



**U.S. Biathlon Association, Board of Directors Meeting  
9:00 A.M. April 13, 2021  
Meeting Minutes, Submitted by Art Stegen, Secretary**

**I. Call to Order**

Bill Alfond opened the Zoom virtual meeting at 10:00 A.M. with a video presentation of the 2020-21 season's highlights.

**II. Roll Call**

Members of the Board of Directors joining the online video meeting were: Bill Alfond, Bob Hall, Art Stegen, Phyllis Jalbert, Hap Brakeley, Sarah Konrad, Haley Stewart, Susan Miller, Brian Noyes, Dexter Payne, Jerry Baltzell, and Sean Doherty, Kelly Kjorlien, and Jake Brown. Also joining were CEO/President Max Cobb, Sara Studebaker-Hall, Lowell Bailey, Tim Burke, Preston Noon, Danika Frisbie, and Tom Kelly. Dr. Brett Thoresdahl joined the meeting later. The members online represented a quorum.

**III. Opening Remarks**

Bill Alfond welcomed the members and thanked them for joining the meeting. In his opening remarks he highlighted the good communication, media exposure and streaming. He recognized Tom Kelly for his efforts. He praised the great team effort that saw the team participate in many events without any exposure to the Covid virus. Bob Hall thanked the Finance Committee for their previous day's meeting and the good progress the staff had made. He asked for approval of the previous meeting's minutes and was approved. With thanks to Max Cobb for his outstanding efforts he asked that he give the Chairman's report.

**IV. Chairman's Report**

Max began his report by giving an update on USOPC issues and said all indications are that the Tokyo games will be happening and that it would be financially helpful. He mentioned the discussion of a potential boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in China and that the USOPC is working towards the opposite of that outcome. The USOPC is placing greater focus on success at the 2026 and 2030 Winter Games and with long term success and a focus on development towards that end. He told the members that the USOPC has great respect for Lowell Bailey and Tim Burke in their roles with the Association.

Max continued by expressing that the previous 13 months were difficult and stressful, with straining demands due to the compromised season and impact of the pandemic. The highest priority was to protect the athletes' safety and that those efforts were successful without any infections. Great hardships and challenges faced the staff and programing requirements, and he thanked the staff for their compliance and efforts. Safety protocols remain a priority and in place with athlete vaccinations taking place

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with the hope that upcoming events will return to normal. Max asked Lowell to give an update to the members.

Lowell began his presentation with a review of the season's performance highlights. The staff were able to provide full rosters to all events and amid all the disruptions and distractions the season was quite successful with medals at the World Cup and break-out performances for Jake Brown at the World Championships. He highlighted the fact that the U.S. was one of the few teams to complete the World Season without a positive Covid test. He thanked Dr. Brett Toresdahl for implementing health guidelines that made this possible.

Lowell made special mention that full rosters of athletes competed in the reduced IBU Cup events and had additional success with podium performances. The upcoming training for the Olympic season will include a shooting training camp at Lake Placid, on-snow ski training at Bend, OR and focused group-training in Lake Placid for June and July. A longer 4-week training camp will take place in Europe with trials in October for the first World Cup positions that are still to be determined. The team will continue to work with Matt Emmons in their preparation for Beijing with the philosophy of "focus on things that work and improve them." There will also be continued work on altitude preparation, increased ski and wax testing. An assistant National team coach will also be hired.

Tim Burke then gave his report on the World Youth/Junior Biathlon Championships which included 16 athletes who came from across the country, from Maine to Alaska and achieved excellent 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> places in the men's relays. There were no positive Covid tests and everyone is looking forward to normalcy. The National Junior team is growing with activity several key locations. He highlighted the Crosscut program in Montana and the Anchorage Biathlon Club in Alaska that has hired former National team coach Jean Paquet. The need based scholarship program supported 12 athletes with a total of \$28,000.

Danika Frisbie continued by indicating that the year's priority was supporting the National Team with more than 500 Covid tests and an additional 300 at home locations. Hope remains that normal domestic competitions and regional events can return and the postponed collaboration with Canada can resume. The Kids/Youth project is expected to return, and a virtual Coaches conference is planned for May 19-21.

