



## **Yankee Board Meeting**

12/9/2024, 7:30 PM

Embassy Suites, Marlborough

Board Members Attending: Jeffry, Judy, Geoffrey, Mark, Nick, Amy, John, Miriam, Steve

Guests: Dave Peixoto, Brendan Lounsbury, Mackenzie Hinds, Matt Heckler, Daniel Chen,

Jeannine Luther, Greg LaPointe, Shelley Grambley

### **1. Approval of Prior Minutes**

- a. 10/15 minutes were voted on via email.

### **2. Guest speakers will appear before the board**

- a. A Yankee member spoke of someone's presence at an event that upset them and brought to light what they consider to be an unclear and insufficient manner of reporting incidents that happen at Yankee tournaments or involve other Yankee members. The person also spoke of what they feel is a lack of transparency and accountability from the Yankee board. An ability for all Yankee members to feel safe and comfortable at our events was expressed and this person asked the following of the Yankee board.
  - i. Public acknowledgement that Yankee leadership fell short in making processes and resources well known for those that want to report any violence they have experienced at the hands of Yankee members.
  - ii. Clear and broad communication of what these processes are, including the links to safe sport and any other applicable resources.
  - iii. Commitment from Yankee leadership to continue to work on the transparency of these processes and to continue the fight to make Yankee volleyball a safe environment to enjoy the sport we all love.
- b. Another Yankee member spoke of a situation in which they were a victim of another individual that has in the past been a Yankee member. This individual stressed the need for us to come together as a community to protect and support each other. While acknowledging that it is difficult to ban someone they expressed the need for everyone to have a safe space to come play and pushed for better publicizing of the ability to report to Safe Sport.
- c. The next Yankee member spoke of an incident that they were a victim of outside of Yankee but within a volleyball community and that they believe that there are too many predators in our midst and communities need to protect their members.
- d. The final Yankee member to speak expressed that the Yankee community is a good one with lots of opportunity to play but expressed their disappointment and frustration with, what they felt, was an acceptance of convenience by the Yankee board. Their feeling is that a lot of people in the Yankee community know an individual was someone to avoid but there was not action matching that feeling. USAV training requires looking for situations that could create a lack of safety for those in the community.
- e. The discussion on referenced individual and the discussion of player safety and ability to report incidents in general will be discussed within executive session.

### **3. Reports**

- a. Registrar's Report (Jeffry)
  - i. Membership is 28% ahead of this time last season.
  - ii. 24% of the current membership is new this year.
  - iii. We are already at 80% of last years membership total.
- b. NERVA Report (Dave)
  - i. Boston has 100 teams on the waitlist and will likely need to find help with court set-up.
  - ii. Yankee will not have courts on the Friday of Liberty Challenge so no fours this year.
  - iii. Dave is a member of the USA Personnel and Transition Team for John Speraw, the new USAV President who will be attending BCEC on the second weekend.

- iv. USAV will be hiring a new COO and a new Women's National Team Coach shortly.
- v. The new marketing head for USAV previously worked for the NFL.
- vi. There is a spotlight on New England for adult volleyball since there are far more tournaments run here than other regions.
- c. Ratings Report (Jeffry)
  - i. Have added 6 new raters since last meeting and will continue to add more, one challenge being that lots of our players have now been playing less than two seasons..
- d. Social Media Report (Amy)
  - i. Facebook at 4276 followers and Instagram over 2000. Instagram is more popular with the younger age brackets
  - ii. May need to consider crossing into TikTok at somepoint as lots of the younger players use that as their primary social media.
  - iii. Will be posting rating changes on Instagram also rather than just Facebook.
  - iv. Lots of interaction with posts involving uprates and winning team photos.
  - v. Finding a source for players looking for teams as more people don't use Facebook is a priority. Have that on the website currently but improving/publicizing is key.
- e. Web Editor Report (Jeffry)
  - i. Brendan in contact with Bill looking into issues with file load and End Tournament issues. Appear to have reached the limit of current vendor's knowledge of Expression Engine perhaps showing a need to move to a vendor who specializes in Expression Engine.
  - ii. Strategic decision on whether it would be better to build something from the ground up with funding an obvious issue though short term fixes may end up costing more than a long term fix.
  - iii. Having the API communicate with Sports Engine is a priority down the road though USAV would like to pivot from Sports Engine but not many options in that space.
  - iv. Yankee site has a lot of customization so need something that can be flexible and also easy to update down the road as most sites only stay viable, without updates, for 5 years these days. Security needs to be improved for our site as well.
- f. GrassRoots Campaign Report (Jeffry)
  - i. Decision was made to add a one court scramble to the RICC schedule.
- g. Tournament Director's Report (Mark)
  - i. Spring draft was started November 18<sup>th</sup> with the schedule published on November 22nd. Connecticut tournaments added a week later.
  - ii. Since RCO C-, C+ and B Champs will be held at Liberty Challenge frequent RCO captains at those levels will be given first shot at signing up before going to lottery system. Other levels will follow same lottery rules as last year's BCEC.
  - iii. Yankee has 25 courts each day of Liberty Challenge weekend to try and fill.
  - iv. Will have QR codes for entry at Liberty Challenge with schedules on Sportwrench.
  - v. All board members besides John will be present at least one day for RICC.
  - vi. Saturday and Sunday are using all courts for RICC, Friday will have at least 10 in use.
  - vii. Will have certified referees serving as court supervisors.
  - viii. RICC Players Party is 8-11 PM at Dave & Busters on the Saturday.

#### 4. New Business

- a. RI Rampage tournaments planning
  - i. All RI Rampage items covered in tournament director report.
- b. Scramble subsidies discussion
  - i. Is a NERVA discussion so will be held privately with Dave and Judy.
- c. Flat tournament limits
  - i. Tabled (along with any other possible rule change) to March meeting
- d. Communication and transparency proposal (Amy)
  - i. Amy presented a proposal for Improved Communication and Transparency

- ii. Tabled to March meeting so all can read thoroughly and for refinement/discussion.
- iii. Brendan and Mark have been working to develop an online reporting form (for both positive and negative reports).
- iv. Board policy and procedures would need to be reviewed along with this proposal.
- v. NERVA has a set of policies that could be used as a guide as well.
- e. Email from member regarding tournament disqualifications
  - i. Tabled until March meeting

Jeffrey motioned to close the open part of the meeting, Nick seconded the motion.  
All board members voted in favor.

## **5. Executive Session will be held**

### **Key Future Dates**

**Yankee Scrambles –1/11/25 MC/WC at CTSC (CT), 1/12/25 RCOC at TAU, 2/16/25 MC/WC at TAU, 3/15/25 MC at SMCC (ME), 3/16/25 RCOC at TAU**

**RI Rampage – December 27th-29th**

**Liberty Challenge (Boston event that will have adult tournaments this year) – April 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>**

**USAV Open Nationals Denver, CO – May 23<sup>rd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>**

**2025 Picnic – Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Board Meetings –February 12<sup>th</sup>, March 27<sup>th</sup>**