



United States Quad Rugby Association

## **Agenda for Annual General Meeting April 3, 2013**

**WELCOME** and Introductory Remarks and Matters  
Team Roll Call  
Approval of 2012 Minutes

### **REPORTS**

#### Board of Directors

President – Gary Pate  
1st Vice President – Nick Long  
2nd Vice President – Bob Murray  
Secretary – Carolyn Odom  
Treasurer – Ron Frederick  
Commissioner – James Gumbert

#### RACs

Atlantic North – Bill Bouffard  
Atlantic South – Dan Caldwell  
Heartland North – Sue Tucker  
Heartland South – Bob Lujano  
Mountain East – Chuck French  
Mountain West – Joe Delagrave  
Pacific North – Ed Suhr  
Pacific South – Andy Cohn

#### Referees

Andy Miller – USQRRRA Chairman

#### Classifiers

Paul Sawicki – Classification Head

#### Clinics

Ed Suhr

Dr Darryl Kaelin, Medical Director, Frazier Rehab  
Lori Clark

*Smashing Stereotypes One Hit at a Time*



Postseason

2013 Postseason Review  
Regionals  
Sectionals  
Nationals

Committees

Wheelchair/Equipment  
Hall of Fame  
Competition  
Rules  
Web  
Fundraising  
Constitution and Bylaws  
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**PROPOSALS**

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Commissioner  
2nd Vice President  
Treasurer  
Secretary



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**Proposals /Nominations**



## **President's Report**

### **Gary Pate**

It's been another successful year for our Association... new teams, new players, new classifiers, new refs, new sponsors, new volunteers and new fans. And yet, we are still at the beginning of where we need to be.

On our 25th anniversary, we should be proud of our accomplishments and excited about our future. In October, 2013, our Association, together with the Lakeshore Foundation, will host the American Zonals in Birmingham, Alabama. Teams from all over the Americas will battle it out for supremacy over a week of competition.

At this year's AGM we will be considering a number of proposals... but none more important than a concussion policy. Mentioned for the first time in last year's revised Code of Conduct, an adoption of this proposal will address a growing concern and put us on the cutting edge of sport associations.

In the upcoming year, we will, together with the IWRP, explore options on the manufacture and sale of our regulation balls. Your association makes no money on the selling and shipping and we continue to look for ways to save money for everyone.

We will be losing three Board members this year. It has been a pleasure working with Bob Murray, Carolyn Odom and Ron Frederick. Each has worked tirelessly, usually behind the scenes, to make your association better. Many of our sponsorships are traceable to Bob's efforts. Our expanded presence on social media and in publications is due to Carolyn's persistence and creativity. And Ron has been the driving force behind our budget, our expenses and ball sales (truly a thankless job.)

We truly need your input, your advice and your hard work. Too much work is done by too few. And there is an open door for your participation.

It is a genuine pleasure to serve as your President. You can always reach me at [j.gary.pate@googlemail.com](mailto:j.gary.pate@googlemail.com) or [205.999.3092](tel:205.999.3092).

## **1st Vice President's Report**

### **Nick Long**

Not Submitted.



## **2nd Vice President's Report**

### **Bob Murray**

Ladies and gentlemen of our Membership and Board of Directors:

It has been a true pleasure in serving our Association as your 2nd Vice President. I'd like to thank Commissioner Gumbert and the Board for their never-ending dedication and support to our sport and the Association. I also apologize for not being in attendance as my commitments to family and work have kept me home.

As this chapter has come to a close, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your 2nd Vice President. It has been a true honor and blessing to serve on this Board, our Membership and a sport that I truly respect and love.

I continue to, and strongly believe that the wheels we have put in motion will pay dividends in the future. I also encourage the membership to run for a position on the Board, to not only be an active voice, but to be part of our future.

Good luck to all the teams!!!

## **Secretary's Report**

### **Carolyn Odom**

Thank you to everyone here at the AGM, and a special thanks to those of you who are acting on behalf of multiple teams. It is heartening to see so much team and player representation.

Despite a few technological hiccups registration went smoothly. A very huge thanks to Dave Mengyan, Bob Crandall and Tim Fortune for coordinating everything. Our push to post score sheets from every tournament was largely successful. I hope that we will be able to continue to do so in future. I would like to see more scores posted on Facebook during tournaments, and I encourage tournament hosts to designate someone to do so at each event. Our newsletter saw growth with the Classification Corner. I would like the next editor to expand the Full Court Press to include a Referee's \*something alliterative.\* We saw some excellent discussion on Facebook and Rugby Talk. Thank you for making your voices heard! We also had several featured articles in Sports 'N Spokes, including recaps of tournaments and player highlights.

It is with disappointment that I am resigning from the Board of Directors. The league and the sport are at a crossroads and there are important decisions to be made. I hope that the Board acts with transparency and clear focus on the betterment of the league as a whole during this time.

Good luck to all of the teams and I wish you all the best.



**Treasurer's Report**  
**Ron Frederick**

Not Submitted.

**Commissioner's Report**  
**James Gumbert**

Membership,

I am so excited to say the words -- Happy 25th Anniversary! It seems like only yesterday we were... but I digress. I am charged with the day-to-day administration of our sport. It has been a responsibility that I try to take seriously and with respect. The report I am about to give is good and has areas we need to work on. Ours is a young sport filled with possibilities and one that continues to change lives on a daily basis.

Membership in the league has maintained steady in comparison with numbers in past years. We have noted that there have been some veteran athletes that have retired and or have opted to play more sparingly. Athletes continue to be exposed to the sport through the usual (movie, hospitals, family and that random player we see rolling down the street we try to convince to come out) but this year has seen more attention paid to the game from webcasts. The Paralympics, Bernd Best and others have taken to alternative media and have helped to give a new tool to increase membership and exposure.

