



Vision 2020




Eric Chase - with support of the Vision 2020 Committee - Derrick Helton, Gabe Nyrkkanen, Mike Box, Chris Cook and Brad Mikkelsen

*****Vision 2020 was authored by this independent author, and was accepted for publishing in the Full Court Press to promote improved league communication concerning ideas that may benefit the sport of Wheelchair Rugby in the United States*****

If you are reading this, you are a weekend warrior on the court, a retired or current national team member, a USQRA coach or a rugby enthusiast. We all share the same passion – Wheelchair Rugby, and the joy it brings to our lives. We love this sport and everything it has given us. We are devoted to our sport and to the success of the representation of American Wheelchair Rugby, the USAWR program. We are exceptionally proud of USAWR and its amazing performance in Rio. We commend the dedication and sacrifice of all of those involved with USAWR, especially our athletes. We all wish the best for USAWR and we will do what ever it takes to guarantee that it is successful now and in the future.

We have very high standards when it comes to the performance of USAWR. Gold is always expected, and anything less is a disappointment. Reminiscing back in London 2012, the Bronze medal performance left us with the hunger for gold. When USAWR lost to Australia in double overtime in Rio, hearts broke on the floor, on the sidelines, and in all of us watching. Once the initial feelings of hurt faded, we did what most reasonable people would do – we looked for answers. Many folks started looking at our collection of bronze/silver international performances of the last decade and attached blame for the losses with the Head Coach of USAWR, James “Gumbie” Gumbert, and the Lakeshore Foundation. While it may be fair to

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tie accountability for the successes and failures of USAWR to these two parties, there is more to the puzzle than is initially visible. In order to fully analyze the current state of USAWR, we would like to look into the relationship between the USQRA, USAWR and the Lakeshore Foundation. We also need to look how to resolve existing flaws within and between the groups, and to create a better system for building USAWR back into a gold medal-winning juggernaut.

To get right to the point, the USQRA has had very little to do with the running of USAWR since the late 1990s. The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) has directed the USAWR program, through the Lakeshore Foundation over the past several years. The USQRA does not have the personnel, the financial capabilities or the physical resources to run USAWR, independently. The Lakeshore Foundation has been providing USAWR with the training facilities and what ever support that it requires in order to perform at the highest levels. Lakeshore has been accountable to USOC, and has been, for quite some time. We are grateful for Lakeshore's dedication to our national team. Without their unceasing and determined efforts, USAWR's successes would be unachievable. The USOC, Lakeshore and USAWR have been independent of the USQRA and its members for a significant amount of time. This has made many members of the USQRA feel voiceless and seemingly unable to help the development and improvement of the USAWR program. Specifically, many individuals believe that there should be more USQRA input concerning coaching staff selection, increasing player development opportunities and increasing overall USAWR program accountability.

If the membership of the USQRA wishes to become more involved with the direction and support of USAWR, what does the membership need to do? First, an understanding of the relationship between the USQRA and USAWR is vital. The USQRA is not in charge of USAWR and has not been for a long time. However, that does not mean that we cannot find new ways to positively and constructively influence the USAWR program. We can do that by doing several things: increasing the transparency between the USQRA membership and the Lakeshore Foundation, increasing communication between the USQRA membership and Lakeshore Foundation, and becoming more active in our roles as members of the USQRA.



The USQRA is welcoming National Sponsors

Interested Sponsors? Please Contact the 2nd Vice President

LINKS

- [Code of Ethics and Complaint Procedure for USQRA](#)
- [Constitution and By-Laws](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Developmental assistance:](#)
 - [Player grants](#)
 - [Team grants](#)

CLINICS

Interested in hosting a clinic? The USQRA is currently setting the calendar for this season.

If you would like more information on how to host a player, referee or classifier clinic please contact the [1st Vice President](#).

REFEREE CONTACTS

Teams must contact RACs to request officials for tournaments.

RACs are as follows:

Increasing transparency and communication, may lead to an improved, more direct connection with USAWR, and we, as the membership, may not feel as left out of the program. By becoming more active within the USQRA, with greater numbers, we may re-establish the required clout to positively influence the USAWR program.

