Niagara Association
Executive Committee Meeting
January 19,2026

The January meeting of the USATF Niagara Association's Executive Committee was called to order by Don Lawrence at 8:04 pm. The following EC members were in attendance: Don Lawrence, Rozanne Redlinski, Kathy McLymond, Terry Eason, Danielle Anderson, Mike Nier, Eric Boyce, Matt Merrill, Lexi Lindamer, Sonja Robinson, Jim Glinsky and Sharon Gruttadauro.

Minutes:

Rozanne mentioned receiving corrections from Sonya for the minutes, which she then redistributed to the group. Mike pointed out that the Niagara Mile Championship was missing from the list of LDR races, and Don clarified that it was the Queen City Mile on August 15th in Buffalo. Don suggested that any changes to the race list should be discussed with Eric, who would then inform Rozanne.

Budget:

Don shared that the budget is being shared with committee members during the budget zoom call. He also discussed the recent recognition of past presidents Russ Ebbets and Bill Quinlisk, highlighting the tribute to Russ's wife and a tribute to Bill by Matt Merrill. Don emphasized the importance of using surplus funds to enhance member services, such as providing medals and supporting elite timing companies, rather than focusing solely on savings. The conversation ended with a brief mention of the need to discuss the budgets further. Jacky Mendes was not able to attend this meeting due to a schedule conflict.

Track and Field Achievements Update:

Don Lawrence and Eric Boyce shared updates about world records and notable performances, including Michelle Roll's achievements in the race walk and Elli Orie's qualification for the marathon trials. The participants agreed to schedule a meeting in the coming month to discuss sponsorship matters, as Danielle Anderson is waiting for instructions from Jacky Mendes.

Indoor Track Meet Review and Planning:

The group discussed the recent indoor track meet, highlighting Nicoreno's impressive performance and the overall success of the event. They noted the need to increase the number of meets next year, potentially partnering with Adirondack. The financial aspect was addressed, with the group hoping to reach break-even, which would be a significant improvement from previous years. They also discussed the importance of planning for upcoming events, including JO Track and Youth Outdoor, and considered adding a youth cross-country series.

Event Review and Membership Goals:

The meeting then focused on reviewing the recent event and discussing membership status. Kathy reported that 45 officials in the Association and 13 helped with the Indoor event, with some staying late to ensure everything was in order. Jim noted that membership numbers were slightly behind last year but expected to increase, with a goal of 1,500 members. Don reminded board members to renew their memberships if they had lapsed, and Mike inquired about the year-over-year retention rate, which Don and Jim agreed to investigate further.

AI for Member Retention Analysis:

Mike Nier asked if there was any where to look at the retention numbers for the past couple of years. Don Lawrence, Mike and Jim Glinsky discussed using AI to analyze membership data and identify non-returning members. Mike suggested using AI to compare lists from different years, and Don proposed a separate Zoom meeting to demonstrate this. They also considered conducting a SurveyMonkey survey to understand member retention needs. Eric shared that he verifies member statuses for race sign-ups and communicates with those with expired memberships. Don praised Lexi Landimer for her work in organizing a successful event and highlighted the positive impact of track and field on athletes..

Safe Sport and Event Planning:

Don and Lexi discussed Safe Sport initiatives, including a January Newsletter recognizing Safe Sport All-Stars and focusing on healthy coach-athlete mentoring. They also talked about a USATF booth at sectionals to educate parents about Safe Sport and USATF's role in protecting children. Don mentioned avoiding conflicts with events like the Shoe Nationals and proposed back-to-back meets to save on budget. He encouraged Lexi to reach out to Bailey for any questions and appointed her as an Association liaison.

