



2010 International Relations Committee Report

Introduction

The International Relations Committee works to enhance USAT's participation in international activities related to triathlon, primarily within the governance structures of the International Triathlon Union and the Pan American Triathlon Confederation. The IR Committee advises the USAT National Board on matters related to international relations and recommends appropriate policies to support and enhance opportunities for all multi-sport athletes to compete in international events and participate in multi-sport related international activities, as outlined in our by-laws and further directed by the national board. The committee also is charged with reviewing recommendations and nominations for policies and persons related to these activities.

As part of USAT's strategic goals, we support the objectives set by the board to improve our international relationships. These are to:

- Strive for increased USAT involvement in ITU governance.
- Open direct lines of communication, responsibility and authority with ITU.
- Strive for a global rulebook.
- Pursue and make progress on a common protocol to eliminate use of performance enhancing and other illegal drugs in multisport.
- Facilitate global philanthropy toward better relations with multisport federations in all countries.
- Join with ITU on international initiatives such as coaching enrichment programs and other educational outreach.

2010 Accomplishments

This past year saw unprecedented participation by USAT in international affairs activities, the fruits of our past labors to nominate and elect USAT members to as many committees and commissions as possible. This has enhanced our communications and interactions across the board with ITU leaders and staff and their regional counterparts.

In fulfillment of our goal to provide financial support to governance entities outside the United States, USAT secured \$14,000 in US Olympic Committee solidarity grant funding for 2010. Half of that money was used to fund an historic capacity-building governance training seminar at the October Pan American Triathlon Confederation Congress in Puerto Vallarta. The funding provided a half day training program on federation board roles and responsibilities. The training day also included the roll out of a triathlon federation toolbox including model by-laws, templates for websites and press releases, and other materials. USAT's funding for the Congress also provide simultaneous translation of all Congress activities. For the first time in PATCO's history, the organization's president was able to preside over a unified meeting where all attendees were fully engaged without any language barriers to overcome.

USAT also supported a staff initiative to provide funding for race directors in Hy-Vee and Tuscaloosa to pay their PATCO obligation to provide air fare to athletes from other countries who come to the U.S to participate in these international events.

For the first time in recent history, every USAT member who is a member of an International Triathlon Union Committee or board was able to attend Congress and participate in their committee meetings and related activities. In September, USAT President Brian Harrington lead a full complement of USAT representatives to the Budapest ITU Congress – four delegates – plus the U.S. members of the ITU Executive Board and of the Age Group, Coaching, Constitution, Multisport, Paratriathlon, Technical, and Women's Committees and Commissions. Joyce Donaldson, senior ITU technical official in the United States, led a delegation training session immediately prior to the Congress on protocol and culture at international events. USAT Secretary Candy Cheatham participated in the development of the first ITU Women's Seminar in Budapest, which she attended along with USAT Women's Committee Chair Awilda Harrington. President Harrington also led a full roster of delegates who represented USAT at the PATCO Congress in Puerto Vallarta in October.





Since the committee's creation, one of the IR Committee's goals has been to promote the harmonization of competition rulebooks. While we were unable to coordinate calendars this year to put together an international rules meeting, planning for this now are in the works. Initial meetings are expected to take place over the winter to put in place a process for discussing and resolving issues related to rules.

In October, the IR Committee was approached by World Triathlon Corp. officials regarding potential helmet rule certification conflicts at the Ironman event in Kona. The complaint was submitted by the president of another country's triathlon federation. Coordination with USAT staff and WTC produced a quick resolution to the immediate problem and demonstrated the value of diplomacy and responsiveness in our international relations.

2011 Objectives

Harmonization of rules remains high on the committee's priority goal list for 2011. We expect to participate in organizing a high-level meeting of USAT, ITU, and WTC officials to determine how best to proceed to bring our rulebooks closer together. Conversations with other event organizers are continuing as well. Ongoing dialog with all parties will be critical for success of this effort. Unilateral diplomacy has not produced much success for us in the past and a multilateral approach is encouraged and supported by the committee.

Within the U.S., the committee hopes to facilitate work with USAT staff if requested to support a goal of mitigating difficulties with providing officials at all USAT races, particularly those that have different officiating requirements such as ITU or WTC events. This has been problematic as there are few new recruits into the USAT (ITU) technical officials program. Right now, USAT maintains separate funding and training for officials working different events within the United States, although both are sanctioned by USA Triathlon. It typically is difficult to recruit a separate team of officials for ITU events within the United States, which seems unnecessary when we have hundreds of credentialed USAT officials. For example, in Hy-Vee in 2010, there were so few ITU officials available to work the event that officials were brought in from another country at that country's expense in order to provide adequate officiating for these events, which paid out the largest prize purse in the country this year.

The committee urges USAT staff to work with our ITU technical delegate to develop an appropriate additional training module to add to all USAT officials' certification trainings beginning as soon as possible. This will guarantee we are able to provide adequate resources to all race directors desiring to produce ITU and other styles of races in the United States without incurring exorbitant travel or other costs.

The IR Committee is working with the USOC International Relations staff to determine how we can best support new initiatives put in place by USOC CEO Scott Blackmun to enhance U.S. standing in the international community.

We are working to develop a new proposal for solidarity grant funding for 2011. It is expected the request will include funding for another capacity-building seminar for at least one ITU regional confederation. USAT should note that the USOC is looking for matching funds from NGBs as part of its criteria for awarding new solidarity grants for next year. As we provided matching fund this year for our solidarity grant programs, this already is part of our strategic planning. Additionally, the committee actively is participating in discussions with our international partners and USAT staff regarding how to best support initiatives such as athlete exchanges, coaching enrichment programs, training camps, and other educational outreach. The committee is ready to review any proposals or plans for any of our programs and activities and events with an international component and to assist in any way.

Conclusion

The International Relations Committee had a very successful year helping USAT enhance its standing in the international community. The opportunities for USAT members to serve on committees and become involved in the decision-making and policy developments of sport governance are greater than ever. We have helped develop capacity-building programs in other parts of the world and are working to grow strategic relationships with our neighbors in sport. We look forward to another successful year helping USAT promote triathlon wherever Team USA athletes compete.

Submitted by: Melissa Merson

