

Resolution for Board Action

Subject: Athletes Advisory Council (AAC) Membership

Background: USA Triathlon's AAC is comprised of five athletes who are current elite athletes.

Besides the requirement that the athletes meet USAT's elite membership criteria, there are no further performance requirements to serve on the AAC.

However, the USOC has recommended (but not mandated) that USAT's AAC members meet the same criteria that's required of elite BOD reps (see below):

An athlete must have "represented the United States in the Olympic, Pan American or Paralympic Games, World Championships, or an event designated as an Operation Gold event within the ten (10) years preceding election."

The only difference being, BOD athletes must meet the criteria for ITU racing, while AAC members could meet the criteria in any USAT discipline (triathlon, long distance triathlon, duathlon or aquathlon).

Making this change to the composition of the AAC has several benefits. First, it opens up the pool of athletes to those who are retired (the current criteria requires athletes to be active elites). Second, it addresses the fact that successful athletes generally have the most experience and the best understanding of what it takes to make it to the top, therefore better equipping them to make policy decisions/recommendations to USAT. Third, it alleviates some of the pushback and challenges the AAC receives from the USOC, USAT and National Team Members when lower performing (or unknown) elite athlete reps make policy decisions that affect the highest performing athletes or even the Olympic qualification process.

The second part of the resolution is to require each USAT Elite Board representative to automatically serve as an AAC representative (e.g. when an athlete runs for the Board, they are also running to be on the AAC). Since USAT's elite Board members are currently included in all AAC communications, votes and decisions, there will be no change to the workload of elite Board reps. This change will decrease the total number of elite representatives from eight to five (3 BOD/AAC reps and 2 AAC-only reps), which is a more efficient and workable size. It will also insure that there is significant ITU athlete involvement on the AAC.

Financial Impact: None.

Relevant & Affected By-Laws and Procedures:

Bylaw Article XI, Section 2, (e):

The Athletes' Advisory Council shall consist of five (5) members, each of whom shall be selected by and each of whom shall be a member of the Elite Pool (as defined in Article VI, Section 2 above). For the year 1997, the members of the Athletes' Advisory Council shall be the persons serving on the Board of Directors of the United States Professional Triathlete and Duathlete Commission immediately prior to the dissolution of the United States Professional Triathlete and Duathlete Commission.

Whereas, the current bylaws require AAC members to be current, active elites, however it's advantageous to include retired athletes since they are more experienced and less personally involved in the sport.

Whereas, this change would align the AAC with the USOC's policies (note- this isn't required of the AAC, however it's recommended by the USOC);

Whereas, the most experienced athletes have the best base of understanding of the intricacies of the sport;

Whereas, having lower performing elites on the AAC leads to less credibility for decisions;

Whereas, it is expected that USAT would be more likely to use the AAC as a trusted advisor if the athletes comprising the Committee have a strong understanding of and experience at the highest echelon of performance;

Whereas, all USAT elites will still be encouraged to reach out to the AAC with any concerns or issues. The AAC would still be responsible for representing elite athletes at all levels.

Whereas, a working group of five elites will be easier to recruit, easier to manage and more efficient than a group of eight elite reps.

Now therefore be it resolved that Bylaw Article X1, Section 2, (e) be changed to the following:

The Athletes' Advisory Council shall consist of five (5) members, each of whom has represented the United States in the Olympic, Pan American, Paralympic Games or Elite World Championships in triathlon, long distance triathlon, duathlon or aquathlon within the past ten (10) years or whom has finished in the top-15 at Ironman World Championships within the past ten (10) years preceding the election. Further, the three elite athletes elected to USAT's Board of Directors shall automatically hold three of the five slots on the AAC.

This change will take effect January 1, 2009.

Submitted by:
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