

# Minutes

## Special Meeting of the USFA Board of Directors

February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009

In attendance: Kalle Weeks, Jerry Benson, Ro Sobalvarro, Mark Stasinios, Bradley Baker, R. Greg Dilworth, David Blake, Aaron Clements, David Micahnik, Evan Ranes, Alan Kuver, George Masin, Ron Herman, David Sierra, Gerrie Baumgart, Kathryn Schifferle, Dan Berke, Susan Jennings, Alex Wood, Soren Thompson, Gregory Chang, Sada Jacobson, Scott Rodgers, David Herr, Terry Kwan, William Becker

Guests: Donald Alperstein, Tanya Brown, Sam Cheris, Bary Nusz, Nancy Anderson, George Kolombatovich, Paul Levy, Carol Buerdsell, Tim Levy, Andrew Lambdin-Abraham, Terry Dix, Greg Jones, Gary Zeiss, Ellen Klyce, Chloe Seroquere, Eric Dew, Steve Granberg, Dirk Moonen, Bruno Goosens, Charles Greene II, Edwin (Buzz) Hurst, Carla Mae Richards, Lisa Campi, Barbara Lynch, Kurt Aichele, Christine Simmons, Andrea Lagan, Jeanna Mendoza

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\*Reports are provided by committee chairs regarding their committee's activities; approval of the submitted reports does not indicate adoption of items within each report.

## **I. Information**

### **A. General Information and Organizational Items:**

#### **General announcements –**

Moment of Silence observed in memory of Paul Pesthy

Recognition of Christine Simmons for work done as Interim Executive Director

#### **Appointment of Parliamentarian: Aaron Clements**

### **B. Minutes of the September 20, 2008 Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**Motion (Mr. Baker):** To approve the minutes of the September 20, 2008 Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors

**Second:** Mr. Dilworth

**Motion passed.**

### **C. Officer and Executive Director Reports: (Please refer to the Index of Appendices)**

**Motion (Mr. Baker):** to receive Officer and Director reports.

**Second:** Mr. Stasinos

**Motion passed.**

### **D. Committee Reports**

1. Executive Committee Reports of Action. The EC approved the following actions:

#### **November 2, 2008**

- Approved one petition for late entry to NAC B (St. Louis).

#### **November 18, 2008**

- Approved appointment of Referee Development Task Force (Mary Mahon (Chair), Gerrie Baumgart, Ed Kaihatsu, Damon Scaggs, Julie Seal).

#### **November 19, 2008**

- Approved updated Committee/Task Force list

#### **December 2, 2008**

- At the request of our Interim Executive Director, the Executive Committee has authorized her to expand the number of companies from which proposals will be solicited to respond to US Fencing technology needs.
- Committee List modified to reflect a change of the chair of the By-Law Review Task Force from Greg Dilworth to Jane Carter.
- Approved a form of written contract for presentation to Kurt Aichele as Executive Director of US Fencing.

### **January 6, 2009**

- Appointed a panel to investigate alleged misconduct by a coach at an international tournament.
- Approved holding a World Cup (MS/WS/WF) in Dallas, TX, June 19<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009.
- Approved a budget variance of \$11,000 added to the expense column of line 76 (Senior World Cup) and corresponding changes to expenses entries of lines 80 (Total Seniors Programs), 90 (Total International) and 91 (Grand Total), as well as the net figure of all four lines.

### **January 20, 2009**

- Denied one appeal of denial of club representation change request.
- Denied two appeals of denials of petition for qualification to Junior Olympics.

### **January 30, 2009**

- Denied appeal of denial of petition for qualification to Junior Olympics.

### **February 3, 2009**

- Extended the mandate of the Referee Development Task Force through June 1, 2009.
- Denied a request for reimbursement for an unauthorized expense.
- Denied a request for recognition of national points earned by a fencer in contravention of US Fencing eligibility rules.

### **February 13, 2009**

- Approved updated Committee/Task Force list.
- Approved a request for change of club representation.

**Motion (Mr. Baker):** to approve EC action items.

**Second:** Mr. Sobalvarro

**Motion (Ms. Schifferle):** To amend updates to committee/task force list

**Second (Mr. Becker):** Passed.

**Motion passed as amended. Updated Committee/Task Force List attached.**

2. Committee Reports: (Please refer to the Index of Appendices)

**Motion (Mr. Baker):** to receive committee reports.

**Second:** Mr. Dilworth

**Motion passed.**

## **II. Budget Phase**

- A. Financial Reports: Mr. Dilworth distributed and discussed the following documents, copies of which are appended:**

- February 2009 Budget Report
- 2007-2008 Management Letter
- 2007-2008 Financial Report

**Motion (Mr. Dilworth):** To receive the Budget Report as submitted to the Board.

**Second:** Mr. Baker

**Motion passed.**

### III. Unfinished Business

#### A. Second Hearing

1. **Motion (Mr. Micahnik):** To require the Tournament Committee to modify the promotion criteria in all domestic national competitions as follows:

Number of Entries	Promote
16 or fewer	100%
17, 18, 19	16
20 or more	80%

**Second:** Mr. Kuver

**Motion amended to replace “80%” with “as prescribed by Tournament Committee”**

**Motion defeated.**

2. **Motion (Mr. Clements):** To establish a contributory life membership class to be offered to existing fully-paid Life Members, to be known as “Endowment Member.”

An existing fully-paid life member of the Association may become an Endowment Member upon payment of \$1,500.00 to the Association. Endowment Members retain eligibility to vote in USFA elections, but receive additional recognition at USFA events and shall receive credentials including a certificate suitable for framing; a suitably-designed lapel pin, decal, and patch identifying the member as an Endowment Member; and a new membership card identifying the member as an Endowment Member.

Additionally, as an introductory measure, the Executive Director shall be authorized to offer Endowment Membership to the existing roll of life members at a discounted price of not less than \$750.00 for a period of one year following establishment of this class of membership and to offer additional incentive(s) at the discretion of the Executive Director (such as a distinctive jacket or similar gift), but not exceeding \$200 in cost to the Association.

**Second:** Mr. Dilworth

**Motion (Mr. Clements):** To table motion.

**Second:** Mr. Raney

**Motion to table passed.**

**3. Motion (Mr. Streb): QUALIFICATION PATH TO SUMMER NATIONALS THROUGH SECTIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

WHEREAS, the qualification path for Division II fencers to the Summer National Championships through Sectional Championships was previously eliminated, and;

WHEREAS, this has worked a hardship on the organizers of Sectional Championships by reducing the number of fencers and consequently the amount of entry fee revenue;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the prior qualification path for Division II fencers to the Summer National Championships through the Sectional Championships be restored and that the Athlete Handbook, Section 2.11.3, be revised to again state:

**DIVISION II**

Fencers must have a classification in the weapon of "C", "D", "E" or Unclassified at the time of the qualifying competition AND meet the age requirements as above AND—

--Place in the top 25% of the current season's Division Qualifying competition (see Chapter 2.7.2 for detailed chart) OR

--Qualify for current season's Division I-A National Championships OR

--Qualify for the current season's U-19 National Championships in that weapon OR

--Qualify for the current season's U-16 National Championships in that weapon OR

--Placed in the top 4 at the previous season's Division III National Championships

**Second:** Ms. Bell

**Motion defeated.**

**4. Motion (Mr. Streb): Preparation of Executive Committee Report to Sections, Division, and the Membership:**

WHEREAS, it has come to the attention of the Sections, Divisions, and Members of USFA that USFA is in financial difficulty and that the High Performance Committee has been taken over by USOC;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Executive Committee of USFA shall immediately prepare a report to the Sections, Divisions, and Members of USFA stating (a) the nature of the past financial problems; (b) the plan for

correcting the past financial problems; (c) what correction efforts have been made and what efforts will be undertaken within the next 6 months; (d) what correction efforts will take longer than 6 months, and; (e) how management intends to deal with USOC in light of the takeover of the High Performance Committee and any other potential USOC action with respect to USFA. Further, this Report shall state whether USFA will continue to use the same accountants and auditors as in the past, and if so, the reasons therefore. This Report shall state whether USFA will continue to use the same legal counsel as in the past, and if so, the reasons therefore. This Report shall be made within 30 days on the basis of the best available information.

**Second:** Ms. Bell

**Motion defeated.**

#### **IV. New Business**

##### **A. First Hearing**

###### **1. Motion (Mr. Micahnik on behalf of the Veterans Committee):**

A 70+ category shall be created in events for veterans, on a trial basis for the 2009 Summer Nationals, and for the 2009-2010 season, in the two NAC events and the 2010 Summer Nationals. Specifically:

Rule 2.11 of the Athlete Handbook shall be amended as follows:

###### **Veteran Combined and V40, V50, V60**

There are ~~4~~ 5 categories of veteran events: Combined (ages 40 and above), V40 (ages 40-49), V50 (ages 50-59), ~~and~~ V60 (ages 60 and above) and V70 (ages 70 and above). At veteran competitions at NAC tournaments, Combined, V50, ~~and~~ V60 and V70 are held. V40, V50, V60 and V70 events are held at the Summer National Championships. Points are awarded for these competitions. See Chapters 3 and 4 for more details on how points are awarded and calculated.

Eligibility (age, classification) Combined: Must be at least 40 years old as of December 31 of the season.

Age eligibility for the separate age categories is governed by the FIE's rules for the Veteran World Championships (specifically V50 and V60).

V40: Must be at least 40 years old as of December 31 of the current season, and must not have reached 50 years old as of the first day of the month in which the Veteran World Championships will be held (typically the September after the Summer National Championships).

V50: Must be at least 50 years old and no older than 59 years old as of the first day of the month in which the next Veteran World Championships will be held (typically the September after the Summer National Championships).

V60: Must be at least 60 years old as of the first day of the month in which the Veteran World Championships will be held (typically the September after the Summer National Championships).

V70: Must be at least 70 years old as of the first day of the month in which the Veteran World Championships will be held (typically the September after the Summer National Championships).

For the Summer National Championships, fencers must be a US Citizen or permanent resident.

Qualifying Path – NAC

There is no qualifying path to compete in the NAC Veterans events.

Fencers must meet age requirements as above.

Qualifying Path – Summer National Championships

Fencer must state on entry the competition at which he or she met qualification criteria. Failure to do so will be the basis for rejection of entry. (NAC or points)

VETERAN – must meet age eligibility requirements above **AND** compete in

- Current season Section Championships **OR**
- Current season Division qualifying competition for Division II and/or Division III Championships

in which only those with a “C” classification or lower (D, E, or U) may compete **OR**

- Any NAC during the current season.

Seeding

The following ranked fencers are entitled to a seeded draw ahead of all other domestic fencers. See Chapter 2.10 for further details.

Veteran Combined, NAC Top 16 in Combined Veteran points

Veteran Age Championships, NAC Top 8 in Veteran Age points

Format (NAC)

- One round of pools
- 100% promoted out of pools
- No repêchage
- DE bout format: 10 touches in two 3-minute segments. In saber, bouts re fenced to 10

touches, with a 1-minute break when the first fencer reaches 5 touches.

Format (Championships)

- One round of pools
- 80% promoted out of pools; however, if there are 8 or fewer fencers registered in the event, 100% shall be promoted out of the pools [BOD, September , 2008]
- No repêchage
- DE bout format: 10 touches in two 3-minute segments. In saber, bouts are fenced to 10 touches, with a 1-minute break when the first fencer reaches 5 touches.

