

## CROSS COUNTRY SPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

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USSA CONGRESS 2011

The Park City Marriott, 1895 Sidewinder Drive, Park City, UT 84068

May 21, 2011

### Cross Country Committee

Chair: Jon Engen, Ketchum, ID  
John Farra, Heber City, UT (Programs)  
Matt Whitcomb, Park City, UT (Development)  
Rick Kapala, Ketchum, ID (IMD)  
Bob Gross, Park City, UT (Officials)  
Mike Elliott, Durango, CO (Mountain)  
Joey Caterinichio, Anchorage, AK (Coaches) (AK)  
Yuriy Gusev, Madison, WI (Central)  
Janice Sibilina, Hopewell Jnct, NY (East)  
Ben Grasseschi, Truckee, CA (Pacific)  
David Knoop, Park City, UT (At-large)  
August Teague, Reno, NV (At-large)  
Wendy Wagner, SLC, Utah (Athlete)  
Andrew Johnson, Burlington, VT (Athlete)  
James Southam, Anchorage, AK (Athlete)

Meeting Chair: Jon Engen

#### 1. Roll Call

The following members were present: Jon Engen, John Farra, Bob Gross, Mike Elliott, Joey Caterinichio, Janice Sibilina, Ben Grasseschi, August Teague, Wendy Wagner, Andrew Johnson and James Southam

Members absent and excused: Matt Whitcomb, Rick Kapala, Yuriy Gusev and David Knoop

Chair Jon Engen declared that a quorum was present and opened the meeting.

#### 2. Chairman's Introduction and Comments

Jon Engen, Chair, noted that the cross country community had a good year athletically and commented on the ideas and energy that permeated this year's USSA Congress meetings. Attendance was lower, but this created a productive atmosphere where participants were aligned on the goals to be achieved and were focused on solutions.

Mr. Engen remarked that the reports from USSA indicated that the organization had become even more focused on education and development of athletes, coaches, clubs and officials, which further supported the goals of the cross country community in moving the sport forward. He thanked those sport leaders around the country who had been doing the "heavy lifting" with regard to formalizing policies and procedures to produce high-quality events and a level playing field for athletes. He thanked USSA for facilitating these annual meetings that bring together the sport leadership.

#### 3. Additions to the Agenda

There were no additions to the agenda. Mike Elliott moved that the agenda for the meeting be accepted. Bob Gross seconded. **APPROVED**

4. Approval of Minutes from USSA Spring Congress 2010

August Teague moved to approve the minutes of the Cross Country Sport Committee from USSA Spring Congress 2010. Ben Grasseschi seconded the motion. **APPROVED**

5. Reports and Proposals from Officials' Subcommittee

Proposal #1 from the Officials' Subcommittee:

Proposed changes to 305.1.2 (bold):

**All TD, TDA and jury expenses will be at rates provided on the TD expense form found at USSA.org.** For U.S. Championship events, **SuperTour Finals**, and **JNs**, expenses for TDs and Assistant TDs will be travel, room and meal reimbursement at rates provided on the TD expense form found at [www.ussa.org](http://www.ussa.org). The Jury Member will be provided with room and meal reimbursement. A means of local transportation will be provided for the TD. The TD will be paid \$50 per day from start of training to last day of competition. For NCAA Championships, expenses will be as per NCAA rules.

For USSA SuperTour and other USSA sanctioned races, the TD will be paid \$50 per day for official training days and each day of the event plus room, meal reimbursement, **and travel expenses**. The Assistant TD will receive room, meal reimbursement, **and travel expenses** for USSA SuperTour events, and will receive a room for USSA sanctioned events. The rooms can be shared by the TDs and can be in a local house if not shared with a family member. The number of days provided for the room can extend from the night before the official training to the night of the last race day if needed.

Bob Gross moved that the rule change be approved. Mike Elliott seconded.

Discussion: August Teague remarked that organizing committees face increasing costs to host events. He noted that there had been significant discussions in the past on reducing the prize purses for athletes to make competitions more affordable for organizers. Countering those concessions by athletes with increased costs for providing officials seemed counter-productive.

John Farra indicated that the most significant difficulty in finding officials was in places like West Yellowstone and Bozeman where there are no local TDAs. He noted that, if the proposal were approved, there would be sufficient time for clubs to get a coach or volunteer certified as a Level 1 TD by attending one training before the beginning of the race season. He hoped the cost savings in TDA expenses would motivate groups to get more officials certified.

