

USA WATER SKI NAME CHANGE PROPOSAL Draft 8

Note: This is only a draft at this point as it is a work in progress. The final document will be sent out with the USA-WS BOD packet ten days prior to January's USA-WS BOD meeting.

PART ONE – Introduction

The USA-WS Executive Committee and Headquarter Staff propose to the USA-WS BOD that the name of the national governing body be changed from USA Water Ski to USA Water Ski & Wakeboard.

Successful organizations are dynamic and always evolving. To not adjust to the times is a recipe for eventual failure. It is time to look to the future. USA Water Ski is diverse with several disciplines. Loosely defined, all disciplines fall under the proposed name. Renaming the organization provides marketing definition and opens the organization to other elements of sponsorship it has not experienced in the past. We need to realize that those who have never been involved with the organization will pay particular attention to the name whether they are competitors, up-and-coming grassroots members or just those seeking affinity with some form of towed water sport. These individuals, who are in essence the future of this organization, do not care about what has transpired in the past. They want to feel included now. In summary, the change will provide appropriate lift in accurately portraying the organization and broadening its commercial appeal.

Here are specific reasons for this proposal:

1. more relevance within the towed water sports industry;
2. increased sponsorship opportunities
 - A. to towed water sports industry sponsors,
 - B. to wakeboard industry members specifically,
 - C. to non-endemic sponsors;
3. increased marketing potential
 - A. to affinity members,
 - B. to grassroots members,
 - C. to first-time event organizers,
 - D. to families,
 - E. to youth;
4. increased visibility
 - A. to Web site search engines;
5. more affinity with the international governing body;
6. a better descriptor of what we are and whom we represent
 - A. as the NGB of wakeboard in the USA;
7. increased wakeboard membership
 - A. through an increased sense of inclusion.

The disadvantages are:

1. cost,
2. labor,
3. the fact that some SDs may not feel that the new name is all inclusive, i.e., that it represents all nine SDs.

PART TWO – United States Ski & Snowboard Association (USSA) Input

Steve Locke and Jim Grew received the comments below from Bill Marolt, executive director of this NGB. This NGB is comparable with ours in many ways, and its name was changed to make the NGB more inclusive so that snowboarders would feel as if they were part of the group. The snowboarders, not unlike our riders, were adamant about not being called “skiers” and refused to consider themselves “skiers,” a question of identity and culture. Like our many disciplines, the ski side of USSA includes many different divisions, i.e., five downhill events, two cross country events, moguls, aerials, ski cross, jumping, etc., involving very different equipment and training, yet they are all comfortable being called skiers. Not so the snowboarders. Not so our riders.

Bill writes: “Skiers and snowboarders have different demographics and we do have success target marketing to each group. Corporate America is marketing to the younger set so we have seen good opportunities with our US Snowboard approach. In summary the changes have been positively received by our membership and there have been some marketing opportunities as well.”

PART THREE – USA-WS Athletes Advisory Committee (AAC) Input

When asked the question, the thirteen voting members of the AAC (10 AWSA, 1 each from AKA, WSDA, NCWSA & NSSA) voted as follows: Brenda Baldwin (AWSA), Rhoni Barton Bischoff (AWSA), Cale Burdick (NCWSA), Scot Ellis (AWSA), Brandi Hunt (AWSA), Freddy Krueger (AWSA), Alex Lauretano (AWSA), Roger Olson (NSSA), Joe Ray (WSDA), Billy Susi (AWSA) and Karen Truelove (AWSA), totaling eleven, voted in favor with these comments, each from a different respondent:

1. For business purposes it makes sense. Also, remember that IWSF just changed its name to IWWF.
2. I agree with the reasoning in the proposal and therefore support the name change.
3. I am in full support of the name change. One of the biggest benefits for me is the promotion of the grassroots events.
4. I am in support of the name change. It will provide wakeboarders with a sense of inclusion.
5. I think that from a marketing standpoint it is way better. That was the main factor in voting for the change. Any time you can be more streamlined it will help.
6. In a nutshell, if you need my vote to change the name you have it, but there's lots more broken here than the fact that we are just missing a word out of our title and on the cover of our magazine.

Chris Rossi and John C. Haile voted NO with the following comments:

1. If we want to bring in more sponsorship money, we need to be taking actions within the disciplines, not just changing our name. We lose our identity with each of these moves and I do not think the change alone will make any difference to the \$ coming in. The day that we

have a plan to expand our Wake division and to actively attack that market, then a name change seems logical.

