



**USA Softball Board of Directors  
Video Meeting  
April 17-18, 2020**

**MINUTES**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

President Cobb called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. CT

**2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Janie Reed, Elite Athlete Representative, delivered the Invocation and Darrin Duistermars, Midwest Regional Vice President, led the Pledge of Allegiance. These items took place at the beginning of the second BOD session on Friday, April 17, 2020.

**3. ROLL CALL**

Board of Directors (BOD) members present were Rodney Cobb; John Gouveia; Joe Patterson; Beverly Wiley; John McPhail; Carlton Benton; Walker Clark; Drew Wells (joined at 10:32 a.m. CT on Friday, April 17, 2020); Darrin Duistermars; Mary Mahoney; Dick Gulmon (absent on second session from 1-3 p.m. CT on Friday, April 17, 2020); Roger Garcia; Anna Louie; Donn Addante; Sandy Searcy; Valerie Arioto; Michelle Moultrie; Nick Mullins and Janie Reed.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Craig Cress, declared that a quorum had been established.

Staff present for all Sessions: Craig Cress, Mark Loehrs, Chris Sebren, John Miller, Rich Cress, Savannah Edwards, Jay Hedrick, Devin Loehrs, Destinee Martinez, Dre McKee and Codi Warren.

Staff present Friday Afternoon Sessions Only – Kevin Ryan.

Guests present:

Friday Morning Session Only - John Falcone with Cheek & Falcone, PLLC and AJ Morgan and Margaret Schubkegel with RPS Bollinger Insurance

**4. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

Craig Cress – Local Association Website Reviews – New Business  
Chris Sebren – National Teams Development Program – New Business

**5. REMARKS**

- A. President remarks
- B. Past President remarks
- C. President Elect remarks
- D. Chief Executive Officer remarks

## 6. LEGAL/INSURANCE REVIEW (Executive Session)

***M/S/C – Motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss legal and insurance items.***

***M/S/C – Motion to exit out of Executive Session.***

The BOD requested that Mr. Morgan go back to RPS Bollinger and Markel to explore insurance flexibility as it pertains to the 2020 season. The BOD also received legal updates on the U.S. Center for SafeSport and current litigation.

## 7. DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

### A. Operations (Communications, Marketing, IT, Membership, Sport Development)

John Miller, COO, provided the BOD with a brief update related to departments under his supervision, noting that all department reports were placed on the USA Softball portal prior to the BOD meeting. This was done following feedback from Council Members as they requested the non-Executive Session reports to be placed on the portal to review and allow them to submit feedback to their respective Regional Vice President.

#### Communications – Codi Warren, Managing Director

Codi Warren provided a written report on the Communications Department. BOD members provided feedback to Communications-related items, with President Cobb commending Carlton Benton for conducting a Facebook live on the USA Softball of Florida Facebook page with the CEO Cress and recommending the National Office look into providing a similar opportunity for our members. Mary Mahoney inquired about email correspondence that comes out of the National Office and if that information is sent to USA Softball's membership in addition to the Council Members. The National Office staff informed the BOD that their database is roughly half of the total membership due to limited contact information coming into the National Office, which is why the National Office relies on Local Associations to disseminate the information to their members. President Cobb addressed feedback on the National Office website and asked if the National Office had provided information on the website's limitations and how it navigates to better inform our Council Members. In response to that comment from President Cobb, Darrin Duistermars noted that he and Stu Alderman, the Chair of the Communications and Marketing Committee, have worked with the National Office staff to get a better understanding of how the website works and have took on the role of responding to Council Member feedback regarding website concerns. This was an informative report, which required no action by the BOD.

#### Marketing – Dre McKee, Managing Director

Dre McKee provided a written report on the Marketing Department, including an update on marketing initiatives during COVID-19 and "Stand Beside Her" tour stop marketing reports. This was an informative report, which required no action by the BOD.

Ms. McKee also provided a report on the 2021 USA Softball Annual Council Meeting, which is scheduled to be held in Oklahoma City, with information on room and parking rates. CEO Cress added that the BOD will be provided a contract to approve after the National Office has negotiated a contract with the Cox Convention Center and Renaissance Hotel.

