

2021 USA National Masters Board Teleconference

Tuesday July 13, 2021, 9:00 PM

Attendees: Michael Cohen, Sheryl Cohen, Corinne Grotenhuis, Les Simonton, Van Cramer, Joe Triolo, Jeff Scott, Jerry Dunne

Guest: Mike Choi

1. Welcome and Call Meeting to Order (Michael Cohen – Chairman)

Michael Cohen welcomed everyone and thanked them for their continued support of our USA Masters program. The agenda was briefly discussed, and the meeting was called to order. We also took the opportunity to again congratulate Corinne on her upcoming Tokyo Olympic trip.

2. Detroit “Nationals Week” USAW Board Meeting Feedback (Michael Cohen / Sheryl Cohen)

Michael and Sheryl were given a “last minute” but eventually successful opportunity to meet with the USAW Board at the Nationals Week in Detroit. Despite the USAW Board being told that Michael and Sheryl were invited to the USAW Board meeting they were not notified of the board meeting. After noting their absence, Mike Choi called Michael and Sheryl and they hurried over to the meeting in the middle of a rainstorm with no transportation. Arriving soaking wet they were later able to address the Board. Seemingly, several members of the Board gained a significantly broader perspective. It soon became obvious that the Board had been told the USA Masters had declined the opportunity to meet with the Board, declined the opportunity to comment on the “Draft” Masters Integration Proposal into USAW (which in fact USA Masters has never received and still has not received). Michael briefed the Board on the Masters Program history, our distinct goals and objectives / subsequent discussions revealed Board members had been misinformed as to the Masters program. The Board welcomed further interaction and promised to make the previously unavailable “Draft” Masters Integration Proposal available. (That has not happened as of 7-20-2021.)

The Board then asked what the USA Masters wanted. Michael replied regarding several basic areas of concern. 1. Run our own (two) standalone meets – USA Masters National Championships and The Howard Cohen Americans. 2. Regain access to our funds – reinstate the USA Masters credit card (this has been taken care of). 3. Facilitate communication - gain access to our members email lists via BARS or other USAW administrative database. 4. An idea was floated by USAW to provide a Colorado based USAW employee (part time or job share) to service masters membership needs. TBD but if the position is virtual then could be based in Savannah but most likely we would just prefer to handle administrative needs via our current volunteer staff and save the federation and ourselves money.

Van asked who is responsible in USAW to coordinate with USA Masters communication? Obviously, that contact process / and or individual is not working well. Also, when will we get the written “Draft” Masters Integration Proposal that was alluded to back in February of this year and was supposedly to be given to us at that time for initial comment and to open a dialogue with USAW regarding the future relationship with USAW?

The meeting was a definite step forward in positive and open communication with the USAW Board. However, it appears that the USAW Board continues to be misinformed and / or not fully informed by USAW staff regarding masters issues. Also, information promised to the masters (such as the above-mentioned Draft Integration Plan for comment which was to be discussed in 6 months ago) still has not been given to the masters. These remain significant concerns.

3. 2021 Pan Ams Masters (Michael Cohen)

Pan Ams will be hosted by the USA in Orlando FL August 4-8 at the same venue as our National Championships earlier this year. COVID protocols will generally follow the USAW Detroit Nationals Week. At this time, there are slightly over 400 athletes entered with ~ 90% being USA lifters reflecting the quarantine and travel restrictions in Canada and the reluctance of the Latin and South American countries to travel. This will be a two platform meet with 5 days of lifting so the pace should be well controlled and a moderate pace. Likely masks will be required at weigh-ins / likely not required in warm-up areas as we have over ten warm-up platforms for each competition platform and no masks on the competition platform. We will also have an information and registration table.

For comparison, turnout for the last two Pan Am meets (Puerto Rico last year and Gaspe, Canada the year before) was limited due to COVID (2020) and the relatively remote geographical location (2019). Previously, the largest ever Pan Am meet was in Savannah - about 475 lifters.

The location in the USA, attraction of Orlando and hoped for continued improvement in COVID conditions was thought to indicate a higher turnout but the turnout will be as indicated above somewhat constrained.

4. 2021 Howard Cohen Americans (Michael Cohen)

The 2021 HC American meet in Reno, NV on November 5,6 and 7 remains on track with strong support from the Reno Sports Authority and they can accommodate (if still required) COVID protocols and implications. We are hoping for at least 300 lifters and a new geographic opportunity. We are awaiting feedback from USAW regarding the entry costs to use BARS (\$9) and (\$6) deduction to the meet director when an entrant orders a meet T-Shirt. These seem high vs Everbrite \$3-4 and the meet director indicated these are issues to his already slim bottom line. This reflects the general challenge for all meet directors to run a high-quality meet with relatively limited entrants.

