

Eastern Region Coaches Meeting Minutes

Monday August 29, 2005

Attendees: Attendance sheets were passed around and signed. There were 96 signatures; many of them were difficult to read. A number of skaters/officers from the North East region also attended the meeting. Copies of the attendance sheets will be made available at the next meeting and can be made available to anyone upon request.

Eastern Region Coaches Association officers in attendance:

Carey Elder - President
Ann Wahlig - Vice President
Avril Pickersgill - Treasurer
Ed Heater - Secretary

Eastern Region USARS officers in attendance:

Steve Hinkle - President
John Heffner - VP, Art
Marie McGee - Treasurer
John Patton - Secretary

Board member in attendance:

Charlie Kirchner

The Coaches Association would like to thank Ted and Sue Rendfrey, owners of the Palace Skating Center, for hosting the August 29 meeting.

President Carey Elder called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Carey Elder:

Carey started the meeting by congratulating regional skaters who placed at Nationals. He then introduced Charlie Kirchner, National Board Member and summarized the Treasurer's report. He also briefed the attendees on the voting scheme for the main topic of the meeting - the proposed merger with the North East Region. Three votes were taken during the course of the meeting. These included a Club vote (for all clubs in good standing with the regional USARS committee), a Coaches vote and an Amateur vote (anyone holding an amateur card). Carey stated that since this was an important meeting for the region, and since not everyone could attend the meeting. He made a motion to permit members not present to vote either via mail or email. The motion passed. Carey would accept votes up to September 2. Carey then passed the meeting to Charlie Kirchner.

Charlie Kirchner:

Charlie Kirchner spoke in length on the merger and related issues. This included:

- He had not received any paperwork on the subject of the merger. As a board member, if a merger was going to be discussed at the next board meeting, he would normally receive a package before the meeting with analysis data, etc on the issue.
- He received 48 emails from skaters, coaches and rink owners on the merger. Only 3 or 4 were in favor of it. He stressed that emails work and to keep sending them. He asked that people continue to send him ideas and suggestions via email and to copy Richard Hawkings (rhawkins@usarollersports.org).
- He stated that merging is not the answer to the decline in competitive skating; the problem is that there are not enough skaters. If people want to help, they have to get out and start helping out with group classes - either start them at a rink if it doesn't have group classes, or help out if it does. He also stated that coaches and adult skaters should skate at sessions, especially those with birthday parties, and promote artistic skating.
- He feels that the merger issue was miss-handled. Jim Pollard stated a position on the merger without the board's approval. Charlie felt that he should not have done so.

- He is strongly against the merger, and will make sure that every board member is aware of his position.
- Charlie stressed that we had a very good board. He then named each member of the board and enumerated their qualifications.

Charlie closed by enumerating issues he thought should be addressed:

- The length of Nationals
- B & C events at Nationals (this is a money issue)
- Adults comprise 45% of Nationals. He feels that adults should have their own Nationals.
- World Class events were in the middle of Nationals in 2005. This may change next year.
- You can't get in contact with the meet directors at Nationals.

Some points that were raised at the end of Charlie's presentation were:

- Allen Bell stated that he couldn't find the Artistic Committee on the National web site. Charlie stated that if Artistic Committee members were listed on the web site, it was an unintentional error and should be fixed.
- Dottie Walsh pointed out that there was a big problem with the schedule at Nationals. There were events in the program were final events but were listed as elimination events. Charlie stated that many people didn't show because of the weather. He personally reviewed the first five days of Nationals and found that the biggest gaps were figures. Dance and Freestyle events were pretty accurate.
- George Maass thanked Charlie for attending the meeting and believes that Charlie is representing the best interests of the region at Board meetings.

Carey then turned the meeting over to Steve Hinkle.

Steve Hinkle:

Steve made numerous points and answered questions during his presentation. These included:

- Steve presented all the numbers he used in his analysis. This included quite a bit of data with information listed in various manners such as the number of square miles in the existing regions and the proposed new regions, the number of skaters in each region and how many of those skaters did not qualify for Nationals because of competition in their events (the Eastern region had 14 out of 130 skaters not qualify for Nationals), the furthest distance skaters would have to travel for regionals in the proposed new region, etc. They were too numerous to go over in this report, but he did state that he would put his information on the regional web site.
- He announced that he has flipped 180% on the merger issue and now feels that the region shouldn't support the merger. He made it clear that this wasn't his own personal opinion and that his position has changed because of all the comments he received against the merger.
- Anne Wahlig asked why they now take four skaters from each event to Nationals. Charlie Kirchner said that they take four placements for financial reasons.
- John Patton asked if Steve knew what percentage of skaters in the region holding amateur cards competed at regionals. Steve said that the national office does not generate that statistic.
- Steve stated that he was told by a board member that the merger would take 3 days off the National meet. Steve used the current information from the National office (skaters per event at Nationals for each region) to determine how much time would be saved at Nationals if the proposed mergers would take place. It appears that the best estimate was 8 hours would be saved – and that was a generous number, it probably would be less. He forwarded his calculations to the Board. The information in the report he sent to the Board will be posted on the Regional web site.
- Steve stated the National Office had conflicting goals – for example, the proposed methods to reduce the length of Nationals will result in a reduction of income for the National Office, but the National Office desires to increase income.
- Steve closed by stating that regardless of how the region feels on these issues, that the Board will still fix what the feel is a problem.

Carey Elder asked Steve Hinkle what the date is for the 2006 regional meet. Steve had suggested that

the region consider moving the date forward to the Memorial Day weekend. He asked the audience which date would be better – Memorial Day weekend or July 4th weekend. Many in the audience liked Memorial Day weekend, however, Charlie Kirchner pointed out that that would kill the NJ Open meet. He was concerned that killing the NJ Open meet would adversely affect skaters preparing for regionals and nationals. This issue will be discussed at the next regional meeting.

Some general discussion followed on how to increase the number of skaters in the region. Kristen Kievit stated that she did a little show routine every two weeks or so with her beginner skaters. This seemed to help retain more students. Dave Paden suggested that coaches bring ideas to the next meeting.

Upcoming Meetings:

September 12 – Coaches Association Meeting
October 3 – Eastern Region USARS Meeting

Results of Merger Votes:

The following table summarizes the votes collected at the meeting and from mail-in votes:

| | For the merger | Against the merger |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Club Vote | 1 | 15 |
| Coaches Vote | 2 | 33 |
| Amateur Vote | 1 | 81 |

At approximately 9:30 pm, Carey Elder made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Anne Wahlig.

Addendum to the Minutes: After adjourning, Lauren Galda asked if a Youth Skater from the region could be included on the Officers Panel as a voice for Youth Skaters in the region.

Ed Heater
Secretary - Eastern Region Coaches Association