While the league boasts the largest membership in the world there is room for growth. We have heard from areas in the Pacific and Atlantic North who want to start new teams. There are rumors of San Antonio and Utah reorganizing. And finally, there is talk of teams combining to have a more competitive group. No matter what the case we can and need to grow. Regions and Sections have an open invitation to increase membership, here's an idea – have a tournament/games in an area within your Region/Section where there is no team. Can't be done? It already has a start. Montgomery, Alabama, West Palm Beach, Florida and even Louisville, Kentucky have events but no teams. It only takes a small amount of work to get that spark going in the eyes and communities hungering for an outlet.

Competition is consistently month-to-month the best in the world. DI tournaments, DII tournaments and yes DIII/Rec tournaments were happening on almost every weekend from late September to the end of March. That's not lost on the rest of the world. Players from Australia, GB, Canada, Brazil and Finland all send players down to hone their skills and better their international teams. This year's Nationals should prove to be a great tournament. Top to bottom the teams have a great opportunity to control their own destiny.



The sport had relatively a clean year when it came to rule infractions and fines. While there were no code of conduct violations, the league continues to be littered with fines. Late registration, no articles and dropping out of postseason after the January 15<sup>th</sup> deadline were the main culprits. All controllable but often overlooked by team reps and leaders. Communication of these was provided through town hall meetings, registration, newsletter, web and social media. Continued work in providing membership with information and deadlines will always be a need and task for the Association.

The groups that make it happen on the court, refs/classifiers saw turnover this year as well with some veteran faces stepping aside for the next generation of officials that will govern play on the court. The workload in a league that boasts as many games as we do keeps them on the move. I know I speak for both groups when I say we need more people involved. The perks are travel, hotel and modest pay. Perfect for that person who wants to see the country on a budget and be in the middle of the action. Seriously, it is a need. Many of our current members came from teams, family members and friends. Expanding the ranks is easy. Again, with a little work and a visit to your local rehab it could lead to a future classifier or official. It will not happen by wishing it to take place.

The international side of our sport had some tremendous highs and some rough lows. The Force led by Coach Troy McGuirk and Carolyn Odom saw their biannual commitment come to an end. This past Force team has seen seven athletes take the next step in their journeys to become USA Wheelchair Rugby athletes. Impressive. The USA side won the Canada Cup but failed to defend the Gold in London bringing home a respectable bronze. Needless to say work has already begun on the next generation of players and staff and I expect them to fight to return the team to the number one in the world. On behalf of the USQRA: Thank you to the administrators, coaches, staff and athletes that make the USA program the best in the world.

In our sport the word volunteer is never fully grasped or understood. An all-volunteer board, RAC's, committee members, coaches, team leaders, tournament hosts, staff and fans are the lifeblood of our sport. Without them we would not even have a sport. On behalf of the Board: Thank you, Thank you, and Thank you. Your help, efforts, works and words change the lives of so many.

As with every ending there is a new beginning. A call for the next leaders to come into the sport has sounded. This year the Board says farewell and thank you to Ron Frederick, Robert Murray and Carolyn Odom. These three members have served you all with professionalism, pride and zeal. Their presence will be sorely missed. I'd also like to acknowledge Gary Pate and Nick Long for their tireless work and leadership to the Association.

None of the games, flights, planning, training, repairing and promoting happens without sponsors. If you haven't noticed it takes a lot of money individually, team-wise and for the league to operate. That heavy lifting comes from the grants, corporations, companies and



individuals that support and partner with us. To them we say: Thank you and please keep it coming. We are just getting started!

Over the years as a player, coach and administrator it has been my distinct pleasure to represent you and the sport we love so much. I am reminded frequently how great this game is. The first 25 years have seen the sport come from hospital parking lots and inaccessible gyms to convention centers and sold out stadiums. The future is bright for the next 25 years, but it will take work. Proposed new rules, direction and exposure promise to push limits and patience but in the end it has and should always be the game that comes first. The sport has done so much for so many let's keep changing lives, minds and perceptions -- One hit at a time.

Finally, a HUGE THANK YOU to Jill Farmer, her staff, Frazier Rehab and all the volunteers in Louisville, Kentucky for their ongoing support and hosting of tournaments and National Championships. You continue to set the standard in so many ways.

## **Atlantic North RAC Report**

### **Bill Bouffard**

The 2012/2013 season was a busy one in the Atlantic North. The Region has six active teams and one inactive this season with one active team being brand new. This Region holds the NRH Capitol Punishers, Connecticut Jammers, Magee Eagles, EWAF New York Warriors, Northeast Passage Wildcats and the newly formed Kernan Collision Developmental Team. The East Coast Cripples were on the down low this season. Four of these eligible teams withdrew from postseason. The EWAF New York Warriors and NRH Capitol Punishers proceeded to Sectionals with their seasons ending there.

#### **Tournaments Held**

- Rugby Rampage – NEP Wildcats
- Beast of the East – Magee Eagles.
- Al Youakim Invitational – NY Warriors with co-host CT Jammers
- Connecticut Rugby Jam – CT Jammers (1 day unofficial scrimmage session)
- Maryland Capitol Clash – NRH Capitol Punishers

#### **Referees**

- Bob Lopez
- Chandler Bullard
- Josh Kearns
- Several others (see Bob Lopez)

#### **Classifiers**

- Heidi Fullerton
- Cindy Ellis-
- Colleen Bittenbender





- Louise Sarofeen
- Several others (see Cindy Ellis)

#### **Postseason Host**

- The NEP Wildcats were going to host Regionals this year but with enough teams withdrawing, they decided not to host a Regional tournament so as to not force the transferring teams to travel when they were advancing on to Sectionals anyway. The Wildcats will likely try to host Regionals or Sectionals next season.