***M/S/C – Motion to approve the proposed dates, room (\$123.36/night tax inclusive) and parking rates (\$24.00/day valet and \$10.00/day parking garage) for the 2021 USA Softball Annual Council Meeting, to be held October 23-27, 2021, and for the National Office to negotiate a contract with the host hotel and Convention Center.***

Ms. McKee provided the BOD with a proposed agenda for the 2021 USA Softball Annual Council Meeting after receiving feedback to shorten the length of the meeting and Mississippi Commissioner ET Colvin's work on shortening the agenda. CEO Cress and Mr. Miller provided additional feedback that early morning meetings are generally committees with less members and that although many committee meetings overlap, it is to have Council Members on less committees so that new members can serve. BOD members provided their feedback on the proposed agenda and the National Office will continue to review the agenda with the recommendations provided by the BOD.

IT – Savannah Edwards, Managing Director

Savannah Edwards provided a written report on the IT Department in addition to providing updated production reports. Ms. Edwards updated the BOD on the new U.S. Center for SafeSport refresher course, which is expected to be available in October, 2020, and an updated Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP) from the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC), which has been pushed back at this time. CEO Cress brought up a topic at the Junior Olympic (JO) Workshop regarding the U.S. Center for SafeSport courses being a 365-day program and how that relates to USA Softball's registration period. CEO Cress informed the BOD that USA Softball will hold its members to USA Softball's requirements, which are based on an association's registration period. Devin Loehrs provided the BOD with results collected from a COVID-19 survey he sent out to Commissioners to see how the pandemic has affected their Association. The purpose of the survey was to get a jump start on how the National Office can assist our associations and project how our organization might be impacted. This was an informative report, which required no action by the BOD.

Membership/Championships/Events/USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex – Rich Cress, Managing Director

Rich Cress (Mr. Cress) provided a written report on the Membership Department, Championships, Events and the USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex. BOD members provided their feedback on the 2020 JO Workshop and the Commissioners Meeting, with the majority of Commissioners voicing their concerns over the decision to no longer provide a printed Official Rules of Softball publication starting in 2021. Mr. Cress informed the BOD that National Championship Representative assignments will be sent out to the Council in the coming weeks, while the Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) assignments have not been sent out due to COVID-19. BOD Members and National Office staff addressed the decline in National Championship participation since 2013 and the loss of assessment fees resulting from the decline in participation. The BOD also discussed Border Battle XII and its status, which as of the BOD meeting, Border Battle XII is still scheduled to take place July 24-26 in Kent, Wash. and 2020 Slow Pitch National Team rosters have already been named. CEO Cress added that every athlete participated in 2019 USA Softball Slow Pitch National Championships. Mr. Miller spoke on the possibility of going over the 48-team max for the 2020 GOLD National Championships as many teams in the region might be interested in participating but might have been unable to participate or qualify at a GOLD qualifier. BOD members discussed GOLD qualifiers in their regions and scenarios in the event GOLD qualifiers are cancelled. National Office staff also talked about capital improvements at the USA Softball Hall of Fame Complex. This was an informative report, which required no action by the BOD.

Sport Development – Destinee Martinez, Managing Director

Destinee Martinez provided a written report on the Sport Development Department, which included information on the 2020 JO Workshop. CEO Cress addressed the surplus from the JO Workshop, which is due to the sponsorship of the event from RPS Bollinger and Markel, a sponsorship that could be affected in future years as a result of COVID-19 financial impacts. Ms. Martinez updated the BOD on Major League Baseball (MLB) initiatives, while BOD members addressed the lack of response from associations on a survey sent out by the National Office to assist with the Sport Development Department. CEO Cress spoke on the need for USA Softball to be responsive to partner needs in order for us to continue these partnerships in the future. This was an informative report, which required no action by the BOD.

B. Umpires – Kevin Ryan, Director

Kevin Ryan provided a written report on the Umpire Department and spoke on the National Umpire Staff's recent discussions regarding the 2021 UIC Clinic and the impact COVID-19 could have on attendance. This was an informative report, which required no action by the BOD.

