

**2007 AWSA Membership Meeting
Doubletree Hotel – Bakersfield, CA
August 16, 2007**

Call to Order: President Jim Grew called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

Introduction of the Board of Directors & HQ staff

Doug Robbins (E), Jerry Bautsch (SC), T Caldwell (SC), Jeff Surdej (MW), Dean Chappell (MW), Dave Clark (MW), Jeff Clark (S), Barry Young (W), Mike Hayes (W), TC Boice (W), Gaile Heieck (W) and Secretary Janet Piercy. From HQ: Traci Baylon, Melanie Hanson, Amanda Willson and Brandon Wolf.

It was noted that we had several Board members absent. It is up to the members to communicate to the Directors that they need to be at this meeting.

06 Membership Meeting Action Items

Jim gave a summary of the action items from last year's meeting, one of which was the way we score overall. In the recent past, we came to Regionals and Nationals, and the scoring system was different than what had been used throughout the year. The Board was asked to implement a single system for all tournaments. An Overall Task Force was formed last fall; and, through a lot of hard work and many emails (co-chaired by Jeff Surdej & Dave Clark), the group came up with the system we use today, known as SNOBS. It was felt that, although it may have a few flaws, it is far better and fairer than what we had. The Rules Committee will be reviewing this system at the request of the Board this fall and work on eliminating any problems that may have surfaced.

The second item coming out of last year's membership meeting was the Harris directory. It was looked into. Harris didn't make any money nor did USA Water Ski. But it was not a loss. It was basically a failed experiment.

Carol Boice moved to approve last year's minutes, 2nd by Richard Williams, motion passed.

HQ & Search Committee Update

Jim Grew gave a short review of what is happening at HQ. With Andy Jugan resigning in April, a Search Committee was formed, chaired by Don Bucher. The committee whittled eight to ten phone interviewed candidates down to three for face to face interviews at HQ, one of whom dropped out at the last minute. Of the two remaining, the Search Committee chose to accept one and only the one, with no second choice. The candidate had another job on the table, and the committee gave him two weeks to reply. He answered within the two weeks and declined our offer although he actually went with a third opportunity. The result was that USA-WS had to start the process all over again, now underway even despite the busyness of the National Championships season. There have been over 50 resumes from the various job advertisements used by HQ. Don Bucher opted not to chair this time, but will serve on the committee along with Marc Crone, Dan Levine and Mike Hanson, NSSA President and now the chair. Another AWSA director is expected to be added soon as well as an athlete who may only join in during the HQ interviews. The plan is to conduct these interviews by the end of September if at all possible. Jim has met with the HQ directors weekly since early April, occasionally including the midlevel managers and monthly with the full staff when possible, to keep the lines of communication going and continue the planning for 2008 and beyond. Unfortunately, HQ has lost three key mid-level personnel in the last month.

Andrea Plough wanted to know why the committee turned down the second candidate. Jim replied that the committee did so because its members felt that the candidate wasn't the right person for the job and did not want to settle for second best.

Board Meeting Highlights

Jim said that it basically was a quiet meeting, ending at 2:00 PM (with a 2 ½ hour long athlete's appeal of a denied National record at the start). There were several minor issues that will come out in the Board minutes that will be emailed out by the Regional EVPs and committee chairs to all council and committee members and hopefully further. The same officers were re-elected: COB - Jeff Smith, President – Jim Grew, Vice President - Don Bucher, Treasurer – Tom Danford and Secretary – Janet Piercy. There was a request for Bylaws to look at whether our AWSA BOD and committee meetings may be opened to the membership. The Board also spent quite a bit of time discussing our National championships:

- (1) Is our *overall scoring system* the way we want it (Rules)?
- (2) Under what *classification* should events be run (Exec. Co.)?

(3) How do we avoid in the future at our *National Championships* the major problem we had at this event with the hotel selection for the appointed officials and other issues that seem to surface each year?

