

EMPIRE RFU GU
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
April 17, 2017

The Executive Board met via conference call on Monday, April 17, 2017, at 9:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Voting Board Members: Ken Pape (President), Pat Moroney (VP Communications), Lex Maccubbin (ED Men), Angela Corpus (ED Women), Brad Kleiner (ED Referees), Sean Horan (ED Sevens)

Non-Voting Members: J.C. Whipple (Administrator), Gary Heavner (DC Chair), Pete Steinberg (Head Coach, USWNT), Phaidra Knight (USWNT Player)

Absent: Rosalie MacGowan (VP Finance), Sharon Berger (VP Operations)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:09 p.m. A quorum was in place.

USA RUGBY WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM - SUPPORT

Ken Pape introduced Pete Steinberg (Head Coach, USWNT) and Phaidra Knight (USWNT Player).

Phaidra made a quick presentation on the state of the Women's National Team. From 2015-2017 = \$7m. In that same period, the Men's National Team has received over \$17m. There has been a dramatic dropoff in funding for the WNT, and this is a World Cup year. In the current year, the MNT received \$1.7m (non-WC year, while the WNT received \$383K (WC year).

The answer from USA Rugby comes that the majority of MNT funding comes from World Rugby. Phaidra said since being in the WNT pipeline since 1999, she has had to pay her own for most of the associated camps, trainings, etc. for USA Rugby.

Phaidra said that in light of recent developments with Women's programs with US Soccer and USA Hockey, better things are coming for women athletes at the national level, but USA Rugby is not there yet. Along with Alycia Washington, Tiff Fahee (all three are members of New York Rugby Club), Phaidra is asking for consideration for a stipend from Empire GU.

Phaidra said that the lack of funding impacts the athletes' ability to focus on the rugby tasks at hand - there are real-life outside influences which take away from the rugby side: employment, bills, etc. She said the request is for financial support, but moreso, the ask for alliance. The USWNT is the most successful rugby program in US history, in light of the lack of resources. This request is not about three athletes from an EGU club, this is about changing the future of Women's rugby in America.

Ken thanked Phaidra for her presentation. He then introduced Pete Steinberg and asked him to provide an overview of the USWNT program.

Pete detailed the challenges and strain on resources to assemble players eligible for WNT selection. Where it can cost as much as \$25K to bring the team together, other countries can have players drive a couple hours and meet regularly.

For perspective, Pete said an athlete representing the USWNT, they would have to give 12 weeks. The WNT players get \$60 per diem, the MNT receive \$100. For the month of July, players would need to take unpaid leave from their current employment - this presents an issue financially, mentally and emotionally. The program attempts to reduce as much outside stress as possible so the athletes can focus on the athletic competition at hand. If there is a way to reduce the financial stress, it would have a direct impact on the competition results. Pete said he appreciates the discussion and consideration of support.

Ken Pape asked about the month-long July camp and the player's association with the WC squad. All 34 players selected have the same commitment and be prepared to go at a moment's notice, even if they are not in the final 28.

Players will be receiving \$1500 if they travel to WC in August. Pete said they WNT would have to fundraise an additional \$27K to get each player to \$2500, equal to the MNT per diem of \$100.

Ken asked if Phaidra, Alycia and Tiff are all CIPPed with an EGU Club. Phaidra confirmed each were full members of NYRC. Ken then asked if there was a stipend granted, would the players be open to donating time to work with EGU HP sides (Men and Women) or clubs in general.

Pat Moroney said he spoke with Alycia recently. He said he is in strong support of this effort and anything we could do to close the gap, he would be in support of.

Ken noted that he is aware of USA Rugby attempting to make changes to this, but EGU is striving to be a leader in initiatives like this and would continue to fight on behalf of Women and the WNT. Ken also said he is sorry that Phaidra and her counterparts have had to go through this. Ken thanked Phaidra and Pete for their time.

The Board then opened discussion on this topic. Ken Pape said that EGU has a chance to lead the nation in stepping forward to support the WNT.

Ken asked for a current financial accounting. JC Whipple said there is approximately \$79K currently in the bank. \$49K carried forward from 15-16. He said the projected budget Rosalie MacGowan assembled shows a deficit of \$1600 in 16-17.

Lex Maccubbin said he thinks we need to careful how we proceed and make sure the money is there, also in the wording of level of support.

Angel Corpus said she is in full support of what these Women are going through and EGU should provide some support, but it should not come from just EGU. As all three players are EGU members, we should step up to ease the financial burden. An additional consideration is next year when the Women's 7s will be held in San Francisco.

Brad Kleiner said he agrees as well and would look to match up with previous funding efforts.

Sean Horan said he came in late to the entire discussion, but is aware of the lack of funding. He said the question would be to consider giving a reasonable amount but keeping in line with previous stipends.

Pat Moroney said if EGU is supporting athletes, we directly support EGU athletes, possibly through direct donations to the athletes. This should be a one-off based on the current shortfall identified by the USWNT following Congress.

Ken Pape said the total shortfall for WNT WC players would be \$3500 per player (\$2500 for July, \$1000 for August). A discussion took place on the level of support and where the money would be directed.

Lex Maccubbin asked if there is a need to make a firm decision tonight. Could the Board receive detailed info from Rosalie MacGowan on the current financial situation to help make a more informed decision.

Brad Kleiner made a motion for a fundraising effort of \$10,500, in support of EGU-member athletes selected for the WNT WC. Empire GU will match dollar-for-dollar (up to \$10,500) for EGU-member athletes selected for the WNT WC squad (July camp and WC in August). Any players funded through EGU, the player is expected to work certain EGU HP camps. The motion was seconded by Angela Corpus. The motion passed 6-0.

Ken Pape said he was extremely proud of the EGU for leading the effort for equality in this effort with the WNT.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Rosalie MacGowan not present.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Pat Moroney said he and Brad Kleiner had a productive conversation on a new process for Match Roster checks. Both clubs will be required to bring printed rosters, each team checks opposing roster, each team and referee signs / opposes roster, each team takes a picture of roster and holds onto paper / images for future reference.

Pat said the thought is to make a more robust process. If there are any disputes, everything goes back to the referees report and eliminates any differences.

MEN'S REPORT

Lex Maccubbin said the semifinals are set for this coming weekend and both D2 and D3 will be great competitions.

WOMEN'S REPORT

Angela Corpus gave an overview of the Women's playoffs. D1 = Monmouth, D2 = Morris will be hosting crossover; D3 = Brooklyn traveling for the crossover.

NCR3 REPORT

Angela Corpus there was a proposal put in front of the committee to prevent teams from same conference playing each other in first round.

SEVENS REPORT

Sean Horan had to leave the call in advance of report.

REFEREES REPORT

Brad Kleiner stated referees were being contacted from NYSRRS to cover matches. Suggestion was made to also connect with EPRU.

DISCIPLINE REPORT

Gary Heavner not present.

NEW BUSINESS

Binghamton Men's RFC

Lex Maccubbin said he sent an email to the Board detailing the acceptance of the Binghamton Men as a provisional member of EGU. A discussion took place on the history and viability of Binghamton Men's RFC. Since the club has CIPPed with USA Rugby and made it application to EGU, Binghamton is accepted as an Associate member of EGU. Further discussion took place on parameters associated with the club's acceptance as a full member, including playoff eligibility in 2017-18 and a cash bond to ensure scheduling compliance. This will be reviewed prior to the upcoming AGM.

Being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
J.C. Whipple
EGU Administrator