

Western Rugby Union
Winter Meeting of the Board of Directors
Draft--Draft--Draft—Minutes—Draft—Draft—Draft
Friday 8 February 2008
Courtyard by Marriott
San Diego, CA

Welcome

West President, Bill Sexton, called the meeting to order at 8:35 A.M. and welcomed all attendees. He gave a brief summary of the plan for the day and the weekend and proceeded with the meeting.

Roll Call and Introduction of Guests

Secretary Dan Ward conducted a roll call.

Members of the West Board of Directors:

Bill Sexton (President and Congress Representative), Paul Hoskins (Vice-President), David McPhail (Treasurer), Dan Ward (Secretary and President, Missouri), Alan Sharpley (Congress Representative), John McBride (Congress Representative), David Jenkins (President, Texas), Kurt Torkleson (President, Heart of America), Mike Mariani (President, Rio Grande), Jeff Coffman (President, Great Plains), Bob Lesnanski (Representative, Eastern Rockies).

Absent:

Ozark Representative

Guests:

Bill Haffner (Administrator, WRFU), Joe Zevin (Treasurer, Western Referees), Greg Smith (Past President, Rio Grande), Ron Laszewski (WRFU Senior Men's Coach), John Wolf (WRFU Senior Men's Manager), Dax Junker (High School Committee/SBRO Member and Green County High Schools).

Proxies held:

None

Review and Approval of Agenda

The agenda was presented, reviewed and accepted, with the following notations from Sexton:

- 1) The Senior Men's 2007 Report, 2008 Plan and Budget Request will be combined with the Revisions to the West Senior Men's All-Star Program.
- 2) There will be a review of the expectations of the Ozark Union to regain voting status.
- 3) Because of their weekend schedules, Ed Todd's and Nigel Melville's presentations to the meeting will be included when they are available to the meeting.

Motion to accept the agenda: Daniel Ward (Missouri); Second: John McBride (Congress Representative);
Result: Approved by voice vote.

Review and Approval of July 2007 St. Louis Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting which, were distributed by e-mail, were reviewed.

Western Referee Representative, Joe Zevin, indicated that West Referee Chair, Calum Pender wished to change sentence 2 in paragraph 3 of page 3 of the minutes to the following: (“26 were “C1” grade referees of which ~~one half~~ 50% won’t be promoted above this level.”)

There was also a note by West Administrator, Bill Haffner, that the July Referee report had no note on how to increase the number of referees in the West.

Motion to accept: Daniel Ward (Missouri); Second: Kurt Torkleson (Heart of America); Result: Meeting agenda approved by voice vote.

Year End 2007 Financial Reports

The 2007 financial reports were distributed, via e-mail, prior to the meeting for review. Notes presented by West Treasurer, David McPhail included:

- 1) The West has been spending more each year than it has been taking in. We have been using \$20,000-\$30,000 per year from our cash reserves since 2003-2004 to balance the budget. This has caused our cash reserves to go from \$100,000-\$120,000 in that year to about \$60,000 now.
- 2) The budget for Competitions has been doubling every year. Our largest budget line item has been our All-Star programs at >\$42,000 a year. Our second largest line item has been the referee budget at >\$29,000 in 2007.
- 3) There is a need for more income. Our budget has gone from \$100,000 per year in 2003 to almost \$130,000 per year in 2007. During this time there has been no increase in dues in the West and our membership numbers have remained fairly stagnate.

President Sexton commended Mr. McPhail on the outstanding job that he does with the West finances and stated that the West does things correctly and others could take a lesson from the way things are done here.

Motion to accept: Bill Sexton (President); Second: Dave Jenkins (President, Texas); Result: Report accepted by voice vote.

Western Referee Association Report

The Western Referees Association was represented at the meeting by their Treasurer, Joe Zevin.

2007 Report and Financial Report- Western Referee Association Treasurer Zevin reviewed the 2007 report distributed by Western Association Chairman, Calum Pender, via e-mail prior to the meeting. There were several outstanding questions raised by this report which included:

- 1) There seemed to be only 10 referees CIPPed with the West. There is a need to make sure that all referees are CIPPed. There may be multiple registrations (coach, referee, other) that needs to be addressed.
- 2) The revision of the West/Referee Operating Agreement was in West Referee Chairman Pender’s hands and needed to be followed up on.