A committee has been formed with the 5 EVPs along with several National chiefs past and present, the Tech Co co-chairs and others chaired by SR EVP Carey Zimlich. They will be putting together a revised contract for the 08 Nationals which will delineate more clearly and with more detail the responsibilities of the LOC and HQ. This revised contract is to be submitted by **September 15th** to Jim Grew. The new contract will then be sent to all clubs who have expressed an interest in hosting the 2008 Nationals by that time as the bidding process was opened up again until September 15th. Those clubs who agree in principal to the new contract will have their bids reviewed by the Board by email ballot by November 1st at the latest. The AWSA BOD essentially is reopening the bidding process and preceding directly to the contract itself because of the time issue. The second task of this Nationals task force will be to finalize an RFP (Request for Proposal) for future National Championships so that we avoid the problems we witness from year to year.

It will be sent out by **October 15th** to all clubs who have three lake sites and others who express an interest. These RFPs must be returned to HQ by **January 15th**. In essence, the RFP will outline what we need and the bidder will present what can be offered by the LOC.

Questions and Comments from the Floor

1. **Overall Scoring:** Richard Williams complimented Dave Clark, Jeff Surdej and all who worked on developing the *SNOPS overall*. He would like to see it stay where it is right now, at least for another year, to truly see what works and what does not. He also thanked the Board for listening to what we had to say last year. He presented, as an example, Girls 2 at this year's Nationals in which the skiers had to ski well in all three events to win the overall. The only complaints he had heard were from those skiers who dominate in one event. **Rules** will be reviewing the Overall scoring system as per the Board's request.

2. **Officials Qualification:** Larry Goodwin said that an official needs three Regionals and/or Nationals, i.e., three seasons of work, to become a Senior Judge or Scorer. He thinks that attending a Regionals and a National tournament in the same year teaches one what one needs to learn and should count as two of those three (**Judges & Scorers**).

3. **Men 7 Max. Slalom Speed :** Stan Switzer was wondering if Rules was going to recommend lowering the Men 7 max. slalom speed. He thought that M7 could handle their current max. speed and urged the **Rules Committee** to canvass the skiers before lowering the speed.

4. **Senior Women Age Division Max. Slalom Speeds:** Richelle Matli (out of West Membership Meeting) asked if a Woman 5 skier could ski 34 mph instead of the current 32 mph or be able to ski with the Women 4 group. The problem unfortunately is multi-faceted. The W4 may not want a former top W4 back down with them again. Other suggestions surfaced (**Rules**):

- a. Changing divisions should not be mandatory.
- b. Allowing the skier to compete at the higher max. speed and getting the buoy count at that speed rather than at the lower division max. speed which is currently the practice.
- c. Making all senior age division the age and above, i.e., 35 and older, 45 and older, the way it is done in Canada and along the lines of our philosophy with the juniors, as in 9 and under, 13 and under and 17 and under.
- d. Creating a Masters Women event like MM slalom.

Dave Clark commented that it is important to get one's ideas to the Rules Committee with the necessary detail and even the rationale behind the recommendation.

5. **Declining Officials' Numbers:** Richard Williams was concerned about the lack of up and coming officials and the dwindling number of officials now evident. Does the Board have a strategy on how to maintain and keep the officials that we have? Jim replied that the **Judges & Scorers Committee** has been working on this problem for a number of years. In the recent past, there have never been so many short cuts to maintaining and advancing. It is important that those assisting officials review the Judges' & Scorers' Policy Manual where all these possibilities are outlined. We as a group need to do all we can to recruit, such as simply handing out Assistant forms to those in attendance and willing to work. Gaile Heieck mentioned that, at their collegiate tournaments, there is a strong push for getting help. We need to take aspiring and possibly aspiring officials by the hand, help them in the process and show them what needs to be done. Each one of us needs to find one person and get that person involved.

