

Western Rugby Union  
Annual General Meeting  
February 10, 2006  
Torrance, California

Action Items are in bold italics and are outlined on the last pages.

**Welcome:** Bill Sexton, President of the WRFU, welcomed all attendees to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m..

**Roll Call and Introduction of Guests:** Rich Cortez, Secretary of the WRFU, conducted the roll call.

**Attendees: Members of the Board of Directors:** Bill Sexton [President and Director], Paul Mabry [Director], Bob Latham [Director], David McPhail [Treasurer], Rich Cortez [Secretary], Amy Rusert [ERRFU], Gene Nelson [Great Plains], Kurt Torkelson [Heart of America], Greg Smith [Rio Grande], Dan Ward [Missouri]; **Proxies:** Paul Mabry [Texas for David Jenkins], Rich Cortez [Ozark for David Higgins]; **Other attendees:** Bill Haffner [WRFU Office], John Wolfe [West Senior Men's Manager], Tom Coburn [Chair, West Referees], Anil Kamat [Rio Grande Vice-President]

**Guests:** Geoff Blue [Candidate for USA Director], Paul Hoskins [Candidate for West President], Kristin Richeimer [USA Rugby Office], Larry Johnson [ERRFU Referee].

**Agenda:** The Agenda was approved after minor modifications and motion by Sexton, second by Smith.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the 2006 St. Louis Summer Meeting were approved upon motion by Torkelson and second by McPhail.

**2005 Financial Report:** David McPhail provided the 2005 Year End Financial Report. The main issues from 2005 were:

- First year clubs have not been applying for refund of West dues.
- McPhail is willing to assist LAU Treasurers with formatting for record keeping and reporting.

On motion by Sexton and second by Smith, the financial report was accepted. McPhail was commended for his excellent report and record-keeping.

**Report on USA Rugby:** Bob Latham reported on current issues facing USA Rugby, including LA Sevens, restructuring of USA Rugby, iRB consulting, and the need for more events in the West. Blue inquired about the scope of the consulting work. Latham responded the work included strategic planning, operations, and structure of the National Office.

**Old Business:** Focus Items from the previous meetings were addressed in other areas of the meeting:

- West governance issues and re-organization discussion have been placed on hold pending the outcome of the USA Rugby National Office and Board reorganization.
- West Referees Association will be addressed by Tom Coburn. Initial budget submission by referees was noted to be high – over \$60,000
- The West will not conduct Men's Division II and Division III leagues.

**West All-Star Team Coaching Appointments:** Sexton announced the status of all coaching appointments. Mark Bullock has been appointed Women's Senior coach. Craig Coates was named the West Collegiate Coach. Applications for the Women's Sevens coach just closed, and the appointment will be forthcoming. The call for applications for the Senior Men's Coach was recently released. Dustin George continues as the Women's Under 23 Team. The West Men's Sevens team will continue to be guided by David McPhail and coach Doug Brown.

**Project to define purpose of the West:** Haffner suggested that the West needs to figure out what it's doing. Rusert suggested an external facilitator to assist in formulating a shared vision while integrating USA Rugby's initiatives. McPhail warned the idea would have major budget implications. *Sexton asked Amy to put together a proposal, with budget, by March 1 for a retreat to be held in Colorado during the last weekend of July.*

**Status of Ozark RFU:** The Board noted the difficulties of the Ozark RFU. The President of OZ was not in attendance and other union administration has been non-responsive. There is a lack of competitive leagues for men. The college programs are spotty, although the high school programs seem to be going fairly well. There is no referees' society. Sexton asked the Board what could be done. Mabry suggested not accepting OZ representatives into West Championships and force clubs to realign with neighboring unions. After discussion, *Haffner has been assigned to meet with Higgins to get Ozark functioning again.* Rusert also offered assistance. Blue inquired about financial assistance from the West and Mabry felt the Board should entertain a grant request if forthcoming.