- 3) A referee/match scheduling program (assign by Web) was being used by Texas and there seemed to be some question of making these tools available to all if they were successful.
- 4) There is a need to know the total number of referees in the West and the total number of matches that they were doing.
- 5) There needs to be a contact list of all referees who referee at the West level or above produced.
- 6) A Referee Education Officer plan needs to be presented by the Western Referees Association and sent to the West Secretary for distribution.
- 7) A request was made to all LAU's to submit their referee budgets for comparison.

USA Rugby Referee Development Programs

Ed Todd, Director of Referee Development, made a presentation to the Board about USA development programs. This was a Power Point presentation that was distributed prior to the meeting and reviewed with commentary. Some highlighted points:

- 1) When this program was started in 2006, the current development program was in bad shape.
- 2) We are getting referees at a younger age.
- 3) Recruiting and retention of referees is an LAU/TU issue not a referee issue.
- 4) There will be an establishment of a national touch judge panel.
- 5) There is a USA Referee Education Officer who will work with TU (7) REO's who will in turn work with Local Referee organizations.

Matters Arising from the St. Louis Meeting

Review of WRA/West Agreement-President Sexton will get together with Referee Association Chairman, Calum Pender, to finalize. No deadline given.

Data Management-Matt Poteraj was to seek advice from an outside 3rd party for data management. No information is currently available as Mr. Poteraj is currently AWOL. Jeff Coffman (President, Great Plains) will now take the lead on this issue and will inform the West Executive Committee on his findings by the Summer 2008 meeting.

Status of Ozark/HOA Meetings-Kurt Torkleson, Heart of America President, has tried to contact the Ozark representative and has yet to receive return contact. Some of the Ozark clubs have joined other LAU's:

- Tulsa to the Heart of America
- Little Rock (men) to the South
- The Crusaders, a new Div III men's club from Oklahoma, has joined the Texas DIII League.

- There are still five clubs in the Ozark that need to affiliate with an operating LAU. They are:
 - OU men and women
 - OSU men and women
 - Little Rock women
- The high school program in Green Country (i.e., northeast Oklahoma) will remain independent of an LAU structure.
- There is a need to work with the USA office to make sure that the CIPP's from these clubs reflect the proper LAU affiliation.

Enhancement of Women's Rugby within the West- The issues outlined in the appendices from the Summer 2007 meeting still need to be addressed. What is the West to do to raise the level of Women's rugby within the West territory?

A task force is to be put into place to look at the women's game in the West and to act on the items as noted in the appendices. KJ Abel-Ruch was recommended as chair. No deadline was given for a report.

Status of High School Programs within the West- A list of current high school programs by LAU's within the West was distributed via e-mail prior to the meeting. All LAU's were requested to review the list and to keep the West informed on any and all updates needed. It was noted that all SBRO's need to be members of their current LAU's and the West. Further, continuing questions arose, without answers, about what happens when high schools within LAU's go to the SBRO format. Will some LAU's have too few clubs to continue to be a viable LAU?

Remarks from Nigel Melville, CEO USA Rugby

Nigel Melville, CEO of USA Rugby, attended the meeting as a guest to present to the BOD a summary of what was going on in his first year with USA Rugby. Highlights:

- 1) Americans have a great passion for the sport. This is primarily due to the hard work that needs to be done at all levels to make the game go.
- 2) Communication is paramount to make things work. Communication needs to be LAU to LAU, TU to LAU and USA to everyone.
- 3) USA is planning a "Rugby for All" program to promote different "brands" of rugby. Get in at 6 and participate until ??? These "brands include:
 - a. Touch/flag rugby
 - b. 7's rugby
 - c. 10's rugby (middle school)
 - d. 15's rugby
- 4) There is a need to change the visual picture of rugby from the current stereotype to a good vision for the new generations coming into the game to help move forward.

- 5) Plan to professionalize the USA 7's team to make it an IRB core team in 2008-09.
- 6) Organize an America's tournament (Canada, USA, Chile, Uruguay and Argentina "A") to help with player development and increased matches.
- 7) The USA U-20, 19, 18 and 17 programs are improving.
- 8) There are more sponsorships to come on board with USA Rugby in the future. If we "over deliver" on our end, these are partners that we can grow with and get An even bigger return in the future.

Other Old Business

These items are incorporated with President Sextons State of the West address.

