

# UNITED STATES HANDBALL ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the USHA Winter Board Meeting  
January 21-22, 2023

## **Saturday January 21, 2023**

President Hogan opened the meeting at 8:09 a.m., MST at the Hampton Suites in Tucson, AZ. The meeting was conducted both in-person and virtually via Zoom. Present in person were President Denis Hogan, Vice President Jared Vale, Treasurer Steve Birrell, Secretary Tom Sove, board members Terry Nett, Rob Birrell, LeaAnn Martin, Ben Van Arsdale, Alethia Mendez-Caba, Frank Swehosky, and Rich Curtner. Present virtually were Quinn Foley and Nick White. Carl Porter was ill and assigned his proxy to Nett soon after the meeting started. Porter joined the meeting virtually in the afternoon. Rob Nichols was ill and assigned his proxy to Nett. Kyle Kloss was summoned to work and assigned his proxy to Van Arsdale. Also attending in person was Executive Director Matt Krueger and Development Director Sam Esser.

Hogan welcomed new board members Frank Swehosky, Southwest Region and Rich Curtner, At-Large; and welcomed back Steve Birrell, At-Large, Jared Vale, Northeast Region, and Rob Nichols, Southern California/Nevada Region.

The first item addressed was reading of the minutes of the summer board meeting. **Vale made a motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Martin.** In discussion, Swehosky revealed he had some ideas to make the minutes more readable, which he would share with Secretary Sove. **The motion passed 15-0-1.** The abstention was Porter, who had not yet given his proxy to Nett.

Hogan reviewed the protocol of the meeting, wherein we strongly discuss and dissect the issues, we vote, and we support the board decisions when we leave the meeting.

At this time Hogan asked all attendees to introduce themselves and describe what they have done to benefit handball since the last board meeting. Board members related such activities as restarting state tournaments, starting new youth or collegiate programs, soliciting players to return to the sport, and instituting local play days.

Hogan followed this with a reminder that the offices of Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary will be up for election on Sunday and for those seeking the respective offices to be prepared to give a campaign statement.

Next was a review of the decisions of the board and Executive Committee since the last board meeting.

Board decisions:

- Approved the revised collegiate eligibility guidelines;
- Approved suspending bylaws for the South West Regional board election;
- Approved offering World Championship titles to our 2023 4-wall national tournament.

Executive Committee decisions:

- Approved the establishment of a Game Committee subcommittee for the purpose of approving nominal housekeeping rule changes;
- Approved the Investment Committee's recommendation to seek proposals from financial advising firms.

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Hogan gave his **President's Report**, consisting of his discussions with US Racquetball, dealing with the new World Handball Council leadership, meeting with our new investment counselors, describing our new magazine editorial staff, and how that newness has impacted the printing timeline of the magazine, the helpfulness of our new bookkeeper employee, and he congratulated certain committees on their work this past year.

This led to a discussion of the lateness of the printing of the magazine. Swehosky suggested our past editor should receive some sort of award. Krueger declared the magazine is going to the printer this week and will be back on the quarterly schedule from this point on. Mendez-Caba suggested we create better awareness of the magazine's disruption to our players. Krueger replied there will be an email and Court Shorts blast to that effect. Swehosky suggested the board needs to be better informed by the Executive Director on the magazine issues and asked why this hasn't been done. Martin agreed the word should get out now.

**Birrell gave his Treasurer's Report**, starting with stating our new bookkeeper is proving to be a real asset. The stock market took a hit this past year and it had an effect on our investment portfolio and endowments. He noted staff controlled expenses very well last year. He reviewed our balance sheet, fund summaries, and each schedule. He made comments on certain aspects on each of their performances. There was discussion to promote auto pay for donations, which was tabled to the Funding Committee. Birrell continued by stating the budget right now projects a deficit of \$4,500. During the course of the meeting projected income and expenses will fluctuate.

**Game Committee:** Sove began the committee report with the plan to revise the 1-wall Referee Guide. He then initiated discussion on the four-point proposal from ONE LLC regarding the 55 ball and the ONE ball. Regarding the 55 ball, Sove noted the limited feedback from the limited dispersal of this ball was extremely inconsistent and heterogeneous, concluding we need to make this ball much more available to our players. Also, we need to improve our survey tactics to get better statistical feedback. Nevertheless, the committee recommended to approve the 55 ball for play. **S. Birrell made a motion, in order to encourage broader use and maximize feedback, we approve the 55 ball for use in USHA sanctioned events, seconded by R. Birrell.** Discussion centered on perhaps an informative article in the magazine, and using Court Shorts for a survey. **The motion passed 15-0-1.** Porter was not present and he had not given a proxy at this time.