.....

The Tournament Committee, Executive Committee and other USFA authorities shall make such amendments to the rules and procedures as are necessary to effectuate this resolution

.....

**Second:** Mr. Kuver

**Motion (Mr. Micahnik):** To move motion to “Urgent” status

**Second:** Mr. Benson

**Motion to move to Urgent defeated.**

**Motion (Mr. Chang):** To reconsider motion to move to “Urgent” status

**Second:** Mr. Herr

**Motion to reconsider passed.**

**Motion amended to include the following text:**

“Conduct of each competition pursuant this motion is contingent upon the marginal cost thereof being covered by event entry fees and donations.”

**Motion passed as amended.**

- 2. Motion (Mr. Stasinios on behalf of the Tournament Committee):** To remove the 10am projection requirement from the NAC and Summer Nationals tournament schedules.

**Second:** Ms. Baumgart

**Motion (Mr. Stasinios):** To move motion to “Urgent” status.

**Second:** Ms. Schifferle

**Motion to move to Urgent passed.**

**Motion passed.**

- 3. Motion (Mr. Stasinios on behalf of the Tournament Committee):** To modify calculations for team seeding beginning with Summer Nationals 2009.

**Second:** Mr. Baker

**Motion (Mr. Stasinios):** To move motion to “Urgent” status.

**Second:** Mr. Benson

**Motion to move to Urgent passed.**

**After discussion, the movant and second accepted a friendly amendment to add the following text to the motion:**

“To modify the table used to seed team events, beginning with Summer Nationals 2009, to comport with the table below titled “Recommended.”

**Motion passed as amended.**

<b>National Pt. Standing</b>	<b>Current Additional Pts.</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
1	132	132
2	131	131
3	130	130
4	129	129
5	128	128
6	127	127
7	126	126
8	125	125
9	124	124
10	123	123
11	122	122
12	121	121
13	120	120
14	119	119
15	118	118
16	117	117
17	116	116
18	115	115
19	114	114
20	113	113
21	112	112
22	111	111
23	110	110
24	109	109
25	108	108
26	107	107
27	106	106
28	105	105
29	104	104
30	103	103
31	102	102
32	101	101
33	50	91
34	50	90
35	50	89
36	50	88
37	50	87
38	50	86
39	50	85
40	50	84
41	50	83
42	50	82
43	50	81
44	50	80

45	50	79
46	50	78
47	50	77
48	50	76
49	50	75
50	50	74
51	50	73
52	50	72
53	50	71
54	50	70
55	50	69
56	50	68
57	50	67
58	50	66
59	50	65
60	50	64
61	50	63
62	50	62
63	50	61
64	50	60
65	50	50
66	50	49
67	50	48
68	50	47
69	50	46
70	50	45
71	50	44
72	50	43
73	50	42
74	50	41
75	50	40
76	50	39
77	50	38
78	50	37
79	50	36
80	50	35

**4. Motion (Mr. Berke):**

Beginning with the 2009-2010 USFA season, additional exemptions will be made to the rule requiring competitors to be age 13 or older to compete in senior events. This will be reflected in Section 2.5 (“Eligibility to Compete”) of the Athlete’s Handbook as follows:

*Old text:*

For any USFA competition that is not specific to an age group, the fencer must be at least 13 years old as of January 1 of the current fencing season. The fencing season is the same as the membership year, August 1 through the following July 31. ~~The exception to this rule is that a fencer who is on the Junior national rolling point standings (NRPS) at the entry deadline for the competition and is younger than 13 as of January 1 of the current fencing season will be allowed to compete in the USFA competitions not specific to an age group.~~

*New text:*

For any USFA competition that is not specific to an age group, the fencer must be at least 13 years old as of January 1 of the current fencing season. The fencing season is the same as the membership year, August 1 through the following July 31. **An exception to this rule will be granted to fencers that meet at least one of the following criteria:**

- 1. The fencer is on the National Junior point standings in that weapon.**
- 2. The fencer is on the National Cadet point standings in that weapon.**
- 3. The fencer is ranked in the top 32 of the National Youth-14 point standings in that weapon.**
- 4. The fencer has earned a classification of “D” or higher and is at least 12 years old as of January 1 of the current fencing season.**

Related text that mentions the 13-year-old age limit in Section 2.3 (“Types of Competitions”) and Section 2.11 (“Specific Events - Division I”, “Specific Events -Division IA”, and “Specific Events - Division II & Division III”) also must be modified to reflect this change. It is recommended that these Sections refer the reader to Section 2.5 rather than reprinting the detailed list of exceptions.

**Second:** Mr. Sierra

- 5. Motion (Mr. Baker):** To adopt rules changes to reflect a change in the target area in foil to include a portion of the lower bib, matching the current rules in effect for FIE competition. The effective date of these rules changes will be August 1, 2009 for all national tournaments and qualifiers to national tournaments. The effective date of these rules changes will be August 1, 2010 for all other competitions at all levels governed by the rules of US Fencing.

**Second:** Mr. Kuver

## **B. Disciplinary Hearings:**

- 1.** Review and consider the report and recommendations of panel formed to investigate alleged misconduct of Matthew Hite. The panel found no basis for the

imposition of discipline, but suggested that the Executive Committee advise Mr. Hite of the USFA's Sexual Harassment Policy and reiterate the USFA's commitment to the policy's principles.

**Motion (Mr. Kuver):** To implement recommendations included in panel report.

**Second:** Mr. Stasinis

**Motion passed.**

2. Review and consider the report and recommendations of panel formed to investigate alleged misconduct of Eric Dew.

**Recommendation of the Panel:**

With these factors in mind, the panel unanimously recommends the following sanctions:

1. That Eric Dew's membership in the Association be suspended for the 2008-2012 quadrennium;
2. That as a condition for reinstatement to membership in the Association following this period of suspension, Dew be required to submit evidence of at least forty (40) hours of sexual harassment counseling during each year of the suspension;
3. That as a condition for reinstatement to membership, that Dew agree to refrain from serving as a tournament official, referee, or armorer, or in any elected or appointed position in the Association; and
4. That Dew's conduct be referred to the Fencing Officials Commission for any further sanction which that body deems appropriate.

**Motion (Mr. Herr):** To implement recommended discipline included in panel report.

**Second:** Mr. Stasinis

**Motion passed on a vote of 18 in favor and 1 opposed.** (Note: Discipline including suspension of membership, expulsion from the Association, denial of continuation of membership, or denial of readmission to the Association requires a two-thirds vote of members voting.)

## V. Good and Welfare

1. The next Special Meeting of the Board of Directors will be held the first weekend in July at the Summer Nationals. The President will determine and announce the specific time after the Summer Nationals schedule is established.
2. Cindy Bent Findley is looking for news items for inclusion in future issues of American Fencing.

**Motion to Adjourn (Mr. Dilworth)**

**Second:** Mr. Stasinis

**Motion to Adjourn passed.**

**Appendix A**  
**Kalle Weeks**  
**President's Report**

The focus of the officers and the EC since September has primarily been on matters requiring immediate attention. We conducted a successful search for a new Executive Director, culminating in the hiring of Kurt Aichele, who joined the staff on December 15<sup>th</sup>. As is the case at the beginning of each quad, we put forward candidates for various FIE offices and conducted an international campaign to enlist support for their candidacy from other federations. Sunil Sabharwal was elected to the Executive Committee, Derek Cotton to the Arbitrage Commission, Sam Cheris to the Legal Commission, and Dan DeChaine to SEMI.

Closer to home we established committees and task forces, which, as you will see from their reports, have moved forward at different paces. Of particular note is the work of the Resource Development Committee, which has set forth ambitious yet practical plans to enhance our finances as well as our visibility. The Referee Development Task Force has set forth a variety of ways to address how we enhance our referee corps, and will continue to refine its findings to create a comprehensive program. Still in the organizational phase is the Parent Advisory Group, which is working on its mission statement and exploring various potential projects.

With the support of the board and a small group of dedicated volunteers, the National Open Circuit, a new category of events, has been established. And with the appointment of Courtney Winninger as the Youth Development Manager at the National Office, support for this aspect of our program is significantly enhanced; the 2009-2010 SYC bid packets are available on the web, and decisions about these events will be made early in the spring.

Our relationship with the USOC has been positive; we have addressed a variety of financial issues and continue to maintain open and cordial communications with these colleagues. Our coaches have developed plans to build on our Olympic successes, even in the face of increased costs and smaller resources.

There are significant tasks ahead for us: continuing to manage our finances responsibly, bylaws reform and strategic planning, as well as ensuring that our tournaments and other activities move forward productively and efficiently. And we must do so within the national and international financial context. Some of our members have lost their jobs, others are doing the work of two—or three—in downsized businesses. For many this means less discretionary income, less time to volunteer.

We have begun to see what the financial situation means for us in our tournament numbers: for the first time entries have decreased across the board at our NACs and JOs, starting in November, 2009. In the past, entries moved up and down, often in response to the venue location, and in percentages that hovered in the single digits. What we are experiencing now is both a more consistent pattern and is in some cases much larger in scope. Entries were down 22% from last year for NAC C, and are down 17% for JOs (as of 1/28). We have responded to these downturns by decreasing our tournament staffing levels, but venue costs are set by contract, so tournaments that in the past were breaking even or making money may well come in over budget. As we plan for future we will have to consider how best to work with reduced

entries and therefore with reduced income.

Even as we face these challenges, there is much to celebrate; our cadet and junior fencers have had impressive results in Europe already this season, and our senior fencers are poised for success as well. Our membership numbers are stable or increasing, with, for example, a 27% increase in 3-year coach memberships, and a 30% increase in Junior 3-year memberships. We have reservoirs of talent and energy that are beginning to be tapped to continue to realize fencing's potential; bigger and better things are on the horizon as we move ahead as a sport and as an organization.

**Appendix B**  
**Mark Stasinios**  
**Vice-Presidents Report**  
**January 8, 2009**

The Referee Task force was created and given assignment in November to examine other Sports and Federations in their development of the grassroots to elite referees. The Task Force was chaired by Mary Mahon, with additional members of the group, Gerrie Baumgart, Julie Seal, Damon Scaggs and Ed Kaihatsu. The final report of information was to be presented on January 20, 2009 to the EC and it's findings then to be passed on to the Fencing Officials Commission. I am hopeful the final report will be available for review at the Board of Directors Meeting this summer. This is what their mission was to accomplish:

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Referee Development Task Force.

This Task Force has as its purpose the gathering of information to present to the Executive Committee and the Fencing Officials Commission to assist the FOC in better serving the referees and their development on all levels.

Rationale:

There has been a lack of understanding amongst our officials regarding the process of development and advancement in our ratings system. The need for consistent communication and mentoring is a must; in addition we need to explore how to do this more effectively both regionally and nationally. Some of the questions that need to be explored are:

1. How do other International Federations and National Governing Bodies deal with the promotion and demotion of their referees?
2. What other systems are there that have mentoring programs and how do they operate?
3. What measures can be recommended to make clear the processes and procedures for referee advancement?
4. What recommendations can be made regarding the process of reducing individual's ratings?
5. What is the best way to deal with the critiques and criticism of referees' performance?