2. And when I look at the name USA Waterski and Wakeboard, I feel as though my discipline is left out because it's not the same size as the larger disciplines. I respect the idea, but I feel like it involuntarily plays favorites. Let's not ignore the smaller disciplines.

One has not voted yet.

PART FOUR – Input from IWWF Federations that changed their names.

At the request of the EC, a questionnaire was written and sent out in April by the IWWF main office to the nine federations who had changed their names. Eight responded (the year the change was made) **NED** (2005), **CAN**(2004), **SIN**(2002), **KOR**(1/2009), **GER**(2006), **SWE**(2008); **AUS**(2004); **SUI**(2002). Here is the feedback received:

1. When asked if the change affected membership numbers positively, three said YES, one said MINIMALLY, one said that it was too early to tell and three said NO.
2. When asked if sponsorship had increased, two said YES, one said NO, BUT HAD THE POTENTIAL, one said it was too early to tell, and four said NO.
3. When asked if the name change made it easier to promote membership/competition entries, five said YES, one said that it was too early to tell, and two said NO.
4. When asked if the image of the federation had improved, five said YES, three said NO.

Additional comments from three different federations:

1. For us, the consequences of not changing the name would have been very negative. If we were to continue to promote and develop wakeboarding, our name and logo needed to be more inclusive. Right or wrong, our wakeboard membership felt increasingly excluded. Take note, however, that a name change alone does not make an organization more representative of its membership – many other structural, communication and organization 'culture' changes also need to be examined.
2. Sponsors who were/are keen on supporting wakeboard events have turned to our Federation first because of the inclusion of "wakeboard" in our name. There has been very little confusion as to who is the national governing body of wakeboarding since our name change and we are glad that we did it early.
3. The rationale presented for the name change was that water skiing events include the three-event (jump, tricks and slalom) water skiers, barefoot water skiers, water skiers with a disability, marathon water skiers and cable water skiers. Wakeboarders do not consider themselves water skiers.

The International Water Ski Federation changed its name to the International Waterski & Wakeboard Federation in August of 2009. France and Italy then announced plans to follow suit.

PART FIVE – Administration

Although we can change the name of USA Water Ski as a non-profit corporation to USA Water Ski & Wakeboard either by a complete name change or by using a Doing Business As (DBA), the process and result are similar. Both would effectively change our marketing name and the name by

which others know the organization. There do not seem to be any cost or other advantages (reduced legal documentation) to doing a DBA. Administratively, the following would be needed:

Legal: USA Water Ski is incorporated in New Jersey and recognized in Florida as a Foreign Corporation incorporated in New Jersey and doing business in Florida. In order to accomplish a name change, we would need to submit certificates of amendments to both states and register the new name with the IRS. In New Jersey, a \$50 processing fee and completion of the necessary documentation are required. In Florida, an amendment must be submitted with a charge of \$52.50, plus some additional ones for registering the new name. The total would be in the range of \$200-\$300. As for the IRS, certain forms would have to be filled out.

Electronic, printed collateral material and awards: The USA Water Ski name and logo are liberally used on material printed and electronically viewed. Through software, the online and other electronically stored documents can be cleansed of the old name and the new name inserted. Logo application would need to be manually manipulated. All existing printed collateral material can be used until exhausted and new material with the new logo and name is printed. The casting mold for our nationals' awards would need modification at the cost of \$300.

Web site: A Web site domain name would be needed. Just in case, USA Water Ski is in the process of obtaining USA Water Ski and Wakeboard domains for both .org and .com addresses.

Magazine: It stands to reason that the organization's publication (The Water Skier) would need a name change. Scott has been asked to explore names.

Logo: The current logo would need to be modified or a new logo developed. Branding is a significant consideration. The current USA Water Ski logo is widely known; and a new logo would require reintroduction into the marketplace of a new branding of USA Water Ski's established organization. Furthermore, in logo restructure or recreation, many factors of anticipated use come into play. For instance, use on clothing, printed and electronic collateral, pins, and so on. Lynn is working on options. A certain investment will be necessary. One possibility is to retain the actual logo, which represents any and all towed water sports, and add the name of "wakeboard" or "wakeboarding" underneath that of "water ski" or "water skiing".

PART SIX – Conclusion

It is important to realize that a name change is only the first step. USA-WS will not be able to just sit back and wait to see what happens because little will. USA-WS will have to formulate a strategy on how to use the name change to attract a different type of sponsorship and grow membership. Indeed, our National Governing Body will need to actively promote the name change and rebrand the organization to some degree which can be done without negatively impacting what is already in place.