disclosure must be recorded in the minutes along with the associated recusal from the applicable agenda item.

The IAC identifies compliance with this Policy as imperative to earning and retaining the trust of the athlete community.

**Section 11. Grievance Procedures**

A grievance pertaining to these Bylaws shall be filed as an administrative grievance pursuant to the USLA Grievance Procedure Policy.

**Section 12. Bylaw Review**

The IAC shall review these Bylaws annually and report to the Board any suggested changes or updates. The IAC may also suggest changes or updates outside of the scope of an annual review should the need arise.

The Board may consider changes to these Bylaws outside of recommendations from the IAC but must consult directly with the IAC during the review process and prior to enacting any revisions.

*Review History*

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| Change | Reviewed Led By | Date of Enabling Action | Approved By | Date of Enabling Action |
| Approval | IAC |  | BOD |  |
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| Next Scheduled Review: | | | | |