The task force will focus on these questions and any others that may arise as a result of their research.

The Task Force will consist of 5 individuals:

Mary Mahon: Chairman of the Task Force

Gerrie Baumgart: Chairman of Grassroots Development, FOC

Damon Scaggs: Member FOC

Ed Kaihatsu

Julie Seal

The Task Force will begin November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and report to the Executive Committee with their findings and recommendations by January 20<sup>th</sup> 2009

Mark Stasinios, Vice President

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The development and advancement of referee's is high a high priority for me during this Quad. Gerrie Baumgart is the Chair for the Grass Roots Development Committee and has begun the process of distributing new seminar and testing materials for examiners. With Derek Cotton's election to the FIE Arbitrage, he resigned as chair of the Elite Referee Development Committee

for the FOC. Mr. Cheris will be selecting a new chair for the Elite Referee Development. The remaining FOC business will be presented in Sam Cheris' report for the FOC.

The Tournament Committee is working on a number of projects at this time. I will ask you to refer to the TC Report to the BOD. I would just like to acknowledge the commitment and seriousness that Tanya Brown and her group have demonstrated since their appointments in September and their commitment to improving our National Tournaments and Championships. In addition, I am confident that outlines for formalized training programs will soon be in place before next season for the development of additional bout committee personal and technicians for regional and national events.

There has been no action or business to date taken or submitted by the Divisions and Sections Resource Group.

**Appendix C**  
**Vice President Report, Jerry Benson**  
**Board of Directors Meeting, February 14, 2009**

I will start with the area with which I am having difficulties, or in other words, the area with which I am not having the success I would like. I have been unable to find a working Chair for the Club Development and Support Task Force. This, in my opinion, is one of our most important groups, and one that could have a direct effect on our success in the future. Given the current economic situation, our clubs need more support and help than ever before. We started the year right after Beijing with most clubs showing a positive growth in membership. Across the nation, many were reporting a 15-20% increase. In talking to other club owners, I have found that this growth has stopped or at least slowed down. Many clubs did use the information and help provided on the web site and initially obtained some very positive results. However, these results appear to be fading. We have a good group of members on the committee, but we need a Chair who can spend the time and energy directing their efforts and goals. We have been looking for volunteers from the ranks of current club owners, but many now seem to not have the time to volunteer. I hope to be able to suggest a new name to the President before this meeting.

The Paralympic Development Resource Group has been very active, and I will let its report speak for the efforts and hard work of its members. Our Resource Development Committee lost one of its key members due to health reasons but has been able to recover and move on. Although you may have not heard a lot from this Committee, it has been meeting frequently and working very hard and to have programs and suggestions ready for the incoming Executive Director. The Resource Development Committee is now ready to hit the ground running and soon hopes to be able to start programs that will show some results. Again, I refer you to the Chair's report for the particulars. Sports Medicine is working to develop our current staff and to recruit more volunteer staff to be able to address our needs both domestically and internationally. The Chair of the Sports Science Technology Task Force has meet with several coaches and with the design team to try to get a working product to our coaches using e-scout as soon as possible. Please refer to the Chair's report. Finally, the Hall of Fame Committee is getting ready for the annual election and installation of new members into our Hall of Fame at Summer Nationals

As a member of the EC, I am very excited about the hiring of our new Executive Director, Kurt Aichele. He has impressed me in a very short time. The demands of this job were going to be immediate with no time to settle in or prepare. Kurt has somehow found a way to hit the ground running. I have also found him very open to ideas and he is willing to listen to suggestions. I refer you to his report. I hope we all give him as much support as possible and that, if we are asked to help, we do not hesitate to volunteer to do our part. Although we have been able to stop the "bleeding", we are still not out of the hospital yet. Much cooperation, understanding, patience, and hard work are still needed before we totally recover.

With Respect,

Jerry Benson

**Appendix D**  
**Vice President's report**  
**Ro Sobalvarro**

The first half of this year has been challenging and rewarding as we have begun to restructure high performance and move the national youth program into the next phase.

The high performance group, comprised of the National Coaches and the interim Director of High Performance, developed and submitted the High Performance Plan (HPP) to the USOC in October. The quad plan used in determining funding levels for elite athlete programs was well received.

The funding level for this year, while still below what was requested, was somewhat greater than the 2005 level that was anticipated. However the tight budgets are a problem for our international programs and discussions are on going as to how the amounts can be used to best move us towards our goals in 2012.

The hiring process has begun for a new Director of High Performance.

The youth program had a rocky beginning with late scheduling of SYCs and some vacancies among the regional coordinators. Currently, the SYC calendar has been completed and posted, bid are being sought for next seasons SYCs, and a revamped job description for the regional coordinators is being finalized. Submitted bids will be reviewed by a group outside the Youth Committee and a final calendar will be in place for '09 – '10 season by May.

Courtney Winninger has been hired as youth program manager at the National Office to help handle the continued growth of youth fencing. Ms Winninger will work with the committee to implement policies, handle daily operations, allow for better communication with parents and coaches, and further expand the opportunities for youth athletes.

**Appendix E**  
**Secretary's Report**  
**Bradley Baker**

Three new task forces were created in late September that currently report to the Secretary. All got started somewhat slowly and have progressed at variable rates since then. The most active has been the Technology Planning Task Force, which is working in coordination with the National Office and several standing committees to help identify the needs of the Association in the realm of technology over both the short- and long-term.

An RFP has been sent out to a number of identified potential bidders for the creation of a new technology infrastructure. Responses to the RFP have been received and are currently undergoing a process of review. It is anticipated that significant new systems will be coming online in time for the start of the 2009-2010 membership year. More importantly than short-term fixes, the new infrastructure is being designed from the beginning with long-term needs in mind and should provide a platform which can be expanded and extended to fulfill future requirements, both identifiable and unknown.

This is a significant undertaking, which should provide considerable benefits to the organization both internally and in interactions with the membership and external relationships.

I'd also like to take time to bring attention to a number of new and on-going activities which aren't officially a part of US Fencing, which nevertheless are contributing to the growth and development of our sport. Much of the good that takes place in the fencing community is caused by the efforts of individuals working on their own simply to make something good happen.

Recent examples of this include the "10,000 Fencers" effort being led by Tim Morehouse and Jason Rogers – and the associated email blasts and blog postings by Tim – and Dan Kellner's "Sofa Employed" blog. 10,000 Fencers (<http://www.tenthousandfencers.com/>) is a campaign to introduce the sport to 10,000 new people. Tim Morehouse has also been sending out frequent email messages and chronicling his training and competition activities since Beijing. On Sofa Employed (<http://www.sofaemployed.com/>), Dan Kellner has been fielding a wide variety of questions related to many aspects of fencing from the elementary to what goes through the mind of an Olympian during competition. These efforts from current and recent Olympians and National Team members provide an unusual and invaluable resource and look into what goes into being at the very pinnacle of our sport.

Other well-known examples have existed for considerably longer periods of time. Peet Sasaki's askFRED (<http://www.askfred.net>) has gained wide-spread use in nearly every division in the country as a convenient location for posting tournaments and, more recently, clinics. Fencing.net (<http://www.fencing.net>), operated by Craig Harkins, continues to expand and offers a wide variety of information and services, most notably a widely-read forum with thousands of members from around the world.

Not directly related to US Fencing activities, but covering our sport, is the very new (less than

three weeks old) College Fencing 360 (<http://www.collegefencing360.com>), written by Pete LaFleur, a former Assistant Sports Information Director at Notre Dame. CF360 examines the world of collegiate fencing, focusing primarily on NCAA varsity competition. As a new site, the format is slightly in flux, but it's already clear that it will provide a valuable resource for those looking for information on this particular corner of our world. I have high hopes for what CF360 will become and how it can help raise awareness of fencing to a significantly wider audience than would otherwise be possible.

While askFRED and Fencing.net have morphed into commercial enterprises, all of these are examples of how individuals working to fill a perceived need have helped to improve things for us all. We have hundreds of dedicated and involved volunteers working within the US Fencing structure, but we also have many people working on their own initiative. Both are essential to the improvement and development of fencing in this country.

Continued growth in our sport relies on the efforts of many people working both collectively and independently. Activities official and unofficial can provide significant contributions. There are many places inside the Association's organization where we are looking for help from the undeniable skills and experiences of our membership. There are at least as many places outside of our official structures where the application of a bit of effort can yield considerable returns.

**Appendix F**  
**Tournament Committee Report**  
**Tanya Brown**

As of the writing of this report, three NACs have been completed serving 4,999 competitors which is down 4% from this time last season; for the most part it appears that the competitors have continued to find the tournaments to be a positive experience; however some concerns have been raised. Among these are the same weapon events happening on the same day throughout the season, the posting of check-in times prior to number of fencers being known, thus affecting the way the tournaments are run, and the overall tournament schedules.

These concerns were discussed at the Tournament Committee's meeting in December. The Committee decided to move to an AM/PM projection for the remainder of the 2008-2009 season with posting of check-in times approximately one week after the first entry deadline (for Junior Olympics and Summer Nationals the check-in time schedule may be posted 2-3 weeks after the first entry deadline).

Beginning with the 2009-2010 season, the Committee and the National Office will adjust the entry deadlines to be at least 6 weeks out from the tournament, with check-in times being posted approximately 4 weeks prior to the tournament. This change in deadline meets the needs of the membership as well as the tournaments they attend. The Committee will also be revisiting the Scheduling Criteria and the tournament schedule review process.

The Committee has formed a Tournament Technology subgroup whose primary task will be to look at and advance tournament technology and create a greener environment.

During this quad the Committee plans on looking at our tournament structure, the classification system, formalized Bout Committee training process, and other enhancements to our tournaments.

**Appendix G**  
**LEGAL RESOURCE GROUP REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**Donald W. Alperstein, General Counsel**  
**January, 2009**

Since the last meeting of the Board, the LRG has been actively engaged in the following tasks:

1. Negotiating and drafting the Executive Director employment agreement;
2. Drafting, in conjunction with staff, National Coach Contract extensions;
3. Reviewing and advising staff on a number of third party contracts;
4. Overseeing multiple disciplinary proceedings;
5. Providing ongoing and special attention to the continuing problems of the several divisions and sections on matters of elections, governance and fiduciary responsibility, including financial accountability;
6. Assisting with the formulation and drafting of various codes and policies for international teams and cadre;
7. Advising staff with regard to requests for information from participants in ongoing litigation between members of the USFA to which the USFA is not a party;
8. Coordinating with staff, the administration, the FOC and the Technical Committee to formulate a response to a fencer's inquiry based on religious tenets;
9. Addressing questions concerning the propriety of certain expenditures and the request for reimbursement thereof;
10. Monitoring and participating in ongoing litigation with a former USFA licensee/vendor;
11. Mediating a financial dispute between an USFA subdivision and a member club;
12. Coordinating the investigation of allegations of financial, ethical and contractual improprieties against a member/contractor; and
13. Advising numerous individuals, committees, divisions and other USFA interests regarding Bylaw provisions, athlete rights and responsibilities and procedural matters for the preparation and presentation of motions and routine legal inquiries.

