

USAT BOD Teleconference Call September 10, 2007
Minutes

At 5:58 pm MDT, Rob Kasper called the meeting to order.

In attendance:

Rob Kasper
Jeff Matlow
Joe Umphenour
Mike Greer
Andy Kelsey
Eric Averill
Melissa Merson
Brian Harrington
Jim Donaldson
Celeste Callahan
Skip Gilbert

Absent:

Mark Fretta
Andy Kelsey
Jeff Matlow

Guests:

Alison Hankins, Elite Athlete Advocate
Dale Nauburger, TSE Consulting

PATCO and ITU

PATCO and ITU have been awarded the Hyvee Triathlon in Des Moines the official designation for 2008 North American Junior Championships. They have also given USAT priority to host the 2009 Pan American Junior Championships.

Resolutions

Resolution for Board Action

Subject: Elite Triathlon Membership Qualification Criteria

Background: USA Triathlon's elite triathlon qualification criterion was last updated in January 2005 in an effort to raise the bar of US elite performances and professionalism. While the criterion does meet this objective, it focuses too heavily on field size and does not account for field quality. For example, if an athlete is the overall winner at Amateur Worlds, they are still required to finish top-8 in 2 more (or 1 more Ultra-distance) events

with 500+ participants. The added travel and resources required for the additional 1-2 races could be better spent in the elite ranks.

Therefore, this resolution proposes the addition of new qualification options that are at a high enough level that they would merit an elite license.

Financial Impact: None.

Relevant & Affected By-Laws and Procedures:

Article 2 Section 2.4

Article 6 of the Bylaws

(Current) Elite Qualification Criteria:

Any athlete who chooses to compete as an elite triathlete must meet at least one of the three (3) criteria listed below:

CRITERIA A:

Finish top-eight overall and within 8 percent of the overall winner's time, according to gender, in at least three (3) USAT sanctioned events that occurred within the past 12 months and had at least 500 participants. No exceptions will be made.

CRITERIA B:

Finish within 8 percent of the overall winner's time in at least two (2) ultra- distance events that included an elite field (offering \$5k or greater in prize purse) that occurred within the past 12 months and had at least 500 participants. Ultra distance is defined as any distance equal to or greater than a 4K swim, 112-mile bike and 26.2-mile run. Events must have been sanctioned by USA Triathlon. No exceptions will be made.

CRITERIA C:

Finish within 8 percent of the overall winner's time in one (1) ultra-distance event that included an elite field (offering \$5k or greater in prize purse) that occurred within the past 12 months and had at least 500 participants AND finish top-eight and within 8 percent of the overall winner's time, according to gender, in at least one (1) USAT sanctioned event that occurred within the past 12 months and had at least 500 participants.

Whereas, the goal of USAT's elite membership criteria is to objectively and efficiently select the highest caliber athletes for elite status;

Whereas, the current criterion takes into account field size without regard for field quality;

Whereas, some performances are at such an exceptional level that they alone merit elite status;

Whereas, if an athlete has proven their ability through exceptional performances at the highest level of the sport, it is not necessary to require further proof that the athlete merits elite status;

Now therefore be it resolved that, USAT elite triathlon qualification criterion is changed to the following:

In order to apply for USAT's elite triathlon membership, an athlete must meet at least ONE of the following criteria in the past 12 months:

1. Finish within 8% of the winning elite time (on the same course as elites) in 3 USAT sanctioned events that offered an elite/pro prize purse.
2. Finish top-10 overall and within 8% of the winner's time at ITU Age Group World Championships.
3. Finish top-10 overall in the amateur field at Ironman World Championships.
4. Finish top-5 overall and within 8% of the winner's time at USAT Age Group National Championships.
5. Finish top-5 overall and within 8% of the winner's time at USAT Collegiate National Championships.
6. Finish top-3 overall in the amateur field at an Elite Qualifying Race. The list of Elite Qualifying Races is determined by the AAC each year and published on USAT's website.

All race results from 2007 will be required to meet the 2007 elite membership criteria. If any 2008 results are submitted as part of an athlete's elite membership application, the athlete will be required to qualify via the 2008 criteria outlined above.

This criterion will take effect January 1, 2008.

Submitted by:

Alison DeWall, Elite Athlete Advocate on behalf of the AAC
Joe Umphenour, USAT Board of Directors Member

Motion passes unanimously

Resolution for Board Action

Subject: Athletes Advisory Council (AAC) Membership

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Financial Impact: None.

Relevant & Affected By-Laws and Procedures:

Bylaw Article X1, Section 2, (e):

The Athletes' Advisory Council shall consist of five (5) members, each of whom shall be selected by and each of whom shall be a member of the Elite Pool (as defined in Article VI, Section 2 above). For the year 1997, the members of the

Athletes' Advisory Council shall be the persons serving on the Board of Directors of the United States Professional Triathlete and Duathlete Commission immediately prior to the dissolution of the United States Professional Triathlete and Duathlete Commission.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This change will take effect January 1, 2008.

Submitted by:

Alison Hankins (DeWall), USAT Elite Athlete Advocate

Joe Umphenour, USAT Board of Directors Member

Discussion occurred regarding the qualification given to only the top athletes. The AAC explained that in the past athletes have made policy decisions on the Olympic Games and World Championships with no experience. This does not mean that the AAC will not seek opinions from the membership going forward. The AAC conducts polling and has a yahoo group that is frequently used. This resolution will align USAT with the USOC structure as well as how the AAC is required to elect Board members.

Motion passes unanimously

TSE Overview

USAT contracted TSE consulting in April 2007 to analyze the USAT membership program and the administrative units that support it and the Regional Federations to determine how to effectively develop and serve a large membership base.

Dale Nauburger with TSE provided the Board an overview of this document.

Based on Dale's report the Board asked that more dialogue occur prior to the October Board meeting. A group consisting of Rob, Melissa, Eric, and Skip will work out a process for the Board to efficiently discuss a wide range of strategic planning topics, including those in this report.

Discussion Items

- Regional Newsletter is scheduled to go out on 10/1/07
- Agenda for October Board meeting

At 7:40 pm MDT Eric Averill moved that the meeting be adjourned.