

EMPIRE RFU GU
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
July 21, 2015

The Executive Board met via conference call on Tuesday, July 21, 2015, at 9:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Voting Board Members: Michael Crafton (President), Robert Mayers (VP Communications), Steve Lewis (VP Operations), Ken Pape (ED Men), Sarah Rutman (ED Women), Sean Horan (ED Sevens), Brad Kleiner (ED Referees).

Non-Voting Members: J.C. Whipple (Administrator), Gary Heavner (Ad-Hoc)

Clubs: Tim Skennion (Bayonne), Ralph Von Rosendahl (Montclair)

Absent: Matthew Winard (VP Finance),

CALL TO ORDER

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

Michael Crafton opened the meeting by stating this call would be used to review matters surrounding scheduling, and specifically the potential relegation / placement of Bayonne (Men) and Montclair (Men).. Per Ken Pape (ED Men), Bayonne is being relegated to D3 and Montclair will have one club in D2.

MONTCLAIR

Mike Crafton invited Ralph Von Rosendahl to give an overview of the situation surrounding Montclair.

Ralph stated that Montclair will be having a meeting on July 28 to determine how many sides are feasible for the club. Having only a D3 club could hurt overall numbers of their club, but it would be for the good of the league. Ralph sent an email to Ken in early June asking the league's position for Montclair and did not receive a response until July 16, indicating that Montclair would be in D2.

Ralph stated based on numbers for their club, they would ideally like to have two sides – one at D2 and one at D3. If the numbers are not there, the club would prefer to compete at D3 only. This would allow the club to regroup and develop players and numbers.

Mike Crafton asked what the justification is for Montclair asking for relegation to D3, even when they didn't place last in their D2 division in 2015. Ralph responded that a reduced number of sides is not ideal, but many of the players are on the downside of their career and Montclair would be hard-pressed to field a competitive D2 side. This would impact morale, numbers, etc.

Sean Horan asked for clarification that with one side, Montclair was asking to compete at D3. Ralph affirmed.

Sean then asked how many times Montclair had to formalize its request. Ken Pape asked Ralph if he did not receive an email response. Ralph stated he did not receive a response for his initial email to Ken. The follow up came on his second attempt.

Mike stated that USA Rugby is expecting a list of clubs by July 29. He asked that Montclair have their status in place by then. Ralph stated the club meeting is July 28 and the Board would receive word no later than noon July 29.

BAYONNE

Mike Crafton invited Tim Skennion to give an overview of the situation surrounding Bayonne.

Tim stated Ken Pape notified him last week that Bayonne was being relegated to D3 for the coming season. Tim said Bayonne is protesting this and would like the consideration of the Board to compete at D2. When he stepped back and looked at all the factors involved, Bayonne is still a strong club – CIPP, finances, the results of the spring and recruiting all point to the 0-10 Fall season as an aberration. Injuries played a large factor (lost 10-12 players). Recruiting for the Spring added 12 new CIPP members. The club went 5-2 during the Spring.

Tim said relegation is a serious matter and will negatively impact the club. Member retention, recruiting and sponsorship all could be negatively impacted. He asked that the Board look at Bayonne's collective work.

Sean Horan asked when Bayonne was notified of the relegation. Ken Pape said he sent them an email last Thursday (July 16).

Robert Mayers asked what D2 would look like and what the rationale was for the decision to relegate Bayonne. Ken stated the team went 0-10, administratively forfeited four games, which had an impact on the standings and playoffs. Other controversial factors arose, including the coach being sanctioned for using an un-CIPPed player during a league game. Ken said the club needed to prove it can rebuild.

Tim said the club proactively reached out to the Board to utilize Administrative forfeits for the remainder of the season, once it became apparent they would not have a competitive side. The club took that opportunity to start its rebuild then, playing younger or more inexperienced players.

Tim asked what evidence the club could provide to show the rebuild. Ken Pape responded they should get through the season without a forfeit, fare well in D3, have a complete CIPP roster with eligible players.

