**Athlete Input Council**

**January 14, 2019 – Conference Call MINUTES**

**6:00 – 7:00 pm**

**Present**: Cole Cleworth, Danny Cox, Edward Kastern, Zachary Reetz, David Epping, Martha Hill, Lora Behr, Luke Smith, Steve Woodard, Eresi Yarney, Steve Woodard, Marquis Garner, Tom Pezzi and Jeanne Hrovat Guest: Jason Blank, SOWI Sr Director of Sports.

**Absent**: Missy Baldwin, Christiana Coakley, Jonathon Baker, David Thompson, Jake Casper, Zechariah Tietz, and Deb Moore-Gruenloh

1. Welcome and sharing. Please update us on the progress you have made on your work plan since our November meeting.
2. Cole – I’m on the Polar Plunge Committee and doing the Polar Plunge for the 5th year. I will be on TV making videos for Social Media. I’m also helping coach snow shoe and have helped the Region office with Run with the Cops and Cops Gone Wild.
3. Danny – I’m on the SOWI State LETR committee and we met in October. Danny will be calling Karina regarding the Polar Plunge.
4. Edward – Attended training in Athletes as Table officials for Basketball in November and completing practicum in Neenah this weekend.
5. Zachary Reetz - Attended training in Athletes as Table officials for Basketball in November and completing practicum in Neenah this weekend and sectional in March.
6. Martha – Martha dropped off the line, but Jeanne reported she continues to serve on the US AIC. Although she will be leaving the SOWI AIC in March at the end of her SOWI Board term, she will visit the AIC once in a while to give US AIC updates.
7. Lora – Lora has been helping coach Basketball Skills for her Agency.
8. Luke – Doing pretty good. Serving on Manitowoc AIC and raised money for fund raisers the agency offered finding sponsors for a “Running Affair”.
9. Steve – Attending the Partners in Policymaking (through the Board for People with DD) and is also working with Lisa Hassenstab on government relations. He is hoping to connect with his local Kwik Trip regarding icon sales. He is also serving as a trainer for the UWW Athlete Leadership Academy this Wednesday, January 16.
10. Eresi – Hope to host a Healthy Leadership Conference with her Agency.
11. Marquis – Tommy Jaime called Marquis tonight and hope to go on a radio show for the Polar Plunge yet this week.
12. Tom Pezzi – Will be attending UWW Athlete Leadership Academy.
13. David Epping – joined the call and Jeanne will call later.
14. Guest Jason Blank – SR Director of Sports. Jason thanked everyone for their leadership roles. Jason started running the Regional 8 events and now running both Summer Games and Outdoor Sports Tournament for SOWI. He provides supervision to some of the Regional Athletic Directors and serves on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for SOWI.
15. Overview of Gold Star Standards for Competitions
16. Jason reminded us SOWI has a five year strategic plan and read each of the four goals. Now, SOWI is working on our 2019 plan.
17. The objective regarding the Gold Star falls under the goal: improve opportunities for athletes to perform at their best.
18. Started last year and learned SOWI needed to add something about our competitions. It is new this year, but still have four years to complete.
19. Five year goal: By 2023, 75% of SOWI competitions will be “Gold Star” quality that optimizes sports offering, training schedules, athlete experiences, community engagement and revenue potential. (2020 will have 25% and add 25% each year to get to 75% by 2023).
20. 2019 goal: By December 31, 2019, develop “Gold Star” standard criteria for games and competitions and timeline to evaluate Regional, Sectional and State Competitions’ progress towards criteria. Therefore, we will come up with what the gold star standard is and then have three years to add 25% each year over the next three years so we will have 75% of competitions.
21. Goal is to be as consistent as we can across Regions and State competitions. We do a good job of running competitions, but we really want to improve all our competitions. We want to knock it up another notch.
22. Want to get an idea of what we are looking for in those competitions.
23. Everything we do, we’re working as a team – sports department as well as other departments and people who experience our events. The sports team is Troy Anderson (Reg 7), Jenna Lang (Reg 2 and Young Athletes), Erin Muehlenkamp (Reg 6) and Jen Stevens (Reg 8).
