



## Minutes of December 6, 2022, Board of Directors Meeting Via Videoconference

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**Board members present:** Gen. Peter Chiarelli (Chairman), Carl Allegretti, Dr. Gerald Gioia, Mike Golic, Scott Hallenbeck (non-voting), Sheila Hamp, Eric Holliday, Kelly Mehrstens, Mark Murphy, Dr. Karissa Niehoff, Elizabeth Okey, Dr. Allen Sills, Kevin Warren, Rachel Worsham

**Absent:** Todd Berry, Oliver Luck, Pete Ward

**Staff present:** Celeste Ballou, Joe Banach, Brittney Brothers, Connie Fisher, Ian Gentile, Eric Mayes, Curtis Peterson, Jamie Riley, Amy Stevens

**Guests present:** Alexia Gallagher (NFL Foundation VP of Philanthropy and Executive Director), Wendy Guthrie (WJG Consulting), Amie Peele (Peele Law Group)

### Call to Order and Welcome.

Chairman General Peter Chiarelli called the meeting to order at 1:05pm and welcomed those in attendance.

### 1. Approval of Minutes.

No corrections were made to the June 16, 2022, minutes as distributed.

MOTION: Motion was made by Mike Golic and seconded by Dr. Karissa Niehoff to approve the minutes. The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes.

### 2. Chairman's Remarks.

Chairman General Chiarelli discussed the partnership with USAFB and the Army, with the end goal being to address the critical issue regarding recruiting for the Army and sports in general with volunteers and strong leadership. The focus of this multi-year partnership is reintroducing the Army to the football community through several USAFB programs and platforms. He further added that expanding to other branches has been discussed. Continued updates will be shared once the details are finalized.



Chiarelli highlighted the presentation he and Scott Hallenbeck made during the October NFL Foundation board meeting, providing them with the impact USAFB is making in the sport. He thanked Alexia Gallagher, the NFL Foundation VP of Philanthropy and Executive Director, for providing the opportunity to make that presentation and for their continued support.

In addition, two USAFB board members are now serving on the NFL Foundation board – Sheila Hamp and Mark Murphy – and invited them to share their opinion on how the Foundation meeting went. Hamp felt the USAFB representative were well received and appreciated the synergy of the two entities.

Chiarelli conclude by expressing his enthusiasm for working with USAFB in achieving their goals and thanked Hallenbeck and the team for their hard work.

### **3. CEO Report.**

Hallenbeck presented an overview of USA Football’s activities and accomplishments in 2022, beginning with what USAFB is seeing as a steady and promising recovery since COVID. Participation numbers have increased in both flag and tackle and we more leagues are adding flag and aligning with the Football Developmental Model. He was pleased to note that more girls are registering to play football, both at the youth and high school levels, acknowledging the success of the Girl’s Parallel Pathway.

In addition to the Army partnership, Hallenbeck shared additional partners coming on board in 2023 beginning with an insurance provider, whom he could not currently name as it has not been finalized, that will strengthen USAFB’s commitment to “improve the overall quality of youth football leagues and make them more sustainable”. He will share the details upon final execution of securing these important partners.

Another key partnership is with the United States Performance Center (USPC), located at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. USAFB, along with other NGBs, is partnering with this elite performance center to serve as an academy for expanding our sport development programs.

Beginning, in 2023, USPC will be the home of a majority of USA Football’s high performance and flag activities; including the IFAF American Continental Championships, USAF’s Jr. International Cup, and The One.



Hallenbeck described USPC as a one-of-a-kind sport performance facility offering best-in-class athlete training, testing and research to our current and prospective national team athletes. This partnership exponentially enhances the level of athlete supported services we can provide and brings USAFB's offering in-line with other Olympic governing bodies.

He also explained USPC will provide services in sports performance, strength and conditioning, nutrition, sports medicine and functional wellness. In 2023, USAFB will host its National Team Tryout and Training camps at USPC.

In November, USA Football announced its partnership with Hard Count Athletes (HCA) as its preferred flag football tournament partner. Hallebeck reported HCA will operate seven (7) youth/junior tournaments in 2023, all of which will be sanctioned by USAFB and feed into The One. He explained this partnership will allow us to engage teams and clubs within the competitive flag football marketplace immediately and serve as a strong foundation to build our proprietary Club Sanctioning and Club Affiliation program. He reported we are looking to sanction other third-party tournaments to grow our tournament base and noted we are setting high-standards from the start and requiring our sanctioned tournament partners to elevate the quality in which we will deliver flag tournaments in the future.

Hallenbeck shared that our partnership with Riddell was secured with another multi-year renewal.

Lastly, Hallenbeck highlighted the presentation he, along with executives from IFAF and the NFL, made to the LA28 Host Committee and the IOC regarding possible inclusion of Flag Football in the LA28 Olympics. He noted the feedback was positive and while there are no guarantees, IFAF is optimistic of our chances at this time. The IOC will likely make the decision in March, 2023, but not being officially announced until October, 2023.

As part of this effort, Hallenbeck reported that USAFB has been working with experts to learn, understand, and align our organizational policies, governance, and overall business operations to comply with all requirements of our NGB designation and in compliance with the USOPC. Currently, we are working with Wendy Guthrie with WJG Coaching and Consulting to assist the process and thus far are compliant with most of the highlighted areas.



