

2 June 2022 - Meeting Minutes - University Weightlifting Committee

Start Time: 12PM Mountain

Duration: 43 minutes

Method: Zoom

Present: SS, DG, BL

Absent: WH, AN

Region 5 (Northwest) Update - BL

- Reached out to a few athletes from Temple University
 - BL mentions there seems to have been hesitation from the University to approve new sports in the past, perhaps wary of what they may or may not be able to provide on their end
 - BL mentions that should be unnecessary as they already have a space off-campus and a coach, simply need the school's stamp of approval
- Reached out to a few clubs in Virginia, now that they are a part of region 5
 - Virginia Tech - does not have a current USAW club -
 - SS mentions that they were part of 2021 incentive program, club expired, and then the president reached out to reapply for the incentive program
 - BL mentions that he will work with them on properly allocating and organizing their budget for that
 - George Mason - already has an established USAW club
 - James Madison - still needs to reach out to them
 - VCU - has not reached out to them
 - BL mentions that the George Mason team has reached out to VCU and are looking to organize intercollegiate competition in the winter
 - UVA - has a barbell club, but seems almost entirely powerlifters
 - BL has not received word back from the members of the team yet

Region 3 (Southwest) Update - DG

- TAMU Galveston - DG speaks with SS on the issue that the member of the team that was set to act as the club coach and take part in a USAW course as part of the incentive program, suddenly announced he was transferring to the main campus at College Station
 - SS mentions that there was another member on the team that already had a USAW level 1
 - DG states that he'll follow up with the new team president on the status of the club
- UT Dallas - DG noticed a new IG page shot up for UT Dallas Weightlifting
 - President of the club then reached out via email inquiring on how to become official with USAW membership and asking about the Regional University Championships
 - DG mentions that there used to be a club at UT Dallas that went dormant after Jake Wade and Mary Rossi left

- DG responded back to the President of the club and is awaiting more information
 - DG mentions that UT Dallas is a school where the rec center can support a weightlifting team, and in the past many have trained right on campus
- ASU - DG came across a master participant list for AO1 that he received from Ray Harkness on the Texas-Oklahoma WSO, which Ray had received from Les Simonton for the purposes of searching new state records
 - DG used this document to zone in on his region and noticed that Sun Devil Weightlifting was an active team and their listed coach was Jesse Veniza, an ASU professor
 - ASU is not officially listed as a club with the school or with USAW so DG was going to inquire on the nature of that club
- DG also used this document to identify all other participants in the Southwest Region, and then was able to drill down on the participants in Texas and Oklahoma using his WSO permissions to identify which school they were attached to
 - DG states that if BARS permissions were expanded, this could be monumentally useful in organizing and connecting people already competing in the sport
 - SS mentions that she has an update on this from Alex Love, which will give the regional representatives access to not only their region, but the entire membership
- DG states that facility request to host the Regional University Championships has finally been approved by the University of Texas
 - DG mentions now that there is a definitive date and location, he'll reach out to more budding University teams about their potential involvement

DG has a few items that he's been thinking on since the last meeting and states that these items should be brought up again next month, when AN and WH are present:

- DG states that for the purpose of the Regional University Championships we'll need to clarify state of residence vs school attended and what region that places people in for their regional championship
 - DG brings this up because while traditionally an athlete would compete in the region/conference that their school resides, the committee's BARS permissions will sort by residence (this issue is likely fixed a few sections above with updated BARS permissions)
 - SS also states that we may be able to sort by the collegiate eligibility tab in BARS
 - DG states that it just may take some intra-committee communication, so that members in a certain region don't fall through the cracks because they attend school in a different region and don't receive correspondence from that regional representative
 - SS also states that this won't be an issue this year with the allowance of attending any regional event no matter your school or place of residence
- DG states that last year, state championships were automatically counted as NUQs, as they were synonymous with LWC boundaries. DG inquires if that will remain if a state championship is held in a multi-state WSO

- SS states that the previous rule was put into place to give people in larger geographic areas more opportunities to qualify, and that we should continue to give those ample opportunities and count state championships as NUQs
- DG states that he had a question from a member in his area regarding the semi-national meet nature of the Regional University Championships and whether a total at one of those events could be counted towards international team placement
 - SS states at this point, given the current selection procedures, no

BL inquires on the plan for 2023 when all five regions hold Regional University Championships, considering some committee members have not run weightlifting meets and may not be currently well equipped to run such a large event

- SS states that the most likely course of action will be that in 2023, these meets will be absorbed under USAW and run them as another national event

SS states that with a new incoming CEO after nationals there will be an evaluation of the committee and its budget, and with that SS would like to put together a proposal that would allocate a large amount of money in starting collegiate programs

- SS asks to start the discussion on if the committee had near limitless funds, how could we best employ that money?
 - Potentially throw large amounts of money at funding a new program from scratch?
 - Spread that money out across existing clubs?
 - Scholarships, travel money, regional event hosting costs, etc
- For reference, SS mentions that USA Triathlon received a 2.4 million dollar donation a few years ago
 - That money was allocated to 25 schools over a period of 5 years, with each year the disbursement becoming less and less as the schools starting shouldering more of the funding
 - SS mentions that to becoming an emerging sport within the NCAA, 25 varsity programs will need to be started
 - SS mentions that the big schools are less likely to initiate the process, with the NGBs essentially having to pay those schools to become a sport there
- DG mentions that this debate essentially comes down to either looking to fund particular schools in the name of high performance with the goal of potentially turning out world class weightlifters or looking at a more grassroots approach in being able to grow the numbers in a large scale at the collegiate level by spreading that money around to existing schools
 - SS mentions that if the sport is not in the Olympics in 2028, the majority of the budget which is currently shaded toward high performance may shift back towards more outreach and growth of the sport
 - BL mentions that by utilizing the money on scholarships that money would be utilized on people already in the sport, versus potentially sending money to a program where they have their own marketing and could bring more people in and fight the same battle as USAW in growth

- DG agrees this is a really big discussion and eager to hear from WH and AN on this matter