#### **Clinics**

- Nothing scheduled/hosted. The Magee Eagles are looking into hosting a Best of the Rest tournament in late April or early May.

#### **Future**

- Our goal is to have a postseason host established before December so teams can plan ahead.

The North Atlantic Region has a lot of teams but not many that can afford or desire to move on to postseason. With teams transferring in that never attended a tournament in the Region, it is discouraging for the developing teams, especially when we don't even know they are transferring in until late January. Not a lot else is happening in the Region. Players seem to come and go on most teams based on life commitments. It seems to be a recreational sport for many players. Connecticut hosted a daylong scrimmage and veteran player Paul Nitz made an appearance on the court. It was nice to see an old face back in action.

While four teams dropped from postseason for financial and competitive reasons, two teams from our Region did move on to Sectionals. The NRH Capitol Punishers and NY Warriors both attended Sectionals in South Carolina but their season ended there, finishing 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> respectively.

#### **Items of Interest**

**Postseason:** The NEP Wildcats were ready to host Regionals this year but as stated, opted out to keep teams from traveling unnecessarily. They plan to host a postseason tournament for 2014 with the help of Spaulding Rehab in Boston.

**Recruitment/Fundraising:** Fundraising continues to be a very big issue for teams. Travel is expensive and where each team in the Region is hosting a tournament, costs add up fast. This year Connecticut joined forces with New York to host a tournament on Long Island. There is a strong drive to promote our sport by getting us into colleges and communities to do exhibitions and fundraisers. We are seeing more of this all the time. Hopefully this will translate into \$\$\$ for our sport.

That's it in a nutshell for the Atlantic North!



## **Atlantic South RAC Report Dan Caldwell**

Not Submitted.

## **Heartland North RAC Report Sue Tucker**

### **Tournaments Held**

- Crazy 8's-St. Louis December, 2012
- Demolition Derby-Lakeshore, January, 2013
- Sectionals-Purdue University March, 2013

**Clinics:** None

### **Referees**

- Jody Paniagua
- Artie Paniagua
- Kristin Little
- Gary Pate

### **Classifiers**

- Tom Lieb (Level 4)

### **Area of Concern**

- No growth of new teams in this region for several years.

### **Areas of Growth**

- 4 players from this region are currently members of Team USA Rugby. All play for St. Louis. Clayton Braun, Chuck Melton, Eric Newby, Mike Schamburg.
- New sectional site at Purdue University, hopefully will be an option for future events.

## **Heartland South RAC Report Bob Lujano**

The Heartland Section saw the return of Chuck Aoki to the Minnesota North Stars fresh off his bronze medal performance in London, England at the 2012 Paralympic Games. It has been an exciting return as Minnesota has claimed a DI seeding at this year's National Championship tournament. Aoki had led Minnesota to some impressive victories earlier in the season by finishing second at Best of the West. Here in the Heartland South, we saw the return of Bryan



Kirkland, fresh off his Alabama Hall of Fame induction. The two-year layoff did not seem to disrupt his skills as he is still one of the best players in the USQRA. His efforts culminated as he led Lakeshore to a first place finish at the Heartland Sectionals in West Lafayette, Indiana, at which Kirkland was named MVP. Kirkland now heads off to Louisville to lead the sixth-seeded Lakeshore Demolition at DI Nationals, as well as to his enshrinement in the USQRA Hall of Fame.

In addition, the Heartland has had some team improvements with the help of international players. Both the Milwaukee Iron and Lakeshore Demolition had the help of Brazilian sensations Bruno Damaceno and Alexandre “Japa” Taniguchi, as they added new talent to our growing league.

The Heartland Section also had some losses as the Lakeshore Demolition played a majority of the season without Paralympic alternate Delvin McMillan, as he had to take a medical leave. We also we saddened by the passing of Jeff Coupie, Kevin Cary and Matt Reynolds.

Overall, the Heartland South has been through another roller coaster ride of success. Hopefully, it can have a wonderful conclusion at Nationals. See you in Louisville.

## **Mountain East RAC Report**

### **Chuck French**

Once again the Mountain Section has the cooties as all but four teams transferred out of the Section for a shot at the National tournament. The Mountain East Region had 5 active teams during the 2012/13 season. This Region holds the Denver Harlequins, North Texas Cowboys, San Antonio Steel, Texas Stampede and the TIRR Texans. San Antonio withdrew from postseason play while Denver and TIRR transferred to the Atlantic North Section ultimately qualifying for Division II Nationals. With Tucson and Utah not competing this season, the transfers of TIRR and Denver and the postseason withdrawal of San Antonio, it left the Mountain Section with four teams automatically qualifying for the National Tournament. The Texas Stampede is headed to Division I while the North Texas Cowboys are headed to Division II Nationals. The Mountain Section remains one of the toughest in the country with six total teams (out of nine original Section teams) heading to the National Tournament.

#### **Tournaments Held**

- Pre-Season Scrimmages (Houston) TIRR, San Antonio, Texas – September 15 & 16, 2012.
- Texas Cup – Houston – November 17 & 18, 2012.
- Texas Cup – San Antonio – December 8 & 9, 2012.
- Texas Cup – Houston/Texas Co-Host – January 19 & 20, 2013.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Matt Reynolds Memorial Tournament – Dallas – February 8-10, 2013.
- Mile High Mayhem – Denver – February 9 & 10, 2013.



- Texas Cup – Austin – February 23 & 24, 2013.

#### **Referees**

- Marsha Bailey
- Genny Gomez
- Chuck French
- Travis Adkins
- Wendy Gumbert
- Bo Wolfred
- Henry Cochran
- Kristen Hewitt
- Marc Reynolds

#### **Classifiers**

- Christopher Newman

#### **Postseason Host**

- Mountain Section postseason host was scheduled in Phoenix but with teams transferring, withdrawing and not playing the postseason tournament for the Mountain Section was not held.