To the best of counsel's knowledge, there are no immediate threats of additional litigation against the organization, although we have handled several matters in which members or their representatives, including attorneys, have mentioned litigation as an option for redressing real or perceived grievances.

At present, the Legal Resources Group is within its budget and, barring the unexpected, will continue to be so.

As always, I wish to express my great appreciation for the efforts and assistance of Steve Sobel, John Springgate, Aaron Clements and Sam Cheris for their donations of time and expertise. Their contributions are considerable and given *gratis* at significant personal inconvenience and cost. These special individuals deserve public recognition and the USFA's thanks.

## **Appendix H Veteran's Committee Report**

A Veterans Fencers' Meeting was held on Saturday, December 13, 2008, in the Officials Lounge at the Broadmoor Hall, at the Colorado Springs, Colorado NAC, which was attended by approximately 40 veteran fencers and Mr. Brad Baker, Secretary, USFA. The attendees were informed that the USFA Board of Directors did not accept the motion to modify rule 2.11.6 in the 2007-2008 Athlete Handbook, as proposed by Judge Paul Levy to introduce a separate 70+ category at NAC and National Championships. Judge Levy had previously explained to the Chair of the Veterans Committee that the Board would not support his proposed method, which would have the 70+ fencers in a unique pool. The reason is that would skew the seeding for the 60+ event in that a 70+ fencer would get a high seed for only fencing 70 year-old fencers, while the rest had to fence all those from 60 through 69.

The overall strategy for the Veterans Committee which had been previously advocated was that we need to provide an avenue of competition for the 70+ fencers that would eventually convince the FIE to create a separate event at the World Championships.

An appropriate alternative was recommended to hold a separate event for 70+ fencers, as long as there were at least 3 competitors, on the same day as the 60+ events. The 70+ fencers could decide to fence in either competitions or just one; if he or she was concerned that the 70+ events would hurt their chances for the 60+ events or that he or she had no interest in the 60+ events.

The veteran fencers present unanimously agreed to have Judge Levy attend the USFA Board of Directors meeting to sponsor the recommended motion in Albuquerque and argue in its favor.

Mr. Philip Gerring has submitted his resignation from the USFA Veterans Committee. This means that there are currently four vacancies on the Veteran Committee and it is critical that the USFA appoint a diverse group of new members willing to serve in this capacity. The Veteran fencers attending the meeting overwhelmingly supported the idea that Judge Paul Levy replace Mr. Gerring on the Veteran Committee because of his vast fencing experience on a national and international level as the former chair of the Veteran Committee. It was also suggested that an additional lady be selected to become a part of the Veterans Committee. The USFA was requested to expeditiously move forward in the appointment of individuals to replace the needed members of the Veteran Committee.

The Veteran Committee wants to express how pleased and proud that the US Veteran Fencing Community is with the results achieved by the US Team, which won a total of 9 medals at the 2008 World Championships in Limoges, France. The Championships had over 400 athletes, 35 national teams, constituting the largest Veterans Fencing World Championships ever held since its inception. The Veteran Committee would like to express its thanks to Mr. Scott Harkey for volunteering his services as the team's armorer. In addition, the Veteran Committee recognizes the support of Mr. Brad Baker, who agreed to referee at the World Championships on very short notice. Without Ms. Jeanna Mendoza's continued hard work on behalf of the team members our efforts could have been realized in Limoges, France. Many Thanks.

The Moscow Veterans Fencing World Championships, which will take place September 23-27, 2009 – will require a more substantial cadre of volunteers that will constitute the Official Cadre

of the US Veterans Team to ensure complete and effective support of the team members. It is recommended that the team has a Chief of Mission, a Captain, a Doctor, a Coach, a Trainer and Armorer. Numerous issues were raised at the Limoges Veterans Fencing World Championships that required the specific attention and expertise of all of the aforementioned positions, including translation responsibilities. These issues will be multiplied as a result of the lack of adequate Russian language skills available for the team.

The Heads of Delegations meeting, October 4, 2008 at the World Championships in Limoges, France, which was requested by the delegations to be Chaired by the USFA Chair of the USFA Veteran Committee resulted in some key recommendations to the FIE, which was represented at the meeting by Mr. Max Geuter. There were issues that are important to the veteran fencing community in the United States that should be addressed by the USFA in the future, in that it was unanimously agreed that:

Future organizers of a World Championship must ensure that expenses for the event must be covered by the published FIE rate for entry fees to Veterans Fencing World Championships should be obligatory.

The FIE be approached for a derogation regarding referees in that active and respected ex FIE listed referees, who have due to being over 60 years been removed from the FIE referees lists, be allowed to referee in the World Veterans Championships until the age of 65 if they have continued to be active for one year prior to their 60th birthday.

The FIE be approached for a derogation, or a change of rules, so that the use of transparent masks should not be obligatory in Veterans World championships. The point should be made that there is no TV presence at the championships and that excessive costs are incurred participants who have to meet all of their own expenses with many of pension able age.

It was agreed that the use of conductive bibs at foil should be adopted in line with FIE timescale.

The use of wireless scoring and video review should not be the rule for veteran world championships and that the FIE be approached for a derogation.

It was recommended to have a team championship alongside the individual World Championships. It was generally accepted with the suggestion that this be initiated in a gradual way, to be able to assess its effect on the organizers and the level of participation.

It was agreed that a pilot event be added to the championships program, as was done with Women's Saber, as soon as possible.

The team event should be based on 9 bouts per match, not relay. The teams should consist of 3 persons per team with a minimum age per person of 50 years and an aggregate age to be determined. The question of team; whether members must have entered the individual event was not resolved and needs clarification.

The FIA consider that there be an expansion of the number of veteran fencing categories at the Veteran World Championships to be more in sync with the veteran competitions held in different European countries that have the 70 + category. In addition, consideration should be given to the

formation of a veteran masters category for fencers over 30 and veterans 40 +.

The Veteran Fencing World Championships organizers must ensure that the website publish all information in the three official FIE languages; French Spanish and English.  
All information and communication at the Championships be translated for all participants in the official FIE languages.

The organizers must ensure that their website is being properly managed to enable participants to communicate with organizing officials.

The Veterans Committee received information that there should be a change in the Veteran NAC association with Division II and III NAC because it would subject the veteran fencers to referees that were still in a training cycle. Mr. Brad Baker, Secretary of the USFA indicated that the USFA has done everything possible to enhance the quality level of officials in USFA competitions. Everyone in attendance at the Veterans Meeting in Colorado Springs expressed their pleasure with the caliber of officials in Colorado Springs NAC. It was noted that the percentage of the officials scheduled to participate in the March NAC (Vet and Div II and III) would be in training. This does not mean that there will not be highly qualified officials that will handle the finals within each event. It was noted that this be brought to the attention of the USFA Tournament Committee. Mr. Campana agreed to again set out for the USFA the concerns raised by the Veterans Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Rinaldo A. Campana  
Chair

January 31, 2009

**Appendix I**  
**Wheelchair Task Force**  
**Report to the Board of Directors**  
**January 2009**

The task force for wheelchair fencing was created anew in the fall of 2008. Task force members include: Gary van der Wege (chair), Sean Shumate, Dennis Aspy, Jon Moss, Michael Dasaro Jr., Terry Harkey and Ginny Boydston , with Les Stawicki and Christine Simmons as advisors.

With the simple charge of ‘increase wheelchair fencing in the US’, we have set forth the following mission statement:

**Whereas there is a need and desire to provide access to the sport of fencing to the disabled community, it shall be the goal of the WHEELCHAIR FENCING TASK FORCE of the USFA to do the following:**

**Increase the number of grass root and competitive wheelchair fencers in the US.**

**Help further the development of coaching for wheelchair fencers in the US.**

**Increase communication among all persons with an interest in wheelchair fencing.**

**Provide more training and competitions for wheelchair fencers.**

**Create and/or utilize human, monetary, equipment and facility resources to achieve these goals.**

With no budget or funding available at this point, we felt our primary emphasis was to create a database of both athletes and coaches, and institute a regularly scheduled newsletter to keep everyone informed and stimulate communication. The first *Sit and Fight* Newsletter went out in December.

With Mario Rodriguez acting as web master, a new website was launched. *wheelchairfencer.org* is now online and in the process of being linked to both the USFA and other sites.

It is disheartening that US Paralympics has decided to not provide any funding to our program, so we are asking that complete governance of our program be changed to that of the USFA. We understand that the current financial constraints may make things difficult, but also look forward to the potential of new outside resources.

Our competition focus will be on having a good turn-out for the Atlanta NAC and Summer Nationals, and are also looking to create more regional events including combined AB and chair competition formats. There is a dire need of training camps for both athletes and coaches.

We will continue to seek creative new ways to market our program to both the potential athlete and coach. We humbly believe even the smallest amount of funding will be put to good use and is sorely needed.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary M van der Wege

**Appendix J**  
**Hall of Fame Committee**

The Hall of Fame committee is currently considering 23 suggested nominees. 13 of those suggestions came from the USFA membership who are not part of the HOF committee. We believe that the Hall of Fame website (<http://usfencinghalloffame.com/>) is responsible for allowing more USFA members to be a part of the process. In addition to those 23, we are considering a number of formerly nominated individuals who failed to get enough votes for election to the HOF. We will decide if any of these individuals should be re-submitted to Congress this year.

Sincerely,

Andy Shaw  
Chairman, Hall of Fame committee

**Appendix K**  
**SPORTS SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY REPORT**  
USFA Board of Directors Meeting – February 2009  
**Dr. John Heil**  
**PROGRAMS & SERVICES**  
September 2008- January 2009

**PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

**Technology**

**eScout (Electronic Scouting Project)**

An electronic scouting tool intended to enhance competitiveness of US Fencers by providing tactical information including: “Statistical” (data files- e.g., Match/Bout Stats); “Descriptive” (word file, e.g. athlete books) and “Video” (video files - Video Book).

Designed for use on PDA (handheld) allowing stripside information retrieval (and real time stripside scoring)

Personal Computer version provides enhanced display, data analytic and storage capacity

**Recent Developments**

From September to December continued development by John Heil (US Fencing), project leader; Bobga Danjuma (LiviaSoft) software designer; and, Mike Leigh (USOTC) sport technology specialist

Demo and critique for USOTC Technology staff in December 09 (in conjunction with Colorado Springs NAC) with continued conceptual and logistical support.

Demo of eScout for coaches and administrators at Colorado Springs NAC with release for initial use and continued beta testing to Zoltan Dudas, Ed Kaihatsu, Michael Marx/Darius Wei.

(Additional release to coaches are pending.)

Access to program has been provided to the Technology Task Force

**eScout Value estimates**

**Estimate of investment**

***Actual expenditures + estimate of “pro bono” consulting time = \$50,000***

-Software design costs (Danjuma) ~\$13,000

-Project manager time (Heil) ~\$25,000 (~1,000 hours @ \$25/hr)

-USOTC sport technology consultant time (Leigh) ~\$3,000 (~125 hours @ 25/hr.)