Reports

State of the Western Rugby Union-Points addressed in President Sexton's assessment of the WRFU:

- 1) As previously announced, Bill Haffner will not be retiring from rugby. Bill will remain working with the West and have more direct contact with USA Rugby. He will be installing some procedural items within the West to "streamline" our operations. He will be converting his title to more of a "Chief Operating Officer" and will receive a reduced stipend, at his request.
- 2) USA Rugby will continue to collect West dues along with CIPP fees.
- 3) Appeals:
 - a. The West's Glendale decision was overturned by USA Appellate Panel and the West will file an appeal and/or file a grievance. This was due to a USA process error in which the appeal by Glendale should have first gone to the USA Disciplinary Committee and not the Appellate Panel.
 - b. The West's decision regarding UNL was upheld, however, showing a glaring inconsistency in USA's decision making process.
 - c. The decision involving Wyoming and UNM women was appealed by Wyoming to USA and the ruling was reversed.
 - d. Because of the number of appeals and reversals, the West will be reviewing the text of our own procedures in our disciplinary process.

- 4) LAU's within the West have clubs that are not in good standing. These club's names need to be forwarded to the West to publish on the West web site. LAU's are responsible for competitions within their area. They need to manage these and make the results known. There will be a review of the LAU's between Feb 22 and March 22 that will include website review among other criteria to determine which LAU's are doing their job. Non-compliance may mean that the LAU will lose competition spots.
- 5) All-Star coaches have been appointed as follows:
 - a. Men's Senior-Ron Laszewski
 - b. Women's Senior-Mark Bullock
 - c. U-23 Women-Angie Cranmore
 - d. Collegiate Men-Rich Cortez
 - e. Men's 7's-Sean Knight
 - f. Women's 7's-In process of naming
- 6) CYR has not been registered with the West for the past 2 years even though USA requires that SBRO's belong to their local and territorial Unions. If CYR enroll with the West, they will be O.K. and be available for grants to CYR clubs and individual members.

All-Star Team Reports

Senior Men's Squad 2007 report, 208 Plan and Budget Request and Revisions to West Senior Men's All-Star Program- A report was submitted by e-mail prior to the meeting. President Sexton gave thanks to coach Ron Laszewski and manager John Wolf for the job they did this year given the fact that they had almost no lead time due to the late withdrawal of the previous coach.

Motion to accept: Bill Sexton (President); Second: Alan Sharpley (Congress representative);
Result: Approved by voice vote.

Senior Women's Squad 2008 Plan and Budget Request- No report was provided by the meeting date and President Sexton indicated that he would get the report and forward to the BOD.

Collegiate Men's Squad 2008 Plan and Budget Request- The report was submitted by e-mail prior to the meeting.

Motion to accept: Bob Lesnanski (Representative, Eastern Rockies); Second: Bill Sexton (President); Result: Approved by voice vote.

Women's U-23 Squad 2008 Plan and Budget Request- No report was submitted by the meeting date.

Women's 7's Squad 2007 Report, 2008 Plan and Budget Request- No report was submitted by the meeting date.

Men's 7's Squad 2007 Report, 2008 Plan and Budget Request- The report was submitted by e-mail prior to the meeting.

Motion to accept: Kurt Torkleson (President, Heart of America); Second: Daniel Ward (Secretary); Result: Approved by voice vote.

Competition Analysis

Final 2007 Results
2008 Calendar
Seeding and Venues for 2008 Events
Performance of West Teams at USA Events
Status of Western Leagues

All reports were distributed by email prior to the meeting or are available on the West web site.

USA Competition Report

There was a men's club competitions' meeting for Div I, II and II in August in Austin. Recommendations from the meeting which were sent to the Rugby Committee for review were:

- 1) Expand Div III playoffs to 16 teams.
- 2) Move all clubs competitions to a common USA cycle,
- 3) Modify rules to allow more multiple division competition teams.
- 4) Mandatory promotion from Div III to Div II and Div II to Div I. Clubs could petition 1 time to stay down.
- 5) Formation of an ad hoc committee to investigate:
 - a) Organization of Div II and Div III into Competitive Regions
 - b) Identify specific criteria for DI teams
 - c) Integrate DI and RSL to 1 league with promotion and relegation
- 6) A competition review will be held at the conclusion of the 2008 season. It will be led by Dan Payne and Alan Sharply and look at revamping the club rugby competitions.

Update on the West Grant Program

This report was presented FYI with the information available on the West web site.

Western Discipline Report

During the 2007 season the number of yellow cards issued in West Leagues and championships was 54. During this same period the number of red cards issued was 18.

Glendale RFC - This issue was addressed in the State of the West.

Rio Grande RFU / El Paso U-19 - The West agrees with the decision handed down on this issue.

Open Fines

This was presented FYI. All fines are posted on the West web site.