#### **Clinics**

- Nothing scheduled/hosted.

#### **Future**

- Our goal is to have a postseason host established before November so teams can plan ahead.

The Mountain East welcomed the resurrection of the San Antonio team, now named the SA Steel. It's just not rugby with all four Texas teams playing. While not as organized as prior seasons Texas Cup tournaments still pushed forward providing several options for Texas teams to compete throughout the season. The Denver Harlequins pulled out a huge upset to claim first place in the Atlantic Sectional tournament beating a tough, usually Division I Shepherd Smash team.

#### **Items of Interest**

**Recruitment/Camps/Clinics:** Michael Cottingham, former coach of the University of Arizona quad rugby team is now a professor at the University of Houston. Professor Cottingham has a weeklong rugby camp scheduled for this summer. With the help of local programs, Professor Cottingham hopes to have a University of Houston team on the court playing by 2014. Two official's clinics are currently in planning for the early 2013/14 season.



## **Mountain West RAC Report**

### **Joe Delagrave**

This year the Mountain West Region saw some changes from last season. The ever-steady Utah Scorpions decided to not travel this year and ended up dropping out of postseason. The two-time defending champion Tucson Pterodactyls were hit hard by players deciding to leave the sun for the snow and had to withdraw from postseason play as well. The University of Arizona played a healthy schedule of games this year, steadily improving along the way and now find themselves back at Nationals after a two-year hiatus. The Phoenix Fusion has had a great year again and looks forward to showing the improvement at Nationals.

The Mountain West Region has enjoyed success at Nationals for quite some time now, but with the Virginia G. Piper Sports & Fitness Center now open for nearly two years, the Region will look to develop a new crop of players. The Center sits right in the heart of the Mountain Region, and hosted its first 8-team tournament this last February. It is nice to see a state of the art facility devoted to athletes with disabilities in this region. With 3 out of the 4 teams established in Arizona, the center has been the hub for rugby training, scrimmages and games.

## **Pacific North RAC Report**

### **Ed Suhr**

The Pacific North Region consists of five teams: Portland, Seattle, Sierra, Nor-Cal and new development team Boise. The Region had an active season with invitational tournaments in Seattle, Reno, Portland and Sacramento. Sectionals were hosted in Tacoma, Washington by the Seattle Slam in conjunction with Tacoma Parks and Recreation. There were also several one-day events hosted throughout the Region. We should have a similar tournament line-up next season though a Sectional host has yet to step forward.

The quality of rugby has improved with both Sierra and Nor-Cal taking competitive strides. Boise is a young team but they attended three tournaments and have a strong nucleus to build on.

The greatest need in the Region is identifying and training new referees. This is especially true since there are not enough refs on the West Coast to fully staff a six or eight team tournament which means extra airline expenses for tournament hosts.

## **Pacific South RAC Report**

### **Andy Cohn**

Sharp Edge continued to host the Best of the West in November. This Division I tournament



featured the nation's top teams and was another success continuing its 20 plus year run. Our thanks to Andrea Esposito and the City of San Diego Parks and Recreation for all of their hard work over the years, as well as Sharp Hospital for their continuing support.

In December, Northridge hosted a three-team tournament, a great opportunity for young and new players to get experience.

The Vegas Renegades hosted a Summer Blast in August, later hosting a DII tournament that highlighted some more up-and-coming players. Its collective group of players qualified for DII Nationals their first season out.

Sharp Edge was able to add several new players to the roster this year and we hope that they will continue to develop in the years to come. Sharp also qualified for DI Nationals.

**Tournaments Held:**

- One Man Wolf Pack – Renegades
- Best of the West – Sharp
- Vegas Vengeance - Renegades
- December Games – Northridge

**Referees:**

- Kelli Kal
- Bob Doty
- Greg Gandy
- Jordan Luxembourger

**Classifiers:**

- None

**Postseason Host:**

- None established for next year

**Clinics:**

- None scheduled, but Sharp is planning a Summer Blast to be held on the beach in Oceanside this summer.



## USQRRR Referee Report

Andy Miller

This has been another busy and successful year for the officials in the USQRRR.

1. Clinics held during the past year – The past year we conducted only one referee clinic, which was held in Irving, TX, in conjunction with the Matt Reynolds Memorial tournament. There were a total of six participants, all of whom passed the written examination and got court time. Only one official was certified, Travis Adkins, primarily due to not having sufficient time to floor test the other candidates. We plan to hold a follow up clinic in the fall to complete the certification process with the other candidates. Thanks to Marsha Bailey for instructing this clinic.
2. Member Development – One official passed the certification for promotion to a higher level during the season. Congratulations to Joshua Kearns, who earned his “B” level certification.
3. USQRRR officials at international events:
  - Mitch Carr, Darren Roberts – Paralympic Games – London, UK. Darren was selected to officiate the Gold Medal game!
4. USQRRR members officiated 1004 games at 38 events (through Sectionals) during this season.
5. Our total membership stands at 46, with 32 “active” (fully certified w/ game activity in 2012-2013 season) referees:
  - 13 – “A”, 10 – “B”, 23 – “C”
  - Membership distribution by Section
    - Atlantic – 12
    - Heartland – 16
    - Mountain – 9
    - Pacific – 9

Tim Davis, who has served the sport as an official and RAC for over 20 years has retired. Tim will be recognized at the USQRA banquet and will officiate in the Legends game. We wish Tim the very best in this new phase of his life!

6. For the second consecutive year the USQRRR held an advanced clinic for all officials selected to work the Nationals tournament. We plan to have another clinic this year, with each of our “A” level officials taking on a specific topic. Topics to be covered include correctable errors, teamwork, behavior on/off the court, mechanics, injustices (calls that should not be missed), and special situations.



