

USAT Board of Directors

Teleconference Meeting

Monday, June 7, 2010

In attendance:

Brian Harrington, President

Eric Averill, Vice President

Bob Wendling, Treasurer

Candy Cheatham, Secretary

Jim Donaldson

Victor Plata

Steve Sexton

Vince O'Brien

Jim Ryun

Dave Kuendig

Melissa Merson

Skip Gilbert, Executive Director

Scott Schnitzspahn, Sport Performance Director

Absent:

Celeste Callahan

Brian Harrington called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time.

National Office Report

Skip Gilbert updated the board on website developments and timeline for IT solution. More information on a new website and IT solution will be presented in the June, 10th in-person BOD meeting.

2012 Olympic Games Selection Criteria

Even though the Board agreed to postpone voting until the June, 10th in-person BOD meeting Scott Schnitzspahn was asked to summarize the criteria for the Board.

The Board discussed elements of the criteria and asked for clarification on selection and discretionary slots.

Resolution

Resolution for Board Action

June 7, 2010

Subject: Amend USA Triathlon Competitive Rule, Article IV Number 4 – Swimming Conduct, Wet suits

Background: The sport of triathlon has accepted wetsuits as a valid piece of equipment since the early days of the sport. Wetsuits have been used by participants primarily as an insulator, helping shield the swimmer from cold water and allowing for cold-water swim segments at events, effectively lengthening the sport's season. However, there has been an unintended consequence to the use of this equipment in the sport: swimming became easier, swim times became faster and thus the balanced, but admittedly arbitrary, swim segment of multisport events became of less importance to the other legs.

Research has shown the benefits of wetsuits to swim times and performances: as much as a 5-percent reduction (Cordain and Kopriva) and a 7-percent reduction (Chatard, et. al.) in swim times; a 7-percent increase in swimming speed (Parsons and Day); a 9-percent improvement in swim performance (Trappe, et. al. [1995]); a 14-percent reduction in drag (Toussaint, et. al.); a 5-percent increase in the swim velocity at VO₂max, as much as a 14-percent decrease in the energy cost of swimming, and 5-percent reduction in swim time (Tomikawa, et.al.).¹ All research conducted has shown that the primary effect of this artificial enhancement is due to the added buoyancy of the wetsuit effectively reducing passive drag. Importantly, the greater the amount of neoprene rubber exposed to the water, the greater the artificially-induced aid to the swimmer (Trappe, et al. [1996]).

USAT does not limit the thickness of wetsuits for age-group competitors. There is a danger that as wetsuit thickness increases, a continuing negative impact will occur, effectively shortening the swim leg of events by increasing artificially-boosted speeds. This phenomena has recently occurred in the sport of swimming where the use of skin suits led to artificially boosted speeds resulting in a plethora of new world records unseen in swimming history. The sport, through FINA, had to intercede and stop the technological advances in order to save the sport. USAT is at the same juncture.²

Other major organizations in the sport support a 5 mm limit to neoprene rubber suits. The International Triathlon Union (ITU) rule is: "# 4.6. Equipment, b.) Illegal Equipment, (i) Athletes must not use Wetsuits with thickness exceeding 5 mm;". And, this year the World Triathlon Corporation (WTC) requested a waiver from USAT rules to restrict wetsuit thicknesses to 5 mm at all their USAT-sanctioned events.

The USAT Competitive Rules policy is now out of synch with the practices of all other major organizations in the sport and should rejoin the world community and institute a 5 mm limit. Interestingly, Parsons and Day saw this coming over 24 years ago: "Regulations about the use of wet suits must be agreed internationally to ensure equal competition whilst promoting the health and safety aspects of the sport".

