

GREAT LAKES SECTION
UNITED STATES FENCING ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER
JUNE, 2011

Editor's Note: Division Officers are requested to e-mail updates 2010-2011 fencing event schedules to the GLS webmaster, Doug Bliss, at dbliss@columbus.rr.com as soon as possible for inclusion on the Great Lakes Section Schedule which appears on the GLS website, www.columbusfencing.org/gls/index.html. And Sectional Circuit Event organizers must communicate results to the Section Secretary.

GREAT LAKES SECTION OFFICERS

Dr. Joseph S. Streb, Chairman, Columbus, Ohio, streblaw@sbcglobal.net

Patrick Kelly, Vice-Chair, Louisville, Kentucky

Secretary, Peter McOwen, Dayton, Ohio

Jaison Laker, Treasurer, Ft. Wayne, Indiana

THIS ISSUE CONTAINS: Proposed Elimination of Sections by USFA; Future of the GLS; Location of GLS Championships and Related Information; Future of Sectional Circuit Events; Other Sectional Issues; and Minutes of 2011 GLS Executive Committee Meeting at Ann Arbor, Michigan.

USFA ELIMINATES DIVISION IA QUALIFYING THROUGH SECTIONS

In an action believed by many to be the death knell for Sections, during the second week of April, 2011, during a teleconference meeting, the USFA Board eliminated the qualification path through the Sectional Championships for the Div.IA National Championships. This, of course, also eliminates the sole remaining reason for the existence of Sections, from the viewpoint of USFA. USFA eliminated the U19 qualifying path through Sections last year.

As many GLS members know, the USFA Executive Committee, current Executive Director, Greg Dilworth, and general legal counsel, Donald Alperstein, have long favored eliminating Sections and Divisions because they are viewed as an administrative nuisance made more irritating by revenue sharing rules (rules based upon the past belief that sharing membership dues revenue with Sections and Divisions encouraged membership growth). The attempt to eliminate Sections and Divisions outright during the last round of amendments to the USFA Bylaws during 2010 produced considerable outrage among USFA members from places where Sections and Divisions function well. Hence, USFA backed away from a direct elimination of Sections and Divisions and set about a more stealthy plan to eliminate their functions, so as to be able to eliminate them by attrition.

In any event, it is expected the USFA Board Of Directors will be asked to, and will, formally eliminate Sections, either at the 2011 Annual Meeting in Reno, NV, or at the fall Board meeting. Should this happen, of course, the GLS Treasurer, by duly authorized resolution of the GLS Executive Committee has been authorized the directed to immediately disburse all GLS funds equally among the member Divisions. It is believed that Divisions will remain in place, at least for some period of time, after the elimination of Sections.

WHAT ABOUT THE 2011 GLS CHAMPIONSHIP?

In light of the possible elimination of Sections at the upcoming July meeting of the USFA Board Of Directors, what should be done about the 2011 GLS Championship and beyond?

Patrick Kelly, head of the organizing committed for the 2011 GLS Championship, has expressed the desire to continue the GLS Championship, regardless of what USFA does or does not do with respect to Sections. Hence, there are no plans to eliminate the 2011 GLS Championship set for Kentucky. However, obviously, the formal elimination of the GLS as an administrative body of USFA will have repercussions. Mainly, the little revenue received by the GLS from USFA will disappear. Hence, there will be even more responsibility on sponsoring Divisions than previously. In fact, the GLS Championship will be almost entirely a Division undertaking.

WHAT ABOUT FUTURE GLS CHAMPIONSHIPS?

Whether there will be future GLS Championships depends upon what the GLS members desire for the future. At present, the GLS is an unincorporated association sanctioned as an administrative subdivision of USFA. There is certainly no legal impediment to the GLS continuing as an unsanctioned unincorporated association. The big problem will be lack of funding. Nevertheless, fencing is and always has been largely supported by volunteers, so the GLS certainly could continue. The same thing applies to Divisions, should USFA attempt to eliminate Divisions too. In fact, some Divisions, such as, the Columbus Division, are already stand alone non-profit corporations. As to the argument advance by some USFA officers, such as, newly elected Board member, Lawrence Schiller, that USFA owns the money given to Sections and Divisions over the years, this most likely false. As expressed to Ms. Kalle Weeks, USFA President, on August 4, 2010: "Under the corporate laws of Colorado, and most states, corporate bylaws represent a contract between the members and the corporation. See, *Model Land & Irrigation Co. v. Madsen*, 87 Colo. 166, 168, 285 P. 1100, 1101 (1930). This, of course, is *a fortiori* true where Sections and Divisions have independent legal status. Further, of course, if Sections or Divisions raised funds independent of any sharing of membership dues, such funds would not belong to