-Additional Consultant time (Largman, Snider, Soter & varied meetings with coaches) ~\$5,000 (200 hours @ 25/hr)

-Travel costs which allowed project development incurred as part of sport science service delivery over the last 2 quads (\$4,000)

**Cost of comparable PDA technology** (Other sport, e.g., Baseball)

***80 total units x 124.95/unit = \$10,000*** (= current cash investment)

Cost of providing 10 units to each of 6 weapon squads (60) and 20 total units to sport science committee, referee/officials, technology task force, and media relations

### “Reference”Products

#### Digital Scout

Digital Scout (for Baseball) = \$249.95

Digital Scout (for Football) = \$499.95

Digital Scout (for Basketball, Softball, Soccer, Volleyball, Hockey) = \$149.95

*Approved by USA Baseball, USA Softball, ASA Softball, Little League Baseball, AAU USA*

#### Turbostats

Turbostats ScoreKeeper (for Baseball & Softball) = \$99.95/unit

Turbostats ScoreKeeper (for Basketball) = \$124.95/unit

### **Project Value Added**

*eScout is not just a cost but also an investment*

As an in-house proprietary technology there is the possibility of generating an income stream by eventual sale of data and/or technology to end users such as coaches, athletes, referees, researchers, broadcast media etc.

Proprietary status of software program allows virtually open ended use by members of the organization at minimal cost

Because of the general applicability of this technology to other martial arts, components of the software design can be transferred at cost savings to other NGBs and allow fast tracking of development of similar technology. Using eScout for Fencing as a base, it will save an estimated 35%-40% development time when transferring to other combat sports.

The mobility of eScout allows extension of USOC EoP (Eye on Performance) in-house technology to varied competitive settings, and as such is a complementary technology

The role of statistics in sport is growing and well established in high revenue sports. The window of opportunity to be a leader in this technology is open to US Fencing. Sooner or later the use of statistics will become a mainstream element of sport science across sports. It is to the advantage of US Fencing to lead the way here

### **Project Status**

Additional funding needed to continue program development (see attached proposal)

### **Nutrition**

Have renewed relationship with the Athlete Performance Group (High profile elite athlete training centers located throughout USA- headquartered in Phoenix, AZ) to provide nutrition based articles in American Fencing Magazine. There is a possibility of expanding this consulting relationship.

### **Strength & Conditioning and Injury Prevention Programs**

Pilot program being developed at Twin Cities Fencing Center – status unknown at this time

## Sport Psychology

***Team Game Project Report Technical Report*** by John Heil & Paul Soter is near ready for release.

This report focuses on team fencing and presents results of the Team Game Project initiated in the Athens Quad and continued into the early period of the Beijing Quad before going dormant due to funding and administrative constraints

### USFA EVENT CONSULTATION

#### **Sport Psychology & Sport Science Consultation**

2008 NAC, Colorado Springs (Report submitted.) Partially self-funded - \$512.

### EDUCATION & TRIAGE

Ongoing services provided to general membership

#### **Information/Education**

Provision of materials to coaches, athletes and administrators on Sport Science & Technology topics upon request.

#### **Intervention/Triage**

Direct consultation to coaches, athletes and administrators on Sport Medicine and Science topics by phone, email or face-to-face

Referral to local sport science specialists

### Publications

#### **American Fencing Magazine**

Ongoing articles in *American Fencing Magazine* Sport Science Column

Pending articles on nutrition and sport statistics

#### **Fencing.net**

Contribute series of three articles on sport psychology in the Olympic Games to supplement comprehensive Olympics coverage provided by fencing.net

Beijings Games; Psychology of the team game

*Contact:* Dr. John Heil, Psychological Health \* Roanoke

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[jheil@PsychHealthRoanoke.com](mailto:jheil@PsychHealthRoanoke.com)

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## Technical Reports/Information Archive

Heil, J., Buford, B., Chirby, B, Gore, K. (2007). US Fencing Referee Study of Stress & Coping. United States Fencing Association Technical Report No. 2007-01. Colorado Springs, CO: United States Olympic Training Center.

Heil, J. & Gregory, J. (2004). Modern Pentathlon Mental Training Protocol. United States Fencing Association Technical Report (No. 2004-01). Colorado Springs, CO: United States Olympic Training Center.

Heil, J. (2002). Psychological Preparation for Competition: The Men's Epee Team Mental Training Protocol. United States Fencing Association Technical Report (No. 2002-01). Colorado Springs, CO: United States Olympic Training Center.

Heil, J., Hartman, D., Robinson, G., & Teegarden, L. (2000). Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Identification and Management in Athletes. United States Fencing Association Technical Report (No. 2000-01). Colorado Springs, CO: United States Olympic Training Center.

Heil, J. & Soter, P. (2003). Stripside Coaching . United States Fencing Association Technical Report (No. 2003-01). Colorado Springs, CO: United States Olympic Training Center  
*A proprietary document available for limited distribution to coaches while awaiting posting to a secure web site.*

Heil, J. & Zealand, C. (2001). Psychological Skills Training Manual. United States Fencing Association Technical Report (No. 2001-01). Colorado Springs, CO: United States Olympic Training Center.  
*Previously distributed as electronic book to Clubs as part of membership fee for 2005*

"Psychological Preparation of the Fencer" by Tyshler & Midler – Translation of Soviet text on Sport Psychology with annotated guide prepared by Dr. Steve Hesky

Copies available at USOTC Information Resource Center

**Appendix L**  
**eScout Task Force Plan 2012**  
*Revision & update of report previously submitted*  
**Dr. John Heil**

**eScout Description**

An electronic scouting tool intended to enhance competitiveness of US Fencers by providing tactical information regarding competitors.

Holds 3 sources of information: “Statistical” (data files- e.g., Match/Bout Stats); “Descriptive” (word file, e.g. athlete books) and “Video” (video files - Video Book).

Designed for use on PDA (handheld) and PC devices.

The PDA application allows stripside information retrieval (and real time stripside scoring

The PC application mimics the PDA version with enhanced display, data analytic and storage capacity

Other potential applications include: broadcast information resource, referee training, research applications (e.g., trainee and master official can simultaneously code bouts and compare for accuracy and uniformity).

**Brief History**

Development began as an outgrowth of the Sport Psychology Team Game Project (lead by Heil & Soter) with the goal of speeding competitive development by enhancing tactical preparation.

When review of existing sport performance technologies revealed no suitable commercial product, a decision was made to explore direct product development. In consultation from Mike Leigh of USOC Sport Performance - Technology (and with additional assistance by a US Fencing start-up committee), Heil investigated hardware and software options – and identified the PDA as the most viable option when considering cost and versatility (in particular, stripside use). After a hiatus, funding was provided by US Fencing to hire a software designer, Bobga Danjuma. Danjuma and Heil worked collaboratively on product development through alpha testing to release candidate status, with continued consultation from Leigh of the USOC.

Coaches Korfanty, Pederson & Soter identified coding schemes for their respective weapons. Korfanty requested additional development of video playback capability (eScoutV), which was initiated following approval by Michael Massik.

**Project Status**

eScout PDA – “Ready for Use” with initial release to a select group of coaches

eScout PC – “In development” - Initial version will mimic PDA with similar screen layouts (to facilitate ease of transition), with simultaneous viewing of statistical, word and video files. PC will also provide greater ease of navigation. The PC design is compatible with off-the-shelf statistical programs allowing extensive unique data analysis.

**Recommended Task Force Personnel – Skill Sets**

Project Manger

Software designer – Bobga Danjuma is under contract through completion of first edition

Statistics specialist

National Coach

IT Specialist/Systems Engineer

Security/Legal specialist  
Video storage & editing specialist

## **Goals**

### 2008-2009 Season

Complete initial version of all systems on PDA and PC, and field test with Task Force leading/assisting coaches and other end users

Initiate development of centralized information storage and retrieval

Development of unified bout coding strategies (by National Coaches) to optimize uniformity in coding

Modify application for use on varied hand held devices like iPhone and BlackBerry (adjusting layout for varied screen ratios), allowing end-users to rely on personally owned devices reduces long term costs and training time.

### Latter 2008-2009 to early 2009-2010 Season

Update eScout PDA and PC functions (edition 2) based on testing and use during 2008-2009 season

### 2009-2010 Season

Implement use by select coaches independently with Task Force providing support

Implementation of centralized long term data management system

### 2010-2012 Seasons

Implement use by more extensive group of coaches with goal of mainstreaming use of tactical and other statistical information to enhance competitiveness for London Olympic Games.

## **Plan**

User training, field testing and beta testing (by coaches, end-users); and uniform coding strategy (by national coaches or coaching group) and product development oversight (by Task Force) at 3 NAC events, spaced throughout the year - recommend Colorado Springs NAC (done with partial self-funding), Atlanta NAC (or other mid-season event) & Summer Nationals.

## Rationale

Product development requires face-to-face time from stakeholders, and opportunity to test in an appropriate environment.

Participating parties: are naturally clustered for competitive events (reducing costs and scheduling issues), may be funded to events on other budgets lines (reducing costs), able to field test in an appropriate environment, and generate enthusiasm for the Project among the general membership (helping justify spending and perhaps assisting in fund raising)

## **Costs – First Year**

### Training & Field Testing

Travel to meetings and field testing – 3 events (*at standard cost for tournament service staff-consult with National Office for cost projection*) for project manager and others at discretion of Executive Board.

Reimbursement of additional costs (lodging, per diem) for coaches, task force members who must extend their stay.

### Product Purchase

Purchase of ~ 3-4 PDAs (~\$800 -1,200) for Task Force members. Task Force members may own suitable devices and not require purchase (especially if alternate screen ratios versions are available)

Product Development

Costs for development of eScoutVideo application (\$3,200) was promised by Michael Massik but has not been escrowed as requested

Costs for developing eScout on alternate screen ratio (e.g., for use on “smart” phones). Will request bid from Danjuma; possibly could be provided by Tack Force member

**Appendix M**  
**USFA Sports Medicine Report**

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**February 2009**

Peter A. Harmer, Ph.D., MPH., ATC. FACSM  
Chief Medical Officer  
(503-370-6470)  
email: pharmer@willamette.edu

The first part of the 2008-2009 season has seen the USFA Sports Medicine program continue its work in providing quality healthcare to the USFA family. To date, coverage has been provided for NAC A-D under the national program format, and staffing has been arranged for the women's sabre world cups in London and France from January 30-Feb. 8, 2009. The latter coverage is a continuation of the additional care the program provided to weapons squads during the last season as funding was available. We anticipate continuing this service through the remainder of the current Olympic quadrennium.

For the 2009 Cadet/Junior World C'ships in Northern Ireland, the staff will be Nick Tobianski (lead sports medicine staff) and Brian Hardy (assistant).

Additionally, the Sports Medicine Program has continued to offer individual advice on injury and rehabilitation issues to USFA members as requests arise, and has maintained its education program through the Sports Medicine Q&A in each issue of *American Fencing*. Research activities have also been continuing – the results of a study on sex and weapon variations in types and location of time-loss injuries in national competitions will be presented at the American College of Sports Medicine Annual Conference in May, 2009, and a chapter on fencing injuries will be included in the book *Epidemiology of Injury in Olympic Sports*, a volume in the IOC *Encyclopaedia of Sports Medicine* series, scheduled for publication later in 2009.