6. **Record Tournament Weighting:** Mike Hayes would like to see weighting of record tournaments. There has been much discussion but no action. Several committees have addressed this topic but have not come up with a

satisfactory solution. We will send the issue back to committee to look at again. What about counting record tournament scores twice for example? Jeff Surdej cautioned that a skier would not want to have a bad score counted twice. If that problem could be solved, we could move forward. Doug Robbins wanted further study and asked for input from people interested in weighting. Stan Switzer was concerned that there would be fewer record events and our sport would suffer for it. We must find a way to make record events more important than just for setting records. Mike Hayes mentioned that, with the changing to three slalom scores from five, we have helped to resolve the case of 'bad water' situations. Jerry Woodard believed that it is not fair to count C and record event scores the same. Doug Robbins commented that the reason the ranking list was put in place was to get skiers to participate in at least three tournaments. Consequently, he was concerned that, by doubling the record tournament scores, it might not lead to more participation. T. Caldwell mentioned that they were going to continue to put on record events in his area. Richard Williams commented that the only difference between C and record events is that higher ranked officials and a camera at the end of the lake are required. He further added that participation would not increase, because the penalty for not skiing more events is not enough to offset a bad score. If we have weighting, we need to have a significant penalty. If scores count twice, a skier need only compete in Regionals and Nationals, and he has all his scores. It will not help the participation concept. A straw vote was taken on the weighting of record events with 26 in favor and four opposed. All are encouraged to send their comments and specific suggestions to **Laura Johnson, Chair of Seeding**.

7. **Membership Meeting Attendance:** There was concern that our younger AWSA members do not attend this meeting. Jeff Clark pointed out how many 20 year veterans were in the room and that we were not motivating our youth to attend this meeting or getting them involved to help at tournaments. This is something that a committee can't do, but we can and must do ourselves. It was pointed out that more advertising of this meeting should be done at the site. Let's have announcers repeating it hourly and more signage around site (**President/HQ**).

8. **08 Nationals Date:** John Goodman was concerned about when the Nationals would be held. Will it be during the 2nd or 3rd week of August or the 1st, which happened to us in West Palm Beach? He can't wait until the end of November or December because he is trying to get his area tournament scheduling done now. Rules mandate that the tournament take place during the 2nd or 3rd week of August. This year's was during the 2nd full week. **Jim** promised to past that request along, but could provide no guarantees. The process approved by the Board must follow its course.

Thanks and Concluding Remarks

Jim asked for more comments or concerns. There being none, he thanked Headquarters for its help; particularly those in attendance - Amanda Willson, Brandon Wolf, Melanie Hanson and Traci Baylon who were applauded enthusiastically. He also mentioned that, if one has never worked at HQ, one could not fathom the amount of hard work and energy they put into doing their jobs.

You may hear: "Oh, AWSA is dying. HQ doesn't know what they are doing, etc., etc." Forty years ago, there wasn't a fifth of what we have now in terms of recreational activity both indoors and outdoors. In fact, water skiing is competing with so much more activity, both recreational and competitive, family oriented or otherwise, before our increasingly obese youth even gets out of the house, activities that did not even exist just twenty or thirty years ago. After all, household computers were not readily used back then whereas now they have become almost a full on sporting activity, esp. with Nintendo's latest game. Look at the positive: There are more ways/shortcuts now than ever to become an official; and HQ, along with our committees, is doing much to aid and assist in getting and keeping these officials. Yes, more can be done and the committees involved are always trying to improve their programs. Also, programs, such as those offered by our Junior Development Co., have had much success in encouraging our younger athletes as well as similar programs in the regions. Look how many three generations families we see participating here, the Troegers, the Gays, the Hortons, etc., as well as at our world class and national level skiers who are bringing their kids into the sport, e.g., the Montavons, the Baldwins, the Pickos, the Gays, the McCormicks, the Greenwoods, the Van Treeces.

He thanked those attending for coming to the meeting and advised them to heed Jeff Clark's advice that "it is up to us to prepare and provide for the next generation."

He then asked for a motion to adjourn. Dean Chappell moved to adjourn with Carole Boice's 2nd. We adjourned at 8:00PM.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Piercy, Secretary