

MEETING MINUTES
Western PA Division / US Fencing Association
Annual Meeting and Elections – July 16, 2017

A.) Call meeting to order:

- Meeting called to order at 1:14 PM

B.) Roll Call:

- Attendees (alphabetical order by last name)

Joseph Cascio
Amber Davis
Shane Malachow
Will Romanias
Dave Theriault
Deb Theriault
Storm Walden
Olivia Weiss
Renee Weiss

C.) Adoption of minutes from last annual meeting on July 17, 2016:

- Minutes from last annual meeting, held July 17, 2016, were adopted at this time.
- **Motion:** to accept Minutes; moved by Dave Theriault, seconded by Will Romanias.

D.) Reports:

1.) Treasurer's Report: Deb Theriault provided the Treasurer's Report.

- As of 7/16/17, the ending balance of the WPD Treasury was \$10,071.85. The bank balance was \$10,399.23, with \$327.38 in outstanding checks.
- Total income for the 8/1/16 – 7/16/17 period was \$858.00 (meet fees: \$360.00; US Fencing dues share rebates: \$498.00)
- The US Fencing dues rebate amount included \$159.00 from the end of the 2015-2016 season and 339.00 from the beginning of the 2016-2017 season.
- Total expenses for the 8/1/16 – 7/16/17 period were \$1,020.61 (WPD rebates: \$420.00; FOC clinic: \$300.00; website costs: \$142.58; meet expenses: \$80.83; and miscellaneous admin expenses: \$77.20).
- Some additional expenses for the 2016-2017 season have not been submitted (annual meeting expenses); receipts for these will be sent to Deb Theriault promptly, so she can finalize the Treasurer's Report.
- WPD rebate program had 12 SafeSport partial rebates for the season.

- Deb Theriault commented that for several years, the annual income of the WPD has been less than the annual expenses. She encouraged the members of the Executive Committee to try to think of ways to increase revenue. One of the ways is for the Division to host tournaments, but that can be complicated, as staffing and venues are a concern.
- **Motion:** to accept Treasurer's Report; moved by Olivia Weiss, seconded by Dave Theriault.

2.) Year-End Review:

- Olivia Weiss presented a PowerPoint with data from the 2016-2017 season.
 - Division Membership: this past season, there were 325 members of the WPD: 108 were voting members; 35 members were Veteran Fencers; 148 were over 18 (of voting age); 177 were under 18; 126 members were high-school aged; and 51 were youth (under 14).
 - Tournaments: twelve tournaments were held in the WPD this season. Corsair hosted 3 of these events; IUP hosted 2; USCFC hosted 2; Tiger hosted 1. There was also one unsanctioned tournament: the Holy Grail at CMU. The WPD held Qualifiers for Junior Olympics and Summer Nationals: 7 individuals qualified for Junior Olympics, 8 individuals qualified for Summer Nationals. Tiger also held an RYC.
 - Classification Changes: thirty-five ratings were awarded this season: 2 B, 5 C's, 8 D's, and 20 E's. Of these, 20 were renewals, 15 were new ratings. Twenty-four of these were In-Division, 11 were Out-of-Division. This is a total of 3 fewer tournaments than the 2015-2016 season, and 5 fewer ratings generated.

E.) Elections:

- Elections were held for the positions of Chair, 1st Vice Chair, and Treasurer.
- The WPD Nominating Committee's recommended candidates were Olivia Weiss as Chair, Sarah Read as 1st Vice Chair, and Deb Theriault as Treasurer.
- The election results were unanimous: Olivia Weiss as Chair, Sarah Read as 1st Vice Chair, and Deb Theriault as Treasurer.
- The current Executive Committee includes Erik Blank as 2nd Vice Chair and Renee Weiss as Secretary.

F.) Old Business:

1.) Membership Statistics

- Olivia Weiss said, that once again, the membership statistics had been covered in the PowerPoint during the Year-End Review, earlier in the meeting. This was agreed on by all attendees, with everyone being aware of what the demographics of the WPD are.