7. The USQRRRA Executive Board has reviewed the proposals and resolutions to be considered at this year's AGM and respectfully offers the following input.
  - Proposal 9 – Reentering the Field of Play – Article 108 – Release from the Penalty Box. This season the referees have changed our mechanics and have not beckoned players back onto the court from the penalty box. The responsibility for releasing the player from the penalty box, either after a goal (without an associated penalty), or at the expiration of the one-minute penalty, lies with the Penalty Timekeeper. This part of the proposal is consistent with our current practice, and we support the recommendation.
  - Article 71 – Substitutions. We respectfully disagree with the part of the proposal that states “Athletes entering the field of play on a substitution need not be waived on to court by a referee”. The officials have the responsibility for determining whether or not substitutions are permitted, and whether or not players wishing to substitute into the game have properly checked in at the table. Waving the player(s) onto the court provides the necessary checkpoint that insures that substitutions are made properly. We believe eliminating this step could result in improper substitutions occurring. We recommend a “No” vote on this part of the proposal.
  - Article 101 – Player Technical Foul. The proposed change eliminates the language that calls for the player to be released by the referee or Penalty Timekeeper. We support removing the language that calls for the referee to release the player. We recommend leaving the language in place that calls for the release by the Penalty Timekeeper. We believe this is consistent with the duties of the Penalty Timekeeper, and removing that language would, in effect, leave it up to the player to decide when to come out of the penalty box.
  - Proposal 12 – Twelve Second Violation. We take no position on the substantive part of the proposal, but want to state for the record that the referees are fully capable of keeping track of multiple counts. Please approve or reject the proposal on its merits alone.
8. For the past 6 years I have been privileged to serve the sport as Chairperson of the Referees' Association. I have learned a lot, made plenty of mistakes, and hopefully managed to make a few positive contributions along the way. I have especially enjoyed working together with the USQRA leadership to forge what I believe is an effective and productive relationship. I have decided that the time has come for me to step aside and look for other ways to serve. I will always appreciate the relationships developed during this time, and I do plan to continue officiating as long as I am able. Thanks to everyone for your support and friendship!







## **Clinic Report**

Ed Suhr

The summer of 2012 was a slow one for clinics due in large part to the hectic schedule of Team USA. Team USA's staff and players make up most of the clinic instructor pool. We tried to schedule two clinics but were unable to provide instructors on the available dates.

Referee clinics continue to happen with the most recent one in connection with the Dallas tournament. The referee clinic structure has changed. Official clinic expenses will now be reimbursed at a rate of \$100 per participant up to the cost of bringing in the instructor.

We have one clinic date for this summer and another in the works. The University of Houston is hosting a '25 and under' clinic in late June. Mike Cottingham will be the contact for that clinic if anyone is interested. Augusta is also interested in hosting a clinic though a date has not been set. If anyone else is interested in hosting a clinic, please contact me as soon as possible. With the turnover in Team USA, there should be a larger pool of available instructors.



## **Policy on Concussion in the Athlete**

Concussion is defined by the American Medical Society as a traumatically induced transient disturbance of brain function. It is a blow to the head or body that may result in improper brain functioning. The USQRA recognizes that concussions are a potentially serious condition that if ignored or improperly managed can lead to catastrophic and permanent consequences.

Signs and symptoms of a concussion may include, but are not limited to: headache or complaints of feeling pressure, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, blurry vision, sensitivity to light or noise, tinnitus, concentration problems, confusion, personality change, slurred speech, loss of consciousness, amnesia, or disorientation. These are only some of the symptoms.... others may be present or may manifest hours or days later.

At the time of registration, the team manager or coach shall certify to the Association that he or she is familiar with this policy. Further, the team manager or coach shall certify to the Association that all rostered athletes shall be informed of this policy.

2) Anyone who suspects that an athlete has a concussion must notify the team manager, coach, medical personnel, head official or other person in authority at the practice, game, tournament or other venue in which the athlete is present.

3) Any athlete suspected of having a concussion shall be stopped from playing. The head official at any tournament shall have the authority to prohibit such player from returning to competition. That player shall be assessed by an appropriate healthcare professional, certified athletic trainer or other healthcare provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.

4) A player with diagnosed concussion shall not be allowed to return to play on the day of injury.

5) Further, a player with diagnosed concussion shall not be allowed to return to play without written permission from an appropriate healthcare professional, certified athletic trainer or other healthcare provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions. A copy of the "return to play" authorization shall be sent to the Association's Commissioner and Secretary.



## Postseason Review

### 2013 Atlantic Sectionals

Tournament Directors – Mike Duda and Sandy Hanebrink  
Anderson, SC

Date of Sectional: March 1-3, 2013

#### Results:

1. Tampa Generals
2. Denver Harlequins
3. Shepherd Smash
4. TIRR Texans
5. Carolina Crash
6. NRH DC Capital Punishers
7. Brooks Bandits
8. New York Warriors

#### Tournament Directors Comments:

Classification panel: Lauri Elling, Ana Sheridan, Phyllis Palma

Referees: Marianne Duda, Matt Smith, Josh Kearns, Kerin Banfield, Kristin Little, Darren Roberts, Tres Smith, Robert Bogusch

Game Protests Filed: None

Individuals Disqualified: None

Rules Questions: None

### 2013 Heartland Sectionals

Tournament Director – Kevin Crombie  
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN

Date of Sectional: March 8-10, 2013

#### Results:

1. Lakeshore Demolition
2. St Louis Rugby Rams
3. Minnesota North Stars
4. RHI Indy Brawlers
5. Milwaukee Iron
6. Grand Rapids Thunder



7. Pittsburgh Steelwheelers
8. Chicago Bears

**Tournament Directors Comments:** Overall, everything went pretty smoothly during the Heartland Sectionals. One of my biggest concerns, as far as making a good relationship with the facilities, was the gym floors. After the first day and even with the facilities staff cleaning the courts during any stoppage in play, the floors looked trashed. However, everyone I talked to seemed to not mind or show little concern. In fact, at the end of the tournament, I spoke with one of the facility directors and he said that they may be interested in playing host to an annual event at Purdue!