Joey Caterinichio mentioned that more certified officials would raise the quality of competitions.

**APPROVED** NOTE: USSA will notify clubs on the cost changes as the 2012 race schedule is finalized.

Proposal #2 from the Officials' Subcommittee:

Proposed modification to rule 303.1.3 (bold)

For U.S. Championship events, **SuperTour Finals**, and Junior Nationals, Jury members will be assigned in conjunction with the TD, **USSA**, & Organizer and must be at least a Level **1** USSA TD.

Bob Gross moved that the rule change be approved. John Farra seconded.

Discussion: August Teague asked if there was a shortage of qualified volunteers to serve on a Jury. He was told that there was such a shortage and that the intent of the rule change was to provide more local volunteers the opportunity to attend a TD seminar.

John Farra noted that he had good success with Level 1 TDs serving on a Jury with more experienced TDs to get real life experience and mentoring on the types of issues that occur during competitions.

**APPROVED**

Proposal #3 from the Officials' Subcommittee:

Proposed Trail Homologation Procedures for USSA (see Addendum A).

Bob Gross moved that formal procedures for pursuing homologate trails be approved. Janice Sibia seconded.

**APPROVED**

NOTE: Matt Pauli was selected by the Officials' Subcommittee to head a Homologation Working Group. Questions from venues seeking to homologate should be submitted to the working group.

Bob Gross noted that a FIS-sanctioned TD Seminar would be held the weekend of October 14, 2011 in Park City at the USSA Center of Excellence.

TD Assignments for upcoming national competitions are as follows:

			<u>TD</u>	<u>TDA</u>
Jan. 2-8	Rumford, ME	U.S. Championships	Slaughter	Carey
Mar. 5-10	Midway, UT	Jr. Nationals	Casey	Pokorny
Mar. 24-31	East - tbd	USSA SuperTour Finals	Wilson	Broomhall

Other assignments, as they are confirmed, will be posted at [www.USSA.org](http://www.USSA.org).

6. Reports and Proposals from Coaches' Subcommittee

Coaches' Subcommittee Chair, Joey Caterinichio, prefaced her presentation of proposals by noting that, even though there was a smaller group of coaches present, the presence of the entire National Team coaching staff helped inform the discussions.

Proposal #1 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

To allow for a limited number of SuperTour events that are not scored to FIS when there is a strategic purpose for being at the site. 2012: West Yellowstone (distance race), Owl Creek Chase, Birkie.

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. Bob Gross seconded. **APPROVED**

Proposal #2 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

With the publication of every USSA points list, adjust the USSA NRL points to match FIS points more accurately by taking the average of the:

- a. top 10 US athletes differentials (difference between USSA & FIS points) for each list, to create a modifier for both distance points lists (men's and women's), and the

- b. top 5 US athletes differentials to create the modifier for the sprint points lists. A Technical Committee will be named to oversee this process with the USSA Competition Services Department annually.

Proposed oversight committee: August Teague (Chair), Pat Cote, John Estle, Ernie Page and the USSA Nordic Director.

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. James Southam seconded. **APPROVED**

Proposal #3 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

By the 4<sup>th</sup> USSA points list, athletes' overall points will be calculated by using a minimum of two (2) races from the current season of the total of four (4) races used to calculate their overall points. Currently an athlete could be ranked 1<sup>st</sup> place on the USSA NRL from races in late Jan, Feb and Mar of the previous season, and having not raced at all in the current season. This would aim to mitigate that scenario. Proposed to test in 2012, and review the results at the 2012 Congress.

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. Mike Elliott seconded. **APPROVED**

Proposal #4 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

If a foreign or U.S. athlete ends up in the penalty (top 5) in a FIS/USSA race and does not have points (Active, but no points) the USSA may use their last known FIS points to calculate the USSA (not FIS) penalty for the benefit of the USSA field; only if the last known FIS points were from the current or previous season.

As per the USSA Comp guide (page 22), they are not permitted to receive any prize money.

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. August Teague seconded.

Discussion: August amended the proposal to include U.S athletes as well who have not timely renewed their license and would likewise, cause challenges in calculating the race penalty.