24. Define what does “gold star” mean?
25. Gather as much information as we can.
26. Initial steps
27. Look at what we currently offer at some events and offer at more events. Examples, LETR officers at all competitions, Healthy Habits at all events, enhance the way awards areas look for banners/flags. We don’t anticipate there are any bad events, but we believe we will find differences between our events.
28. Look at what other states are offering. There are 50 different states that can give us ideas. Perhaps there are things we’re not offering that we would like.
29. Talk to Special Olympics North America (SONA) – some of you may have attended to USA games and we’d like to bring some of those ideas to Wisconsin.
30. Want to get input from our Agencies – will be speaking to the Agency Management Committee that meets several times a year.
31. Then, put it all together to create a template of what we want to offer at each event and create a plan for where we will add these things starting 2020.
32. The Sports Dept. team will be meeting as a team this first quarter.
33. Brainstorm – **What things at competitions do you look forward to?**
34. Marquis – I love doing it because gives me a chance to be competitive. Sometimes we compete with other athletes and we know them by face, but not by name. Maybe at the dance we could break the ice. Station where we could have games or places to chat and break the ice. Looking for opportunities to meet other athletes outside your agency and build some friendships. Example – Family Feud, Break the Ice Games.
35. Danny – look forward to Cops (LETR) giving out awards.
36. Steve- What I really like seeing in competitions is people believing in themselves. You’re not obligated to win, you’re obligated to try. So people having good attitudes – quoted Bear Bryant. Good sportsmanship.
37. Eresi – wants to help out with bowling at Homestead – will touch base with Jason off line.
38. Edward – Opening Ceremonies is something I really look forward to. At the local level, maybe do some name recognition of athletes? Already do Agency recognition, could they also say athlete names and give individual recognition.
39. Marquis – liked the name recognition – after track if I got a fifth place could say how long we’ve been doing SO. Ex Marquis been doing track for five years and no matter how he does he enjoys being involved. Find a way to recognize our athletes as individuals at the events – can go beyond competition results – talk about we’re all hitting in the same direction. We want equality and rights and to fit into society like everyone else. We want to feel part of community.
40. Jason added- hearing with athlete recognition comes along with community involvement.
41. Marquis – we want to be part of mainstream society. SOWI bringing athletes and community together.
42. Brainstorm – same question as above plus health– **What things at competitions do you look forward to, but regarding Healthy Athletes?**
43. Marquis- likes dentist and eye doctors
44. Edward – like Healthy Athletes (HA), but could possibly add topics of Hydration (how much water we should drink) and a station about mental health. That is a big thing too.
45. Jason added that trying to increase the number of HA activities and mentioned Strong Minds.
46. Next Steps
47. Jason will give these notes to the sports committee for the Gold Star Standard
48. At the end of the year, come back to the AIC with everything we learned this year and what we implemented by the end of the year.
49. Jason said people can continue to share input via email with him. Please include that it is ideas for gold star standard. jblank@specialolympicswisconsin.org
50. Jeanne offered up idea of reunion at the Summer Games as an opportunity to hear from athlete leaders.
51. Next meeting March 16 – Madison
52. Who can attend: Yes – Cole, Danny, Edward, Zachary, Lora, Luke, Steve, Eresi, Marquis, Tom. No – Deb Moore-Gruenloh.
53. Agenda
54. Update on your plan since January
55. Update on the SG reunion – Jeanne will contact this sub-group to start planning
56. Update on SOWI Athlete Leadership web page– Tommy Jaime
57. Waisman Center Project
58. Partners in Policymaking update and Capitol Hill Days – Steve and/or Christiana
59. Next meeting adjourn at 7:00pm