**Missouri RFU Motion to Amend By-Laws regarding voting of West USA Directors:** Ward (Missouri) presented a motion to eliminate the vote of the West's Directors to USA Rugby on West Board of Directors. Ward noted the board has a potential of 14 votes. Due to alignments and officers from particular LAU's, one or two unions may dominate votes. The motion was seconded by Nelson. Paul Mabry offered an amendment to make the effective date February 13, 2006 if the motion passed. Mabry's motion was seconded by Sexton. Mabry's motion passed by a 7 to 5 vote. Mabry then suggested it would be disingenuous for the Directors not to have a vote and felt the Directors' voices at the national level are stronger if the Directors are voting members of their Territorial Unions. Gene Nelson made a motion for a secret ballot. This motion was seconded by Rusert. The motion carried. By secret ballot and with a total of 12 votes possible, the motion to Amend the By-laws failed by a vote of 5 affirmative, 5 negative, and 2 abstentions. A two-thirds vote was necessary to amend the By-laws.

## Reports

**Written reports and plans** were received from Collegiate Men, U-23 Women, Men's Sevens, and Senior Women. On a motion by Torkelson, second by Nelson, the reports were approved. Women's Sevens report will be forthcoming. Sexton noted the closing date for the Senior Men's coaching applications is February 22, 2006.

**Kristin Richeimer of the USA Rugby National Office** reviewed her responsibilities as Director of Membership Relations. These included overseeing staff that deal with championship staffing, member registration, eligibility review and waiver requests, transfers, background checks (outsourced), insurance and certificates, and database management. She polled the Board about what other functions should be added. The Board requested USA Rugby possibly collecting LAU dues as part of CIPP registration, adding a new youth rugby registration category with a different dues structure, implementing ACH system for processing dues money back to the Territories, and

adding a feature for members to print out their player registration cards and obtain USA Rugby decals as part of their CIPP fee. \

### **Reports (continued)**

**State of the West Referees:** Tom Coburn reported on the current state of refereeing in the West. Currently the West has 2 National Panel referees, one B1 referee, four B2 referees, no B3 referees that are upwardly mobile, and six C1 referees that have a chance to advance. This report focused on the need for more referees. The men's CR competition requires a C1 referee, just short of promotion, or higher graded referee. The college competition in the West requires a C1 referee or above. These requirements are national guidelines. Coburn queried whether the West wanted to follow the national guidelines. Ward noted the MO union requires every club to have a referee for teams that want to compete for a championship. Coburn worried about the West Collegiate Championships in Oklahoma since the event will require 20 people and only 6 will be coming from Dallas. The Board assured Coburn the funds would be available to staff the event with non-West referees, if required. Sexton informed the Board the West is looking at an arrangement with referees requiring clubs to pay a flat fee per West match. This is outlined in the draft referees agreement that was emailed to board members. The West will pay for all staffing a West Championships, but for referees only in West league matches. Coburn and the Board agreed *better reporting* is needed from the referees. Discussion ensued about formalizing a *Referee Development Officer position* to conduct referee clinics.

**State of the West:** President of the West, Bill Sexton commented on several issues facing the West. He began by thanking Rich Cortez, West Collegiate Coach, Larry Naifeh, John Wolfe, and Ron Laswieski, Senior Men's All Star staff, and Craig Coates, Senior Women's All Star Coach, for their service and commitment to the West. He noted the driving force for all the volunteers who serve the West and their LAU's is one of service and continual improvement and upgrade. He offered the proposed Referee Development Officer and Game Development Officer Positions as examples of this goal. He would like to see some programs implemented to provide incentives the LAU's to encourage growth.

**State of USA Rugby:** Paul Mabry entertained questions since Bob Latham's report covered much of information relating to the reorganization of the USA National Office and Board of Directors. Local members were invited to the Board meeting on March 3, 2006 in Boulder. McPhail question whether information was or is available relating to USA event site selection.

**Senior Men's All Star Report:** John Wolf presented a development plan, purpose statement and review of 2005, including budget and expenses. He noted six West players were selected for the USA Eagle pool. Commitments have been made for a November match in St. Louis against the Midwest as well as Developmental team games against the Midwest, South or MARFU. He asked for the LAU's assistance in recruiting athletes. Wolf would like to continue in some capacity with the All Star team. Sexton said Larry Naifeh will be a part of the review committee for a new coach. On motion by Sexton, second by Nelson, the report was accepted with the Board thanking John Wolf for his service.