**APPROVED**

Proposal #5 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

Use Regional USSA penalty minimums except for: USSA SuperTour/U.S. Champs/NCAA Champs/ Birkie.

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. James Southam seconded.

Rationale: USSA SuperTour & U.S. Championship penalty minimum is 15 pts. USSA Regional races have a minimum penalty of 50 for men and 65 for women. If a race organizer decides to score their race to FIS, we will utilize the USSA Regional penalty minimums. Top events should be protected as the best means to attaining a low penalty. Just because we score a certain race to FIS it should not automatically result in a lower penalty. Need clarity in the comp guide either way.

**APPROVED**

Proposal #6 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

Add Guidelines for USSA SuperTour Finals to the Nordic Comp Guide as follows:

- a. Maximum entry fee equal to U.S. Champs - \$150 for up to 4 events. (\$180 for 5+).

- b. Prize money in principle should be equal to the 3-4 race totals for other USSA SuperTour events (\$11,700-\$15,600). Distribution of prize money is flexible, determined in consultation with USSA Nordic Program Director.
- c. No free lodging required by the Organizing Committee.
- d. Free entry to USSA SuperTour overall leaders (top man and woman). Free entry also for USST athletes and a standard FIS pts minimum for Canadian & Foreign (Top 50 on the FIS sprint or distance points list).
- e. 4 To 5 races required
  - i. 30k/50k U.S. Championships
    - In Tour format:
  - ii. Sprint
  - iii. 10k/15k mass start event
  - iv. Hill climb pursuit start
  - v. SUGGESTED: Prologue

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. Ben Grasseschi seconded.

Discussion: James Southam strongly opposed the change to no free entry and no free lodging for the top 4 men and women Overall leaders. The comped entry and lodging has been a fixture of the USSA SuperTour series for a long time.

John Farra stated that, because the USSA SuperTour Final is a new, premier event, more in line in stature to U.S. Championships, the Final rules should be consistent with Championships. Hosting USSA SuperTour Finals is a huge expense for the organizer and it has become difficult finding organizers willing to take on the event.

Joey Caterinichio remarked that the loss of lodging privileges would not likely be a hardship for athletes as they typically stay with their club team. She did suggest that the free entry may be a negotiable concept.

Andrew Johnson commented that with the USST now funding a D Team of athletes with an unknown potential, perhaps not comparable to the USSA SuperTour Top 4, entries for D Team should not be comped for them.

Janice Sibilia suggested that some sort of incentive might be considered to determine whether an organizer needed to offer free entry such as: if overall entries reach "x" level, the organizer would be required to provide "y" number of free entries.

Jon Engen intervened in the discussion to note that there were strong, conflicting opinions on the issue of free entry. He suggested that a vote be taken on the original proposal to see if it would pass. If it did not pass, he declared his willingness to entertain an amended proposal.

#### **MOTION NOT APPROVED**

AMENDED PROPOSAL: James Southam moved that an amended proposal be approved granting free entry to the Top 4 men and women Overall Leaders consistent with USSA SuperTour rules and

restricting USST free entries to the A & B Teams. The other elements of the original proposal would remain the same. Ben Grasseschi seconded. **APPROVED**

Proposal #7 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

J1 Scando Team Selection criteria as presented by USSA.

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. Mike Elliott seconded. **APPROVED**

Proposal #8 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

Junior World Championship Team Selection Criteria – Objective criteria modified to include results achieved at the NorAm Continental Cups being held in December.

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. Mike Elliott seconded. **APPROVED**

Proposal #9 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

Drop the U23 sprint brackets at the US National Championships.

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. Mike Elliott seconded. **APPROVED**

Proposal #10 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

U23 Championship Team Selection Criteria - Objective criteria modified to include results achieved at the NorAm Continental Cups being held in December and to lower the women's FIS point result from 60 to 55.

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. Janice Sibilgia seconded. **APPROVED**

Proposal #11 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

Require 80% of all coaches per division who attend Junior Nationals to have USSA Level 100 certification.

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. Ben Grasseschi seconded.

Discussion: Joey Caterinichio commented that, in retrospect, the proposal should have extended to U.S. Nationals as well.

John Farra responded by noting that the intent of the proposal focusing on Junior Nationals was to push for more experienced coaching at younger ages.

