



President's Report - October 23, 2024

This is my last full day as board president. Tomorrow, I'll preside over the election, by the board, of my successor and immediately turn over the gavel to the newly elected board president.

It has been an eventful and often difficult three years. Rather than dwell on the difficulties, I'd like to point out a few areas where the Association is improving its service to and leadership of sailing.

1. Board Composition – With the great work of the Nominating Committee and the recruiting efforts of all our board members, we've created a pipeline of board candidates that has increased our business and strategic talent while continuing the tradition of geographic, sailing discipline, gender and ethnic diversity that has been a priority for several years. During my tenure, our directors have displayed the utmost attention to doing what was good for the sport and the Association, while providing perspective from their own lived experiences in business and sailing. We now have the sailor athlete voice present in numbers on the board. Laura Grondin, Sarah Lihan, Maggie Shea, Judge Ryan and Pam Healy are our 'athlete elected' directors and have been invaluable in steering the actions and decisions of the board to reflect what was best for our high-performance athletes and US Sailing Team members. In addition, we have at-large board directors with diverse perspectives from grass roots to HP. Thank you all, my board colleagues, present and past for serving with integrity and distinction.
2. Offshore Department – The Offshore Department has received a stream of compliments on its responsiveness, skill, productivity and hard work on behalf of our offshore racing community. Andrew Clouston and his team have been supported and guided by Matt Gallagher, Stan Honey, Henry Brauer and other volunteers on the board and in the offshore community. What was a pain point for US Sailing when I entered my term has become a bright spot due to their response to the board's request that we fix our struggling and understaffed department.
3. Alan Ostfield – While we sadly lost Alan to an incredible opportunity outside the NGB world this past August, his business sense and experience resulted in a major improvement in our operations and standards of business in Bristol and throughout the Association, with several great hires who continue to improve our business. We are hard at work with an elite search committee, led by Vice President Henry Brauer and including Alan Ostfield. We hope to have a selection by the new year; if not, certainly by the end of January.
4. Our Investment Committee, led by John Schoendorf, working with the financial department, improved and diversified our investments of restricted funds, catching a good wave of news from Wall Street to double digit annual increases in value in 2023/24.
5. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – In hiring, US Sailing has a majority of new female employees and is working hard on women's sailing from the grass roots to elite sailing. Additionally, the Board of Directors has had, during my term, as many as seven women on our board. We have the first non-white person on US Sailing's board in history, Marie Rogers. Siebel Sailors was an incredible, inclusive program to get under-represented youth into sailing in a real way. We have thousands of kids who found themselves in sailing through the hand-up they received from a program that provided coaches, boats, and curriculum at no expense to them. A large portion of the graduates are still with sailing as instructors, instructors in training and coaches and we expect them to spend their lives immersed in what sailing can give. In the present-day DEI Committee, we are exploring the possibility of engaging marginalized (and middle-class minority) families in helping support these efforts. We're reaching out to HBCUs and community sailing

programs to create interest in schools to bring kids and families to the waterfront and perhaps, college sailing teams.

6. Our Partnerships department, under Eric Krasnoo, has dramatically improved the portfolio of corporate partnerships, adding more in 2023 than had been added in the previous 3 years. And the department continues to perform well in 2024. Sextant Wines, GoPro, Samsonite, Goslings, Polar Seltzer, in addition to long time partners like The Moorings and Gowrie Risk Strategies.
7. Our development department, led by elite sailor and fundraiser Blaine Pedlow, has brought back several donors who were sidelined during the headwinds caused by the previous Olympic Director's resignation and the subsequent consequences of which everyone is aware. More importantly, while his team is naturally closer to the start line than the finish, they have considerably expanded the donor base beyond the 'friends of friends' that had previously existed.
8. Our financial department has made several improvements to our financial controls, and we've received outstanding grades from our auditors over the last three years. More work is to be done, for sure, as we try to bring our systems into the 21st century.
9. USOPC Relationship –Over the past three years our relationship with USOPC has improved dramatically. It is safe to say that we have created a true partnership with our ultimate governing body. We have demonstrated to the USOPC that we would fulfil our obligation to protect and support athletes. One indication of this is a six-figure financial allocation to US Sailing that was stated to be an indication of their faith in the new direction.
10. Domestic Olympic Trials for Most Classes - Pam Healy, Olympic Bronze Medalist and US Sailing Board Director took on a daunting task; plan and execute the first domestic Olympic Selection Trials Regatta in over a decade. US Sailing had shifted to focus on sending athletes overseas to compete, using their results from select competitions to choose the US Sailing Team. Pam had very little to go on; there was no road map that was reasonably current. And the stakes were very high. Our Olympic efforts had produced a single medal in three quads, after decades of American sailing dominance at the Olympics. She set about the effort with determination, experience, an open mind and a commitment to ensuring we had a system that found the best representatives for us at the Paris Games. Pam and team, thank you.
11. Marcus Lynch – Alan led a diverse committee including board members, Olympians, athletes, USOPC officials and other friends, on an international search to identify and hire our next Director of High-Performance Sailing. Marcus Lynch started with us on January 2, 2024. His leadership and organization are a revelation to the Olympic Team and Department; knowledgeable, skilled, patient, attentive, with a rare ability to gain the trust and respect of athletes, board, staff and donors alike. Marcus brings proven success as a coach and Team Leader from his time as an athlete and coach for GBR and more recently his involvement as one of the leaders of the German Sailing Federation's Olympic Team. Under his leadership our team performed better than expected with multiple top ten finishes and a Bronze Medal. A great sign was the athlete exit interviews and polls which indicated a high level of confidence in Marcus and his team.
12. Youth High Performance Track – Our Youth and High-Performance Departments heard the calls from the community to ensure that youth success eventually translates into Olympic success with a complete redesign of our pathway; John Pearce added Rosie Chapman and Phil Muller, well respected leaders and coaches in high-performance youth sailing. The trio, in collaboration with Marcus and his team, have implemented the vision of Project Pipeline to ensure that there's a clear, understandable and attainable pathway from youth to U19, U23 and international high-performance success. The US World Youth Team performed admirably at the recent World Championship garnering three Bronze Medals.
13. International Selection Committee - Briana Provancha succeeded JJ Fetter as the chair of the International Selection Committee, building on JJ's good work and ensuring the structure of qualification for the team remained objective, the rules surrounding the trials were ironclad and the qualifications would be settled on the water in fair racing.
14. Race Admin, Youth, Adult and Education - These programs rolled on throughout my term, through the COVID crisis, finding ways to deliver the value our sailors had come to expect. In addition to the difficult