Although the overall the program is running very well, particularly thanks to the support of Christine Strong Simmons on the domestic front and Andrea Lagan for international events, there are several issues that need improvement:

a) Communication between aspects of the USFA administration and the Sports Medicine program. It has been particularly frustrating and disappointing to learn recently that despite the operation of the program with the national team for almost 20 years, and the domestic program for 9 years, that members of the BOD and others are unaware of the structure and scope of the program. In the past few years I have sent detailed information about these things to a succession of administrators but there does not seem to have been any passing of the information forward. As a result, I have been left out of discussions relevant to the smooth running of the program and/or important aspects for improving its service to the USFA, including evaluations of staff assigned for international events. It is vitally important that lines of communication between the BOD, HPC and other relevant bodies in the Association and myself as supervisor of the Sports Medicine program be improved.

Proposal: to bring the BOD up-to-speed on the history, current structure, and goals of the program, I would like to make a presentation to the Board at a (near) future meeting.

b) a portal on the USFA website. This has been an on-going project for several years, lead by John Heil as Chair of Sports Sciences, which has gone through a number of false starts. Although we have been close (with a beta site developed thanks for Andrea Lagan), there has been no consistent support from within the USFA to finalize this project (e.g., on-going designer, webmaster).

c) Issues presented to the BOD in the report for July, 2008:

i) to develop a physician advisory board to work with and provide input for the program

ii) to continue to expand both the number and geographical diversity of the members of the Program (note; we have already been active on this point with 5 new members recruited since the July report – 3 females (OR, WA, CO) and 2 males (OR, CO)).

As we move further into the new Olympic quadrennium, I anticipate continuing enhancements in the program, especially in response to improved communication within the USFA administrative structures.

Please free to contact me at your convenience if there are any questions or need for clarification.

## Appendix N

# Resource Development Committee

## Initial Report

January 09, 2009

## Executive Summary

This report is the initial work of a team of dedicated volunteers who believe that finally fencing's time has come. Over the course of the past three months, this committee has met numerous times; it has contributed through written work and small projects, and stays committed to supporting the ongoing effort to build a future for fencing.

We offer the attached report and information as foundational material and preliminary resource for strategic planning. In addition to the written material contributed by the current committee members, this report includes two reports that were previously submitted to the USFA, one from Joseph Sasek, and one from Circone & Associates.

In the short term our team has also accomplished the following:

- Established a Club Resource Kit on the USFA website with significant seed resources including: photos, press release templates, marketing booklet and banner link.
- Coordinated and supported the execution of the first ever USFA Team Calendar, from which the USFA will earn \$3 per calendar sale.
- Developed a draft PR plan designed to provide Press Releases to all local newspapers following each NAC for the top eight in each event.

With the new Executive Director on board, we see our role is to offer advice, planning and implementation support for the following top priorities:

1. Create a plan to assist the national office and the Executive Committee in ways to develop better communication and internal marketing.
2. Develop a marketing and fundraising plan for the upcoming World Cup, Training Camp and USFA Summer Nationals to be held in Dallas during June and July.

In addition, the Resource Development Committee stands ready to offer support for the upcoming strategic planning process.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathryn Schifferle, Chair  
(Complete report will be made available separately)

## **Appendix O**

### **USFA Parents Committee**

Barbara Cheney - White Bluff, TN  
Peter Dorfman - Lebanon, New Jersey  
Carolyn Forcier - San Diego, CA  
**Co-Chair**, Monica Kao - Pittsburgh, PA  
Chris O'Donnell - Fredericksburg, VA  
**Co-Chair**, Kathleen Pathi - Las Vegas, NV  
Anthony Teelucksingh – Baltimore, MD  
Kathy Whitney - Washington Depot, CT

**Mission:** The mission of the USFA Parents Committee is to support the development of US fencing by making available to athlete families information, guidance, and experiential knowledge concerning current USFA rules, conventions, and services.

**Goals:**

- To promote a deeper understanding of the fencing experience for athlete families at all levels of proficiency.
- To enhance fencing participation through the sharing of successful athlete family management techniques and activities.
- To encourage good will, cooperation, and support among athlete families.

**Objectives:**

- To create a USFA Parents' Handbook of relevant rules and their applications by the 2009 - 2010 membership year.
- To create a USFA Parents' FAQ presence on the Internet.
- To offer personal assistance and guidance to athlete families at USFA tournaments when Parent Committee members are in attendance and available.

**Appendix P**  
**Technology Development Task Force**  
**David Sierra**

The Technology Development Task Force came together for the first time in early December 2008, when we were first contacted as a whole by the USFA Secretary, the officer under whose oversight we serve. Almost at the same time, the National Office staff released an RFP with the intention of securing a vendor to do begin the process of modernizing the data management and workflows of the national office. This RFP was put together entirely by the National Office, without the input of the TDTF, who was identified by the Board of Directors and Executive Committee as a resource to be utilized in development of a modern information technology infrastructure for the organization. After being asked to review the RFP, the TDTF had a number of substantial concerns regarding the product that would be delivered, if built to the specifications outlined. Working in close coordination with the new Executive Director, the TDTF prepared a set of modifications and expansions to fine-tune the needs and requirements. Much of the TDTF's input and guidance was in the form of ensuring that the system that were selected that the staff included the capability to interface well with the other components of the organization, possessed the flexibility and development potential that the USFA will need in the future, and served the actual needs of the entire organization.

The system that will be deployed, must, as a start, have the capability to track all membership data, take online registrations for NAC's, download data to a tournament software package and upload the results from that event back, calculate point standings from uploaded results, track the usage and history of officials (BC, referee and armoury), allow non-national office event organizers to verify membership, classification, and qualifier status, and a number of other capabilities for the different components of the organization.

The original RFP included a requirement for a new tournament management software system. The TDTF and the new ED felt that was outside what should be the primary focus of the current project, and that part was dropped. However, the addendum specified development of an interface for communication with tournament management software, both current and future. This interface will be in a modern format data exchange format (XML, SOAP, REST or whatever works best for the selected vendors back-end system) as well as possess the capability to interface with the current national tournament software system, XSEED, through CSV files, albeit with all the limited capabilities and restrictions inherent with such a format.

As of this submission, the TDTF is helping to review the responses to the RFP addendum, and will be making a recommendation to the Executive Director regarding selection of a vendor. A more extensive report, concerning the specific recommendations of the TDTF, as well as the evaluation criteria and the development and rollout timeline the selected vendor will be expected to follow, as well as a detailing of the evaluations and suggested modifications to the RFP will be made available at the Board of Directors meeting.

**Appendix Q**  
**Referee Development Task Force – Submission I**  
January 29, 2009

Task force members:

- Mark Stasinos ([mdakstas@aol.com](mailto:mdakstas@aol.com)) – Sponsor and coordinator. Vice president of the USFA. Member of FOC.
- Mary Ellen Mahon ([meldarius@aol.com](mailto:meldarius@aol.com)) – Chair of task force. Internationally rated referee.
- Damon Scaggs ([damon@inebraska.com](mailto:damon@inebraska.com)) – Task force member. Internationally rated referee. Member of FOC.
- Edward Kaihatsu ([ekaihatsu@aol.com](mailto:ekaihatsu@aol.com)) – Task force member. Internationally rated referee.
- Gerrie Baumgart ([gfbaumgart@aol.com](mailto:gfbaumgart@aol.com)) – Task force member. Internationally rated referee. Former Olympic referee. Member of FOC.
- Julie Seal ([Julie@utahfencing.org](mailto:Julie@utahfencing.org)) – Task force member. Former international competitor.

First of all, we would like to thank our president Kalle Weeks, for placing confidence in us for this project. We consider it an honor to be in a position to give back to the sport that has enhanced our lives so much. The Task Force would also like to thank its fearless leader Mark Stasinos. We have all enjoyed working with him immensely, and look forward to future endeavors under his guidance.

I speak on behalf of all members of the Task Force in saying that this report should be considered a first step in what we hope will be an ongoing process of investigation, reporting, communications, and where beneficial implementation of ideas that can improve the process of referee development within the United States Fencing Association. It is the intention of this Task Force to continue working together towards this common goal for the overall betterment of fencing in our federation.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Mahon

This first submission of findings from the Referee Development Task Force is primarily composed of information culled from two sources: other Olympic sports, and our fencing membership.

In seeking information from other Olympic sports, each Task Force member selected a sport of interest and did an in-depth investigation of that sport's methods for developing referees. This included such things as reviewing that particular sport's rulebook, doing research from online resources from their domestic federation, and in some cases interviews with appropriate personnel. Four Olympic sports total were studied\*: wrestling, gymnastics, taekwondo, and tennis. In addition, an investigation was also done of the Italian Fencing Federation for a compare and contrast within the sport of fencing.

\* - Please note that only the domestic (United States) federations of these sports were contacted and investigated.

To gather ideas and recommendations from our own fencing membership, two separate internet resources were created. The first was located in the General Discussion board of the website Fencing.net. This was arranged as a chat forum where members could communicate their thoughts on a running commentary page. The second was a link off of the USFA homepage that connected the user to the Task Force Chair's email so that they could submit ideas via email. Both methods were very successful in garnering interest among our membership, and many good ideas were submitted to us.

In this report, I have given a synopsis of ideas and information from all of the above mentioned sources. They are organized by subject, and are listed in no particular order. In some circumstances, opinion on possible methods of implementation is given. Separate subject reports such as individual sports reports are available as attachments to this summary.

## **Video**

This is the most common thread I noticed in reviewing all of the information from the various sources. All five of the sports investigated used video to some extent in the training of their referees. Taekwondo, for example, has an extended video library not only of actions and matches, but of the referees themselves. The reasoning behind taping taekwondo referees is to have reference material for evaluations. The referees are shown tapes of themselves, and their performance is analyzed so that they may make corrections in their refereeing.

Video seems to be the most beneficial in sports with rapid, compound actions such as the "combat sports". Taped footage can be slowed to aid training referees on how to parse complex actions and teach correct focus points during a "melee". Taekwondo and the Italian Fencing Federation were the two sports we studied that use this technology prominently.

Video technology is already in place at the international fencing level. Referees that work senior world cups, and in particular Grand Prix and World Championship level tournaments have this available as an aid for making calls. It would be perhaps advisable to contact the organization responsible for the video technology used at the international level of fencing, and explore a possible bridge between what they currently do, and what we would like to do with using footage as a training aid.

Currently, there is a large volume of fencing video footage from Olympics, World Cups, and World Championships already in existence. This material could be edited down to focus on specific weapons and specific actions (i.e. – foil blade actions, saber tempo actions, epee penalties). Considerations would of course have to be made for ownership rights to the tapes, consensus on what clips to show for what purpose, and maintenance of the video library.

As an offshoot of this project of inculcating video into training fencing referees, we could also use specific clips as part of an online exam, and ongoing recertification and retesting of referees (details of these to follow). For example an online video test could include a video clip of an action with a question to follow such as “What is the appropriate call for this action? A) Touch for left B) Yellow card for left, no touch C) Simultaneous D) ‘Halt’, left fencer advances 1 meter”.

### **Background checks**

Both wrestling and gymnastics require a thorough background check before one can be considered to referee. This is a potential policy that has both pros and cons. Some benefits to such a screening process could include saving the organization from some of the current conduct problem individuals we are dealing with. It could also deter unwanted, and potentially dangerous individuals from attempting to infiltrate our sport.

One drawback to mandating background checks would be having to worry about the burden of keeping findings confidential. There is also the potential circumstance of discovering a concealed criminal in our midst, and weighing what our legal responsibility would be if for example we uncovered a convicted pedophile running a club full of children back in their hometown.

