

Board Meeting Update

As promised, here is an update from our board meeting we had last weekend (2/3 Nov). It was a really productive weekend and have started the cogs moving as to where we want to lead our sport.

There will be a few documents and the like that will be coming out to you all in the coming weeks to both advise details so that you can all begin planning, and for your consideration about the direction we intend head.

Below is a brief of what was discussed and a bit of the rationale behind it.

Strategic Plan

We held a session to develop an overarching strategic direction for our sport. The base of this has been drawn from the review/ strategic plan completed by Paul Cameron back in 2014 and which we are just refreshing as many of the factors identified back then are still very relevant today.

We have also looked at the Sport NZ strategy which has a major focus on getting kids into sports and having fun. We have incorporated these principles into our strategic direction as we have identified that this is a struggle we have, and for the longevity of our sport it is something that we as a hockey community to need to respond to.

We will have a draft of this out to you all hopefully in early December and hope to have your input to help create something meaningful for the long term.

Board Committees

The flow on from our planning session was the establishment of 4 sub-committees that will be responsible for overseeing the evolution of our sport. These are:

Finance and Risk – Jendi, Felicity, Michelle and Cameron

Responsibilities include: cashflow, Insurance, Health and safety, audit. Basic accountability for the organisation.

Events – Alethea, Arden and Tara

This committee will be responsible for the organisation and implementation of our IHNZ events (Nationals Champs, Inter-Regional champs, international, secondary schools).

Growth and Development – Tara, Gary and Arden

This committee will be responsible for development of our players, coaches, game officials, volunteers etc.

We will be looking at implementing a coach training system in the new year and really put some focus on ensuring we have quality coaches leading our players.

Our growth committee are putting something together where we need your input. We want to understand what is going on in your club, the good, the bad and the ugly. We want to be able to know where we should be investing our resources and our efforts.

Integrity – Cameron, Gary and Alethea

This committee will be responsible for our disputes and disciplinary matters, dispensation / transfers.

We have drafted a new disciplinary policy as our current document is not fit for purpose. This will be sent out over the next week. The major differences are that it provides for disputes between members (and non-members) and covers matters both on and off the rink.

As a part of being transparent and accountable, we want to ensure that our members can be confident that they raise an issue and that it will be addressed in a fair and non-threatening way. New dispensation and transfer guidelines are being created. These will be lists of principles that will be designed to promote and encourage the “Spirit of the Game” to ensure fairness is being applied and supporting good quality hockey being played, again will be disseminated shortly!

Referee Panel – Felicity

Our Referee Panel will stay as it has been with the purpose of coordination and development of our referees / officials. This panel will work closely with the events committee to support our events.

Regional Committees

Our regional committees will remain and will continue to be responsible for the organisation of our sport in our regions. We are reviewing our regional committee guidance document which will outline what the Board would expect of our regional committees and clubs. This will be sent out shortly.

We envisage that our Board committees will work with our community to develop and implement strategies

2020 Structure

We have set our event calendar for the 2020 season and again will be put out more formally soon. Event venues will also be announced shortly.

We have decided to make a slight shift in terms of how we determine our age grades. This being to align more with how these are structured internationally (e.g. U16 grade will be 16 years of age and under / rather than under 16 years of age).

This will be detailed more in the event notices which should be coming out to you all before the end of the year.

U19 grade. We have decided to shift this grade back to the U18 grade (in line with the above example). It really is in name only as those who are 18 are still able to participate in this grade. The U18 grade (formerly U19) has shown to have not been as successful or viable as it perhaps should have. The growth and development committee will be taking a look at what is going on in this space and with the support of clubs implementing strategies so that we can start bolstering these ranks.

Perhaps the biggest change will be with how we are going to be organising our inter-regional tournament. We have made the decision to use inter-regionals as the stepping-stone for those who want to be considered for New Zealand selection. The aim is to both bring some prestige back to the tournament and help develop the pathway for high performance. We will be aligning the grades with that of World Skate so that we can start better preparing our teams for when they go away (Snr Men, Snr Women, Jnr Men, Jnr Women, Masters). We will also continue to run junior grades to support development in this area. Again, the event notice will provide further detail.

Women's Hockey

We have decided to make at this point is removing the ability of female players to play down a grade.