C. National Teams – Chris Sebren, Director

Chris Sebren provided a written report on the National Teams Department, including information on events that remain on the 2020 calendar. This was an informative report, which required no action by the BOD.

D. Chief Financial Officer – Mark Loehrs, Director

Mark Loehrs (CFO) provided a report on the financial stability of USA Softball as a result of COVID-19 and the 2019 Budget Variance Report. CFO Loehrs answered questions from BOD members on the 2019 Budget Variance Report, the 2019 audit that is being conducted remotely and the status of USA Softball's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan, which USA Softball applied for and was approved to receive. CEO Cress thanked Dick Gulmon for his assistance with the PPP loan and spoke positively on USA Softball moving banking services to MidFirst Bank as the application for the PPP went smoothly through MidFirst Bank. CFO Loehrs also provided a report on the USA Softball National Teams Endowment Fund with the Oklahoma City Community Foundation and recommended reinvesting the 5% distribution USA Softball is due to receive.

***M/S/C – Motion to reinvest the 5% distribution for 2020 from the USA Softball National Teams Endowment Fund back into the USA Softball National Teams Endowment Fund.***

8. **OLD BUSINESS**

A. Feedback on Regional Calls with Commissioners

BOD Members provided updates on calls held within their respective regions. Common concerns included the effects of COVID-19 on associations and appreciation for information coming out from the National Office as it relates to COVID-19. CEO Cress spoke on the timelines that the National Office has put together for COVID-19-related decisions, including a potential set of guidelines for the resumption of softball once social distancing restrictions are lifted in areas. Discussions were had about the difficulties social distancing has on a team sport given the way games are played and any potential issues that could arise if recommendations were made for wearing face masks or putting distancing measures in place for positions. CEO Cress also discussed a recent call that he was on with representatives from other softball organizations regarding their plans to resume play.

B. USA Softball Bylaws and Procedural Code

The National Office has placed the 2020 USA Softball Bylaws and Procedural Code online, with an email going out to the BOD, Commissioners and Council Members to inform them of the documents being available. Donn Addante gave an update on Bylaws proposals that could be submitted and how those could be reviewed and adopted in the event USA Softball does not hold a 2020 Annual Council Meeting due to COVID-19. CEO Cress commended Julie Whiteaker at the National Office and Mr. Addante for their efforts in getting the Bylaws and Procedural Code online quickly following the conclusion of the 2019 Annual Council Meeting. CEO Cress also noted that the National Office would work with the appropriate groups in the event the USOPC or U.S. Center for SafeSport require additional edits or additions to be made to the Bylaws.

C. Rulebook/Scorebook Production Costs

BOD members were provided a report on the production costs for the rulebook and scorebook dating back to 2017. BOD members discussed feedback given to them by Council Members following the motion passed at the November 14-15, 2019 BOD meeting to make the rulebook a digital publication beginning in 2021 and to eliminate printing the scorebook in 2021. President Cobb had conducted a straw poll asking the attendees of the JO Workshop which was more important for membership to receive a physical copy: a rulebook or a scorebook. The majority of feedback deemed the rulebook a tangible membership benefit and placed it above the scorebook in the straw poll. BOD members also voiced their concerns for local leagues who value the scorebook because they do not have access to a digital scoring app like travel teams do and mentioned the possibility of partnering with a scorebook vendor to grant them a license to use the USA Softball brand on printed scorebooks to eliminate our costs. Additional recommendations included printing the rulebook every other year, not printing the rulebook in 2021 and using the 2020 playing rules, having an online rulebook for members to print off themselves and passing on the cost of rulebook production to the Local Associations. BOD members also discussed establishing a written policy for associations to pay for the incurred costs of shipping out rulebooks and scorebooks as a result of not turning in their order to the National Office by the deadline.