The board took a ten-minute break at 11:17 a.m.

The board reconvened at 11:30 at which time the Game Committee report was suspended in order to hear a virtual **presentation from our financial advisors, Genesis Private Wealth Management Group.** The presentation was introductory and a basic overview of risk/reward asset allocation. They explained their focus is on diversification with relative low correlation between each segment of investment. They will work with the Investment Committee to develop a specific plan, which will take two weeks to a month to complete, then one week to execute the plan once they receive approval from the board. Varied discussion ensued with questions and answers.

The board broke for lunch at 12:28 p.m.

The board reconvened at 1:30 p.m. Porter joined the meeting virtually.

The **Collegiate Committee report** was given virtually by Chair Mike Wells. He started with a basic review of the committee, that it meets virtually once a month and there is a separation of specific tasks. The 2023 Collegiate

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tournament will be in Tucson, and hopefully at Texas A&M or Minnesota in 2024. The tournament this year will engage Bracket Ace and Referee Ace. Wells noted they have revised their reseeding protocol, as well as the Most Improved Award protocol. He reported the eligibility rules were refined, especially the Covid exception. The Committee has contacted currently inactive college programs and asked what help they would need to reenter the collegiate tournament. He was encouraged by some increased participation.

Wells outlined issues for the board to consider:

- The number of eligible hosts for the collegiate tournament is decreasing, noting the requirement for ten to eleven courts for the tournament. He also noted facilities are coming with higher court fees. What can the board do to help them?
- The cost of the tournament is increasing, which also decreases the possible number of hosts.
- We need more junior programs, which are conduits to the college programs. Especially needed are instructors. He asked USHA to help promote in this area.

Some following discussion included the option to sell merchandise at the tournament desk, and for programs to do more fund raising.

The **Game Committee report** was resumed at this time. Sove discussed the second item of the proposal, to name the 55 ball as the “ACE” handball, and said the committee’s action was short and decisive: the USHA will not give that name to a ball unless we are sure it is the best ball. With the number of balls at hand at this time we cannot give that assurance to the 55 ball. The board agreed to deny that request by consensus, with no discussion.

The third item of the proposal was to promote the ONE ball as the official ball for all outdoor small ball nationals. The Committee noted we already sanction the ONE ball as the official ball for the 1-wall nationals, because the 1-wall segment of players universally accept and prefer that ball. However, we do not have the same level of acceptance from 3-wall players, and we need much more feedback to make such a decision. We do agree to distribute ONE balls to every entrant at this year’s 3-wall Master National to help promote visibility and use. The committee’s recommendation was to deny the request and the Board agreed by consensus without further discussion.

The last item of the proposal is to sanction the ability for tournaments to have more than one tournament ball, that is, different divisions may use different balls. The committee noted we already do that with our female and junior divisions; therefore, this request really is moot, and tournament directors are free to make their own choices with USHA-approved balls. The board agreed by consensus without further discussion.

Sove concluded the Game Committee report by stating in the near future the committee will reconsider the concept of a Universal ball from a reality standpoint; approval and adoption of new balls will remain the committee’s prime goal; and regarding eye-guard protection education, staff will start a continual running of PSAs in Court Shorts and the magazine.

**Services and Revenue:** Chair Quinn Foley conceded they have not had many virtual meetings lately, and they will be working on setting relative goals. He suggested he should be working locally with the Minn. HB Assoc, especially with the 4-wall nationals coming up. He will be meeting with the local racquetball association by himself to garner what he can from them. Of special import to the committee is an increase in social media presence. He concluded with the statement due to his lack of time he will not be renewing his board position next year.

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The **One Wall Committee report** was next. Mendes-Caba started with a discussion of the USHA tournament schedule for 2023. There is an unfortunate situation in June with three important big ball tournaments being back-to-back over three weekends. This may present a financial burden to some players and result in a dilution of entrants, especially for our Wall Ball nationals. Nevertheless, we are locked into the last week of June because we already have the permits, and everyone knows the dates. The Junior Nationals will be at Castle Hill this year, June 10-11. Richie Vera will run this event for us. Vale noted there are three small ball tournaments and three Wall Ball tournaments. If someone plays in all six tournament and wins three of the events, ValeuGroup will sponsor a financial award. Specifics are to be worked out. Some traditional doubles tournament are retiring in New York and the question was asked how can the USHA take advantage of these calendar openings? It would be good for us to connect with those independent doubles tournaments.

