USRowing Athlete Council, First Meeting

28 April 2022 / 12:05 PM - 1:05 EST / Virtual Meeting

ATTENDEES

Athlete Council Representatives: Dariush Aghai, Sara Hendershot, Grace Latz, Robin Prendes, Taylor Ritzel, Jaclyn Smith, Genevra Stone, Maddie Wanamaker

Also Present: Nobuhisa Ishizuka (Board Chair), Don Reynolds (At-Large Board Member), Josy Verdonkschot (CHPO, joined at 12:30pm)

Council Representatives Not Present: Liam Corrigan, Daniel Ahr

AGENDA

Introductions

Elect Executive Leadership Team

1. Discussion about potential candidates based on interest expressed. Full slate motion was made by Taylor Ritzel to elect Sara Hendershot as Chair, Dariush Aghai as Vice Chair, and Grace Latz as Secretary. Seconded by Maddie Wanamaker. None opposed. Motion passed.

2. Discussion about term limits (Executive Committee members serve one year terms, co-terminating with their other terms as athlete representatives).

Review Athlete Rep Code of Conduct

- Discussed the importance of drafting and implementing an Athlete Rep Code of Conduct and a renewed Athlete Code of Conduct

- Newly elected Executive Team to draft Athlete Rep Code of Conduct to incorporate points discussed, to bring to the Athlete Council during the next meeting for review.

Discussion about Grievance Panel Policy/Athlete Issue Protocol Process with Athlete Council and Board Members

- Overview and process outlined by Nobu.

    - The Athlete Issue Protocol Process will deal with internal team dynamics (between athletes, coaches, staff), athlete wellbeing (physical and mental), equity and fair treatment. The role of the Athlete Council in this process is advisory, to not judicate or represent athletes. This process is meant to be elite athlete-centered, not focused on broader membership grievances.

    - Process: A form will be available on usrowing.org that is directed to the current Athlete Council Chair, who will determine the best avenue for resolution (in the case that it falls under Safesport, HPC, or medical team). Need to create reporting protocol and generate quarterly reports so that the CHPO and Board are aware of themes, types of complaints, urgency, etc.

- Questions for Nobu and discussion about:
    - How can an athlete file the reporting form anonymously, to make sure confidentiality is protected and enforced through the Athlete Rep Code of Conduct
    - How to anonymize reports to Board and CHPO, how to accommodate levels of urgency
    - Creating a secondary point-of-contact within Athlete Council Chair if the athlete has any issue or isn't comfortable with the individual in the position of Chair. Consider another POC be a rep on the executive team or the next ranking rep of the opposite gender.
    - Incorporating confidentiality and protecting athletes into Athlete Rep Code of Conduct
- Wrap up: Nobu will circulate a draft for review

Discussion with Josy Verdonkschot

- Overview of upcoming camps, new athlete system prioritizing investment in athletes first, selection of lead coaches and selectors for Camp 1, feedback from Athlete Council on selector considerations for Camp 2.
    - Future plans to expand national programs, standardized lactate testing for this year, create more contact points for athletes with the new hybrid system.
- Questions
    - How to bring in younger coaches, developing talent, or international contracts? New buy-in process for established coaches?

Meeting concluded at 1:05pm EST after a brief note about setting a monthly meeting time for Athlete Council Representatives.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Executive Team to meet about outlining Athlete Rep Code of Conduct and Athlete Code of Conduct, circulate to Athlete Council Reps and CHPO for review before next meeting
2. Circulate draft of Athlete Issue Protocol to Athlete Council members to review