D. Registration/System Update

President Cobb spoke on a committee that he assembled to work with the National Office in the development of the new registration and tournament software program for USA Softball. Members of the committee include Roger Garcia, Walker Clark, John McPhail and Mary Mahoney, who have met several times with Devin Loehrs and Savannah Edwards from the National Office to discuss the progress of the system development. President Cobb thanked the committee members for their time and involvement in the new program that our members will be using. Mr. Addante brought up the lack of responses to membership details requests from National Office emails and if the new system would enable BOD members and National Office to mine data from our membership directly. President Cobb and National Office staff informed the BOD that the new registration system would enable more information to be pulled, however based upon the current registration model there is still a disconnect with what information the National Office is given.

E. Posting of Department Staff Reports on the USA Softball Portal

President Cobb spoke on the positive response he has received from Council Members following the posting of Department staff reports on the USA Softball portal. This enables the Council Members to review the reports and provide questions, comments or concerns to their Regional Vice President to be addressed at the BOD meeting.

## 9. NEW BUSINESS

### A. World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) Baseball 5

CEO Cress spoke on the new discipline the WBSC has established called Baseball 5, which is a condensed version of baseball/softball. Baseball 5 only has five players per team and alleviates some of the cost to play as it does not require a bat or glove to play as the ball is made of rubber. This also cuts the liability for an organization due to the lack of equipment used to play. This could be an opportunity for USA Softball to look into, whether as an indoor game or new avenue for people to play the game of softball. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has added Baseball 5 to their Youth Olympics and MLB has also implemented Baseball 5 at their PLAY BALL Park at the MLB All-Star Game.

### B. Website Reviews for Local Associations

Region 7 Regional Vice President Mary Mahoney brought up a concern by Colorado Commissioner Nik Mead on the Communications and Marketing Committee continuing reviews of Local Associations websites during the COVID-19 pandemic. BOD members discussed the need for these reviews to be conducted as Local Association websites have only gotten better since these reviews began and the purpose is to better our associations. COO Miller will speak with Commissioner Mead about his concern and the support from the BOD for these website reviews to continue.

### C. National Team Development Program

Mr. Sebren brought up a potential development program for the USA Softball National Team Program that could assist with player development, identification and expenses for the younger National Teams. Mr. Sebren, along with Ms. Martinez and Megan Schallom at the National Office have formed an internal working group that recently held a conference call with USA Field Hockey, who has a similar development program in place for their National Team Program. Following those talks, the group is proposing the creation of a National Team Development Program that can help sustain our younger National Team Programs while creating opportunities for Local Association athletes and coaches to represent USA Softball. The National Office will be sending an email to Local Association Commissioners requesting nominations for a coaches committee. BOD members voiced their support of the program, the opportunity it provides for our Local Associations to capitalize on being the National Governing Body (NGB) within their membership, how it creates a true pipeline to the National Team Program and how it could further develop coaching so that teachings are consistent throughout the National Teams. National Office staff answered additional questions by the BOD, including if this program could enable Local Associations to use the "Where Olympic Journeys Begin" branding from the USOPC.

### D. Code of Ethics

CEO Cress provided a USA Softball Code of Ethics draft for the BOD to review and approve per USA Softball Bylaws. National Office staff answered questions by the BOD on if the Code of Ethics is a required document for signature by USA Softball members, the answer to that question was no, and if the Code of Ethics should be placed in the USA Softball Bylaws in its entirety. It was recommended for the Code of Ethics to not be included in the USA Softball Bylaws outside of just referencing it as changes would need to go before the BOD. BOD members also recommended that Local Associations place the Code of Ethics on their website for their members. The BOD was provided a final copy of the USA Softball Code of Ethics and an updated Conflict of Interest Policy.

***M/S/C – Motion to adopt the USA Softball Code of Ethics.***

E. GOLD National Championships

Region 3 Vice President Benton brought up an earlier conversation regarding the GOLD National Championships and opportunity to allow for more than 48 teams per Championship to participate. The National Office voiced their desire to have the support of the BOD to accept more teams, which would be handled exactly like CEO-allocated berths for the GOLD Nationals. The National Office added that both Oklahoma City and Broken Arrow would need to evaluate what the maximum number of teams they could host would be based on staffing and field capabilities while answering questions by the BOD on how this affects existing GOLD qualifiers which are still scheduled to take place. This would not affect existing GOLD qualifiers, but it would provide an opportunity for those teams who might not qualify to apply for a newly created berth. By allowing more than 48 teams to participate, it could allow for quality teams within the region to participate because travel restrictions might not allow them to compete in other events.

