



NATIONAL COMPETITION COMMITTEE

Conference Call Minutes – Wednesday, August 2, 2017

1. Welcome

2. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. Meeting was called to order by Adrian Gannon at 7:41 pm CST.
- b. Roll Call –
 - i. Ben Parker, Pacific North (ACR1)
 - ii. KJ Abel Ruch, Frontier (ACR3)
 - iii. Kirk Tate, Red River (ACR4) *... in place of Alan Sharpley*
 - iv. Gary Lobaugh, Midwest (NCR1)
 - v. Angela Corpus, Atlantic North (NCR3)
 - vi. Margy Thomas, Mid-Atlantic (NCR4)
 - vii. Tammy Brekenridge, Women's Representative
 - viii. Erik Geib, National Officer Manager
 - ix. Adrian Gannon, Committee Chairperson
 - x. Bill Marnell, Committee Secretary
- c. Not in attendance –
 - i. Patrick Rashidian, Pacific South (ACR2)
 - ii. Martin Gardner, NCR2

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. Bill sent out Meeting Minutes for June call earlier in the day via e-mail. Margy, who took minutes in Bill's absence for the July call, sent out minutes shortly before the call.
- b. Ben Parker proposes a small adjustment to the minutes from the July call.
- c. Erik Geib proposes an adjustment to the June minutes to remove the publishing of the roll call votes for the 7's championship structure.
- d. Both sets of minutes are approved with the above adjustments.

4. Approval of the Agenda

- a. There was no formal agenda for this evening's call. Rather, individual committee members stated via e-mail the items they wished to bring before the committee. They also provided background on the information they wished to address.

5. Old Business – None.

6. New Business

- a. Club Competition and Remaining Questions (Tammy Brekenridge)
 - i. TM inquired to the committee members: "Do all CRs have up to date competition guidelines published and available to the public?"



1. Gary Lobaugh answered that the Midwest CR has accurate competition guidelines that are available online via the Midwest website.
 2. Kirk Tate stated that Red River also has rules online; however there is a plan to review them in the near future.
 3. BP stated that the Pacific North does not have competition guidelines up, partially due to the fact that the CR does not have a website, or a Facebook page. He stated that the Pacific North adheres to USA Rugby's guidelines.
 4. **TM asked all CRs to distribute the guidelines to their clubs via e-mail.**
- ii. TM then asked if the National Office will be creating an NCC handbook. EG answered, "Yes".
 - iii. TM then explained that recently the Eligibility Committee had reviewed and altered their fee structure for hearing eligibility appeals. **They amended their fees to \$100 for player eligibility appeals and \$500 for club eligibility appeals.** She asked if the NCC would like to match this fee structure for competition appeals.
 1. GL stated that in his opinion, higher fees prevented excessive appeals from being brought forth to the committee; however he also remarked that the NCC rarely collects the fee.
 2. BP further added that most appeals come from Division 1 clubs and in those instances; the clubs pay the fee on behalf of the player.
 3. After some further discussion, Adrian states that the \$100/\$500 fee structure seems reasonable and that he believes the NCC fees should be in line with the Eligibility Committee's fees; however he proposes that no appeal is heard by the NCC until the fee is paid in full via Justin (Last Name?)'s method that is used in the EC.
 4. Margy also gives an example of what happens in MAC where a player's eligibility is "locked" in CMS until the fee is paid and the appeal is ruled upon.
 5. **After some final discussion, the committee agrees that the fees should match the EC and that fees must be processed ahead of time using Justin's process. There are no objections.**
- b. Proposal to Change Eligibility Wording to Allow "Approved" Matches to Count for Player Eligibility in USAR Club Playoffs (Gary Lobaugh)
- i. EG summarizes Gary's proposal as the Midwest looking to utilize spring matches that are not CR assigned to be utilized as a way for club's that are heading to the club playoffs in May to make new players that join over the winter and spring eligible.
 - ii. GL agreed, but also stated his intention to limit appeals heard by this committee and to ensure that scheduled crossover games that the Midwest has scheduled with the Atlantic North (Men's D2) are also counted. GL states that the policy should be flexible in that clubs can be accommodated with easier travel without giving them total control to create their own schedule as a pathway to playoffs.
 - iii. EG reiterated the need to keep things fair for everyone and suggested wording that states league matches and matches deemed as "approved competition" could count. An example would be these scheduled intra-CR crossover matches and proposed "Cup competitions".