¹ See L. Cordain and R. Kopriva, "Wetsuits, Body Density and Swimming Performance", *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, March 1991: 25/1, pp. 31-33; J.C. Chatard, X. Senegas, M. Selles, P. Deanot, A. Geysant, "Wet Suit Effect: A Comparison Between Competitive Swimmers and Triathletes", *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, April 1995: 27/4, pp. 580-586; L. Parsons and S. J. Day, "Do Wet Suits Affect Swimming Speed?", *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, September 1986: 20/3, pp.129-131; T.A. Trappe, R.D. Starling, A.C. Jozsi, G. H. Goodpaster, S. W. Trappe, T. Nomura, S. Obara, and D. L. Costill, "Thermal Responses to Swimming in Three Water Temperatures: Influence of a Wet Suit", *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 1995: 27/7, pp. 1014-1021; H. M. Toussaint, L. Brinink, L. Coster, M. De Looze, B. Van Rossem, R. Van Veenan, and G. De Groot, "Effect of a Triathlon Wet Suit on Drag During Swimming", *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, June 1989: 21/3, pp.325-328; M. Tomikawa, Y. Shimoyama, and T. Nomura, "Factors Related to the Advantageous Effects of Wearing a Wetsuit During Swimming at Different Submaximal Velocity in Triathletes", July 2008: 11/4, pp. 417-423; and T.A. Trappe, D.L. Pease, S.W. Trappe, J.P. Troup, and E.R. Burke, "Psychological Response to Swimming While Wearing a Wet Suit", *International Journal of Sports Medicine*, February 1996, 17/2, pp. 111-114, which studied the short, long, and full versions of wetsuits.

² At least one manufacturer has designed and is marketing a neoprene rubber wetsuit in the U.S. that is up to 10 mm in thickness.

Financial Impact: None.

Relevant & Affected By-Laws and Procedures: USA Triathlon Competitive Rule, Article IV Number 4 – Swimming Conduct, Wet suits

Whereas, there is a marked and measurable performance benefit to the use of wetsuit technology leading to a growing artificially-induced reduction in physical demand required during the swim leg and an increase in speed, and,

Whereas, the ITU classifies all wetsuits with a thickness exceeding 5 mm as illegal equipment and, at events where the WTC allows wetsuits, they recognizes a 5 mm legal limit to their thickness,

Now therefore let it be resolved that Rule IV.4 shall now be amended such that “wetsuits with thickness exceeding 5 mm **in any part**” are illegal. This rule shall become effective on January 1, 2013.³

³ Until the rule-change takes effect, the right of race management to request an event waiver to the current rule in effect at USAT-sanctioned events is not impeded.

Submitted by:
USAT Board of Directors

###

In an earlier email Rob Kasper suggested a friendly amendment to add ‘in any part’ to the Now therefore let it be resolved portion. Resolution above reflects that change in red.

Eric Averill motioned, Jim Donaldson seconded to accept the Wetsuit Resolution including friendly amendment (in the body of the resolution in red)

Motion passed unanimously

Lease and Capital Costs

Skip Gilbert stated that the lease should be finalized this week and will be provided to the Board. The capital costs associated with the move will be up for Board vote once the lease has been BOD approved. This will be brought up in the June 10th in-person meeting.

IR Update

Melissa Merson stated that Loreen Barnett, Secretary General of ITU, will be meeting with the Board on June 11th. She updated the group on: a race in Monterey and a rule violation; NYC and London paratriathlon; PATCO Congress; and Visas.

USADA

Skip Gilbert explained to the Board that in our efforts to educate on drug testing USAT has resources linked on the USAT website. In addition, we have put together a comprehensive press release that will be distributed through our email communications.

Bylaw Changes

Victor Plata spoke about electing Elite Athlete Board representatives. USAT Bylaws do not mesh with the USOC Bylaws pertaining to the athletes. Email exchanges have occurred and there is much dialogue to consider. Brian Harrington asked Victor to put together a task force to include Rob and Eric and others of Victor's choosing. This task force will need to work in conjunction with USOC Council.

Eric Averill motioned, Bob Wendling seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.