**Classification panel:** Paul Sawicki, Kim DeChant

**Referees:** Karen Bauthier, Joe Bongiovanni, Jen Burns, Mitch Carr, Chris Chapman, Andy Miller, Gary Pate

**Game Protests Filed:** None

**Individuals Disqualified:** None

**Rules Questions:** None

**2013 Pacific Sectionals**  
**Tournament Director – Curt Chapman**  
**Tacoma, WA**  
**Date of Sectional: March 22-24, 2013**

**Results:**

1. Portland Pounders
2. Sharp Edge
3. Vegas Renegades
4. Seattle Slam
5. Sierra Storm
6. Northridge Knights

**Tournament Directors Comments:** Not much to say here. Things seemed to go smoothly. On the positive side the sun shined the entire weekend, which alone is nothing short of a miracle this time of year.

**Classification panel:** Paul Sawicki (Head), Trisha Suhr, Jelena Svircev



**Referees:** April Wolfe (Head), Bob Doty, Bob Lopez, Kelli Kalizewski, Todd Jackson, Andy Miller

**Game Protests Filed:** None

**Individuals Disqualified:** None

**Rules Questions:** None

### **Wheelchair Specs/Equipment Committee**

James Gumbert, Troy McGuirk

At this time the IWRF has not made any changes. We are considering changing the wording of the ball hoop and the 11 cm at the wing, but everything else is just rewording existing rules for clarity. We will keep you informed as things develop.

### **Hall of Fame Committee**

Brad Mikkelsen

Currently there are nineteen members in the Hall of Fame, with eighteen active voting. Two players were nominated this year and both received more than 75% of the votes needed to be inducted into the Hall and both will be presented and awarded, along with Steve Pate, during the banquet activities at USQRA Nationals.

The Hall of Fame committee has not had a sponsor for the last few years. Sorry to be vague, but I'm not sure how many, as I don't see the accounts. After expenses this year, we will be empty of funds. We have made inquiries into new sponsors, but have not secured any. We request that the USQRA assist in the solicitation of potential sponsors.

The HoF committee has started work on a new website presence and will continue to work with Dave Mengyan to create an updated Hall of Fame website.

We want to work with the USQRA board to establish policies for standardized procedures around funding inductees, committee members and HoF projects. Also, we need new procedures for nominating potential inductees. One of the roadblocks to voting in nominees is that the info presented to the Committee is not enough. We want to create a nominating procedure to encourage a more developed and researched nomination, before it's presented to the Committee for consideration.

From the discussions prior to voting these concerns came forward

- more discussion needed



- more effort toward finding nominees from the earlier era of the sport and those who contributed in meaningful ways other than as players
- how to draw the line between retired from competition and still active

## Competition Committee

Rick Mason, James Gumbert, RACs

This was the initial season for the Competition Committee and it was charged with:

Responsibilities:

- Develop and present Sectional and National playoff structure to the Association by November 15
- Seed representative teams on a Sectional and National level on a biannual basis.
- Monitor the designation of DI and DII level teams in relation to postseason play.
- Monitor and Approve/Decline postseason transfer requests.
- Other duties as assigned by the Executive Committee as it relates to postseason play.

Seeding:

The first order of business was to develop a preseason seeding of all registered USQRA teams based upon the previous years' results at Nationals and all available season tournaments. This offered a starting point from which to proceed.

In order to provide teams with an updated in-season status of their relative ranking an attempt was made to provide an accurate mid-season seeding. This effort was made difficult by the delayed reporting of tournament results, with some fall tournaments finally submitting in late January, even with repeated requests by the Association Secretary.

The timely reporting and posting of all tournament results is critical to the seeding process:

1. Provides those involved with the seeding process an accurate picture by which to compare teams, especially as it relates to team composition (i.e. missing and/or guest players.)
2. Provides the Commissioner with information as it relates to the two game requirement.
3. Provides all Association teams with competitive information on other teams' performance, especially those from out of their respective Regions.

The entire seeding process could be made more reliable with the passage of an updated (and enforceable) tournament reporting proposal at this year's AGM.

The Competition Committee began the testing of a statistically based "beta" seeding program. Although the results proved promising, it requires further refinement. The framework of this proposed system is available on the USQRA website.



#### Team Transfers:

This year five teams requested the option to transfer with potential openings in five Regions. The three Regions that were closed to transfers were either: 1). Full (at least 8 teams) or; 2). A transfer in would have necessitated a Regional tournament where one (at the time) was not required. The two teams that did transfer were Denver and TIRR, both to the Atlantic North.

The Association may want to revisit the policy of closing Regions/Sections to transfers with exactly four teams. There have been situations in the recent past where a Section was not required to have a Sectional Tournament because of four (or less) teams. The Competition Committee will be looking to address this situation in the off-season and present options.

#### Future Plans:

1. Seeding
  - a. Continue refinement of current seeding process
    - i. Preseason, Midseason, and Postseason
  - b. Refinement and addition of a statistically based “beta” model
2. Transfers
  - a. Continue refinement of the team transfer process
3. Develop a sub-committee to:
  - a. Analyze the current seeding process in its entirety
    - i. Identify key components
    - ii. Prioritize key components in relation to statistical analyses

### **Rules Committee**

James Gumbert, Bob Murray, Dave Ceruti, Marty Frierson

This committee met individually during the new year and brought forth numerous proposals that were requested by athletes, tournament directors, administrators and coaches.

