

2019 USPA SPRING BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING RECAP



The USPA Board of Governors and the USPA Subsidiaries, Committees and staff met in West Palm Beach, Florida, April 17-22, for the 2019 USPA Board of Governors Spring Meeting. The week began with the Chairman's Cocktail Reception hosted at the Museum of Polo and Hall of Fame in Lake Worth, Florida, during which the new GAUNTLET OF POLO™ Trophy was unveiled. The reception was followed by two days of committee meetings and division's presentations at the Embassy Suites in West Palm Beach. On Friday night, the USPA and the Polo Training Foundation co-hosted a polo party and awards ceremony at the International Polo Club Palm Beach (IPC) Pavilion in Wellington, Florida. The April USPA Board of Governors Meeting took place Saturday morning from 8:00am until 2:00pm. The afternoon went on to feature two polo games that took place at IPC beginning with the traditional Governor's polo match followed by the Jr. Westchester Cup. The week culminated in the CaptiveOne U.S. Open Polo Championship® Final at IPC. Please see below for a brief recap of the week's events:

Finance Committee

Samuel Ramirez Jr. presented the March 2019 financial report. For the first quarter 2019, the year to date investment portfolio is up eight percent with an overall 3.8% return for the most recent 12 months, despite the December market plunge. The Board approved the USPA Investment Policy as updated and endorsed by the Finance Committee at their meeting on April 19, 2019.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the USPA meets monthly to discuss pressing issues related to the overall operation

of the Association. The entire committee met in person on Friday, April 19 and discussed ongoing issues including: umpire admonishment, discussion on a catalogue versus outright horse registry, Polito Pieres as a potential USPA Ambassador, USPA office space and more. The Board approved to ratify the actions of the Executive Committee since the Fall Board of Governors Meeting to present as outlined in the Executive Committee Meeting Minutes.

Arena Polo Committee



Danny Scheraga was presented with the Russ Sheldon Award for Outstanding Contribution to arena polo. Pictured with USPA CEO Robert Puetz and Dan Coleman. ©Alex Pacheco

Dan Coleman reported that arena polo is strong and growing with 49 circuit events awarded for the year and all national tournaments awarded in 2019. During the Committee meeting, a resolution was passed that would require all national events be umpired by USPA Certified Umpires. This change will be implemented by the Rules Committee for 2020.

Danny Scheraga was named the recipient of the 2019 Russ Sheldon Award. The Russ Sheldon Award is presented annually by the Arena Committee to a member who has made an outstanding contribution to arena polo.

Armed Forces Committee

Mark Gillespie reported on the Armed Forces Committee's actions thus far in 2019 and the plans for the future. Highlights for the year included entering a 13-goal team against the United Kingdom as part of the International Arena Showcase. The Texas Arena League hosted eight Circuit military tournaments this winter.

The Committee anticipates to send a team to India and will coordinate with the International Committee and USPA Global Licensing Inc. for branding and endorsement. In addition, the Committee is working in conjunction with the Women's Committee, to start a women's military tournament.

The General George S. Patton Jr. Award was presented to Karl Hilberg, this award is presented to the member who has gone above the call of duty to create opportunities for military members and their families to become involved in the sport of polo.



*Karl Hilberg was presented with the General George S. Patton Jr. Award. Pictured with USPA CEO Robert Puetz and Mark Gillespie.
©Alex Pacheco*

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee made a point to emphasize that they are adamant about maintaining the independence

of the Audit Committee.

Deloitte & Touche presented the 2018 audited financial statements. A clean, unmodified opinion was issued. The audit progressed as expected, with nothing of note for discussion.

Chuck Stanislawski was elected Chair of the Audit Committee. Following interviews of several candidates, the Audit Committee recommended Habib Nasrullah to fill the vacancy caused by the terming out of Gene Burk, one of the original Audit Committee members. The Board unanimously approved to add Habib Nasrullah to the Audit Committee. With the remaining two original members, Chuck Stanislawski and Steve Rudolph terming in the next two years, the Board expressed their desire for the Nominating Committee to be seeking candidates to fill these upcoming vacancies.

To fill the Constitution requirement of an Audit Committee member to Chair the Nominating Committee, as a non-voting facilitator, the Audit Committee members recommended Gene Burk (prior to his leaving the Audit Committee). Chip Campbell put forth a motion to approve Gene Burk as the new Chairman of the Nominating Committee. The motion was amended to include corporate council to be in attendance at the Nominating Committee meetings.

The Board will recommend changes to the Constitution regarding the Nominating Committee structure to be presented to the Delegates at the fall meeting to avoid any potential conflict of interest that may arise by having the Nominating Committee chaired by a member of the Audit Committee.