- Olivia Weiss stated that the Division has a reasonable number of youth fencers and a reasonable number of high-school fencers who are an underserved component of the Division. These members are not voting members, they do not attend the meetings, and there are also no events held for them to compete in.
- The question was raised if anyone knew what was going on with the high-school league (PIFA). Deb Theriault commented that now that Charles Murphy is gone, there seems to be less organization. Adam and Lisa Marthens are now coaching the Catholics, and Dan Yu (Allderdice's coach) organized the referees for PIFA.
- It was agreed that although PIFA is not directly WPD business, it is still in the Division's mandate to "promote fencing within the Division" and therefore the WPD should be of assistance if possible.
- Deb Theriault said that an important factor in getting youth events supported was to engage the parents of the youth fencers: if the WPD wants to host some youth events, the parents need to be counted on to help out, on a meet-by-meet basis.
- Olivia Weiss stated that once the academic year begins, she will reach out to the high-school and collegiate coaches to find out what their plans are for the season, and how the Division can be assistive.

2.) Expansion of email distribution list

- Olivia Weiss said that the current WPD email distribution list includes approximately 100 people. This number is up from last year.
- Not only are more WPD members getting the emails, but more are reading them, as the email consolidator provides data on readership and engagement.

3.) Safe Sport Policy and reimbursement

- The WPD Safe Sport rebate policy was addressed for revision, due to the changes in USA Fencing's membership categories. The WPD had been providing a \$35 partial rebate, but now that the additional costs are only \$20 for the +Coach and +CheckED upgrades, the partial rebate should be modified to reflect that.
- Deb Theriault commented that the Coach membership level is \$120, which is \$15 more than what the previous season's Professional membership cost.
- A thorough read-through was done of the USA Fencing's most recent listing of memberships, and it was determined that further clarification was still needed before the rebate policy was officially modified.
- Olivia Weiss said she will contact Membership Services at the National Office to get that further clarification. She will then distribute said information to the WPD members via email.
- Deb Theriault said once clarification is received, she will post the information on the WPD website.

- Shane Malachow asked what membership level will be required for the fencers at IUP. Will they need Coach memberships, or just a CheckED upgrade on their Collegiate Competitive memberships?
- Olivia Weiss said she would inquire about that as well, when she speaks to Membership Services.
- Renee Weiss said that all Executive Committee members still need to have SafeSport and background checks, despite the fact that none of that was delineated in USA Fencing's information on the new membership levels.
- Deb Theriault stated that there should be ONE set of CORRECT information available.
- The revision of the SafeSport partial rebate policy was tabled until the clarification is received from the National Office: an Executive Committee vote on the revision will be conducted by email.

4.) All-Academic Program

- Olivia Weiss recognized the achievements of 3 of the WPD high-school aged fencers who had received recognition through USA Fencing's All-Academic and All-American Team Programs.
- The All-Academic Team is based on GPA; the All-American Team on classification changes.
- Harry Hardman (Aquinas Academy/Pittsburgh Fencers' Club) and Rachael Kate Yanalitis (Oakland Catholic/Corsair) earned 1st Team honors in the All-Academic Program.
- Harry Hardman, Rachael Kate Yanalitis, and Ariel Holstien (Taylor Allderdice/Pittsburgh Fencers' Club) earned honors in the All-American Program: Harry Hardman and Ariel Holstein were awarded 2nd Team honors, and Rachael Kate Yanalitis earned an Honorable Mention.
- It was agreed that the WPD should continue to promote these programs to their high-school fencers: Olivia Weiss said she would send out emails to the high-school coaches with the information to pass along to their fencers. Deb Theriault will post the links on the WPD website once they are available for the new season's programs.
- Amber Davis asked if the information could please be sent to all the club coaches as well; Olivia Weiss agreed that she would do so.

5.) Accomplishments at Summer Nationals

- The WPD had 7 fencers compete at Summer Nationals in Salt Lake City this season, with reasonable results.
- Zara Moss won the Junior Women's Saber; Lynn Botelho won the Vet 50 Women's Foil; and our very own Chair, Olivia Weiss placed 5th in Division Women's Epee, earning a spot on the podium!

G.) New Business:

1.) Calendar and proposed competitions

- Renee Weiss had distributed blank calendars to all the meeting attendees. Big events that are being held nearby include: *Fencers Attacking Diabetes* (September 9/10, 2017) and the Arnold (March 2-4, 2018). National Event dates were also considered, so as not to conflict with potential Division tournaments.
- Amber Davis addressed the accessibility of Corsair as a venue; Olivia Weiss acknowledged that it was not an accessible venue.

- 2017-2018 events being planned:

IUP: Shane Malachow said IUP was hoping to host at least one, possibly two events this season: something in the fall (date uncertain as yet) and something in the spring (potentially April 7th or 8th). The availability of IUP's gym for a fencing competition remains the perennial concern.