Getting complete records on our many foreign nationals could prove to be prohibitive.

A consultation with USFA legal counsel would be best in forming an opinion on this matter.

### **Combined Training Camps**

This idea came exclusively out of the sport of taekwondo. As part of their referee development program, taekwondo combines elite athlete training camps with referee training. Much like fencing, elite and national team taekwondo coaches hold camps during the off-season to work with the nations aspiring athletes. Taekwondo requires their referees to attend one of these weekend long camps at least every other year. The referees observe what is being taught to the athletes, they interact with the coaches, and at the end a mock tournament is held utilizing these referees present. The benefits of this fusion of training camps are many.

By engaging the national and elite coaches in the training of referees, it aids in breaking down the walls of adversity that can develop between the two groups. It also lays some of the responsibility on the coaches to help mold the referees as they do the athletes, and ensures that the most current and recognized tactics are both taught to the athletes and understood by the referees.

One of the problems we have in fencing is a there is a typical delay in the transfer of information between what is seen and taught to our international athletes, and the way our domestic referees call actions. If the transfer of information were more immediate (from coaches to referees) it could eliminate some of the errors and incorrect calls that are made by developing referees. I personally have benefited tremendously from the consultations of our elite coaches.

### **Recertification and Continuing Education Programs**

All of the sports we contacted had some sort of a continual process for the education of their referees. Formal programs exist in both gymnastics and wrestling. The sport of gymnastics follows an interesting approach – the demands for recertification and continued education increase with the referee’s skill level. There is no possibility of a gymnastics referee riding for years on past (and arcane) accomplishments. Gymnastics also insists on peripheral involvement in the sport as ways to maintain their status as a high level referee. Coaching, competing, running tournaments, and holding official positions in the sport are all accepted (and expected) ways to keep elite status as a gymnastics referee.

Currently, we have no way to guarantee our referees are up to date on the latest rules applications and interpretations of right-of-way. Emailed rules updates can be ignored, and the inconsistencies of what is covered in our referee seminars only serve to confuse our referee population. A logical and simple solution to this would be making a policy wherein all referees must take (and pass) the written exam at least every other year. This test could be administered online, and should include video action sequences for the referee to “call”. In addition, an aspiring referee should be attending tournaments frequently. Showing up to 3 tournaments a year with no other activity to keep them fresh is insufficient for a sport such as ours. If we insist that referees do their part and participate more frequently, then we must do our part as the organization that insists on this. FOC and other appropriate personnel **MUST** make it a point to evaluate our referees frequently and fairly. Records should be housed at the national office and then USED at meetings where referee ratings are decided.

Another issue we have is a gap in the education of fencing referees. There is a good amount of information for the novice to intermediate referee (ratings 10 – 5). The rule book, referee study guide, and referee seminars are all designed to inform and develop the beginning referee. “Elite” referees that are 1’s and 2’s, or are internationally rated have a large volume of experience to draw from. Our weakness is in transitioning intermediate referees to elite status. Fencing has referees that stagnate for years at the same rating. They are not exposed to international fencing which would serve to widen their understanding of high level fencing, and yet they have somewhat “outgrown” what is typically seen domestically. What could be beneficial for bridging this gap would be some of the above mentioned ideas – video technology, and combined training camps.

A resource that would be beneficial for consultation is Peet Sasaki (moderator of AskFred.net). He could potentially aid us in the creation of online exams that include video footage, as well as other online tools.

## **Evaluations**

This was another common thread shared by all of the sports we investigated. All sports had an evaluation system with varying degrees of frequency, and most used official forms. We have referee evaluation forms that are supposed to be used in fencing, but in practice they are sporadically used, not used enough for the above mentioned “transitional” referees (3’s and 4’s), and apparently not referred to consistently at the yearly FOC meeting where ratings are decided.

A logical suggestion is to make sure a referee gets at least two evaluations per season, that they are advised of the contents of this form immediately so they are aware of their strengths and deficiencies, and then make sure the decision to raise or lower a referees rating is based in part on these forms.

## **Alternatives to ratings demotions**

Of all of the sports the Task Force engaged for this project, none of them had a practice of immediate ratings demotions for referees unless there was evidence of blatant misconduct such as cheating, assault, or sexual harassment. Fencing unfortunately stands alone in this practice of rapid and undefendable ratings demotions based on performance.

Of course all sports have different ways to encourage referees towards ratings *increases*. Mandatory tournaments, clinics, camps, and tests along with evaluations were all tools used by the other sports to push referees “up the ladder”. But only the sport of fencing, in particular the United States federation, recently employed the practice of rating demotions that are based largely on opinion. The ratings demotions and ratings freezes that came out of the August 2008 fencing FOC meeting were often the first notification the affected referees had that their parent organization was displeased with their abilities. Again, few referee evaluation forms were referred to at this meeting as a result of alleged disorganization at the national office. The result was disastrous. Referees affected by this are now bitter, distrustful of the FOC, and alienated.

A referee in any sport will go through growth curves while developing their abilities. Fencing is no exception. But instead of viewing the struggles of a developing referee as unfixable deficiencies, the FOC should strive to retain and work with as many referees as possible. What these other sports recognize which fencing seems to have forgotten is that refereeing is essentially a volunteer activity. Fencing referees do not sacrifice all of their vacation days to earn at most \$12.00 an hour at fencing because they seek wealth or fame. They do it because they love the sport and want to contribute what they can to it. Dedicated referees are recognized as rare commodities in other sports, and retaining and developing them becomes the responsibility of their respective parent organization. Fencing has failed their referees in this aspect.

There are two strategies that fencing should consider employing to deal with referees who are truly foundering. The first is something that the sport of wrestling uses – conditional rating decreases. Most sports referees who put in effort will continue to develop, albeit some may progress slower than others.

If there is a suspicion of apathy in the referee, wrestling will put them “on notice” with a conditional demotion. First, the referee development organization will contact the referee and fully apprise them of what is happening. Then, an *unpublished* and confidential conditional rating decrease will be applied. This referees rating is unofficially moved to an “understood” and unpublished 1C instead of the higher 1B, and the referee will be given a year to restore their rating. If they show a desire and work their “understood” rating demotion will be nullified and they will continue to be a 1B. However, if the referee continues on their path of apathy and neglect, this “understood” conditional rating will be made official and published as a 1C. From what I understood of reviewing the information from wrestling, it is unusual that a referee will passively stand by as their rating gets systematically decreased.

The second option for referees who display disinterest in advancing is a rating freeze. Again, the referee would be apprised of what is happening, and be given concrete examples of the behavior they exhibited which led to this freeze. An agreed upon “probationary period” would follow in which time the referee would be expected to demonstrate genuine interest in advancing their rating.

In either of these circumstances, there would have to be sufficient and concrete proof that the referee was indeed stagnating themselves. Documented lack of attendance, poor evaluations, and other recorded serious issues would need to be provided. The referee should have a very clear understanding that it is their consistent tardiness, sloppy hand signals, and inconsistent blade action calls that led to this situation.

Because the focus of the FOC *really is* referee retention and improvement, solutions for correcting a situation of this sort **MUST** be presented to the referee. They must be alerted to upcoming tournaments they need to attend, clinics that will help, and opportunities for retaking the written test. Every attempt must be made to grow our referee base, and develop “layering” within it. If not, we face a very precarious situation when our current elite cadre “retires”.

## **Written Resources**

There are two primary written resources that can be improved: the rule book, and the referee examination / study guide.

### Rule book

In looking at the rule book for tennis (provided as an attachment of their website), I saw something that would be immensely beneficial to clarify the application of rules in fencing. Embedded into the text of the US Tennis Associations rule book are real-life examples of rules applications that run from the obvious to the odd. Of course these examples are peer reviewed and accepted as correct before they are inserted into the text of their rulebook.

For example, under the section of the rulebook that covers what constitutes a justified medical withdrawal there is a text insert that, paraphrased, explains the following situation and correct application of the rule:

“Player A has a nosebleed and has requested an injury time-out to attend to it. After the allotted time had expired, the nosebleed had not yet been controlled.

Player A requested more time to attend to this problem. The chair umpire determined that it would be a violation of the rules to grant additional time. The chair then gave the player two options: withdraw and forfeit the match, or pack the nose and resume play immediately. Player A elected to pack his nose, and the match continued without incident.”

US Open 1997 3<sup>rd</sup> round Men's singles

Such examples can be easily collected from our referee cadre, reviewed by the FOC, and be merged into appropriate sections of the rulebook when it is next edited. These sorts of examples would take some of the guess work out of rules applications, thus reducing the risk of incorrect extrapolation and application of the rules.

#### Referee examination / Study guide

Several complaints came in through Fencing.net and email about the referee exam (one in the same as the Referee Study Guide). The complaints were generally of the same nature – the exam is difficult, poorly written and confusing.

I carefully reviewed the exam and found a few glaring errors which actually would lead the person taking the exam to *answer incorrectly*. There were about ten other questions which were so poorly worded that the likely result would be confusion. Revisions of the exam should go through a double review and sign-off from the FOC before it is published so that errors like this do not occur.

Another appeal that was made that would be easy enough to inculcate is to replace the terminology of “Fencer X” and “Fencer Y” with real names such as “Fred” and “George”. This may aid in reducing confusion, particularly for those who are not good test takers.

**Appendix R**  
**National Open Circuit Oversight Group**  
**February 14, 2009**

The NOC Oversight Group selected the following events to comprise the NOC for the 2008-2009 season: Remyanik Open (Chicago, Illinois, October 25 & 26, 2008), Duel in the Desert (Las Vegas, Nevada, January 3 & 4, 2009 ), Poujardieu Memorial (San Marcos, Texas, January 24 & 25, 2009), Jeff Wolfe Long Island Challenge (Long Island, New York, May 2 & 3, 2009). Additionally, since the purpose of the NOC is to expand competitive opportunities for DivIA level athletes, the Group has developed a points list including not only the four designated tournaments, but also including DivIA Summer Nationals. For the first season, results from the four designated events will earn points at a strength factor of 1.0 with a maximum of 2 events counting, and DivIA Summer Nationals will earn points at a strength factor of 1.5. A subdomain of askFRED is being utilized during the first season to report results, track points and provide information about the NOC (usfanoc.askfred.net). Based upon lessons learned so far in the first year, the NOC Oversight Group is developing a set of guidelines for selecting and conducting NOC events for future seasons, a bid package, and an operations manual, all of which should be available by March 8<sup>th</sup>, which will be posted on the USFA website and NOC information site. The Oversight Group envisions at this time that bids will be due by April 1<sup>st</sup> and a decision made on designations for the 2009-2010 season by late April.

The NOC Oversight Group has developed a set of goals and expanded purpose for the NOC. The NOC Oversight Group recommends that the pathway for qualification from the NOC to DivIA Summer Nationals be modified, with qualification transitioning from placement in the designated tournaments to a system where qualification is based upon the NOC points list, to be determined by the permanent oversight committee. Additionally, the NOC Oversight Group suggests replacing the qualifying path from DivIA Summer Nationals of one season to Div I Championships of the following season with a qualification from the NOC points list, utilizing DivIA Summer Nationals of the previous season and NOC events through the appropriate time frame.

