USRowing Athlete Council, Meeting MINUTES

27 September 2023/ 8:02PM -9:00PM EST / Virtual Meeting

ATTENDEES

Athlete Council Representatives: Dariush Aghai, Liam Corrigan, Sara Hendershot, Grace Latz, Robin Prendes, Genevra Stone, Maddie Wanamaker

Council Representatives Not Present: Daniel Ahr, Taylor Ritzel, Jaclyn Smith

AGENDA:

HOCR Annual Meeting and National Team Alumni Event Update - Hendershot

- Locations and venues confirmed for both annual AC meeting and NT alumni event
    - Annual meeting - Same location
    - 10+ year athlete event happening immediately after 2023 Worlds Team Reunion, at USRowing Tent. USRowing Contact for this: Amanda Cobb and Theresa Fitzpatrick.
        - Check if we can get snacks/in-kind donations
        - Remember to bring name tags and pens

2023 Annual Athlete Survey - Hendershot

- Sending out surveys this week. Need volunteers to review drafts of the survey questions and added material.

Athlete Engagement Trends: Discussion about how to maintain the lines of communication with athletes, since we've noticed disengagement in different populations around different items. Ideas discussed:

- Potentially open up a seat as a non-voting member to a male athlete, to contribute and strategize with the AC and tie our conversations across the men's athlete pool. Give them visibility into the AC's work to improve communication between athletes and HPC.
- Add an additional 6-week routine call with men's group with Josy? Add an anonymous chat/question function? Add Josy to every other monthly men's athlete x representative calls? Poll men to see if they'd like this time changed.
- Pivot to sending out AC updates and communications to WhatsApp or email versus Slack. Repost the questions via WhatsApp and email. Example in question: getting athletes to respond to poll to change our monthly athlete/rep meeting times.
- Check in with para representatives

Currently-training athlete-representative update/HPC: Maddie/Liam/Gevvie

- Still collecting feedback around coxswain selection being a negative and unclear experience. Need to have better criteria for coxswain selection (polls, official votes, something tangible/traceable)
- Training locations for the Olympic year:
    - Sweep boat athletes are to be dispersed across different clubs to maintain a dispersed system, which is causing some confusion among a few athletes anticipating a more central group/location in the Olympic year. Josy/Jesse trying to use Princeton as a landing spot for recent college graduates and lean on clubs to maintain training for the core athlete group to keep the clubs strong. Maddie and Gevvie observed some tensions amongst coaches and athletes trying to navigate a decentralized system.
- The Athlete Council sees a need to prioritize coaching collaboration and feedback. Informal feedback from Worlds coaches indicate they need further support and clarification on priorities. Who hears feedback from the coaches? How do they receive feedback? How do we/USRowing capture their input? How to give them accountability and resources. Maybe suggest that Josy host a debrief call with Worlds coaches to gather feedback.

Upcoming 'State of the Team' talks with Josy-

- Josy will speak to each contingency to make sure everyone is on the same page as we start into the Olympic year.

Board Meeting Update - Hendershot/Dariush

- Advocated for a small travel budget for selection camps and trials to increase athlete representative visibility and access.
- Taylor created a list of 2023-2024 events for reps to indicate which events they may be available to attend. Check the WhatsApp group for access.

Continued reminder to reach out to our athelte constituents to increase communication and overlap.

Meeting concluded at 9:00pm EST