TFC: Tiger did not submit a bid for an RYC this season; since no one else in the Division was aware of this until after the bid window was closed, no other club, nor the Division itself, was able to step up as a potential host. There was no information available from Tiger as to whether they were planning to hold any sanctioned competitions this season.

USC: Renee Weiss said there is E and Under competition planned for the fall; Walter Ullrich has requested a gym for November 11th. Additionally, he is requesting a gym for May 20th: that competition would potentially be a D and Under.

Corsair: Brendon Beatty has informed the Executive Committee that he wants to hold a series of 5 Open competitions paired with progressive level events (Unrated, E and Under, D and Under, C and Under, Unrated) this season. The proposed dates are: October 28/29, November 18/19, December 16/17, March 24/25, and April 14/15. He will submit sanctioning requests shortly. The dates for the spring events will remain tentative until the scheduling of CMU's Holy Grail.

NHFC: Amber Davis said that North Hills Fencing Club would like to hold a small tournament, perhaps coupled with a clinic. She felt that this might be best after North Hills had completed its next beginners class.

WPD: The WPD will be hosting *Fight Strong! Fencing for the Cause*: a fundraising competition in support of the National Breast Cancer Foundation on October 8th, 2017. Corsair Fencing Club has generously

provided the venue.

Junior Olympic Qualifiers are projected to be held on December 2nd, 2017, and Summer National Qualifiers on March 18th, 2018.

CMU, WVU, PFC, TRFC: No information available.

- Olivia Weiss once again brought up the possibility of clubs within the Division running some youth competitions, especially as there is no RYC this season. Renee Weiss suggested the possibility of these competitions being held during the host clubs regularly scheduled practices.
- A referee seminar and an armory seminar were under discussion for the fall; dates and venues were as yet unconfirmed.

2.) Youth development

- All attendees were in agreement that a concrete plan for youth development needs to be put together by the WPD. As was mentioned during the discussion of proposed tournaments, clubs are going to be contacted and encouraged to host some small events.
- The proposal was put forth that perhaps the Division itself could host an RYC during the 2018-2019 season, if no individual club is prepared to do so. Olivia Weiss stated that due to the changes in USA Fencing's qualifying paths, it has become increasingly difficult for any WPD youth fencers to qualify for National events. Deb Theriault agreed that kids need to get over the hurdle of their first competition at a local level (not by driving to New Jersey).
- Shane Malachow suggested a mentorship program between college fencers and youth fencers; Olivia Weiss said this was something that definitely merited further consideration.
- Will Romanias asked what were the requirements for holding youth tournaments; Olivia Weiss responded that since youth tournaments are unsanctioned, mostly just a space and a referee or two. Renee Weiss readdressed the possibility of holding potential youth tournaments as a series, with one at each participating club. Will Romanias suggested that the WPD run these tournaments, and as an incentive, split the proceeds with the hosting club.
- It was proposed that CMU might host some youth tournaments during their practices. This would provide refereeing experience for the college fencers as well.
- Shane Malachow suggested that some of these tournaments could be paired with an armory workshop, for parents to learn how to repair their child's equipment. Deb Theriault said a good time for an armory workshop would be the beginning of the season; Olivia Weiss said she would check into possible arrangements for that.

- Deb Theriault stated again that the biggest factor in getting a successful youth program was parental involvement, and posed the question of how do other divisions develop this. Will Romanias said that in the various divisions he has been affiliated with, there usually are big clubs with large youth contingents, and youth classes year-round. Olivia Weiss said she would reach out to committee members of other divisions and inquire what other methods of youth development they have found successful.

3.) New Membership Categories

- USA Fencing's new membership categories were addressed earlier during the meeting. Olivia Weiss confirmed that she would get the clarification on those as soon as possible.

4.) Division Officer meeting at Summer Nationals

- Olivia Weiss reported on the Division Officer meeting that was held in Salt Lake City at Summer Nationals.
- The issue of youth fencers dealing with the changes in qualification paths had been addressed there as well: the possibility of the WPD being reassigned to Region 2 (which begins at the Ohio border) from Region 3 (which extends through New Jersey) was put forth. This would greatly increase the opportunities for WPD fencers to actually compete in regional events without a 6-hour drive.

5.) Updated club listing/contact information

- Deb Theriault will update the club listings on the WPD website as needed; some of the clubs have changed their contact information and their social media links. Olivia Weiss will contact the clubs to provide Deb Theriault with their updated links, etc.

H.) Adjournment:

- Olivia Weiss made the motion to adjourn. Storm Walden seconded it. The meeting adjourned at 3:03 PM.