Sara Studebaker Hall gave an operations update saying that there was positive financial movement with improved numbers of donors and membership numbers. A membership survey had a 19% response rate and indicated members were mostly satisfied in a difficult year. She asked Tom Kelly to comment to which he mentioned the podcasts 12<sup>th</sup> episode was now ready and that the idea to present a platform to "tell the story" is seeing a lot of traffic. NBC's Peacock broadcasting and social media were seeing increased interest. Hap Brakeley added that there is a need to target influencers, promote story lines and organic connections. Also, to pursue life-style angles and military connections.

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Max ended his report with an IBU update and indicated that it was and challenging but successful season for the IBU as well. But that it had seen increased television audiences with no reduction in revenue. IBU remains financially strong with €70 million in reserve and that 2022-23 will see increased revenue and increased support. He mentioned that the fluorocarbon ban is still in progress and may be possibly ready for the 2021-22 or 2022-23 season.

### **V. Committee Reports**

Lowell Bailey gave the ICC report indicating its National team nominations which were provided in the documentation for the meeting. There were no discretionary decisions and objective criteria was followed. Two women had achieved pre-qualified status for the Olympic Games with two remaining and will be decided at the 2022 World Cups and January 2022 races. He asked for a motion to approve the ICC nominations and teams and the motion was approved.

Bob Hall reported that 6 new members had joined the Foundation and that all present members renewed their membership.

Hap Brakeley reported that all existing sponsors will continue and a new sponsor for \$50,000 will do a TV series to explain how winter athletes train. He told the members that targets for additional sponsorships and conversations are taking place.

Brian Noyes reviewed the financial status to date. He explained that the revenue side is likely to exceed the budget and that an anticipated increase of \$80,000 will be taken by expenses. He suggests establishing a 5% over-budget expense in preparation for emergencies. The PPC funds were received and will be used to pay down debt.

Susan Miller indicated that the audit report had been received and highlighted good and steady progress towards healthy financial status. Management costs were at 15% and there continues a heavy reliance on the IBU and USOPC funding. PPC loans are forgivable and the audit indicated that risk of reliance on the IBU and USOPC is not a big concern since the sources are consistent. A written report will be provided to the members.

Sara Studebaker Hall updated the members on the efforts of the By-Laws Review with the working group having proposed changes that will be up for review and approval by the next BOD meeting in June. The proposed changes are in response to new USOPC and Congressional requirements. The main points are the removal of the memberships process, clarification of quorum, increasing the athlete representation to 33%, size of the Board of Directors, the Election of officers by the Board of Directors rather than the membership, and committee updates. The full document with highlighted suggested changes was provided to the members for their review and comments.

### **VI. Athletes' Report**

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Haley Stewart and Sean Doherty were joined by Kelly Kjorlien and Jake Brown who are newly elected as Athlete Representatives. The ability to extend the pool of athletes provided a greater selection of potential candidates for the election. Turnout for the election by the athletes was 81%. Sean explained the Athletes Agreement was working towards compliance with the USOPC and with those refinements they hope to have an effective agreement soon.

Dexter Payne gave a report on the Governance/Bylaws committee by noting that new legislation will require changes in the Bylaws as Sara Studebaker-Hall had previously mentioned. Among those are increasing athlete representation on the Board of Directors and all committees from 20 to 33%. For this reason, the committee recommends increasing the number of Directors from 12 to 15 and expanding the 10-year rule for 2 additional Athlete Representatives. He also indicated that USOPC will require term limits for all positions to 3 four-year terms and a requirement for clarification on how to remove Directors. Additionally, the committee suggests updating committee assignments, changing the name of the Safety Committee to "Sport Safety", including "Ethics" to the Nominating and Governance Committee, and having no requirement for a committee Chair of the Audit Committee.

Tom Kelly reported on communications and promotion efforts by hosting a training workshop with concepts about "Telling your story", that include "uniqueness, personality and willingness" to tell the story, especially in the social media presence. He explained how a "circle of success" brings sponsoring values and how to organize content into "buckets" (personality, events, culture, publicity, and life-style) and thinking strategically about what to post.

### **VII. Adjournment**

The next virtual meeting was tentatively scheduled for June 15, 2021. The meeting was adjourned into Executive Session at 1:20 PM.