### **Executive Session**

The Board then adjourned the regular meeting temporarily to convene in Executive Session with only voting eligible board members and invited guests in attendance. Upon completion of the executive session, the regularly scheduled AGM was re-convened.

## Membership and Competition Analysis

- Bill Haffner reviewed the Open Fines list, Final 2005 West Competitive Results, the 2006 Calendar of Events, and Seeding & Venues for 2006. Discussion then turned to the Status of LAU Programs for Division II and Division III teams. Suggestions were offered for running LAU leagues. Sexton reminded the Board that USA has assigned the duties of conducting championships to the Territorial Unions, who have the responsibility to pass along those requirements to the LAU's who should communicate to the clubs. Rusert informed the Board that ERRFU has different priorities for their web site but will provide any documentation the West needs.
- Revisions to the Combined Regulations and League Regulations were discussed. On motion by Sexton, with second by Ward, **Version 11 of the League Regulations and Procedures** was approved by voice vote. **Game Day Regulations revisions** were approved by voice vote upon motion by Nelson and second by Smith. **Match Reporting revisions** were approved by voice vote upon motion by Sexton, second by Torkelson. **Regulations and Procedures for Competitive Events** were revised to remind referees to adhere to existing procedures regarding the submission of reports involving any discipline action taken during the match and to review roster requirements. On motion by Torkelson, second by Nelson, the changes were approved by voice vote.
- The Dan Hartwig award was intended to be an individual player award. The consensus was to change to a team award at the Men's Club Championship and teams from any division (I, II, or III) would be eligible. *Sexton asked Ward to assemble a subcommittee to choose the recipient.*

## New Business

### **Elections:**

Nominations for President were Paul Hoskins (duly nominated by West members in good standing) and Bill Sexton (nominated by Torkelson). Sexton was re-elected after a secret ballot.

Vice-President nominations included Dan Ward (by Smith) and Paul Hoskins (by Torkelson). Ward then announced his withdrawal as a candidate. Sexton motioned to close nominations with Torkelson seconding. Paul was elected by a show of hands.

Treasurer's position was filled by a unanimous voice vote of approval for McPhail (nominated by Torkelson).

Cortez continues as Secretary after unanimous voice vote upon nomination by Nelson.

There were three candidates for two USA Director positions: Geoff Blue (nominated by ERRFU), Bob Latham (by Nelson), and Sexton (by McPhail). By secret ballot, with each eligible voter selecting two, Sexton and Latham were re-elected to be West representatives to the USA Board of Directors.

### **Other New Business:**

With time and patience running thin, several items were not considered at the meeting. These items will be circulated to the Board Members by email for discussion and electronic balloting, if necessary. These agenda items included:

- West Game Development Officer and budget
- West Administrator Job Description
- Western Governance project to define—postponed until USA Board reorganization completed
- Report on LAU Responsibilities (Great Plains and Rio Grande) will be presented next meeting
- Subcommittee to review West Collegiate All Star Tournament and make recommendations
- West Administration Budget
- Possible grant incentives to LAU's that improve CIPP enrollment
- Possible staggered terms for President and other officers
- 2006 West Budget will need to be approved by electronic ballot once discussion on above matters is completed.

Upon motion by Nelson and second by Hoskins, the meeting was mercifully adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

#### ***ACTION ITEMS***

- 1. Amy Rusert plan facilitator meeting for Friday before the next West Summer Meeting in Colorado in July.***
- 2. Bill Haffner to meet with David Higgins and other interested parties of the Ozark RFU in an effort to get the LAU functioning again.***
- 3. Sexton to appoint coordinator to review Men's Senior Coaching candidates and Women's Sevens Coaching candidates.***
- 4. Coburn to work with Haffner to devise methods for better referee reporting of scores and disciplinary reports.***
- 5. Coburn will also explore the viability of appointing a Referee Development Officer for the West.***
- 6. Ward will appoint a committee to present the Dan Hartwig award at the next Men's Club Championships.***
- 7. Sexton, Haffner, McPhail and Cortez will submit unfinished business to the Board by electronic mail for discussion, review, balloting, and implementation.***