Mendez-Caba brought up the Tournament Membership Fee (TMF) for all USHA tournaments in New York for 2023. She noted the TMF charge is \$20 for each tournament, and a player would incur a total of \$60 in USHA membership fees by playing in all the events, which compares unfavorably for the player when compared to regular annual fee. She asked for a motion to renew the TMF. **Sove made a motion to renew the TMF for 2023 for the Wall Ball and 1-wall small ball national tournaments, and the Players Championships, seconded by Martin.** A question was asked if entries would go down if the TMF was not offered, and the answer was yes. It was further clarified these discounted memberships allow the receipt of the magazine only electronically, not by USPS. **The motion passed 16-0-0.**

Mendez-Caba described an invitation from the CIJB to support and participate in an international Wall Ball event in Valencia, Spain in April this year. By consensus and with very little discussion, the board decided that due to the timing of the request, we are not able to fairly choose a team nor to budget funds. Therefore, we will certainly support the event, but we will not participate this year. President Hogan will compose a suitable letter to the CIJB.

**Promotion Committee.** Sove shared the tournament schedule for 2023, noting only the Junior 3-wall and 4-wall tournaments remain to be scheduled, as well as the Master Doubles, which will be in the fall. By contrast, the 2024 tournament schedule only has three tournament confirmed. There is more work to do for 2024. There will be no change in sponsored prize money goals for the 4-wall nationals this year. The Awards Committee met and recommends Rich Goosmann for Volunteer of the Year, and the Fred Lewis junior program for the Organization of the Year. These awards are for their performance during the 2022 calendar year. **Sove made a motion to approve the slate of awards by acclamation, seconded by Mendez-Caba.** No discussion ensued. **The Motion passed 16-0-0.**

**First Ace.** The First Ace liaison program of assigning committee members to funded programs had limited success this year due to the lateness of its implementation in 2022. It will be a goal to regularize it this year. Another goal for 2023 will be to revisit the grant funding priorities. Martin briefed the board on the First Ace summary of activities for 2022.

Martin then described the methodology of our grant process, and reviewed the proposed grants for 2023. The total amount of grants in the budget for 2023 comes to \$14,900.

There was some discussion and questions, such as, is there any way to give more to some programs at the end of the year. To this, Martin described staff's \$1,500 discretionary fund. There was a request to receive the dollar value of equipment sent out over the year. Another suggestion was to advertise the good news of our

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ability to give grants in Court Shorts, especially after the recent meager Covid years. We should spread the word, especially to our state chairs and commissioners.

There was a discussion of the individual grant requests and the Committee's recommendations in the amount each should receive. **Van Arsdale made a motion to accept the First Ace Committee's grant funding recommendations for 2023, seconded by Nett.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 15-0-1.**

The board took a brief break from 3:42 to 3:55 p.m.

Upon return Hogan gave the **Hall of Fame report**, starting with a summary of changes in the members of the committee for 2023. The Hall of Fame's endorsement for induction was met with some discussion about the criteria the committee follows. Board members requested more information on the nominee before ratification. **Sove made a motion to table the vote for the Hall of Fame's nomination recommendation for 2023 to the summer, 2023, board meeting, seconded by Swehosky.** The reason is to ask the Hall of Fame Committee for more information on the qualifications. **The motion passed 13-1-2.**

Van Arsdale started the **Technology Committee report** with a review of its goals. The first is to improve the website, followed by updating the data in the Court Map, and then promote Bracket Ace for tournament use. It was noted the Court Map currently has 500 courts identified right now, and Van Arsdale plans to review the process to add/delete courts.

Hogan gave a very brief report on the **Planning Committee**, stating the goal is to keep the USHA at the forefront of Handball. He is going to work on potential changes in this committee.

The **Personnel Committee report** was next. Chair Nett went over the evaluation of the Executive Director, noting he only received 50% returns from the board. This year he only asked once, which may explain the low returns. The results of the board evaluation and the staff evaluation of the ED was essentially the same as 2021, with many positive comments. Nett further acknowledged some questions in the form may be irrelevant. A question was asked, that since our staff is often pressed for time, is it reasonable to consider adding staff. One development that came from the discussion was to have the ED create his own goals and develop a plan for adding employees. It was noted the final decision might end up in the Planning Committee. Nett continued his report with the statement the professional evaluation of our office procedures will occur in the fall of 2023.