USFA. While there may be some exceptions to this legal position based upon special relationships between some Sections and Divisions and USFA, we believe it to be the general rule.” Hence, any funds received pursuant to the revenue sharing Bylaws or resolutions of USFA belong to the recipients, not to USFA. Of course, USFA is free to modify those Bylaws or resolutions in the future, and this will most likely occur.

WHAT IS THE BETTER THING THAT USFA MANAGEMENT ENVISIONS?

USFA management envisions a world where it is king of the hill with respect to all national fencing; yet where it does not have to bear the burdens or administration of conducting qualifying events. In fact, this is already happening. The Div.IA qualifying path is now strictly through the ROC process. ROC events require little or no effort by USFA, but USFA collects a head tax on the participants. Typically, the top 8 placers qualify for the Div. IA Summer Nationals. Despite being qualifying events, ROC’s remain largely locally organized events. Even with the advent of computerized tournament management software and AskFred (a service USFA never approved), the administration and refereeing at ROC events remains uneven, and it is likely to get worse as these events become larger. ROC organizers cannot afford to pay travel and per diem expenses for enough high quality officials. In other words, you might pay big to be upset in pool bouting by the bad calls of Uncle Duffus, the local club owner/referee/friend.

What this represents is the replacement of one form of administration with another. Instead of administration of qualifying events at the geographic level, USFA has instituted more committees, like the ROC Committee and SYC Committee. Hence, only people friendly to USFA management will be involved. The USFA President appoints virtually all committee members.

According to USFA managers, USFA does not want to be involved in sorting out qualification disputes that occur in Sections and Divisions. USFA management believes that clubs should operate qualifying events and the market can just sort out which clubs run the best events. Apparently, USFA management believes that disputes are less likely among clubs than within Divisions. Unlikely, this writer believes. USFA is simply replacing one group of volunteers with another. Of course, this is one way to feel powerful. Make some changes, necessary or not.

WHAT ABOUT FUTURE GLS SECTIONAL CIRCUIT EVENTS?

In light of the recent USFA action and potential formal elimination of the GLS as an administrative subdivision of USFA, the question arises of what to do about the GLS Sectional Circuit Events. As you will note from the attached Minutes, the Schedule of

Sectional Circuit Events was set for the 2011-2012 fencing season, as usual. The general informal consensus in Ann Arbor was to attempt to continue the Sectional Circuit Events and keep track of points and give awards, just as we have done in the past.

Of course, it may or may not be the will of the current GLS members to do this. The burden falls on the Divisions. On the other hand, most designated Sectional Circuit Events are events traditionally held by host Divisions, regardless. As a result, there is probably no reason to change anything at this point in time.

Moving forward, some GLS member have expressed the desire to limit Sectional Circuit Events to about three large events per season to be held at the more centrally located cities. Any member thoughts on these matters will certainly be considered. Perhaps the matter should be dealt with formally at the 2011 Great Lakes Section Championship that Mr. Kelly has assured us will take place, regardless of what USFA does or does not do with respect to Sections. Hurray.

MINUTES OF 2011 MEETING GLS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Attached hereto please find a copy of the Minutes of the 2011 Meeting of the Great Lakes Section Executive Committed held on April 2, 2011 at Ann Arbor, Michigan.

--See attached Minutes--

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
GREAT LAKES SECTION, USFA, INC.

APRIL 2, 2011

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the GREAT LAKES SECTION, USFA was held, pursuant to the notice given in accordance with the By-laws, at 7:00 o'clock P.M. at the site of the 2011 Sectional Championships on the above-captioned date.

JOSEPH S. STREB, acted as chairman of the meeting, and JAISON LAKER acted as secretary. The meeting was called to order by the chairman.