Gene Burk was presented with a gift for investing his time in the Audit Committee. (L to R) Habib Nasrullah, Chuck Stanislawski, Gene Burk, Steve Rudolph

Board and Staff Development Committee

Leighton Jordan presented that the Board and Staff Development Committee continue to advise and recommend on various challenges that arise related to the board and staff. Two new topics that have been added to the Committee's task list this year include employee recognition and Safe Sport Training for junior polo events.

The Board approved new job designs developed by the Board and Staff Development Committee for USPA Circuit Governors, Governors-at-Large and Lt. Governors. The next order of business will include job designs for USPA Delegates.

Club and Membership Administration Committee

Committee Chair, Steven Armour, announced that the Committee endorsed the Club Action list approved during the Secretary's Report. Included on the list were recommendations to move Liberty Hall Polo Club (Virginia) and Marlan Farm Polo Club (Maryland) from Provisional Active status to Active Member Club. It was noted that since the 2018 fall meeting, a total of five new clubs have been approved, three Active Member Clubs (101 Polo Club, Beverly Polo Club, Epic Polo Club), one Affiliate Member Club (La Loma Polo Club) and one Associate Member Club (Brisbane Polo Club). The Committee discussed recommendations from the Constitution Committee such as the number of required members for Affiliate Member Clubs, the description of clubs in good standing and the status of high school clubs who do not meet the six or more registered players over the age of 18 requirement. Mr. Armour clarified that the list previously approved had a number of clubs listed to move to the Provisional Active Category. These clubs will be allowed to maintain their Active Club Member status if they come into compliance by May 31.

Constitution Committee

Charles Smith reported that during the 2018 Fall Board of Governors and Annual Member Meeting the Board approved a motion to move the Large Purchase Policy from the policy section to the Constitution. He stated that this change will be presented as a Constitution change for Delegate approval at the 2019 Fall Board of Governors and Annual Member Meeting. He noted that the Committee is discussing various other changes and recommendations from other Committees. Those changes include increasing the timeframe for a formal complaint by the CEO or Chairman, discussions on the non-voting Nominating Committee Chairperson, redefining and renaming Resolution 4.2 to allow refinements after Board notice, shortening the time to call a Special Board Meeting, and addressing the issues presented by the Club and Membership Administration Committee.

Equine Welfare Committee

Dr. Manno stated that the Committee will continue to improve the communication between the Intercollegiate/Interscholastic (I/I) and the National Youth Tournament Series programs in regard to equine welfare abuse and neglect reporting. He noted that there are a number of ways to report issues including the USPA Hotline phone number which can be found on the USPA website along with additional information. An update on the Equine Drugs and Medications Program was provided. Since testing restarted in the fall of 2018, the Committee has tested five clubs and a total of 19 teams, comprised of 122 horses, have been tested. To date only two actionable violations have occurred.

Pamela Flanagan was named the recipient of the Clint Nangle Equine Welfare Award. This award is presented annually to an individual who demonstrates excellence in the field of equine welfare.



Pamela Flanagan was presented with the Clint Nangle Equine Welfare Award. Pictured with Dr. Mike Manno, Membership and Handicap Director Lindsay Dolan and USPA CEO Robert Puetz. ©Alex Pacheco

Handicap Committee

Carlucho Arellano reported on behalf of the Handicap Committees. He noted that at the Fall Board of Governors and Annual Member Meeting the National Handicap Committee was divided into three independent committees: the Outdoor Handicap, the Arena Handicap and the Women's Handicap Committee. The Outdoor Handicap Committee has been tasked to research possible solutions for the compression issues at the lower end of the handicap scale.

Maureen Brennan reported that the Women's Handicap Committee met on March 26 to discuss Women's Handicaps. Voting was left open until the completion of two tournaments which took place after the U.S. Open Women's Polo Championship™. The changes have been published and are available on the website.

Since three independent committees were formed the Board approved the adoption of the new mission statements for the Outdoor, Arena and Women's Handicap Committees, which will replace the National Handicap Committee Mission Statement.

High-Goal Committee

Maureen Brennan reported that the High-Goal Committee meets monthly in order to discuss obstacles that arise in high-goal polo throughout the year. With so many high-goal tournaments being played this year the Committee was extremely active. The Committee is currently in discussion regarding the definition of High-Goal Polo and plans to modify the term to include all tournaments 16 goals and above.