While the move toward improving coach education is desirable, several committee members remarked that trying to achieve an 80% level by next year imposed significant costs on clubs in terms of time and money to get coaches certified. Others preferred a phased in approach to make the goal more palatable and achievable.

Jon Engen intervened in the discussion to note that there did not seem to be support for the proposal as stated. He suggested that a vote be taken on the original proposal to see if it would pass. If it did not pass, he suggested that it be sent back to the Subcommittee as its implementation would have significant impact on coaches, clubs and divisions.

**In Favor 4 - Opposed 5 - NOT APPROVED**

Proposal #12 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

Go to a permanent coaches' bib system, whereby licensed and certified USSA (Level 100 or above) coaches are issued a bib with a number that corresponds with their license.

- a. This bib will afford the coach all coaches' privileges at Junior Nationals, U.S. National Championships and USSA SuperTour Finals.
- b. For Junior Nationals, specific event rules still apply to the attendance and selection of coaches per the rule book.
- c. Coaches will be required to bring their bibs to these events.
- d. Bibs are non-transferrable.
- e. One day bibs will be available for rental for licensed, non-certified coaches from the OC at these events.

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. August Teague seconded.

Discussion: James Southam asked how this affected the ability of wax techs or athletes who are finished racing to access the course.

John Farra noted that this was not part of the proposal.

Andrew Johnson asked whether staff would still have access to the course.

John Farra noted that non-coach bibs would still be available for rental from the organizer for licensed, non-certified coaches and staff.

Bob Gross remarked that there was a need to have licensed, certified coaches in the feed zones for distance races who understood the "no movement" requirement to maintain control and order in a potentially chaotic environment.

**APPROVED**

Proposal #13 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

Ski exchanges will be allowed during the 30/50K US Championships.

- i. Limit to one change per athlete in the 30k and two changes per athlete in a 50k.
- ii. Exchange Boxes will be provided.

Joey Caterinichio moved that the proposal be accepted. James Southam seconded.

Discussion: John Farra noted that the proposal was not stated as a requirement because allowing exchanges may not be possible for all venues.

It was also noted that the FIS 2010-11 Precisions should be cited as an example of rule language.

**APPROVED**

Proposal #14 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

Three official bids for the 2014 Junior Nationals were received. The USSA Coaches' Subcommittee unanimously recommended Trapp Family Lodge to be the provisional bid for 2014 after a careful review by a bid selection committee involving, coaches, officials and the USSA Nordic Director.

**Proposed** that the USSA Cross Country Sport Committee confirm the decision of the Coaches' Subcommittee to support the Trapp Family Lodge as the provisional bid for the 2014 Junior National Championships with a confirmation at next year's 2012 USSA Congress (after the venue has a chance to tackle any changes/updates/modifications required to host this event).

Motion made by John Farra, Seconded by Joey Caterinichio. **APPROVED**

Proposal #15 from the Coaches' Subcommittee:

Proposals by the USSA Cross Country Junior Working Group, and approved by the USSA Coaches' Subcommittee unanimously:

- Agreed to moved Junior Nationals 2013 back one week to March 11-16 as per OC request;
- Approved the use of a Sprint Relay at Junior Nationals of +-1.5K to replace the distance relay (same 3 person design and AK pts);
- Approved the changed of the J1 Mass start distance at Junior Nationals to 10K (from 15k);
- Approved changing the seeding of the Junior Nationals distance races by USSA Distance pts (not overall);
- Approved the removal rule 83.3.10 from the Junior Nationals rules.

Motion made by John Farra, Seconded by Joey Caterinichio. **APPROVED**

7. Presentation on USSA Sport Development Department

Walt Evans, appointed to the newly created USSA Sport Development Department, thanked the Sport Committee for the opportunity to present the goals and strategies as they pertain to cross country.

**General Statement of Purpose**

The USSA Sport Development Department supports the mission and vision of USSA by bringing focus and action to the growth of USSA's membership base which will serve to neutralize the competitive advantage of USSA's Best in the World opponents. The department will focus on bringing value to USSA stakeholder groups and key partners.

This multi-sport department strives to create a "TEAM" culture among the stakeholders of USSA sports by stimulating a healthy, fun and exciting environment for USSA members to experience and excel in winter sports.

Walt noted that a thorough review of other successful National Governing Bodies, both domestic and international, was conducted to determine best practices that were incorporated into the statement of purpose.