- iv. GL explained to the group that MW clubs will hit the required number of matches during fall (only) competition, but would need to utilize games in the spring to get new players eligible for USAR championships.
 - v. AG asked if non-scheduled matches would be at the same level or higher in order to count towards making players eligible? There was a long discussion regarding this. Some committee members wanted the competition to be all at the same level, while others explained some teams may want to “play up” in preparation for playoffs. In those instances, the game would count for the lower level team, but not the higher level.
 - vi. GL stated that CRs should communicate and ask approved games to be entered into CMS and that in his opinion lower level teams should be able to play higher level.
 - vii. EG stated that he can again check the game when he enters it into CMS, making sure the game makes sense to be counted. Further discussion regarding teams adding games just to get players eligible.
 - viii. MT recommends a timing component to the approved games. She suggests setting deadlines for teams to submit their schedules for which they want games to count towards eligibility. GL agrees and suggests having them match the CIPP registration and transfer deadlines.
 - ix. Further discussion is had regarding loop holes and the door open for abuse. EG declares that the MWCR needs to ensure that players that are truly looking to be added are able to play, while ensuring that abuse of this is prevented.
 - x. TB offers the Eligibility Committee to have the ability to approve or deny teams adding players with the help of the CR Competition Committees. This would prevent an unreasonable influx of players.
 - xi. The committee agrees on piloting the program and EG will write specific language.
 - xii. GL confirmed that the group is okay with allowing games to count of equal or higher competition. The group now agrees for the side playing the same level or up.
 - xiii. GL also asks how international matches should be handled and the group decides that should be determined on a case by case basis. **All agree.**
- c. Angela Corpus has three waiver requests from the Atlantic North
- i. The first is the formal request to approve the intra-CR competition between eastern Midwest CR sides and western Atlantic North CR sides. **This is approved with the provisions set forth by EG from the previous discussion.**
 - ii. The next is a request to approve a D1/D2 Hybrid League for women’s competition in the Atlantic North. Both NERFU and Empire GU’s have formed local hybrid leagues in order to elevate play and cut down on travel. Each of these leagues will play a minimum of 6 games. The top two seeds from NERFU and Empire will be designated as D1 and play crossover playoffs on April 28, 2018, hosted by the higher seed. The next two seeds in Empire and NERFU participate in playoffs designated in D2. **Agreed**
 1. Angela also asks TB a follow-up question regarding a team’s second side that would like a schedule but is not interested in eligibility for playoffs. Is this okay? **TB stated it was.**



- iii. The final request is from the Men's D1 division. They have created a schedule where each of the three teams plays each other once in addition to games against Life U "Elite" and Glendale. This brings each team in the Atlantic North up to 7 or 8 games in the fall. The request is to allow them to fill out their schedule bringing all up to 12 games, as required, for USAR playoffs.
 1. GL asked for clarification as to why games v. Life count. EG provided clarity that Life "Elite" plays in the fall which is comprised of players from their collegiate varsity program and their club program. In the spring, the team splits with varsity players playing a collegiate schedule and the club players playing a D2 schedule.
 2. Margy asked what happened to the proposal of crossover games with Mid-Atlantic D1 clubs to help Atlantic North clubs get games. **This was not answered.**
 3. GL suggests a deadline for approving this waiver with a completed schedule. **The committee agrees on a September 5, 2017 deadline to view a completed schedule and make a ruling on the waiver based upon complete information.**
- d. National Office Report – Erik Geib
 - i. ADHOC committee has begun working changes to the Terms of Reference. EG will send out proposed changes today. The committee was later provided via e-mail a listing of the proposed changes and EG verbally went through a number of them on the call.
 1. AG apologized for not getting the 5th member to the committee as the person he had in mind declined the appointment.
 - ii. The Board of Directors approved the Performance Game Board and implemented a High Performance Manager. The CSC will have representation on the board with Luke Gross. Additionally Erik is an ex officio member of all club-related working groups, so he will be on the board as well. There will be limited impact on men and women's 15s with the exception of perhaps some disruption to the playoff pathway for men or control of the Men's D1 pathway. 7's will be removed from the NCC and be handled by the Board. **Committee requires clarification on this from NO and CSC and ToR.**
 - iii. Work is continuing on the club website and upgrades to the CMS system. Some upgrades include: re-factored stats, integration with USAClubRugby.com website, etc. EG provided notes to the committee via e-mail.
 - iv. The Competition Manual will be complete by **Monday, August 7, 2017.**
 - v. Study was completed on recruitment and retention with several key figures being provided to the committee. Additionally a presentation was created for the Congress meeting, but was bumped for time. EG will be attending many regional meetings to present the information. **Copy was requested to be sent to committee.**
 - vi. Dues increase was approved by Congress, a brief summary was provided.
 - vii. Club 7's is going well; special thanks to those who assisted in organizing. 32 teams are set to compete and the event will include several new items including new fan engagement pieces, a Women's World Cup watch party, new naming of trophy, etc.
 - viii. Spring 15's lacks bids for the 2017 -2018 championships
 - ix. COO position is officially open, new Director of Communications expected to be hired soon and CIO will



be hired this summer.

x. Final Note: All CR's need to send their schedules and league set ups to EG for entry into the CMS system.

7. **Adjournment** at 9:31 pm CST. Motion by Angela, second by KJ. Next call scheduled for **Wednesday, September 13.**