The Committee reported that the USPA has done an excellent job of marketing the GAUNTLET OF POLO™ in its inaugural year with all three draw parties well attended. The relationship formed this year between the USPA, IPC and USPA Global Licensing Inc. has benefitted the sport by providing an example of how to work with the host clubs of the USPA's largest tournaments.

Horse Registry Committee

Chairman Stewart Armstrong offered the development of a horse catalogue as a stepping block for ultimately creating a Horse Registry. The catalogue would consist of the best horses playing in the United States, beginning with the GAUNTLET OF POLO™. The formation of a registry would provide a resource for recognition of breeders and horses that compete around the world. This would also benefit the general membership by having a resource to validate bloodlines and position top polo ponies as recognizable assets to promote the sport.

International Committee

Joseph Meyer reported that the USA swept both the Townsend Cup and International Intercollegiate Challenge Cup played at IPC in January. USA took the Junior Westchester Cup over England for the second consecutive year in a row with a final score of 6-4. The adult Westchester Cup was contested on Sunday, April 28.



USPA President Tony Coppola and USPA Secretary Stewart Armstrong.

Coached by Julio Arellano, USA, represented by Mike Azzaro, Peke Gonzalez, Geronimo Obregon and Jared Zenni, found themselves in a pulse-pounding overtime chukker, Obregon delivering the final goal to capture the Westchester Cup 9-8 for the first time since 1992. The International Committee is working with the Women's Committee and the Federation of International Polo (FIP) to compete in the Women's World Cup which will be played in Argentina April 2020.

Nominating Committee

USPA CEO Bob Puetz updated the Board that the Nominating Committee will be chaired by Gene Burk. The Committee will be meeting in May to propose a slate for the 12 Board approved Governor-at-Large seats. They will meet again in the summer to present a slate of Officers (Chairman, President, Treasurer and Secretary) to be presented to the Board eight weeks prior to the Fall Board of Governors and Annual Member Meeting.

Rules Committee

Chris Green reported that Midstates Circuit Governor Trey Schott and Team USPA member Jesse Bray are the two newest members of the Rules Committee, replacing former Midstates Circuit Governor Mark Sedacca and Nic Roldan. The Committee has had a busy six months considering various rule change proposals as well as advising the Executive Committee on variance requests and a protest. The Committee will undertake two major initiatives before the fall meeting: revising the USPA Arena Rules to incorporate within them the Optional Tournament Conditions for various Arena Rules and working to consolidate the USPA Outdoor Rules and USPA International Rules into a single set of rules with key differences between the Rules at different goal levels clearly identified.

The Committee also reported there are many rule change proposals that they will work through prior to the fall meeting.

Safety Committee

Safety Committee Chair, Dr. Thor Norregaard, reminded the Board that the previously approved NOCSAE Polo Helmet Mandate is only 14 months away (June 1, 2020). He announced that two prominently known helmet manufacturers, Casablanca and Charles Owen, have tested their helmets in house and believe they will pass the NOCSAE Polo Standard. Casablanca has already submitted their NEU Helmet to the Sports Equipment Institute (SEI) to gain NOCSAE Certification, and hopes to have a helmet on the market soon. Stephen Alexander of Casablanca and Roy Burek of Charles Owen both attended the Safety Committee's meeting and brought prototypes of the helmets for the Committee to see. The Committee was surprised to see that both helmets are notably lighter than previous models. There was discussion about how clubs will be able to enforce the new helmet rule once it goes into effect to which Dr. Norregaard responded that one of the largest benefits to the NOCSAE standard are visible external stamps which can be seen by the umpire prior to the game. USPA Chairman, Chip Campbell, asked for helmet prototypes, prices and a legal review on potential liability to be presented at the fall meeting in order to make a final decision on whether or not the Association will move forward with the mandate.

Strategic Planning Committee

Stewart Armstrong stated that the Committee is working on a response to an email sent by Fred Mannix regarding USPA Club resources.

Tournament Committee

Mike Carney reported that the Tournament Committee met to discuss the awarding of 2020 National Tournaments. They tabled three tournaments for later discussion: the Silver Cup®, the National Outdoor Commander-in-Chief Cup and the U.S. Open Arena Championship®. The Silver Cup® and the Commander-in-Chief Cup will be evaluated after they are played in 2019. The Tournament Committee requested proposals from the clubs for the Arena Open to be presented within 30 days.

The Board approved the Tournament applications.



USPA Rocky Mountain Circuit Governor and Women's Committee Chair, Erica Gandomcar-Sachs.