The NOC Task Force suggests that the permanent committee be tasked with developing plans, beginning with either the 2010-2011 season or the 2011-2012 season, to hold in addition to the 4-6 NOC designated events a series of NOC Satellite events be held. These events should also earn points on the NOC points list, but should be strength weighted to a level of approximately 0.2 or 0.3, with a specified maximum number of events counting for a competitor. These NOC Satellite events could incorporate portions of the various Regional and Sectional level circuits currently running around the country, would provide additional competitive opportunities for DivIA, DivII and DivIII level fencers, and in coordination with the FOC and Tournament Committee, provide additional training and development opportunities for referees, tournament armourers and bout committee staff, and a pool of capable tournament organizers that could be tapped to run future NOC designated events.

One question the NOC Oversight Group was specifically asked to address is the issue of sanctioning. The NOC Oversight Group recommends that sanctioning for NOC events be at the level of the National association, and that a two-stage sanctioning process be adopted. As part of the bid package, prospective NOC events will be required to identify the Head Referee, Head

Armourer, and Bout Committee Chair that will be working at the event. These individuals must be of a certain experience level and will have primary responsibility for hiring the staff needed to manage the event, based upon the budget provided by the Local Organizing Committee. Any changes in these individuals will require approval by the NOC Oversight Group. Upon the conclusion of the event, each of these individuals will be required to certify that the event was run properly with respect to their individual spheres of responsibility.

The NOC Oversight Group recommends that a permanent committee be appointed to oversee further NOC development and which should be designated principal responsibility and authority for event selection and sanctioning.

**Appendix S**  
**Technology Development Task Force**  
Addendum to Report to Board of Directors

The TDTF assisted the Executive Director in evaluating two finalist vendors (HangAStar and Acetylene Solutions) to provide an information technology solution for the USFA. Both presented web seminars of approximately 1.5 hours to members of the USFA Staff and members of the TDTF. The TDTF wrote and submitted evaluations of the two finalist vendors to the Executive Director, and made a recommendation as to which vendor had the stronger package, as detailed in the attached report. The TDTF strongly recommends Acetylene Solutions be contracted with to provide a new membership database and online registration and results reporting system. The TDTF evaluates Acetylene Solutions as more likely to deliver a product that is: 1) Delivered on time with all the necessary capabilities for both the National Office and General Membership; 2) Within the specified development budget and with reasonable ongoing costs; 3) Is built on underlying technology that is robust and flexible enough to support future needs with reasonable development costs and time. The TDTF has been informed by the Executive Director to expect his final decision on vendor selection within a week.

After the vendor is selected and a contract is signed, the following deployment timeline has been proposed for implementation:

April 17	Membership schema design
May 8	Conversion tool for legacy data complete
June 5	Prototype online for assessment
July 1	Full launch of Membership database;
July 15	Tournament registration prototype released, schema for points calculation complete
July 31	Tournament registration online; points calculation online
August 14	Tournament interface released, schema for referee tracking system complete
August 31	Referee tracking system prototype
September 14	Referee tracking system online, qualifier interface released

The TDTF stands ready to assist the National Office Staff with its interactions with the vendor for the Discovery and Development phases. In addition, the TDTF is preparing to assist the Tournament Committee with the development of a modern tournament management system, including a new software package that will interface with the new Information Technology system being deployed, and provide significant additional functionalities. The TDTF envisions additional personnel will be needed to assist with these projects and will be submitting names to the Executive Committee for inclusion.

## **Appendix T**

### **Executive Director's Report: February 2009**

It's hard to believe that I've been behind this desk for a little less than 2 months...some days I think, "It's already been 2 months..." and other days I think, "It's only been two months? Wow!" Either way, I am excited about what lies ahead of us as an organization, and look forward to meeting those of you whom I have not had the privilege of having an interaction with up to this point. Upon my arrival, I have been focusing on four key areas of the organization, each of which possesses its own challenge: stakeholders, financial health, internal processes, and capacity. In each of these areas I have spent time assessing critical path elements in hopes to develop a plan. That will continue to be my primary focus during this first quarter of my tenure – to assess and communicate.

Despite the lack of some key staff and the immediate challenges before us, we have successfully developed some forward momentum in a number of different areas. As we transition into the second quarter, execution will become increasingly important, and communication will be critical as we continue to move through the process of organizational change. Here's a brief synopsis of what has occurred within the National Office and some ideas as to where we're headed.

#### **Stakeholders**

Of primary importance is the need to re-establish trust across the organization, for there is an enormous cost associated with distrust. While there's no lack of passion within the sport, there is a high degree of distrust, or suspicion. As we work together to address the various areas of our organization, whether financial, performance, tournament, etc., communication is going to be the key to moving from an organization that is seen as somewhat unreliable, unresponsive, opaque, and self-serving, to one that is reliable, responsive, transparent, and caring.

As a National Office, we are committed to making the necessary internal changes to do this – answering the phone on a regular basis, returning email promptly, providing different forums for communication. I have had the opportunity to spend time talking with countless individuals, representing virtually every area of our organization (athletes, parents, coaches, referees, committee members, board members, vendors, sponsors, cadre members, merchandising, media services, USOC affiliates, etc.) as an example to our staff, as a first step in developing the necessary relationships to cultivate trust, and to learn about the different perspectives. I intend to continue this practice to help remain connected to the community at large. Additionally, there are a number of things we have done as a National Office to improve the level of communication including, but not limited to:

- Improvements to the new website, some of which will be activated after JO's that will allow us to communicate on a regular basis with the membership at large.
- Working collaboratively with the Budget and Finance committee to become transparent regarding our current financial position, and to provide accurate forecasts of what can be expected over the remainder of the fiscal year.
- Investigating ways to increase the value of a membership to individuals and clubs.
- Developing ways to provide an increased connection to our corporate sponsors and strategic partners.

## **Financial**

It goes without saying that from a financial perspective we've got quite the road ahead of us. The challenges are not trivial; in no way do I see the situation as hopeless, yet it will require a significant

amount of collaborative effort. Most importantly, given our prior discussion on the need to cultivate trust across the organization, it will be critical to avoid increasing the "tax" on our current members. We will strive to find ways to reduce our expense run by 10-15% while increasing the return on our current revenue streams (tournaments, merchandising, housing, membership). We'll also invest time and energy into developing innovative solutions designed to generate new revenue streams at a minimal cost.

The Resource Development Committee has done some excellent work in addressing solutions to the resource need before us, and capitalizing on their efforts is critical. Concurrently, the USOC is supporting our endeavor to move forward as an organization through the NGB Business Development Division by providing resources in the area of education, sharing of best practices across sport, data exchange, consulting, and technology. We are all aware of the power of viral marketing programs, and through all of these efforts, a comprehensive marketing plan should be released sometime in July. Lastly, as part of our business development initiative, we are investigating the activation of a couple of outside organizations that specialize in foundation and corporate partnership contribution cultivation.

Here's a brief overview of the progress that has been made along with upcoming potential changes:

- Accounts Payable has been reduced from a little over \$1.1M to just over \$650K (~40% reduction)
- Since Dec. 15th, Accounts Receivable has been reduced from \$140K to around \$80K (~40% collected)
- In January, provided the EC with a position statement outlining financial position as of 12/31.
- Taken the annual budget as approved in 2008 and spread it into the appropriate months allowing us to have a better picture of our fiscal health.
- Negotiated "preferred airline" with United Airlines. As a result of this strategic partnership, we receive a 5% discount on all flights booked through the Olympic travel desk listed by the USFA (in March it will be available online), as well as qualify for additional VIK based upon usage. It is estimated that if 1/3 of the membership base used this service over the next year, between 80% & 100% of the staff airfares would be covered.
- Worked closely with Greg Dilworth to develop a working forecast for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- Begun to implement the necessary internal systems to more accurately account for finances on a day-to-day basis.
- Negotiated with USOC to reduce expenses billed for Beijing, while adjusting criteria for awarding athlete support to increase from the initial Performance Partnership Agreement.
- Established a budget timeline for the 2009-2010 budget.

- o March: budget guidelines distributed to department directors
- o April: initial budget submission, executive review, line by line evaluation, returned to directors for revision
- o May: resubmission of budget, review, revisions, and submission to Budget and Finance committee
- Investigating ways to increase the return on merchandising while adding value to member clubs and USFA members in those clubs.
- Investigating existing opportunities used by other NGB's to increase return on tournament housing...one specific option has a history of reducing the room rate by 14.5% while increasing the average number of room nights per tournament by 43% (increases our return by about the same) while also leveraging our ability to more effectively negotiate venue costs for subsequent tournaments.

### **Internal Processes**

This is without question the area over which we have the most direct control, and therefore improvements in efficiency and reduction in costs can ultimately have a significant impact across the organization. Generally speaking, there is a substantial amount of work to be done, for now I will focus on two main areas: organizational structure and technology. An initial step to help improve internal efficiency and communication required an overhaul of our organizational structure. This included a series of role and responsibility changes, and will be coupled with a physical desk change in March. The new organizational structure of the National Office is attached for your reference.

The second step in improving our internal processes involves the migration to an online database and tournament registration system. I honestly would not want to calculate the number of forests our organization destroys on an annual basis given the sheer volume of paper utilized by our membership and tournament department. Many, if not all of the board members, are aware that an RFP was distributed in December. Though the intention was to have a decision announced before the board meeting, upon review of the initial submissions, in collaboration with the Technology Development Task Force, we realized that more information needed to be gathered. In January, we worked closely with the TDTF to craft an addendum to the RFP that would more accurately capture the information that is most critical to our needs as an organization. It is important to reiterate how grateful I am to the members of the TDTF who devoted countless hours in helping determine what interface was necessary as we build the initial architecture of this system to ensure that upon launch, we are as fully automated as possible, while also being user friendly. Due to the scope of the project and some last minute data that surfaced, we will postpone the announcement as we evaluate a little more thoroughly, continuing to capture feedback from a variety of stakeholders and colleagues. A decision should be made by the 23rd of February for a scheduled launch date of July 1. Our intention is to have kiosks available, along with a customer service representative from the developers, at Summer Nationals to allow members to explore, test, suggest changes, etc. In the next month or so, your input and expertise may be solicited to ensure the development of the best possible system for all stakeholders within our organization.

### **Capacity**

The last leg of the organization to touch on consists of building capacity within the organization to effectively handle the changes described above. From a communication and business

development standpoint, we have shifted a staff member from a role as a “utility” individual, to serve as the essential hub of internal communication. In the role as Business Development Manager, Melissa Baylor will be responsible for upcoming developments on the website, handling the relationships with existing and new accounts, contributing to the development and implementation of the marketing plan, while continuing to provide ongoing support for our member services area.

Additionally, we’re approaching the final stages of bringing on a Director of Finance and Business Services. Twenty-nine candidates have applied from within and outside of the fencing community from a broad spectrum of backgrounds ranging from financial analysts, marketing directors from professional sports organization, and the former finance officer of Sun Microsystems. Lastly, we are also approaching the final stages of selecting a Director of High Performance Programs who will be charged with the responsibility to provide leadership, direction, and vision to the entire athlete development and coaches’ development pipelines. We hope to have both of these processes finalized and announced by the 15th of March for an April 1st start date.