

EMPIRE RFU GU
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
June 30, 2013

The Executive Board met via conference call on Sunday, June 30, 2013, at 9:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Voting Board Members: Renee Ovrut (President), Mike Crafton (VP), Oscar Prue (VP), Kyle Antoian (VP), Ashley Belline (ED Women), Steve Molnar (ED Men), Sean Horan (ED 7s)

Ad-Hoc Member: Gary Heavner (USAR Delegate)

Administrator: J.C. Whipple (Administrator)

Absent: Brad Kleiner (ED Referees), John Bradley (Colleges)

GU Membership (Identified): Ryan Meiller (PAC), Nick Mastrosimone (Univ. of Rochester), Kevin Holt (Union), David Taylor (Lansdowne)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 p.m.

This Executive Meeting, per Empire GU bylaws, was made available to GU membership. Those who called in were able to listen to the meeting, and then invited to raise questions or comments during an Open Forum at the end of the call.

BYLAW REVIEW / AMENDMENT

Renee Ovrut raised the matter of Executive meetings being open, per current Empire GU bylaws, to the membership. She said documents and minutes should always be available, and are, but Executive Committee meetings should be kept closed as sensitive matters are discussed and should not be for public consumption.

Mike Crafton stated that, when written, the term “members” meant member clubs and the leadership of those clubs. He said a clarification of terminology would be in order.

Renee Ovrut made a motion to limit Executive Committee meetings to Executive Committee members only, and invited and approved individuals or clubs from the membership.

Vote: Passed, In Favor (6) / Opposed (1)

In Favor – Renee Ovrut, Kyle Antoian, Oscar Prue, Steve Molnar, Sean Horan, Ashley Belline

Opposed – Mike Crafton

** Mike Crafton made the determination that any Bylaw changes or amendments must be presented in writing to the membership. Following a sixty (60)-day window, the Executive Committee can vote on the proposed amendment.

** The proposed amendment will be presented to the membership and voted on by the EC the first available meeting following Sept. 1.

LOGO DEVELOPMENT

J.C. Whipple stated that we are in the final round of review for the new logo being created. He asked that any EC members who have not submitted a vote, to do so by Monday, July 1. Once the logo is in place, a re-design of the website will take place and the logo will be distributed as needed.

COACHING CLINIC

Oscar Prue reported that the postponed coaching clinic, originally scheduled for Rochester in June, will now take place on August 24 at Vassar College. The itinerary will remain the same, though other details are being finalized.

Renee Ovrut suggested that a stepped approach to Clinic fees might be a good idea and promote attendees to sign up earlier. J.C. Whipple said he would work this up and present for review.

SENIOR WOMEN

Ashley Belline reported that schedules have been sent out. At this point, there has been positive response. She asked that in the next newsletter a request for club information / updates be made.

J.C. Whipple reported that the website is being redeveloped to expand club contact information. It will be inherent on the clubs to update their information.

ALL-UNION CALL

Renee Ovrut stated that an All-Union Call would be scheduled for early-to-mid July. This would take place after the Fall 2013 schedules have been loaded to the website and are completely public. The call would also address changes for Fall 2013 and a review of the recently-completed Congress meeting.

CONGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Renee Ovrut reported that she, Gary Heavner and Mike Crafton attended Congress in Houston on behalf of Empire GU. Nigel Melville unveiled and detailed USARs "Work For It" campaign and there was a review of the competition calendar. One of the main highlights was the USAR Bylaw review as it pertains to members of Congress. With the move to a GU structure, questions have been circling as to voting member allocation. There will now be forty-five (45) seats total, with Empire GU receiving one (1).

OLD BLUE WAIVER APPEAL

Gary Heavner detailed a waiver issue that Old Blue (OB) faced in the D3 National Playoffs. Special attention was paid to OBs eligibility during the Final Four, and especially prior to kickoff in the D3 Championship game. Twenty-nine (29) players were appealed on the OB roster, and the club was accused of utilizing ineligible players or flying players in the night before the match.

Mike Crafton stated that this was an unfair attack on OB and the integrity of Empire GU. Questions as to whether protocol was followed by USAR were raised. It was agreed that Gary Heavner and Mike Crafton would present facts and / or letter to J.C. Whipple for review. Once completed, Renee Ovrut will sign and send along to the appropriate parties within USAR.

SENIOR MEN

Steve Molnar discussed matters surrounding Rockaway and concerns with numbers based on players displaced due to Hurricane Sandy. The proposed move is from D2 to D3 based on player availability. Montclair has been approached on moving from D3 to D2. Steve is awaiting response from both clubs.

The schedules are out and have been distributed to the clubs.

D2 will have an (11) game schedule with 10 teams in the division. The standings will be used to determine the league champion. The weakness is that only one (1) team will be eligible for USAR playoffs and if a club gets off to a slow start, it could become a challenge to enforce them to fulfill obligations. To keep clubs interested, the top four (4) clubs will be eligible for playoffs, and follow a North 1 v South 1 / North 2 v South 2 playoff format for a two-game series featuring aggregate total.

Steve also discussed the matter of B-side games for D1 and D2. The concept in play is for the Home club offer a B-side game, with the Visiting club either accepting or denying the offer. It is still being discussed as to what the ramifications would be should either 1) the B-side game not be offered; 2) the Visiting club deny the offer. This will be an on-going discussion with a final decision in the coming weeks.

NYC 7s REQUEST FOR FUNDS TO TWICKENHAM

Sean Horan provided an overview of the NYC 7s clubs competing at the World 7s Championship at Twickenham. Sean was approached by USA Rugby to lead the club. Six to seven Eagles will be a part of the club, with the remainder filled by players from the NE Academy.

The budget is set to cover flights and hotels, but there remains a gap. USAR has stated it will not be providing any funds for the competition.

Sean stated that he is appreciative of the support the Board provides previously to the NE ODA and understands this is asking a lot. He would like to put the Empire GU logo on the jersey and feels this would be great exposure as the games will be shown on live TV in Europe and the competition is expected to draw 80K+ fans.

Questions that were raised included whether the kits would be used again for future competition and why the GU should be stepping to the plate to support players outside of the GU. If those GU players came directly to the Board to ask for financial support, this would be more palatable.

Renee Ovrut stated that USAR needs to show more support of this effort, and then the GU would consider allocating funds. Sean agreed to approach USAR and discuss this plan.

RUGBY RESEARCH & INJURY PREVENTION (CONCUSSION STUDY)

A project is underway to research and track injuries, and specifically concussions, which take place during 7s competition within the Northeast and around the country. Empire GU has been integral with this study, which is gaining credibility and awareness within the rugby community.

Dr. Vic Lopez, leader of the study, has requested funds to offset travel and research costs. The total request is for \$2,600 and Empire GU would split that cost evenly with New England, totaling \$1,300 for Empire GU.

Mike Crafton made a motion to allocate \$1,300 to Dr. Vic Lopez for continued research of rugby injuries. Renee Ovrut seconded the motion.

Vote: Passed, In Favor (5) / Opposed (0)

In Favor – Renee Ovrut, Kyle Antoian, Mike Crafton, Steve Molnar, Sean Horan,

Opposed: None

OPEN FORUM

Questions were posed from various clubs regarding matters pertaining directly to competition within their respective divisions.

Respectfully submitted,

J.C. Whipple
Administrator