Women's Polo Committee

Women's Committee Chair, Erica Gandomcar-Sachs, reported that the relocation of the U.S. Open Women's Polo Championship™ to Florida was highly successful, boasting eight teams. IPC will host the event in 2020 and the finals featured on the US Polo Assn. Field Number 1. There were a number of Circuit and club tournaments leading up to the event which provided a way for teams to play together in preparation for the Open. The creation of this tournament series led to the formation of a second tournament series, the Mid-Continent Women's Series, which will incorporate 12 clubs. Participants will receive points for all tournaments they attend as well as additional points for winning games or receiving MVP or Best Playing Pony. The women with the most points at the end of the series will win a Catena watch. The Committee also plans to help create a series on the West Coast which would culminate in a large final event.

In an effort to boost the number of clubs hosting USPA women's tournaments, the Committee has decided to create a reimbursement program for clubs hosting a qualifying tournament. In order to receive the funds, the club will have to fill out a post-tournament questionnaire in order to receive a reimbursement of \$250.00.

Dawn Jones received the 2019 USPA Woman of the Year Award. The award is presented to an individual who goes above and beyond to support the sport of polo for the greater good. Dawn Jones was an essential part of creating the Women's International Polo Network (WIPN), helped in the relocation of the Women's Open and



Dawn Jones was presented with the USPA Woman of the Year Award. Pictured with USPA CEO Robert Puetz, Rocky Mountain Circuit Governor Erica Gandomcar-Sachs and Membership and Handicap Director Lindsay Dolan. ©Alex Pacheco

participated in a number of the Florida Circuit women's tournaments.

Young Players Committee

Chairman Todd Thurston listed off the new Committee members including Hope Arellano, Zach Grob, Jim Wright, Mason Wroe, Costi Caset, Kylie Sheehan, Jared Zenni and Grant Ganzi.

The Board approved the Young Players Committee Policy and the Young Players Committee Mission Statement.

The mission of the Young Players Committee is to generate a voice within the USPA to provide input on opportunities, initiatives, rules, and policies in an effort to help provide fresh solutions to the challenges young players face in polo today.

Communications Department & USPA Marketing, LLC

The Communications Department presented at the April Meetings their progress from January through April of 2019. The USPA Polo Network livestreamed 102 games of the winter season and 78 during the GAUNTLET OF POLO™. The platform was rebranded to match the GAUNTLET branding guidelines. There were 651,282 unique views across all platforms which streamed the USPA Polo Network including uspolo.org, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The department built a state-of-the-art landing page for the GAUNTLET and three tournament detail pages, resulting in an increase of 166% traffic to these tournaments from last year. The pages allow for fans to

track tournament progressions, team and player statistics, top plays, tournament leaders and much more.

The top performing Instagram post to date was a video clip showing a backshot from Facundo to Gonzalito Pieres in the C.V. Whitney Cup Final. The post reached nearly 20,000 accounts (57% were not following USPA) and made 32,454 impressions.

In a continued effort to support the polo industry and bring awareness to topics surrounding USPA tournaments, the department wrote special interest stories during the Florida high-goal season. The articles highlighted top horses, teams, polo club managers and commentators. Also, the department has focused on Circuit Governor interest articles with the goal of making the leadership more relatable and therefore more approachable to membership.

The department continues to elevate how fans experience the sport through timely score, field and bracket graphics new for the GAUNTLET OF POLO™ and the use of social media influencer Jennifer Sims (@StyledEquestrian). Additionally, the livestreaming contract is up at the end of 2019 and a request for proposal has been created and bids are being accepted.

USPA Polo Development, LLC

The USPA Polo Development, LLC encompasses Club and Membership Development, Intercollegiate/ Interscholastic polo, Team USPA, and Junior Polo Committees of the USPA and their associated programs. Throughout the second half of 2018 and the first half of 2019, Polo Development LLC has been conducting a strategic planning process to best address the needs of USPA membership and align Polo Development programs to sustain the sport of polo for future generations.

In the fall of 2017, infrastructure and capital improvements were proposed to be included within the Polo Development Initiative (PDI) program. In September of 2018, Denny Geiler and Bob McMurtry co-chaired a strategic planning ad hoc committee to explore the long-term planning of the PDI program and proposed new PDI guidelines to the Polo Development LLC Advisory Board.

2019 changes to the PDI program included a shift to a grant-based program, removal of the \$10,000 request limit, inclusion of capital improvements/infrastructure and incorporation of multi-year requests. In 2019, 110 clubs applied. Specific to capital projects a 50% matching policy was established. PDI requests predominately addressed individual club needs for arena facilities/improvements.

