

Date of Board Meeting	September 26, 2024 Quarterly Meeting
Subject	08/08/2024 Board Meeting Minutes
Subject for	Review and approval
Presenter	Bill Goren
Brief Summary	Minutes from the 8/08/2024 catch-up meeting
Recommendation	Review and approve
Financial implications	None
Appendices for Noting	None

Board Meeting Minutes

Date: August 8th, 2024

Location: Virtual

1. Meeting Details

- **Participants:**
 - **Board Members:** Tom Cusack (Independent, Director), Denis Shanagher (International Athlete), Victoria Folayan (International Athlete), Bill Stevens (Youth and High School), Rick Humm (Senior Club), Brett Thompson (International Athlete), Jamie Burke (International Athlete), Paul Keeler (College), Koma Gandy Fischbein (Independent)
 - **USAR National Office:** Bill Goren, Tamara Sheppard, Todd Sowl, Corey MacDonald
 - **Observers:** None

2. Welcome and Roll Call

Tom Cusack opened the meeting and conducted a roll call to confirm participants.

3. Conflict of Interest

Jamie Burke disclosed a conflict, noting her position with WER.

4. Approval of Minutes

- Due to the late distribution of minutes, approval will be sought via email circular from Bill Goren.

5. Chair Update

- **National Teams:** Several national teams are beginning their summer international seasons this weekend.
- **U20 Success:** The U20 team reached the final of the World Rugby Trophy Championship against Scotland.
- **W7 Achievements:** The Women's Sevens (W7) team won a bronze medal at Stade De France in front of 70,000 spectators, a major milestone. This result strengthens the message to World Rugby (WR) for larger venues, especially for the LA28 Olympics. Michele Kang's \$4M donation over four years to the W7 program was highlighted as key to future success.
- **Philanthropy:** There is an ongoing opportunity to build on recent momentum and expand philanthropic efforts. A comprehensive plan for the use of Michele Kang's gift will be developed to clarify its allocation.

6. CEO Update

- **Event Recap:** The recent test matches against Romania and Scotland were successful, particularly the packed event in Washington, D.C. through the AEG partnership. The Chicago match, however, received less focus from AEG. USAR is considering securing a new promoter for the 2025 match.
- **HSBC 7s Series:** AEG will manage the series for 2025, and lobbying efforts continue with USOPC and WR to secure a larger venue for LA28.
- **Anthem Partnership:** USAR is awaiting MLR's signature on the Anthem contract, after which USAR will finalize its service agreement. The budget proposal for increased high-performance support will go to Anthem's board.
- **Short-term Opportunities:** With the Olympic profile rising, USAR aims to engage more deeply with the rugby ecosystem. There are numerous promotional opportunities that must be carefully prioritized to maximize growth.

7. Operations Update

- **Staffing:** Efforts are underway to fill Jonathan's vacant position. Jim Estes, who has a strong background with NGBs like USA Track & Field and USA Badminton, will be offered the role. Rick Humm expressed his support for the process.
- **Philanthropy:** A strategy will be developed to aggressively seek funds in the post-Olympic environment.
- **Sponsorship:** Several deals are nearing completion, including with Quest Nutrition and a medical partner. Renewing the Secret partnership is also in progress, and Insight Global is under review (with a 30% likelihood of success). Challenges with Macron's

commercial requirements were noted, emphasizing the need for USAR to retain control over deal execution.

- **Commercial Rights:** USAR is working with WR to refine the commercial rights agreement to ensure shared accountability.
- **College Rugby:** A plan will be developed with WR to address college rugby's needs, including potentially hiring a women's commissioner for USAR. Brett Thompson raised concerns that WR's funding has historically focused on high performance rather than community programs. Past WR grants targeted college and community growth prior to the bankruptcy.
- **Bylaws and Sanctioning Agreements:** A working group will move forward on finalizing by-laws. Discussions around NZ v Ireland match sanctioning continue.
- **Conflict of Interest Forms:** USOPC has requested a restart of the conflict-of-interest exercise. Rick Humm suggested attaching an NDA to the process, and Bill will coordinate with Corey on this.
- **W7 Recognition:** Brett Thompson inquired about opportunities to celebrate the W7 team's achievement, and Bill agreed to explore recognition options.
- **Player Obligations:** Rick requested clarification on the players' commercial obligations. Bill and Tamara will investigate and report back.
- **W7 Gift Use:** Clear communication on how Michele Kan's gift will be used to support the W7 program is required. Bill and Tamara will provide specific messaging to the community.

8. Finance Update

- **Insurance Costs:** There has been a 28% increase in General Liability (GL) insurance, which needs to be addressed.
- **Discounts:** USAR is exploring a potential Avis/Budget discount for members.
- **Donations:** A progress report was provided on year-to-date donations. Rick Humm requested a deeper look into smaller donations supporting pathway programs.

9. High Performance

- A detailed Paris debrief was shared, with a process for review over the next six weeks.
- Recruitment for high-performance roles continues while awaiting further guidance from USOPC.

10. Any Other Business / Executive Session

- The board entered executive session.

11. Adjournment

- Tom Cusack moved to adjourn the meeting.