Strategies have been formulated in the areas of:

**Growth** - Work in concert with ski areas, ski/snowboard instructors and the industry to capture youth participants into USSA clubs and programs.

**Stakeholder Relations** – Provide leadership and resources to clubs.

**Resort Relations** - Facilitate relationships between Ski and Snowboard Resorts, ski schools and USSA Clubs.

**Competition System** - Provide a healthy, fun and exciting environment for USSA members to experience and excel in winter sport competition.

8. Confirmation of Cross Country Sport Committee Membership, 2011-2012

The position of Chair for the Officials' Subcommittee was up for re-election at this year's USSA Congress. In the election, Bob Gross and Matt Pauli were tied at three votes each. The Subcommittee submitted the results to the Sport Committee for a vote to resolve the tie. Bob Gross removed himself from contention, however, so no vote was required.

Joey Caterinichio requested that as At-Large positions expire, they be advertised within the divisions as a means of getting more people involved in the Sport Committee leadership.

Jon Engen, Ketchum, ID	Chair	5/2012
John Farra, Heber City, UT	USSA – Programs	By Employment
Matt Whitcomb, Park City, UT	USSA - Development	By Employment
Joey Caterinichio, Anchorage, AK	Coaches, Alaska	5/2012
Matt Pauli, Anchorage, AK	Officials	5/2013
Rick Kapala, Ketchum, ID	IMD	5/2012
Mike Elliott, Durango, CO	RMD	5/2013
Yuriy Gusev, Madison, WI	Central	5/2013
Janice Sibilia, Hopewell Junction, NY	East	5/2013
Ben Grasseschi, Truckee, CA	Pacific	5/2013
David Knoop, Park City, UT	At-Large	5/2013
August Teague, Reno, NV	At-Large	5/2013
Wendy Wagner, SLC, UT	Athlete	5/2013
James Southam, Anchorage, AK	Athlete	5/2012
Andrew Johnson, Park City, UT	Athlete	5/2012

9. Adjournment

Jon Engen and John Farra closed the meeting by thanking Bob Gross for his dedication and leadership to the Officials' Subcommittee. Bob has been involved in improving the quality of cross country competitions both here in the U.S. and abroad since before the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City. Bob will continue his involvement in cross country leadership through his membership on the FIS Cross Country Rules and Controls Subcommittee and in the USSA Officials working groups.

Next Meeting – Saturday, May 14, 2012 (tentative)

## **Addendum A - Proposed Trail Homologation Procedures for USSA**

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### **Trail Homologation Procedures for USSA**

The purpose of this document is to establish procedures for homologation oversight for courses within the U.S.

The USSA, as the National Governing Body for skiing, will utilize the FIS homologation process, but is ultimately responsible for overseeing the process in the U.S. The USSA will be billed directly from FIS for all Homologation work and will pass along all costs to the venue in the following manner:

Application for homologation/processing is \$200 per occurrence, plus \$100 for each course to receive a homologation certificate number.

As per FIS \*[11.7 p. 27], all prospective FIS Homologation Inspectors (HI) must attend a FIS Homologation Seminar, pass a written test, and complete supervised practical homologation work in order to be designated as a FIS Homologation Inspector (HI).

The U.S. will be divided into four (4) regions with an experienced FIS Homologation Inspector acting as an USSA regional coordinator for each region: East, Midwest, West, and Alaska.

In the early phases of homologation work, venues and/or designer should contact USSA to advise of the project goals, scope and timeline. The USSA will request that the USSA regional coordinator assign a Homologation Inspector and supervise the project to provide opportunity for collaboration. In the case that the designer is also a Homologation Inspector, it remains imperative that the USSA is included in the process to protect the USSA and the designer/Homologation Inspector from accusations of self interest.

After approval of the homologation documents by the USSA regional coordinator, the documents will be submitted to the FIS regional coordinator.

Initially the USSA regional coordinators will be:

East – Allan Serrano

Midwest & Alaska – Matt Pauli

West – Bob Gross

FIS Regional Coordinator – John Aalberg

USSA Nordic Director - John Farra [jfarra@ussa.org](mailto:jfarra@ussa.org)

\*See FIS Homologation Manual for more details.

<http://www.fis-ski.com/data/document/homologation-manual-2009.pdf>