Sean Horan asked how many players are currently CIPPed. Tim said 55 players are CIPPed. Ken asked how many were CIPPed last fall. Time responded 45, but lost 10-12 to injury. Rob Mayers asked if the club anticipated having A / B sides. Tim said it would be based on numbers, but they would be able to field a competitive A side week-to-week.

Ken Pape asked Tim if he was 100% certain if Bayonne could compete at D2, and what the club was willing to guarantee to the Board that they would not forfeit. Ken asked what securities were they willing to give. Tim asked what other clubs had provided in a similar situation, including examples. Ken said there would need to be absolute securities. Tim said he would leave it to the Board to present options. Ken again asked what Bayonne was prepared to do, and be creative.

Gary Heavner asked for the floor to provide input. Mike Crafton approved.

Gary cited historical use of bond payments by clubs to MetNY for various reasons, and presented an option of Bayonne playing a cash bond prior to the start of the season. Bayonne could receive the bond upon having a complete roster CIPPed prior to the first game and provided that the club did not have a single forfeit during the season.

Being no other questions for the two club representatives, Mike Crafton asked Tim Skennion and Ralph Von Rosendahl to leave the call.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Ken Pape stated it was inappropriate for Mike Crafton to be involved in the discussion on Bayonne.

Rob Mayers said he was the one who initiated this call as he was unaware of the status of these clubs and the communication taking place. He said it was unfair that decisions had been made without the clubs' knowledge. Ken said he agreed, but EGU does not have the authority to decide where clubs play, it is decided by CR. Mike stated the CR does not have the initial authority and that it is the GU's responsibility to send its league structure plan to the CR for approval.

A discussion took place on the Montclair matter and the communication and accuracy surrounding it. Ken Pape said he would forward an email to the Board confirming the discussions between Montclair and him and their intent to compete as a D2 side.

Regarding Bayonne, Ken Pape said he sent an email to Tim Skennion detailing Bayonne's relegation. He said they were sanctioned for use of ineligible players and forfeited a number of matches.

Rob Mayers said Bayonne used the administrative forfeit rule to their advantage and EGU approved the administrative forfeits. Ken Pape said it was only after their coach was sanctioned for use of an ineligible player.

Mike Crafton said while the EGU has a policy in place for Promotion / Relegation, the Board has the ability to do what it feels is best. Promotion / Relegation can be based on one year of data, but several years ago it was intended that the Board consider multiple years in determining promotion/relegation and also noted that other GU's look at 2-3 years of data and the overall impact on the club.

Ken Pape asked if the Board could move to a vote, and stated he would be objecting to the vote.

Mike Crafton said there were other points to consider in addition to Montclair and Bayonne for promotion/relegation. Danbury would be moving to D2, as it ran through D3 last year. Old Maroon has requested to be placed in D3 NYC as a number of their players have work commitments (police officers) and the travel of the D3 NY division is too much.

Ken Pape left the call (10:00pm).

BAYONNE MOTION / VOTE

Rob Mayers made a motion for Bayonne to remain in D2. The club would be required to pay a \$1000 cash bond (payable prior to start of the season). The club must have a complete roster CIPPed, in advance of the first match, and it must not forfeit a match during the season. If those criteria are met the Bond will be returned. The motion was seconded by Sean Horan.

VOTE

Yes: Rob Mayers, Sean Horan, Brad Kleiner, Sarah Rutman

Present: Mike Crafton

Motion passes, 4-0, with one vote of Present.

MONTCLAIR MOTION / VOTE

Mike Crafton made a motion for the Board to agree with the Montclair's preference as to the number of sides and desired level of competition. The motion was seconded by Rob Mayers.

VOTE

Yes: Rob Mayers, Sean Horan, Brad Kleiner, Sarah Rutman, Mike Crafton

Motion passes, 5-0.

Being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J.C. Whipple
EGU Administrator