A protocol of posting on social media individual proposals has shown to increase discussion on the topics. It is the hope that by doing this, further direction and growth of the rules of the sport and Association will continue.

Membership is encouraged to become involved with the committee and help with future requests and proposals from the membership.





## **Web Committee**

James Gumbert, Dave Mengyan, Jason Regier, Bill Bouffard

The committee has met sporadically over the past four months. Focus has been given towards updating and improving the current website, improving the presence of the Association and game on social media and making updating of the website more user friendly.

A survey was conducted in late February that reflected the areas of frequent use on the website and desires for the future. Feedback reflected use in these 5 key areas:

- Registration
- Calendar
- Scoreboard/score sheets
- Information
- Files

Information from this survey will continue to help in the above projects. Of note is Rugby Talk, which was a robust area of the web in the past but has seen a big drop off, and for many has been replaced with Facebook and Twitter. Ease of use and ability to touch certain people and groups were identified as factors.

It is the hope of the committee to continue to improve upon the USQRA brand and make the above areas' use more streamline and content pertinent.

## **Fundraising Committee**

Nick Long, James Ezell, Bob Murray

The USQRA is very grateful and fortunate to have the below organizations as our 2013 USQRA Postseason Sponsors:

Eagle Sportschairs  
Xcalibur Sportschairs  
Melrose  
Vesco  
Fusion  
Coloplast  
Wellspect Healthcare  
Spinergy  
ROHO

We are in need of individuals to be active on this committee. If you are interested, please contact a Board Rep to get involved.



## **Constitution and Bylaws Committee**

Carolyn Odom, James Gumbert, Gary Pate, Nick Long, Rick Mason

Happily, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee didn't have as much to do this year because we had so many teams and individuals put in the work for us! It's been so gratifying to see everyone participating, be it by writing your own proposal, discussions with your teammates or posts on Rugby Talk and Facebook. We've gotten some great feedback from everyone and I look forward to watching this involvement continue and grow stronger.

### **Team USA** Mandy Goff

Early in the spring of 2012, Lakeshore Foundation was awarded the bid to host the 2013 Americas Zone Championship. The date was set for October 13-20, 2013 and the final draft for the registration packet was submitted to the IWRP on March 12, 2013 for review.

May 3rd, 2012 was the start of the official training camp season for Team USA in preparation for the London 2012 Games. We held four training camps at Lakeshore Foundation, one in Portland, Oregon in conjunction with ADAPT and Nike, and another at SpoFit in Phoenix, Arizona. We had originally planned to host the July camp at Lake Placid, but due to budgetary constraints and scheduling, it worked in our favor to hold the camp in Arizona at the new facility.

We saw two International competitions prior to the London 2012 Games; one was more of a Rugby Challenge hosted at Lakeshore in late June between USA and Sweden, then an immediate trip to Vancouver for Canada Cup 2012. In May 2012, twelve athletes were named to the Canada Cup team, and of those original twelve we lost two to injury and illness forcing us to bring in alternates, one of which was named Top 2.5 (Josh Wheeler) of the tournament. Of the twelve athletes, 11 were veteran athletes and one was a Force athlete who moved up the ranks to the National team in December.

Canada Cup proved to be a definite eye opening and exciting tournament. For the first time in a while, Team USA was sent into unfamiliar territory with a loss to Japan. With a regroup and new focus, we came back out to defeat Australia in the semis and then faced Canada for the Gold, which was an even sweeter victory claimed on their home court.

On July 15th, 12 athletes were named to the Paralympic Wheelchair Rugby team, and of those, seven had previously competed in at least one Paralympic Games while the other five were a part of the 2010 World Championship team. In addition to the 12 athletes, 8 staff accompanied the team to London (3 coaches, 1 Team Leader, 2 PCA, 1 Equipment, and 1 medical). The team departed on August 24th, and while the games opened on the 29th, competition for wheelchair rugby did not begin until the 5th of September. We trained prior to and were even able to



schedule a friendly against Belgium the last day at the Mayesbrook facility. The schedule for games was released in late July and we saw a very different match up. While we were already aware of how the pools were split, we were prepared to face France first, with a second game against Japan, and rounding out the pool play with Great Britain. Instead, we saw GB first, then Japan, and finished with France. While we contested this match up with the technical director, our requests were denied and the schedule remained as it was. We played a tough first game against GB, and in front of a maximum capacity crowd. It was amazing to see the sport supported this way and we came out victorious. We were definitely ready for the second match up against Japan, especially after the tough loss three months earlier. We came out ready and had a convincing win and faced our last opponent in France before semi-final action. With a win over France, the stage was set for USA to meet Canada in the first round. We suffered a devastating loss putting us back against Japan in the Bronze medal game. While the outcome was not at all what we had dreamed or even hoped for, USA was on fire and claimed the Bronze medal at the 2012 games. From that day forward, we have been in Redemption Rio mode, ready to get back out there and reclaim our spot as number one in the world. The Games were just as everyone described, unbelievable, and the world is on fire for the sport of wheelchair rugby. It's both exciting and encouraging to see what will happen next.

At the conclusion of the London Games, Ed Suhr, long time USA assistant coach retired. His presence on the court will be missed, but he will continue to be an ambassador for the sport and someone we look to for advice. Another great loss to the staff for the 2013 season is assistant coach Troy McGuirk. He began working with Mike Box designs late this summer and has done a tremendous job growing the product and expanding the market on wheelchair design. While we don't see Troy away from USA forever, it was going to be difficult for him to both work and coach and felt he needed to be completely committed to the team if he was to stay on board. His travel schedule with Mike Box Designs conflicted with several of the camps and competitions and he was forced with a tough decision to make. Several 2012 athletes are taking a year off and plan to return for tryouts during the Worlds year, and others are still "up in the air" with the decision to continue playing or retire....only time will tell.