ROLL: A roll of persons present was taken by the secretary, and it was reported that the following members of the Executive Committee and Officers entitled to vote were present at the meeting and, pursuant to Article VI(A) of the Bylaws, a quorum did exist:'

Voting Members of Executive Committee:

Chairman, Joseph S. Streb (Columbus), streblaw@sbcglobal.net
Patrick Webster (Michigan), patrick_a_webster@hotmail.com
Jaison Laker (Indiana), jjlaker@aol.com
Peter McOwen (SW Ohio), mcowen.z@wright.com
Patrick Kelly (Kentucky), usfakydiv@insightbb.com
Andy Tulleners (N. Ohio), catulleners@hotmail.com
Andrew McDonald (S.W. Ohio), acmcdonald10@yahoo.com
Sterling Streb (Columbus Div.), , streblaw@sbcglobal.net

Interested Members of GLS:

Tom Evangelisti (Michigan Div.), tomevangelisti@aol.com
Amy Webster (Michigan Div.), fencing@aswebster.com

READING OF MINUTES: The minutes of the prior meeting of April 17, 2010 were unanimously approved.

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

Chairman -- Mr. Streb reported that despite the survival of the Section for the 2010-2011 season, he still believes that USFA will eventually eliminate Sections, and possibly Divisions. Otherwise, USFA continues to be dominated by its Executive Committee, and with elimination of geographic representation from the new Board Of Directors, nothing is likely to change. With respect to USFA's financial condition, it is reported to be getting better; however, due to the lack of audited financial statements and coherent financial reporting, there is no way to know for sure.

Secretary – Mr. McOwen had no report.

Treasurer – Mr. Laker reported that the Section bank account contains \$2400.00.

Vice Chairman -- Mr. Webster had no report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: There were no committee with reports.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

(1). **AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS:** The following resolution regarding the GLS Bylaws was made, seconded, and unanimously passed:

BE IT RESOLVED, that Article V of the Bylaws is hereby amended to eliminate reference to Congressional Representatives, in light of the elimination of the USFA Congress in the most recent USFA amended Bylaws, passed in July of 2010.

(2). **LOCATION OF 2011 GLS CHAMPIONSHIPS:** The following resolution regarding location of the 2011 GLS Championship was made, seconded, and unanimously passed:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2011 Great Lakes Section Championship shall be held by the Kentucky Division at time and location to be determined.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that pursuant to tradition, the Kentucky Division appoints its chairman, Patrick Kelly, to be responsible for organizing the 2011 GLS Championship, and he shall also function as Vice-Chairman of the GLS for the next year.

(3). **TIMES OF SECTIONAL CIRCUIT EVENTS:** The following resolution regarding the time of the Sectional Circuit Events was made, seconded, and unanimously passed:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the following schedule shall be used for Great Lakes Section Circuit Events for the 2011-2012 fencing season:

August	N/A
September	Northern Ohio Division (may be deferred to Sectional)
October	Michigan Division
November	Kentucky Division
December-January	Columbus, Ohio Division
February	Indiana Division
March	Southwest Ohio Division
April	Sectional in Kentucky Division
May	Sectional, optional

Note: Results must be reported to the GLS Secretary as soon as possible after each Circuit Event in order for points to be tabulated.

(4). CONTINGENCY MATTERS: The following resolution, passed at the 2010 meeting, was ratified:

Whereas, the United States Fencing Association (“USFA”) may in the relative near future take actions deemed by the Executive Committee of the Great Lakes Section (“GLS”) to be detrimental to the sport of fencing in the Great Lakes Section; and;

Whereas, the Executive Committee of the GLS seeks to foster and promote the sport of fencing in the relevant geographical area;

Now therefore, the funds of the Great Lakes Section in the hands of the GLS Treasurer, which are deemed to belong solely to the GLS under past and current rules and regulations, and as a result of efforts of the GLS, shall be distributed equally to the Divisions comprising the Great Lakes Section or such similar organizations, concurrently with the passage of any bylaw, rule, or resolution by USFA calling for the disenfranchisement, dissolution, or termination of the Great Lakes Section of USFA.

(5). ELECTIONS: The following officer were either unanimously appointed or duly elected to the following positions:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Officers of the Great Lakes Section for the next year are:

Chairman, Joseph S. Streb (Columbus Division)
Vice-Chairman, Patrick Kelly (Kentucky Division)
Secretary, Peter McOwens (SW Ohio Division)
Treasurer, Jaison Laker (Indiana Division)

MISCELLANEOUS:

(1). The next meeting of the GLS Executive Committee was set for the end of the first day of competition of the 2011 GLS Championships.

ADJOURNMENT: Upon motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned by the Chairman.

Secretary,

Chairman, Joseph S. Streb

--End--