USRowing Athlete Council, Meeting MINUTES

20 October 2023/ 8:00AM -1:00PM EST / In-Person Meeting at Head of the Charles

ATTENDEES

Athlete Council Representatives: Liam Corrigan, Sara Hendershot, Grace Latz, Genevra Stone, Taylor Ritzel, Maddie Wanamaker

Council Representatives Not Present: Dariush Aghai, Daniel Ahr, Robin Prendes, Jaclyn Smith

AGENDA:

2022-2023 Recap

- Things that went well and where we want to improve our support this year

Positives:

- Having representatives on-site for trials, selection camps, altitude camps. Visibility of representatives has increased engagement/access.
- Fewer outreach from athletes needed, fostering more direct conversations with NT staff
- Currently-training athlete reps stepped up the outreach
- 100% feedback on the Athlete Survey
    - Used DAS and didn't get any pushback from athletes or HPC in using it to encourage filling out the survey.

Improvements:

- New coaching hires – level of discussion with Athlete Council
- HPC to Board communication
    - Should Whelpley join Board meetings with big updates?
    - HPC reps to share updates after big decisions or meetings
- Josy communication – updating the athlete representative group about informal discussions had with Josy to keep the group informed
- Gevvie to join the men's calls as our HPC rep
- Monthly calls with athletes – request having camera on

EXECUTIVE SESSION

2023 Schedule

- What key moments of athlete support do we anticipate?
    - Fall Speed Order - Nov 18-19, 2023
        - 1x and 2-s, 2k racing
        - Quick progression – everyone races through the final
        - Last opportunity to get funding or invited to the camps
        - Athletes who raced at Worlds are not required to attend.
    - DAS Schedules
        - 2023
            - Perform A: $2,000
            - Perform B: $1,000

                - Training: $1,000
                - Oct 1 - Dec 31
            - 2024: Same amount of money
                - Jan 1 - April 30
                - May 1 - Aug 31
                - Sept 1 - Dec 31
    - Altitude Camp – Colorado Springs, Jan 7-28, 2024
        - Taylor and Gevvie will likely attend
        - Just World Championships roster athletes – 46 athletes (All qualified boats, 4 LW, Men's 8, M2x, Kara, not 4xs, not LM2x)
    - Training Camp - Sarasota, FL Jan 28 - Feb 18, 2024
        - Same group that was in Colorado Springs with some additions from Fall Speed Order and 4xs
    - Winter Speed Order - Sarasota, FL Feb 13-18, 2024
        - If athletes hadn't yet received an invite to a camp and they win, they then get invited to a selection camp
        - Everyone who is shooting for the Olympics will be here
        - Would like to have to have an AC athlete rep present but not needed
    - Two weeks of "in between" where most athletes may still be in Florida
    - Selection Camp, Sarasota Florida, March 3-24, 2024
        - Athlete rep absolutely needs to be here at some point
    - Olympic Trials, Sarasota, FL April 2-, 2024
        - Olympic Trials
            - Qualified Events: W2-, W1x, M2-
            - Nonqualified (FOQR) Events: M4x, W4x, LM2x, M2x, M1x
                - M8+: potentially up for a camp selection
        - Like to have athlete here for retention purposes

2024 Look Forward

- Brainstorm about retention
    - What can we do to improve athlete experience to retain talent?
        - Coxswain support
            - Discussed having biannual check-in meetings with just coxswains and athlete reps to gauge how things are progressing with this specific group
            - Opportunities to assess? Coxswain surveys, how to facilitate feedback? Grace offered to generate a trial-run edition of athlete coxswain feedback for HOCR performances.
                - Assessments – next steps
                    - Select coxswains to evaluate
                    - Choose athletes to assess each (their HOCR lineups)
                    - Get approval of Josy, Skip, and Jesse
                    - Liam – get the list of athletes
                    - Maddie – list of athletes
                    - Liam – send the email to Jessie and Skip, CCing Gevvie
                    - Grace – draft up the eval, send, and facilitate
            - Mentorship opportunities: coxswain panel, invite U23 coxswains to better help them receive measurements about their performance and pathways to improve. Is Brett Gorman, now leading athlete pathways, working on a parallel idea?
- Invite Ellen M to AC meeting

- What can we prepare now to improve the retirement process?
    - The questions to ask via annual survey or new: Are you retiring after this year?
        - Yes, no, undecided?
        - Extremely likely
        - Unsure but considering
        - Unsure but thinking about retiring
        - Extremely likely to retire

- Retirement:
    - Promote the USOPC's Pivot program to our athlete pool. Help our NT athlete pool transition pre- or post Olympics. Athletes who qualify are those who were eligible to receive support services in the last year (including DAS, EAHI, etc. but there are a myriad of exceptions based on each sports). Find more info on this and pass it out to the athletes.
    - Tuck Next Step (Dartmouth program)
    - Exit interviews – make this opportunity available. AC-driven, with Josy.
        - Share info about this at Trials
    - Importance in detraining
        - Work on creating a detraining program. Gevvie expressed interest in developing this as a project. Would benefit current-athletes' future heart and mental health.
    - National Team Alum network – connect people through events, email lists, zooms?

- Think about recruiting of athlete representative candidates for upcoming turnover of all representative positions
    - 2024
        - Robin Prendes (as male-AAC rep, this position will be lead next term)
        - Sara Hendershot (female AAC rep, this position will be an alternate position next term)
        - Grace Latz (at-large member)
        - Maddie Wanamaker (at-large member)
    - 2025
        - Gevvie Stone (female HPC representative)
        - Liam Corrigan (male HPC representative)
    - 2026
        - Taylor Ritzel (female-athlete board representative)
        - Dariush Aghai (male-athlete board representative)

Action Items:

1. Have athlete representatives sign up to attend key athlete moments where we anticipate needing support (Taylor to create spreadsheet, keep checking schedules to see who can be where)
2. Grace will setup and facilitate trial run of athlete coxswain surveys to give coxswains race feedback after HOCR performance
3. Invite Ellen M to AC meeting
4. Bring up planning or automating process for exit interviews. Bring this up with Josy and begin to implement starting after Olympic Trials in April.
5. Grace will forward on USOPC Pivot Program information when next sessions become available. Perhaps USOPC rep speaks to group during COS camp? (Since the Pivot program is hosted in Colorado Springs).