In December of 2012 USA hosted the Selection Camp for the 2013 National Team. Invitations were sent to 40 athletes (according to the Selections Procedures), 26 of those accepting and 14 declining (one whom accepted the invitation was later found to be ineligible because he was not rostered on a USQRA team). There were 3 athletes that protested themselves for an invitation to camp and all three attended. Two of the athletes who accepted the invitation to camp had to request medical exemptions and all both were awarded that request. Over the course of three days, 28 athletes worked to fill what eventually became 16 spots. Of the two that requested medical exemption, only one was give a slot on the 2013 team. The selection committee was made up of James Gumbert, Troy McGuirk, Sue Tucker, and Mandy Goff. The committee made the decision to carry 16 initially and name the 12 for Denmark Rugby Challenge at a later date and the Americas Zone team by August. We are looking at a lot of new, young faces this year, two whom were current Force athletes, and four who were previously on Force or a National



team in the past. The rest of the athletes were all on the 2012 National team, five of those competed in London.

USA will host six separate training camps, all taking place at Lakeshore Foundation. We will participate in two separate International competitions, one of which will showcase the Top 7 teams in the world and extremely important for us to attend. In June, we will take a team of 12 to Copenhagen, Denmark to compete in the Denmark Rugby Challenge. This will be the same host location for World Championships in 2014, so will be much like a test event, but also the opportunity to face those familiar opponents Australia and Canada for the first time since London. Lakeshore Foundation will be the host site for the 2013 Americas Zone Championships in October, and while our zone is still in development, it's growing and this is another great opportunity to match up with Canada.

As mentioned in the previous report, USA was instructed to begin looking at the High Performance Plan for the next quadrennial. It seemed strange to be writing this before we had even competed at the games, but the plan and defense was due to the USOC upon our return from London in early October. In addition to our normal line items, support for National Team training camps and competitions, heavy emphasis was placed on increase in Direct Athlete Support, increased financial support for our coaches, continued high performance services (ADAPT, Dartfish, Training Peaks), coaching education, and support for Team Force (both training and competition). While we were successful in obtaining a great increase in DAS and the financial support for our coaches, we still came out with an amount even less than last year. It became increasingly aware us that the USOC still wanted us to do more with less, yet again, and we had to fight to get an increase to cover just the bare bones of our requested budget. Lakeshore, still operating as our current HPMO, backed us and went to the USOC requesting for more and while we were awarded a small increase, unfortunately it was not enough to cover the Force program again this year.

At the conclusion of the London Games, USA Rugby reached out to us with a serious request and interest in taking over as the National Governing Body for USA Wheelchair Rugby. USA Wheelchair Rugby will continue to develop the relationship in hopes of developing a partnership in the near future. Until that time, Lakeshore will continue to operate as the HPMO.

During the 2012 year, USQRA/USA was awarded a \$14,000 Olympic Opportunity Fund grant and we hosted an Intro to Wheelchair Rugby clinic for injured service members in collaboration with a National Team Camp. The primary focus of the camp was to expose these service men to the sport of rugby, and while most had competed at least one season on a USQRA team, there were a couple who had not experienced the sport at all. We also wanted to show that this could be a direct route to development of athletes and use this as an additional pipeline to channel new athletes. USA did invite one of these athletes to the 2013 National Team selection camp, and while he was not selected to the team, it was evident that he had the skills and talent to make a FORCE team with the potential to expand to the National Team ranks. We are looking at additional grant opportunities through the USOC again as a way to develop this clinic setting



into a pipeline program to include the already existing FORCE team as a way to secure funding for camps and competitions.

It has been another great year for USA and I have been extremely blessed to be a part of an amazing program, surrounded by wonderful men and athletes. I am hopeful and excited about what the future has to offer. Please don't ever hesitate to reach out if there is anything I can do to help.

**Team Force**  
Troy McGuirk

**Camps:**

- Tryout camp was held in May, 2011. 13 athletes were selected to the team.
- June, 2011
- July, 2011
- August, 2011
- January, 2012
- May, 2012
- June, 2012

**Competitions:**

- January, 2012 – Team Force attended the Demolition Derby in Birmingham, AL. We competed against Atlanta, Lakeshore, Northridge and Canada's Developmental Squad. Force came in 4th over Canada.
- January, 2013 – Team Force attended the Coloplast Invitational and placed 4<sup>th</sup> amongst strong national and international teams. We beat Switzerland, Atlanta, Lakeshore and Denver, losing to The Rebels, London and Tampa. We lost the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> place game by one point in double OT. Our own Chuck Melton won Best 2.0.

**Athlete Attrition:**

With a structure of athlete-sponsored travel, Team Force continued to have challenges with regard to retaining athletes throughout the length of the two-year program. This session we only lost one player.

**Staff:**

The staff on the Force was able to remain consistent throughout the term of the team. Head Coach Troy McGuirk, Assistant Coach Sue Tucker and Team Manager Carolyn Odom continued from the last iteration. Marc Reynolds, Jen Burns, Sophia Bong and Steve Butler joined the Force and we look forward to them continuing our tradition of excellence.



**Athlete Improvement:**

The overall mission of the program is to develop athletes and staff to step up to the next level of Team USA. Chuck Melton, Jeromy Brown and Eric Chase were called up in December, 2011 to train with Team USA over the summer. Chuck Melton, Jeromy Brown, Eric Chase, Landon Groff and Mike Schacherbauer were called up in December 2012 for the 2013 Zonals Team, joining previous Force athletes Clayton Braun, Derrick Helton, Eric Newby, Ernie Chun, and Josh Wheeler.

**The Future:**

Tryouts for the next Force team will be held in May, 2013. We look forward to watching the continued development of these athletes. There is discussion about opening Force to previous participants, though no decision has been announced.