challenges that COVID presented, the teams did their best to cope with inflation, insufficient instructors, and the removal of the contingent liability policy for instructors and race officials under our Burgee program, as well as other insurance changes in coverage such as for older boats racing offshore

15. USOPC Report Findings– Our commitment to support and protect athletes caused us to run afoul of certain members of the donor community who withdrew support when we made difficult decisions on Olympic Department leadership. Each of us on the Board and in Bristol has been working well over full time for 18 months or more to recover from the unavoidable financial head winds and we are seeing many green shoots of recovery as more and more donors realize that our cause was justified and we were performing our obligation to the athletes and to USOPC, as required by the Ted Stevens Sports Act.
16. Marketing and Communications – Alan and Eric rounded out our Communications program with a competent, collaborative leader, Carol Lin Vieira, who has instituted several protocols to ensure the team and leadership is up to date on articles referencing important happenings in the sailing world and upgrading the content of our push notifications.

We aren't yet perfect and many of our efforts will need to continue well beyond my tenure, but I thank each and every one of you who contributed to making our Association a better servant of the sport we love.

As to current events:

1. Review of the Games – Marcus, Sally, Kate and all our coaches are conducting a thorough review of the Games, athlete performance and staff support, logistics, USOPC support, athlete protections, etc. We'll have a report for the board soon, but I believe the news will bode very well for the future.
2. Hiring of a Membership Director – As we progressed through my term, we focused on the importance of having a dynamic, talented, committed Membership Director. For a couple of decades we'd been operating as if the membership business model was self-sustaining and this board insisted that we needed a true professional in the role of retaining our members, both individual and organizational, but also developing programs that bring in sailors who would benefit from being members but have not been approached. We are pushing hard to find a membership director whose skills in cultivating members are matched by their understanding of our sailing culture. More to follow.
3. We've been working hard on ourselves, as well. We have been and continue to institute business best practices for board governance, with the board serving as advisor and force extender for staff, financial controls that allow us to remain nimble but ensure our members' dues are properly stewarded. We are also working to bring our bylaws into line with 21st century realities, to comport with the direction the Association has been on for 20 years as we transitioned to a staff led, volunteer supported model, working closely with our auditors to ensure our operations and financial controls are best in class, ensuring that our election bylaws are returned to NGB and general non-profit best practices. We received invaluable advice from USOPC's David Patterson, PHD in Board Governance, long-term stalwart volunteers Fred Hagedorn and Clark Chapin and our in-house counsel, Justin Sterk, all of whom keep the effort on track.
4. We've been working hard on our constituent services, collaborating with the Regional Sailing Associations Committee, the Commercial Sailing Committee, the Community Sailing Committee, to collaborate to help them serve their constituencies. Volunteers Stephanie Webb, Peggy Lidster, Paul Lang, Doris and Steve Colgate have been key, along with too many others to count. Betsy Allison of Adult and Stu Gilfillen of Education deserve hearty congratulations for keeping the wheels on their wagons through COVID's reign, pivoting with remote services development and implementation that have revolutionized our product offerings to our organizational and individual memberships.
5. Most US Sailing volunteers are aware that we have a 20th century legacy IT structure, put in place by a volunteer decades ago, called SailorBase. It has long been left behind by the Information Technology revolution and must be replaced. However, that will be an expensive proposition (the main reason it still remains a problem). We have embarked on a fundraising campaign to raise money for this effort and, so far, we received pledges from two large donors! You'll hear more about this from Blaine Pedlow and the

Development Department, and I hope you will support it with whatever you feel you can contribute. It will do more for our ability to accomplish our mission than any other single effort.

In closing, it was the honor of my life to serve the Association in this capacity and, while it was a bit tougher than I had envisioned, I felt lucky to serve in the trenches with incredibly smart people, committee, board and staff, solving existential challenges for the good of all sailors. I'll serve my traditional Past President ex-officio role on the Nominating Committee and will look forward to attending the next Sailing Leadership Forum in Coronado, CA Feb 6-8, 2025. I hope to see many of you there!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rich Jepsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rich Jepsen, Board President 2021-2024