Membership Analysis

This information was distributed prior to the meeting by e-mail and was presented FYI.

New Business

Meeting Dates and Venues- Future meeting dates and venues are as follows:

- Summer 2008 - August 2-3 in Glendale, CO
- Winter 2009 - February in San Diego w/USA 7's
- Summer 2009 – To be announced

Update on Staffing of Men's and Women's Seven's Squads- This information was included in the State of the West

Revised Hosting Documentation- This information was distributed prior to the meeting by e-mail and is available on the West web site.

Motion to approve: Jeff Coffman (President, Great Plains); Second: David Jenkins (President, Texas); Result: Approved by voice vote.

Revised League Regulations- This issue was tabled for later consideration.

New College Teams- Discussion was held on the formation of new college clubs in LAU's. Rio Grande indicated that there were no new teams on the horizon. Missouri said that there was a group trying to start men's and women's teams at Lindenwood University in St. Charles. Heart of America reported that there were no players and/or coaching available for the formation of new clubs. Texas said that they sent in a report and wondered what the West would/could do to help in the formation of new clubs.

Draft Merged DII Men's Club League-HOA and MO- Presidents Torkleson (HOA) and Ward (MO) will work with Mr. Haffner to determine league teams/plans and schedule.

Update on State based Rugby Organizations- A report was sent by Rick Marshall, Chair of the SBRO Committee by e-mail prior to the meeting outlining a proposal for dues restructuring. This is not the complete report that the West had asked and given direction for.

Motion to table further discussion: Bill Sexton (President); Second: Jeff Coffman (President, Great Plains); Result: Passed by voice vote.

What Time Is It? (presentation by Bill Haffner) - It was pointed out that the West is in the business to implement strategic plans. There are too many things that slide by for too long of a period of time and not get done. We need to "Do It Right!". We need to figure out the way to get the right stuff done instead of making excuses why we can't get it done. Let's find solutions.

Review and Recommendations of West Discipline Procedures- Kurt Torkleson (President, Heart of America) and Bill Haffner will work on updating the rules and procedures of the West removing exceptions. A draft will be available by March.

Elections- Elections proceeded as follows:

President:

Nominations: Bill Sexton by David McPhail (Treasurer); Second: David Jenkins (President, Texas)

Result: Elected by acclimation

Vice-President:

Nomination: Paul Hoskins by Dan Ward (Secretary); Second: Bob Lesnanski (Representative, Eastern Rockies)

Nomination: Alan Sharpley by David Jenkins (President, Texas); Second: David McPhail (Treasurer)

Result: Alan Sharpley elected

Treasurer:

Nomination: David McPhail by Dan Ward (Secretary); Second: Kurt Torkleson (President, Heart of America)

Result: Elected by acclimation

Secretary:

Nomination: Dan Ward by Kurt Torkleson (President, HOA); Second: John McBride (Congress representative)

Result: Elected by acclimation

Congress Representatives:

Nomination: John McBride by David Jenkins (President, Texas); Second: Bob Lesnanski (Representative, Eastern Rockies)

Nomination: Bill Sexton by Kurt Torkleson (President, HOA); Second: Alan Sharpley (Congress Representative)
Result: Both nominees elected by acclamation

The BOD extended their thanks to outgoing Vice-President, Paul Hoskins for his years of service. The BOD also saluted Treasurer David McPhail as a “National (rugby) Treasure(r)”

Addition of West U-19/U-20 Women’s Squads - Discussion was held on the formation of the above mentioned squads. It was decided that the organization of these would be a VP/EC issue to start the planning, identify and find the staff and decide who and when to play.

Women’s DII Club Championships -This proposal was put out as a possible was to improve the West DII structure and possibly improve the West DI tournament by providing more teams through promotion to DI. The fall seemed the best time to play and organization of a league would need to happen. What would be the merits of the league/competition and would it be productive? This topic will be assigned to the Women’s Task Force.

Revised Western Governance- This item, for reorganization of the West structure, was distributed prior to the meeting by e-mail and was presented FYI.

Referee Appointments Women’s DI League- This item was presented by the Sabres RFC from St. Louis and was covered in the Referees Association report.

Open Receivables from UNM Men- An inquiry has been sent to UNM men. Presented FYI.

2008 Proposed Budget

An email sent out prior to the meeting by West Treasurer, David McPhail, detailed the income and revenue projections for the 2008 fiscal year (through August 31, 2008). A possible shortfall was discussed and solutions proposed for balancing the budget.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Ward
Secretary