Hallenbeck thanked Guthrie for the by-law review and introduced her to the board.

MOTION: General Chiarelli called for a vote to accept the revisions to bylaws. Elizabeth Okey moved, and Mike Golic and seconded to accept the revisions. The vote was unanimous to approve the bylaw revisions.

Next, Hallenbeck explained one of the key focus areas from the USOPC is in regards to athlete well-being, therefore a National Team athlete policy was expertly created and reviewed to ensure accountability and alignment with the USOPC. The policy contains athletes rights and responsibilities, code of conduct and whistleblower/anti-retaliation policy.

MOTION: General Chiarelli called for a vote to accept the National Team Athlete Policy and Procedures. Sheila Hamp moved, and Carl Allegretti seconded to accept the National Team Athlete Policy and Procedures. The vote was unanimous to approve.

Hallenbeck next highlighted progress made in 2022 reporting over 4,300 enrollments, a 13% increase from last year. This includes a 55% increase of flag only leagues (216 vs 139) and 90% of leagues renewing. Plus, 813 new organizations. We achieved 1,000,000 coaches certified, a major milestone for USAFB. The FDM mobile app has more than 58,000 active users, nearly doubling users per year, over the last three.

He reported this is our second year with the League Excellence Program (LEP) and we have seen a 39% increase in eligible programs. Overall, there were 177 organizations advance up one tier from the previous year.

He then highlighted our annual grant program which continues to provide assistance to youth organization with their highest expenses being uniforms, equipment insurance and technology. From January to September USAFB has awarded \$1,927,587. Grants calendar years ends December 15 and redemptions go through the end of February, 2023, and is projected to reach \$2.2 million in grants awarded over our goal of \$2,000,000.

Finally, Hallenbeck reported our NFL Club engagements are over 300. Nineteen in-person coach certification clinics were offered, certifying 1,500 coaches. Plus, 15 Blitz community events were hosted welcoming over 11,500 participants. He introduced Brittney Brothers for additional information.



Brothers reported working with several teams and mentioned hoping to engage with those serving on the board. She noted working with the Texans, Viking and Colts with a strong working relationship with the Rams, which is perfect for the LA28 Olympic games. Also, we would like to see engagement with the Big 10.

Hallenbeck thanked Brothers for all her work and for sharing the information. He then introduced our outside council, Amie Peele with Peele Law Group. He explained Peele is working with us regarding an issue with USA Flag. Peele outlined unproductive previous discussions with USA Flag and is preparing to file paperwork on behalf of USA Football.

#### **4. Finance Update.**

Hallenbeck introduced Connie Fisher, who gave an update on the 2022 financials then reviewed the 2023 proposed budget. She noted line item increases and decreases over last year and offered explanations for those. Additionally, losses in investments are reflected in the endowment. Discussion followed.

MOTION: General Chiarelli called for a vote to accept the 2023 Budget. Carl Allegretti moved, and Kelly Mehrtens seconded to accept the 2023 Budget. The vote to approve was unanimous.

#### **5. High Performance Plan.**

Eric Mayes highlighted HPP initiative for 2022. He and Hallenbeck were able to attend the Women's Tackle Work Championship in Finland and the Browns are hosting a team recognition for the US Women. Looking forward to 2023, the goal is to chart our course and create active, living documents that will evolve the game.

Mayes introduced Ian Gentile who reviewed the current process to hire a national coaching team. In addition, he explained how we want to expand services to athletes and provide a platform for athletes to collaborate when not together.

Carl Allegretti asked whether USAFB is competing with the NFL Flag initiative. Allen Sills explained the two are synergetic, not competitive with NFL Flag being more grassroots. Alexia Gallagher agreed with Sills, confirming the NFL doesn't see it as competition. Discussion continued with Dr. Karissa Niehoff sharing how the initiatives support bringing girls flag to states.



Gentile then outlined the season for our Hard Count partners, with the ultimate goal of USAFB being the sanctioning body and leader in rules and regulations including assisting those playing 7-on-7 to the 5-on-5 rules.

## **6. Brand Refresh & Social Strategy.**

Hallenbeck introduced one of the newest member of the USAFB staff, Celeste Ballou, who joined our team in October as Senior Director of Brand marketing. He noted the importance of telling our story and once people understand what we do, the light bulb goes off, encouraging more engagement.

Ballou outlined current social media strategies and noted story telling opportunities. She also reported working with a branding partner to update some of the branding. These updates are subtle and coordinate with The One branding. Updates will be introduced in 2023.

## **7. Top Line Membership.**

Curtis Peterson was introduced by Hallenbeck. Peterson provided information regarding membership for leaders, coaches and athletes. An affiliate program is being developed where organizations will be invited to be a member based on specific criteria. Kelly Mehrtens inquired about the fees and where they are in the budget and suggested they have a separate line for membership under product revenue.

## **8. Education.**

Amy Stevens was introduced by Hallenbeck. She highlighted strategies for improving the certification process through feedback received as well as community engagement. General Chiarelli asked Dr. Gerald Gioia to give an update on the health and safety modules covering hydration and concussion and the information shared with the medical advisory panel in Denver.

## **9. Adjournment.**

Chairman Chiarelli thanked all in attendance for their time and thanked Hallenbeck and USA Football staff for their hard work throughout 2022. Motion was made, seconded, and approved to adjourn the meeting at 3:58pm.