Over the last several years, our membership has become less vocal within our organization. This has given us less influence on decisions that greatly affect our sport. The USQRA was formed by individuals who fought for the existence of our league and who led the way for the sport to be recognized in the Paralympics. Where have all of the fighters gone? Grumbling back and forth with each other about the current state of the USAWR will not achieve the desired outcomes. Perhaps it is lack of focus and that we need achievable goals to get that drive back. Here is what we offer as potential goals for our membership:

- Increase communication/transparency between the USQRA Membership and Lakeshore – via the Board of Directors and player committees
- Create a committee that directly converses/collaborates with Lakeshore/USOC on a regular, scheduled basis to discuss development of players, input for coaching/staffing for USAWR
- Create a presence for USQRA input during coaching selection
- Creation of an annual report on USAWR and the assessment of development of athletes within USAWR program by Lakeshore to facilitate collaboration and support with the USQRA
- Reintroduce developmental programs/teams (Force) for USAWR via USQRA to increase skill and chemistry for developing players and coaches
- Becoming more involved in AGM Constitution and Bylaw submissions to facilitate improvements in the league
- Increase attendance at AGM and discuss/network on ideas that are important to the league

The goal of this letter is not to get bogged down in personal attacks on individuals that run USAWR – that will not lead to productive changes. But the USAWR program has not achieved its primary goal since

Pacific - [Kelli Kaliszewski](#)
 Mountain - [Andy Miller](#)
 Heartland - [Kristin Little](#)
 Atlantic North - [Bob Lopez](#)
 Atlantic South - [Martha Rust](#)

Tournaments are required to pay official's game fees, hotel, travel (airfare or mileage at \$0.40/mile) and a per diem of \$10/game day. Official's game fees are based on level achieved.

For 2016-2017 the structure is as follows:

A level - \$45
 B Level - \$40
 C Level - \$35

RAC's should respond to your email within one week. If you do not receive a response, please contact [Andy Miller](#).

REFEREE CLINICS

Are you interested in hosting a referee clinic in conjunction with your tournament?

The USQRA will reimburse you for your two instructors' travel, hotel and stipend. Please contact [Jody Paniagua](#) for more information!

CLASSIFICATION PANELS

Why do some tournaments have classification panels and some don't? Who pays for classifiers? How can I get a classification panel at my tournament?

Find the answers to these questions and more by visiting our [updated Classification Information document](#) on our website.

Beijing 2008, which is winning gold. Each year, in international competition, we are seeing silver and bronze, but, not gold. It is clear that business as usual is not going to change these results. We need to assess, top-to-bottom, at what is going right and wrong, how we can fix the biggest and smallest problems, and get ourselves back on track. 2020 is not that far off, and the USAWR program needs a shot in the arm. Recently, programs such as Japan, Denmark and Canada all have re-focused their efforts for gold in 2020. We cannot be left behind as they make herculean efforts to claim the top spot in the world of rugby. Yes, the importance of a stronger USQRA and USAWR bond is absolutely necessary for the future. If we have passion for this sport, there is no excuse to not voice our concerns. We have to speak up and fight for the athletes, who will dedicate the next four years of their lives to this program, so that they can develop and succeed. What kind of program are we building for 2020, and 2024? Building a stronger membership and improving communication within and between the USQRA, USAWR and Lakeshore will help achieve the primary goal we all have in common – Gold. We need to collaborate and focus our efforts to improve all of these organizations, together. Let us get active, together, and return to the top of the wheelchair rugby world.

Please email [Head of Classification Phyllis Palma](#) with any additional questions.

Top 20 Rankings (Prior to Post-Season)

1. Phoenix
2. Minnesota
3. DC
4. Texas
5. Shepherd
6. Sharp
7. Seattle
8. U of A
9. Portland
10. Nor-Cal
11. St. Louis
12. Brooks
13. TIRR
14. Lakeshore
15. Tampa
16. Grand Rapids
17. Northridge
18. Denver
19. Philadelphia
20. Salt Lake

Fusion Medical Sponsoring USQRA



[Fusion Medical](#) found its start in Michigan, with the collaboration of Nick Long and Brian Sheridan, two wheelchair rugby athletes, who wanted to start a business to support individuals with disabilities. Thirteen years later, Fusion is proud to provide medical equipment and supplies across Michigan and the United States. Fusion is also a long-time supporter of adaptive sports, including wheelchair rugby and handcycling. Fusion has been a proud sponsor the USQRA, its mission and its athletes. We thank Fusion for its generosity and continued help in promoting the great sport of Wheelchair Rugby in America!

About Us

The United States Quad Rugby Association is a 501(c)3 nonprofit which provides oversight, development and administration to the sport of wheelchair rugby across the United States. Since 1988 the USQRA has been promoting and supporting wheelchair rugby to provide competitive athletic opportunities to eligible people with disabilities and also to empower people to reach their full potential in all areas of life. The USQRA features 45 teams with more than 500 athletes across the country. For more information: <http://www.usqra.org/>

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