

USA Team Handball 2008 - Summit

Overview

USA Team Handball Chairman Dieter Esch defined the general expectation for this meeting - to get a broad understanding of where Handball is at the moment and the steps that can be taken to elevate it to the next level. It is clear that we all have to share ideas in order to spread the word and increase the understanding of the sport. The end goal is to set a trend and engage people, which will ideally increase the popularity of the sport in the US. No final decisions will be made during the meeting. As soon as any decisions are made the membership will be informed.

Introductions were made including Board Members Brad Krassner and William O'Brien.

Mission Statement

A mission statement will be developed and evolve over time. Key phrases and words may include:

- § Develop and grow
- § Change attitudes and opinions
- § Fresh ideas
- § Men/women - senior/junior/youth
- § Educate players and general public
- § Promote Handball
- § Look forward
- § Enable US athletes to win

As long as there is a clear business plan the Olympic committee will support USA Team Handball.

Mid Term/Long Term Objectives

(A High Performance Plan will be developed during the next four months)

- § Competitive Men's & Women's National Team in PATHF, and ultimately at World Championships/Olympic Level
- § Competitive excellence - there needs to be a plan and a building process where good coaching, education, grass roots development and player development is sustained.
- § New Federation Organization and Structure
- § National Board
- § 5 of 7 National board members in place (\$50,000 donation each)
- § The positions are not age, gender or race restricted as long as the applicants share a common vision for the USA Team Handball.
- § The National Board will also have athlete representation - 2 athletes to be elected by "active athletes".
- § Five Regional Boards (Northeast, Southeast, North Central, South Central, West) were discussed. Each board would have ten members.
- § Five business members will donate \$30,000 each.
- § Five "handball" members will not have to contribute money.
- § Regions feature Directors who develop programs and clinics to grow and teach the sport. A job description will be developed.

Regional Director (suggestions)

- § A dozen names were submitted to the board for consideration for Regional Director. The website <http://www.usateamhandball.org/> will be utilized to publicize the opportunity and solicit additional candidates. No decisions were made for any regional position.

Director of Women's Program (suggestions)

§ About five names were submitted to the board for consideration for a "GM" of the Women's National Team program. The website <http://www.usateamhandball.org/> will be utilized to publicize the opportunity and solicit additional candidates. No decisions were made for any regional position.

Regional Coaches (suggestions)

§ About 10 names were submitted to the board for consideration for Regional Coach. The website <http://www.usateamhandball.org/> will be utilized to publicize the opportunity and solicit additional candidates. No decisions were made for any regional position. There will be five full-time paid coaching positions. They must have the skill set to deliver the concept of handball, teach the basic principles and develop the sport on a grass root level. Past experience is essential along with respect of other coaches.

Current Handball Clubs

A discussion was held to identify the 20-25 active Handball clubs around the country and determine which offered men's, women's and youth programs. An updated, accurate list of Handball clubs will be posted on <http://www.usateamhandball.org/>.

All clubs must be properly organized to be recognized by the NGB. Formal recognition process and fee structure will be announced by USA Team Handball later this year. Key elements include:

Be incorporated in state of primary operation (501-c3 IRS code recommended)

Have a proper structure

Have at least one active team

Have certified coach(es) for each team and certified referees

Pay membership dues to USATH (by beginning of season)

Men's and Women's National Team Development and Management

There is no National Team training at this time. Some male athletes have been training in Atlanta and female athletes most recently trained together in Cortland, NY.

Multiple communities have expressed interest in hosting national training centers, events and/or NGB headquarters. USA Team Handball will develop and disseminate criteria for each.

Short/Mid and Long Term Goals

MNT

Short Term: Host qualifying match in late 2009 to reach Pan American Championships.

Mid Term: Develop and prepare the men's team for the 2010 and beyond.

Long Term: Qualify for World Championships in 2013 and 2015 and 2016 Olympics.

WNT

Short Term: No funds available for November '08 "play-in" match.

Mid Term: Prepare for 2011 World Championship and aspire to qualify for 2012 London games

Long Term: Qualify for 2016 games and be in the top eight.

YNT

Short/Middle/Long Term: Team Handball has no future in America unless consistent, effective youth programs are developed, from local to Youth National Team level.

Marketing, Promotion, Fundraising and Communication

Website:

Steve Pastorino will start work on <http://www.usateamhandball.org/> incorporating men's, women's, youth and amateur teams. A discussion ensued about content, including video, membership areas, news, sponsor and fundraising development, etc.

Sponsorship program:

It is important that Regional Sponsorship programs be coordinated with the NGB as there are guidelines to follow as directed by the Olympic Committee.

Television:

Board member Brad Krassner is passionate about creating TV opportunities from one-hour weekly shows titled "This Week in Handball" to international competitions.

PR:

An "all hands on deck" attitude will be required to introduce people to the sport. Suggestions include NGB coordination of press releases, beach handball, reality shows, clinics, celebrities, etc.

Engagement with International Bodies

Pan American Team Handball Federation (PATHF)

A lengthy discussion of the US role in the Pan American Team Handball Federation included a comparison of voting strength relative to active players. Dennis Berkholtz has been on the governing committee for eight years. Dennis explained the federation's function and the members of its executive committee. The next executive meeting to approve leadership for the next quad will take place in Brazil in November 2008.

Interaction with U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC)

USA Team Handball board emphasized that it is important that all members of the USA Handball community follow a chain of command. Communications with the USOC, the PATHF and IHF should only be made through USA Team Handball.

Domestic & International Competition and Organization

This should be a structure environment therefore the organization has a supportive relationship with clubs and the NGB. To enable the handball community to function effectively we must have:

§ Competition Rules and Regulations

§ An official handball season during which sanctioned tournaments will take place

§ Spectator & sponsor interaction

§ National Championship

§ A structure that works for everyone

Closing Comments

USA Team Handball Chairman Dieter Esch thanked everyone for their attendance. He reiterated the need for the handball community to work together for the common good and development of the sport. Members, volunteers, players and friends of handball are invited to keep an open line of communication to the NGB offices in Salt Lake City.