At this point Krueger and Esser were asked to leave the room while salary was discussed. At the end, **Mendez-Caba made a motion to accept the Personnel Committee's recommendations regarding staff compensation, seconded by Martin.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 16-0-0.**

Hogan adjourned the meeting at 5:55 p.m. MST.

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**Sunday, January 22, 2023**

The meeting was reconvened by President Hogan at 8:30 a.m. MST. Present were officers President Hogan, Vice President Vale, Treasurer S. Birrell, and Secretary Sove. Board members present were Porter, Nett, Martin, Van Arsdale, Swehosky, Curtner, Mendez-Caba, and R. Birrell. Present virtually were Kloss and White. Absent were Foley and Nichols. Foley's proxy was given to Van Arsdale; Nichol's was given to Nett. Also attending in person was Executive Director Matt Krueger and Development Director Sam Esser.

The morning's first item was balancing the budget. Treasurer S. Birrell announced that the previous evening's work resulted in a balanced budget. He then itemized the areas of income and expenses that were altered. One item of importance was the price of balls. Birrell suggested the price be raised, effective as soon as possible. Discussion centered on giving fair notice to distributors and other large-lot buyers. **S. Birrell made a motion to raise the price of balls across the board 15%, seconded by R. Birrell.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 16-0-0.**

A second budget item of importance was board travel, specifically in the event the summer board meeting was held in New York with the Wall Ball nationals, versus the 3-Wall Nationals in Toledo. One reason for having the board meeting at these national tournaments is for increased board member presence. Discussion revolved around the likelihood of board members being present at either of the tournaments; the cost of travel; and the cost of room expense. A suggested solution presented would be to have the board meeting in Toledo, but require all officers to attend the Wall Ball nationals in New York in June. This way we accomplish board presence at two national events. It was agreed by consensus to table this discussion until the treasurer can work out the cost structure of all options. Will determine the location of the summer board meeting electronically, either zoom or email.

Birrell reviewed the Operations budget, then made a **motion to accept the .1 Operations budget as presented, seconded by Vale.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 16-0-0.**

Birrell then reviewed the Promotion budget, noting the amount of prize money that needs to be raised will not change, but there will be a \$6,000 increase overall. **S. Birrell made a motion to accept the .1 Promotion budget as presented, seconded by R. Birrell.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 16-0-0.**

Attention then went to the First Ace budget. There was discussion on the need to repeat the level of donations, future amounts available for grants, and the amount of the ED's discretionary fund. **Birrell made a motion to accept the .3 First Ace budget as presented, seconded by Mendez-Caba.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 16-0-0.**

The next topic was to appoint chairs to develop candidates for the five board positions up for election in 2023. Martin and Mendez-Caba are the co-chairs for the At-Large positions to be voted on in the summer board meeting. The deadline for candidate statements is May, 2023. R. Birrell is the chair for the Rocky Mountain Region; Vale is the chair for the Central Region, Van Arsdale is the chair for the Mid-America Region. These board positions are to be voted on by the respective region members in the fall, and the deadline for campaign statements is October 1, 2023.

Election of the Officers and Executive Committee for 2023 was next. Hogan first solicited candidates for the officer positions of Vice-president, Treasurer, and Secretary. The incumbents all confirmed their candidacy and there were no other candidates. For the Executive Committee, there are three positions available other than the four officers. Hogan solicited candidates for these positions resulting in Mendez-Caba, Martin and Van

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Arsdale. Since there were only three candidates for the three officers, and three candidates for the three EC positions, **Martin made a motion to accept the slated of officers and EC positions by acclamation, seconded by Mendez-Caba.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 16-0-0.**

Martin brought up the fact our bylaws are not in sync regarding the subject of where we hold the summer board meeting. The wording in Section 19 still refers to having the summer board meeting exclusively at the 4-wall national tournament. **Martin made a motion to amend the wording of Section 19, Second sentence to delete the words "National Four-Wall Tournament" and replace with "summer", seconded by Nett.** No further discussion ensued. **The motion passed 16-0-0.**

Hogan brought to the board's attention his findings of a document on the twelve best practices of a non-profit board, specifically regarding committee participation. He declared his intent to take this to the Planning Committee for further investigation and action.

Discussion then segued to the make-up of all our committees, including additions and subtractions. Board members declared their intentions on which committees they will serve.

Hogan asked each board member their parting remarks with a brief description of how they will serve handball until the summer board meeting.

Hogan adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m. MST.

Submitted by



Tom Sove  
Secretary