The Board approved the revised Team USPA Committee Mission Statement, and the Team USPA Committee Policy. Team USPA will refocus specifically on developing higher-rated American players. Industry professionals and club-level players that traditionally fell under the Team USPA program will be realigned within Polo Development to continue to support this vital component of young player development.

Umpires LLC

From January through April 2019, 26 professional umpires were on contract, 18 of which were officiating at seven winter clubs in Florida, equating to 621 games to date. In California seven umpires were officiating at two clubs for a total of 186 games. In the Intercollegiate/Interscholastic program, 21 umpires were on contract officiating a total of 124 games within 18 tournaments. For the upcoming spring and summer, 16 clubs have requested full-time umpires for their season.

For a \$500.00 fee, the PUMP/8 Program enables a club to receive a professional umpire for National or Circuit events 8 goals and under. This program remains an overwhelmingly popular resource. In 2019 Umpires LLC is

on schedule to umpire between 130-150 PUMP/8 tournaments, a definite increase from 117 in 2018.

Moving forward Umpires LLC aim to hold more umpire clinics, rules reviews and umpire boot camps. There will be a large emphasis on professional umpire recruitment. Umpires LLC will also initiate Regional Umpire Representation.



USPA Chairman Chip Campbell thanks Britt Baker for his service to the Umpires LLC.



Charlie Muldoon received the Tom Hughes Umpire Award, presented by USPA CEO Robert Puetz and 2018 winner Britt Baker. ©Alex Pacheco

Britt Baker retired as Chairman and the Board approved Tom Gose as his successor.

USPA Global Licensing, LLC

David Cummings, USPA Global Licensing Chairman, proudly reported that they are financially sound and stable and received a clean audit opinion.

Michael Prince reported that the brand has reached \$1.7B in revenue. Expanding into more markets and categories in 2020, while other brands are closing stores and going out of business. U.S. Polo Assn. is currently ranked #42 in the top 150 licensors which surpassed Coca-Cola, Professional Golfers' Association of America (PGA) and the National Hockey League (NHL).

The most recent campaign was photographed at Empire Polo Club (Indio, California) where the iconic Coachella music festival is held. Featuring the recognizable, bright colors of U.S. Polo Assn., the advertisement is both aspirational and widely appealing to the target demographic. Also, the increased involvement and sponsorship opportunities with the new nationwide collegiate outreach program have been a success with 19 colleges signed up this year. Through this initiative, players at colleges and universities across the country sported U.S. Polo Assn. branded product to wear in their polo games and on campus throughout the polo and academic season. The program has provided a multitude of USPA college polo teams with jerseys, white pants and polo shirts while simultaneously allowing U.S. Polo Assn. to form new ambassador relationships with players at the participating schools.

The GAUNTLET has overall been a huge success and USPAGL has built a relationship with the Palm Beach



USPA Global Licensing Chairman, David Cummings.

County Sports Commission. The Polo Life video has exposed potential new fans to the sport of polo by showcasing the lifestyle of the game and the brand in Wellington, Florida.

Deferred Business

The Board discussed the approved International Funding motion, which allows the opportunity for the Association to have funding to pursue International Events. Per the motion that was approved in January, a subcommittee was developed to create a policy for a new International Committee. The policy was based off the High-Goal Committee Policy and encompasses volunteers that represent various aspects of polo.

The Board approved the International Committee Policy, as amended to include a military representative, middle and low-goal polo representative, and an American International Polo Foundation (AIPF) representative. It was noted that some of the representation could represent multiple facets.

New Business

USPA Secretary Stewart Armstrong and Skee Johnston were the recipients of the Hugo Dalmar Trophy. Presented in memory of American player Hugo Dalmar and his contributions to the USPA, this national award is presented annually to the player who best exemplifies the sportsmanship characteristics inherent to the sport of polo.

Legal council Craig Galle discussed with the Board that Mariano Aguerre has filed an appeal of the ruling by the Executive Committee for his Conduct Violation. An appeal hearing will take place on June 4, 2019 in Wellington, Florida.

The Board of Governors and Annual Member Meetings will be held from Wednesday, October 16 to Saturday, October 19, 2019, at the La Quinta Hotel in La Quinta, California.

2019 Polo Training Foundation Florida Season Awardees

Junior Sportsmanship: Guiliana Tarazona and Brock Bromley

Most Improved Young Players: Malia Bryan and Jack Whitman

Young Player Sportsmanship Award: Liliana Falcone

Most Improved Junior Player: Maeve Reicher and Benjamin Obregon

Spirit of PTF Award: Ava Hinkson

Volunteer of the Year Award: Michelle and Keith Whitman

Umpire of the Year: Bradley Biddle

