Minutes of the Age Group Committee Meeting September 21, 2011

I. Members on the Call: Chuck Graziano, Chair, Tom Manzi, Ken Modica, Kevin Smeltzer (board liaison), Steve Sutherland, Rob Vigorito, Jim Weaver and Tim Yount.

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 PM

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes were deemed approved as submitted in accordance with the procedure adopted by the AGC at the last meeting (If no objections- changes/corrections- are received by the specified date after circulation, they are approved)

III. Unfinished Business

a. **Athletes of the Year Awards-** Steve and Chuck gave an overview of the Athletes of the Year Celebration and Cruise. All comments that we've received back were extremely positive and the event was very well received. The food was better than expected and we have started to plan for next year's event with a debriefing call that was held on September 2nd. Notes of that meeting will be circulated to the full AGC membership.

b. Aqua Bike Status

Chuck reported on an email that was received late this afternoon from Board President Bob Wendling. An Aquabike National Championship is being worked on by staff for 2012. Bids will be put out and a location selected. Bob's email indicated that the intent was to have an Aquabike championship at the sprint distance for the first year and to conduct a survey of Aquabike participants to see what distance they preferred. He left the door open for an Olympic distance event, however, longer than that was out of the question.

Many on the AGC voiced opinion that an Olympic distance event would be preferable. Most felt that people would not travel a long distance for an event that takes less than an hour to complete. Still, it was the consensus of the AGC that a sprint distance event for the first year would be acceptable provided that the survey that Bob mentioned was conducted so that we can get the preferences from those racing Aquabike. Tim suggested that we're going to be using the RFP process and soliciting bids from race directors with the intent of being hosted for at least 2 years. One of the requirements could be that they're able to adjust the distance of the event in the second year to the Olympic distance. The consensus of the committee was that this would be fine.

Chuck mentioned the document previously circulated with several questions concerning standards for Aquabike. This document will be re-circulated for

people to comment by email. One concern was that there should, after the first year or two, be a qualifying process to race at the Aquabike National Championship.

c. Grant Program

Ken Modica reported that he and Rob Vigorito reviewed the grant application form and criteria. There was one minor (housekeeping) change that is needed. We had three grant applications this year, and only two were approved. The third was asking for a grant for what basically amounted to a "pre race meeting". While this is clearly not the intent of the grant program, there is nothing in the criteria that disqualifies this kind of meeting from being eligible. Ken and Rob will take one last look and get Chuck a copy of the revised document which will be posted on the AGC web site. No further AGC approval is necessary inasmuch as this is just a housekeeping change and nothing substantive about the program is being modified.

d. Age Group Prize Money

Rob Vigorito reported on this issue. The current limit of \$4,999.99 for prize money given to age group athletes was set at least 22 years ago, and is currently out of date given the rate of inflation during that timeframe. A committee had been working on this issue, but no action was ever taken.

Ken Modica during the call was able to secure today's value of \$4,999.99 in 1988 dollars from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. That value is \$9,575.00, therefore, just moving the prize money limitation up with the rate of inflation would make the limit almost \$10,000.

Kevin S. mentioned that any recommendation from the AGC would go to the Board and then to the AAC for their recommendation before final action.

Tim suggested that he get from staff a list of issues, pros and cons, that might be raised in addition to the inflation factor. Once he got these issues, the AGC will address each one and submit a recommendation to the Board.

e. Age-up process for Youth Athletes- Status Report

This item is continued from the last AGC call. Jim Weaver and Rob Vigorito were developing a paper to be presented in favor of changing the age up rule for youth athletes to "age on race day" as opposed to "12/31". Jim Weaver had circulated a draft of a paper based substantially on the scientific findings outlined in Malcolm Gladwell's book, "Outliers". A compelling argument is made in this book about the developmental differences in young athletes.

In addition, Rob Vigorito made the point that our primary objective at this age level should be to have kids have fun and not have them focused on being competitive. In addition, he finds in his races that kids want to race with their

friends who are in the same grade and by using an "age on 12/31" rule, oftentimes that is not permitted.

After considerable discussion, the following action was taken:

Motion: Rob Vigorito/Steve Sutherland- that the report initially put together by Jim Weaver and Rob Vigorito be reviewed by them one last time and then circulated to the full AGC membership. Members will be given a limited number of days to comment and if no substantive comments are received, Chuck will submit the report to the Board as the recommendation from the AGC that the age up rule for youth athletes be based upon their age on race day. Motion carried: Unanimously.

f. Qualifying Criteria for Age Group National Championships

A special call was held on August 17th to discuss this issue and note from that call were reviewed by the AGC. In addition, Rob Vigorito made the committee aware of a formula and criteria that was circulated by Ann Gilbert Regional Chair of the Pacific Northwest Region, regarding qualifying criteria. In reviewing the overall direction that the AGC discussed on its August call, the objective of changing the criteria is to insure that there would be room in the AGNC for all of those who have qualified and who desired to race. It was felt that only minor tweaks should be made at this point to insure that we don't over-react to the selling out of the race for the past two years.

Upon review of the issues identified on the August call and contained in the notes from that call, the following action was taken:

Motion: Rob Vigorito/Ken Modica- That the qualifying criteria for the Age Group National Championship for 2012 include the following provisions:

- 1. All entries be audited to insure that the athlete did indeed qualify for entry as stated on their entry form.
- 2. Those who qualify at a sprint distance race will **only** be qualified to enter the sprint national championship and not the Olympic distance event
- 3. Regions would be allocated qualifying slots for AGNC based on a weighting formula developed from the proportionate number of athletes racing at the AGNC on a rolling average over the past several years from each region (e.g. if 20% of racers at AGNC over the past 3 years were from the NE region, than 20% of the qualifying slots would be allocated to that region.
- 4. A cutoff date would be in place so that anyone who qualifies prior to that date, would qualify to compete at the upcoming AGNC. Anyone who qualifies after that cutoff date will qualify to compete in the following year's event.
- 5. National Champions from the previous year, Team USA members from the previous one (1) year and the previous year's Athletes of the Year would all automatically be qualified for AGNC.

Motion carried: Unanimously

IV. New Business

a. Proposed Rule Change- Fixed Gear Bikes

The AGC was asked to comment on a proposed rule adjustment that would prohibit the use of fixed gear (non-free wheel capability) bikes from sanctioned events. All on the committee felt that this was a significant safety hazard and the consensus was that the AGC is in favor of such an adjustment.

b. Year End Awards

Tim thanked the sub-committee that reviewed the list of year end awards and for their recommendations. Action would be taken on their recommendations shortly.

V. Confirm Next Meeting Date/Adjourn

The next conference call of the Age Group Committee will be on November 17th, beginning at 7:00 PM EST.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Chuck Graziano, Chair USAT Age Group Committee