Race Success and Summit Planning:

Don and Mike discussed the success of a recent race, with Mike sharing details about the event and the positive response from spectators. They also talked about upcoming plans for a summit meeting in February and Mike's participation in Club Nationals and World Cross Country. Don expressed interest in attending the summit meeting and mentioned the need for more USATF Niagara banners to promote the region. Sharon Gruttadauro joined the conversation briefly, mentioning her son's participation in the race and the opportunity it provided for outreach and showcasing Cornell University.

Track Budget Review:

The meeting discussed various topics related to track and field activities. Don and Terry Eason talked about upcoming events. Sonia shared her experience at a recent meet and discussed plans for youth competitions. The group discussed budget reviews and the need for input from department heads. They also touched on race walking qualifications for high school boys in Section 5. The conversation ended with a reminder for attendees to review budgets before the next meeting in February.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm EST.

Next steps

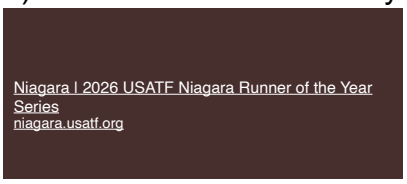
- Rozanne: Update the minutes to include the Niagara Mile Championship (Queen City Mile) on August 15th in Buffalo, and coordinate with Eric for any additional details.
- Don, Danielle, and Jackie: Schedule a meeting between now and next month to discuss and coordinate on sponsorship activities.
- Jim Glinsky: Review board members' membership status and ensure all board members have active memberships as required by the bylaws.
- Mike Nier and Jim Glinsky: Collaborate to analyze membership retention rates using AI or other tools, and consider a SurveyMonkey survey to assess reasons for non-renewal.
- Kelsey, Sonia, and Brett (with possible addition of Ryan from Ridge Runners): Schedule and hold a youth committee meeting before the February meeting to discuss and plan for JO Track, Youth Outdoor, and Region 2 Cross-Country Championships.

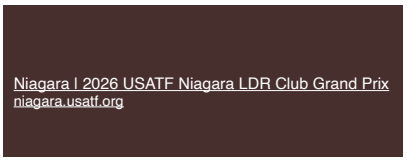
- Don and Matt: Arrange for more USATF Niagara lightweight/perforated banners to be provided to clubs for display at major events.
- Sonja Organize a youth committee meeting with all youth club members during the weekend before the Super Bowl to discuss plans and ideas for the upcoming season and 2027.
- All department heads and interested leaders (especially Eric, Sonia, Matt, Kathy): Review the proposed budget, make notes, and be prepared to discuss or sign off at a follow-up meeting to be scheduled by Don and Jackie.
- Don and Sharon: Discuss offline the possibility of encouraging the inclusion of boys' race walk as an exhibition event at New Balance in Buffalo and address related Section 5 rules.
- Don, Sonia, and Mike: Discuss offline the possibility of combining Region 2 Cross-Country Championships with a Peak 11 series race for greater participation and logistical efficiency.

LDR report:

Eric Boyce

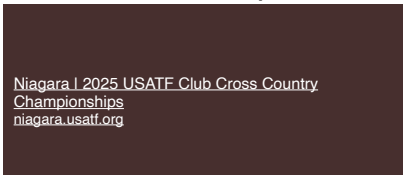
1) 2026 LDR runner of the year/team Grand Prix schedule





2) We have another Olympic trials marathon qualifier.
Ellie Orie ran 2:35:06 at the Houston Marathon to punch her ticket for the trials!!

3) Many Niagara members competed at the Club Nationals race last Sunday. GVH, Checkers, STC represented our association well!!



4) hartshorne Mile: many outstanding master mile performances and pending records from our association and outside the association

Membership report:

	Male	Female	Total	%	
Youth	79	59	138	21%	
Open	107	55	162	25%	
Masters	245	113	358	54%	
Total	431	227	658		
On 16 January 2025 we had 683 individual and 38 club members.					
It is too early in the year to make any conclusions. Most members who don't have automatic renewal are waiting to renew until they need USATF membership to enter a competition that requires USATF membership. The trend is definitely up.					