5. 2022 Howard Cohen Americans (Michael Cohen)

The 2022 HC Americans are planned to be held in Baton Rouge at the Crowne Plaza in August by Michael Cohen. The early date vs the typical November timing is to accommodate and avoid any conflict with the 2022 World Master Championships which will be hosted by the USA in December 2022 in Orlando.

6. Hall of Fame (Van Cramer)

The latest HoF update as of July 2021 is now on the USA Masters website.

The summary is that we inducted two lifters into the HoF at the 2021 Nationals in Orlando – Rick Bucinell and Bob Bondiman. We now have 85 athletes and 22 significant contributors in our Hall of Fame.

Separately, as part of the Hall of Fame data base expansion and the newly revised 150-point criteria to include the HC Americans, Van mentioned that there was one individual identified who will meet the 150-point criteria (based on his results in the very distant past) and we would award Scott Schmidt entrance to the Hall of Fame later in 2021. This came about as part of communications with the Ohio state LWC chair, Joanna Jones who first found the possibility that the lifter was eligible. Van is expediting the Hall of Fame award as the recipient has some health challenges and the LWC would like to award it to him this summer.

In that regard, Les and Van are working to complete Les's data base for all the masters meets since 1975 – Nationals, Worlds, Pan Ams and HC Americans and we expect to have complete by the end of this year – it has been a trick to get the older meet results. At that time, we will address the additional challenge of tracking both revised criteria of 150 points and wins at the Nationals for the Hall of Fame entrants and update annually or just go with the new criteria. (Currently leaning towards continuing to track both National wins and the points so we will have dual recording to do the entrants full justice.)

7. Treasurers Report (Van Cramer)

2020 financial results are in line with the verbal update Van gave to the Board in Orlando earlier this year. The final audit (all USAW accounts) is not yet complete, but we are told no changes are anticipated to the master's account. Overall, there was a \$7,000 increase in funds in 2020 as a result of \$18,000 revenues – USAW masters \$5 membership rebates and minimal spending of about \$11,000 for medals, storage, postage etc. This results in the masters having about \$56,000 on the balance sheet (cash and receivables from USAW for the rebates) at the end of 2020.

Van gave imputed master membership numbers for 2017-2020 based on the \$5 rebates recorded by USAW. There were typically about 3,500 master lifters registered with USAW based on those rebates, with one year, 2019, peaking at about 4,600 master lifters. However, Les indicated he had asked USAW for membership lists when we ran the master National Championships, and he thought those numbers were higher (~4,887 in 2020 and 4,212 as of March 2021). Les will forward those spreadsheets to Van for his comparison and inquiry to USAW to ensure we have full credit for our registered master lifters. On the face of it, if the numbers Les has are correct, we should be due another \$3,000 plus dollars per year from USAW.

8. 2021 Masters Pan Ams Technical Coverage and Drug Testing (Corinne)

Corinne noted scheduling constraints between her Olympic technical / referee responsibilities (Congratulations!) and the first several days of the Masters Pan American Championships. She requested additional coverage / Joe Triolo and Jerry Dunne volunteered to help. Les will also check with Mary Hyder regarding her availability to help.

Regarding drug testing, Corinne indicated that the USADA individual responsible to coordinate testing activities with the masters (we have had significant testing, availability etc. issues) had been replaced. The new USADA masters liaison has been a significant improvement. However, Corinne is concerned with the USADA Pan Ams testing proposal includes both higher costs per test plus a required \$15,000 legal "retainer" pending any "contested" positives impacting legal costs. If there are no contested results, then the "retainer" would be returned. We are exploring alternative testing options (same company that tests the NFL,NBA etc.) and also attempting to re-negotiate with USADA.

In reviewing the drug test positives on the USAW website there are 4 masters lifters out of the total of 48 USAW lifters or ~ 8% which would appear to be less than the estimated ~20% of master lifters in USAW. However, we do not know what percentage of the legal costs these 4 masters positives represent.

9. Meeting Close (Michael Cohen)

Michael Cohen closed the meeting and thanked all for their attendance. The next meeting will take place either at the Pan Ams or via teleconference as required.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45.