Niagara Association Executive Board Meeting

August 18th, 2025

The following members of the Executive Committee were in attendance: Don Lawrence, Eric Boyce. Mike Nier, Jacky Mendes, Matt Merrill, Jim Glinsky, Sharon Gruttadauro, Kathy McLymond, Lexi Lindamer, Danielle Anderson and Kelsey Ryan. Guest attendee was Sonja Robinson.

The USATF Niagara Association meeting covered administrative matters including email corrections, membership growth, and financial updates, with the treasurer reporting the Association reached $100,000 in their account for the first time. Committee reports highlighted recent and upcoming events, including successful LDR championships, youth programs, race walking competitions, and the Junior Olympics National meet in Savannah. The group discussed future opportunities including a sponsorship proposal with different levels to enhance athlete experiences, potential hosting of the 2028 US Masters Championship, and plans for youth cross country events in the fall.

President's update:

The group discussed email address issues, with Don Lawrence noting they received an incorrect email for Jim. He confirmed his correct address is membership@niagara.usatf.org.

Danielle Anderson reported that a document is almost ready but needs some membership data including growth numbers, event participation, youth programs, national qualifiers, volunteer information, and sanctioned events. Don acknowledges this is substantial information but wants to distribute something at next Sunday's meeting with the possibility of revisions later.

The meeting began with a quorum of eight people. Lexi Lindamer joining after practice and Rozanne Redlinski was absent due to internet issues. The group bypassed reviewing last month's minutes since available. President Don Lawrence begins the report by mentioning ongoing drama with the USATF National Junior Olympics that has disappointed many stakeholders.

Senior Games and Championship Updates

The USATF officials share their experiences from the National Senior Games in Ames, Iowa, and announce the upcoming Huntsman World Senior Games in St. George, Utah, where new officials are encouraged to apply. Danielle Anderson reported she's nearly completed a sponsorship proposal document with different sponsorship levels to help enhance athlete experiences in the Niagara Association. Eric Boyce discussed the success of recent LDR

championship events, including the inaugural Queen City Mile which doubled its participation from the previous year with 90 Niagara finishers, and the Mountain championships at Swain with 54 members participating. Eric noted that 35% of adult membership has participated in LDR championships this year.

Youth Athletes in Diverse Running Events

The discussion highlighted the versatility of athletes who participate in various running events outside their comfort zones, with examples like Joey Whalen and Scott Lafour. Eric mentioned a 12-year-old youth runner named Shawnee Miner who impressively completed the Swain race in 68 minutes when winners finished in an hour. Sonja shared information about Youth mountain trail camps run by Joe Gray in Colorado and Max King in Oregon. She noted that World Athletics is trying to get cross country into the Winter Olympics to increase African participation. She also complimented Eric on organizing a road mile event that Michael Branningan found smooth and easy despite having sharp turns.

USATF Financial and Event Updates

Eric acknowledges that John and Amy McMahon deserve credit for the race, with Don Lawrence noted it was a great night. Lexi reported on her experience at the Junior Olympic National meet in Savannah, where the reunification process for younger athletes went smoothly, with children being matched with their coaches or parents who had special wristbands. Jacky presented the treasurer's report, highlighting that the association has reached $100,000 in their account for the first time. Revenue tracked well compared to 2023 despite changes in membership registration allocations. Matt Merrill mentioned preparations for indoor events in January and a potential partnership with Adirondack Association. Don discussed plans for three youth cross country events in the fall. Jim Glinsky reported that membership has increased slightly for the month and is substantially ahead year over last year.

Club Growth and Membership

Jim reported that membership is growing with many new clubs joining this year. He explained that he personally mentors new clubs by working directly with each individual, guiding them through the specific requirements like safe sport certification and background checks before applying for club membership. Don emphasized the importance of getting youth members on board. Verifying birth certificates promptly to avoid last-minute issues, and mentions that sanctioning events has become a significant revenue stream for the association that they plan to expand next year.

Race Walking Update

The conversation then shifts to race walking, with Sharon provided updates on recent competitions including her son AJ Guerrero's 5th place finish at US Nationals and the NACAC

event in the Bahamas where three US race walkers competed in challenging conditions. Sharon also mentioned that local cross country practices are starting soon, with Brockport typically beginning just before Labor Day weekend.

2028 Masters Championship Location Discussion

Don discussed potentially hosting the 2028 US Masters Championship in either Cortland or Rockport, with Robert Thomas (Masters Chair) indicating they could earn $100,000. The group debates logistics, with Sonja raising concerns about travel accessibility for out-of-state participants and potential conflicts with the 2028 Olympics. Matt notes that the event will already be in the northeast (Geneva, Ohio) next year, and the group agreed to form a task force to explore the opportunity further before making any decisions.

The meeting concluded with reminders about the upcoming annual meeting next Sunday at 11 o'clock and mentioned of several upcoming races including the Oak Tree 5K on August 31st and the Buffalo Turkey Trot which is receiving a Hall of Fame award.