***M/S/C – Motion to allow more than 48 teams to compete in the 2020 GOLD National Championships with teams being approved by Local Association Commissioners and submitted to the CEO for final approval.***

F. Cancellation of 2020 National Championships

CEO Cress brought up the possibility of 2020 National Championships not being able to be played due to COVID-19-related restrictions and potentially offering 2020 hosts the right of first refusal to host the same National Championship in 2022. BOD members discussed options and scenarios should a 2020 National Championship not be able to be played in a given area, such as if sites were given the opportunity to host in 2022 should it should be across the board or do the territories and regions determine how to reschedule or relocate their respective Territorial Championships. Mr. McPhail inquired about a Local Association being able to relocate a National Championship in 2022 due to a facility no longer being available or if a Local Association had to keep the National Championship in the originally scheduled location. President Cobb, CEO Cress and COO Miller noted that an association had the flexibility to relocate within their association so long as they cleared it with the local Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) or Sports Commission if one signed off on the bid as many CVB's and Sports Commissions' might have incurred costs to bid on those National Championships. The BOD also discussed the potential that some parts of the country might be able to host a National Championship in 2020 while others can't, and if USA Softball could relocate a National Championship to an area that is able to play for the 2020 season. CEO Cress stressed the need for the National Office to have some leeway and flexibility to make those decisions and on the dates for the 2020 Championship Season as the Procedural Code currently restricts the dates for Championship Play. The BOD also discussed the potential economic fallout from COVID-19 for National Championship hosts in the event that teams cannot travel to a given area resulting in lower than anticipated participation numbers for a National Championship and if USA Softball should look into providing an opportunity to host in the future. COO Miller advised that some National Championships historically do not have high participation numbers and that the National Office would have to evaluate the requests on a case-by-case basis. President Cobb instructed the National Office staff to exercise flexibility in rescheduling or moving 2020 National Championships.

G. Registrations during COVID-19

Mr. Garcia brought up recent communications by the National Office regarding registrations for individuals, teams and umpires and if the BOD needs to establish a path for Local Associations on whether to continue to hold on any new registrations. President Cobb noted that his understanding was that Local Associations should hold off on approving any new

registrations. COO Miller added that the National Office had instructed Local Associations to not approve any new registrations until after this BOD meeting and discussions were had on refunds or credits in the event the 2020 season is unable to be played. CEO Cress added that the decision to halt the approval on registrations is due to services rendered on a registration as soon as it is approved, such as background checks, insurance coverage and the printing of cards to name a few that are hard to issue full refunds.

## 10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

***M/S/C - Motion to enter into Executive Session.***

***M/S/C – Motion to exit out of Executive Session with the following motions made:***

- A. Motion to approve a uniform pilot program with Champro Sports.***
- B. Motion to approve the recommendations by the Women's National Team Selection Committee (WNTSC) for the coaching staff of the 2020 U-18 Women's National Team; Head Coach, Kyla Holas, and Assistant Coaches Suzy Brazney, Trisha Ford and Lisa Navas.***
- C. Motion to cancel the 2020 USA Softball Annual Council Meeting in Shreveport and renegotiate with Shreveport to host the 2022 Annual Council Meeting.***
- D. Motion to eliminate any Playing Rules or Procedural Code changes for 2021, to reuse the 2020 Playing Rules and Procedural Code for the 2021 season and not print a 2021 edition of the Rulebook and Scorebook.***
- E. Motion to approve Kim Ng as the Independent Director to serve on the USA Softball Board of Directors.***

## 11. BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The BOD discussed the success of hosting a video meeting and the possibility of holding future BOD meetings virtually.

### Board Meeting Dates

2020 May Board Meeting: May 20, 2020 at 1 p.m. CT.

2020 Fall Board Meeting: September 18-19, 2020.

## 12. ADJOURN

***The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m. CT on Saturday, April 18, 2020.***