Females can still play in two grades, however, one of the grades must be either junior women or senior women. This is to support the growth/ development of women's hockey in these grades.

These decisions are based on wanting to apply fairness to both our male and female players, but also acknowledging that with respect to our female players we just aren't quite there yet and supporting in this capacity in the interim will best help the development toward what we want to achieve.

Referees / Officials

We have decided to centralise our referees so that we can better organise and coordinate our referee resources. This will afford us better quality control and allow better development opportunities where we can provide a more consistent and higher-quality officiating of games.

The most significant change in our referee system is around how we reimburse our referees. It has been determined that the "tiered reimbursement system" currently in use is more reflective of income rather than a reimbursement of actual or reasonable costs that would normally be considered for a volunteer as a part of a non-profit/ charitable organisation. We are currently looking at alternatives that both meet any legal requirements as well as acknowledging the important job that our referees do.

We envisage that this may be of quite some contention amongst our referees as it will likely impact on what has been the status quo for a while now. We really need all of our clubs on board with this change as it will be significant to what has been the norm. I want to stress that we must remember that we are a volunteer-based organisation and that there are stipulations around how need to operate. Our processes in this respect have not really met this expectation.

We will endeavour to get something out to update as soon as possible so that we can ensure a smooth transition.

Rules

At the AGM this year it was proposed that we adopt the World Skate rule book as the basis of how we officiate games. This was to establish a link with the now only international governing body for inline hockey and so that we can create better pathways for our players, coaches, referees and officials.

A draft of the new rule book is almost completed and 2020 will be a transitional year where we will phase in the majority of the rules. The biggest ones being that we will keep the bigger goals and continue to allow goalie slide plate technology. There has been some rumour that World

Skate may adopt these changes formally, however, as we are preparing for the 2021 season we will move to using the full rule book as written. Again, we will get a copy of this out before the end of the year.

High Performance / International Competition

Conversation was had around how we want to look at international commitments going forward from here. There was a consensus that high-performance and international competition needs to be a part of what we do and there was an acknowledgement that we need to do it a bit better than what we have done.

Enquiries are being made as to the feasibility of international competition in both the short and long terms and we will be in touch once we have more information.

We will be looking at establishing a high-performance pathway for our players and over time, have better systems and processes in place to identify and mentor those who have the capability to represent New Zealand.

The first shift in this respect (as outlined above) will be around those wanting to be considered to represent New Zealand need be representing at inter-regional level. We want there to be a legitimate claim to the New Zealand jersey, we want to be able to better prepare our players and aim for success, not just making up the numbers.

Communication

This is probably the one aspect that is going to link all of this together and quite possibly determine our success. I'll acknowledge that communication within our organisation has not always been very good and is one of the things that we intend to change.

Its got to start from the top, but also needs to go both ways. We want to establish clear lines of communication so that we can be confident that the right information is getting where it needs to go. I have attached a copy of our communication flowchart which is what we expect to be adhered to at all levels. It is pretty straight forward, but basically all communication to the Board needs to come via clubs and vice versa. If there are individuals that feel that they will get preferential treatment by going straight to board members and bypassing the authority of their club, they will be politely asked to go through their club representative.

Complaints/ Disputes

It is expected that all reasonable efforts to resolve any issues be managed within clubs in the first instance, if not possible, then escalated to regional committees. This may not always be the case

and in any event where the issue or concern is of such significance that it can't be resolved by the above, then it may be forwarded directly to the Sports Administrator who will refer the matter to the Board for consideration.

In conclusion, we have a lot to do and some things may be different to what has been done before. The reality is that the status quo hasn't been working for us as it perhaps did in the past. And as much as we'd love to be able to go back to the good ol' days, we all need to be thinking and doing things a little bit differently to succeed as unfortunately times have changed.

2020 will ultimately be a transitional year for us with some of the changes possibly not coming to any fruition until perhaps 2021, but the key is we need everyone on-board paddling in the same direction.

Like said, we'll be getting a whole lot of stuff out to you all in the very near future as we know time is of the essence and we really want to be able to give everyone the best opportunity to be able to do things we need to be doing to succeed.

We all appreciate the support so far!

Please feel free to get in touch if you have any queries.

Cameron McIver
IHNZ Chairperson