

**Southern California Division, USFA,
Executive Board Meeting
August 12, 2024, 7pm
Via Zoom Teleconference**

Present: James Beihold (Chair), Karl Jordon (Co-chair), Eric Speicher (Treasurer), Karen Lieu (Secretary), Liz Geyer (KAFF), Anna Jordon (United Fencing), Tim Robinson (Presidio), Greg Schiller (Bridgeport), and Mike Vasquez (Unattached).

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the proposal of Clubs hosting the Division qualifiers for the Junior Olympics (JOs) and for the Summer Nationals (SN) which is the Division's responsibility. The Clubs would submit bids for hosting the events. The idea is that by breaking the qualifiers into smaller tournaments we will have more options for venues, namely fencing clubs. It is more financially efficient for a club to run a qualifier than it is for the Division because clubs already have the venue. It's a matter of making the tournament small enough to fit in their club. If clubs take on the financial responsibility, breaking even is no longer a concern of the Division. If no clubs volunteer to host a particular event(s), Tigran Shaginian (Swords) said that he will host it at his club, so the Division will not be left hosting a small tournament. In addition, the JO Qualifiers must be held on a Saturday or Sunday in December prior to the last Sunday before Christmas.

The Chair provided the following data:

Here's an estimate of the number of entries to expect depending on how we break up the qualifiers, based on 3-year weighted averages.

Quals Divided by Weapon

Events	Expected Number of Entries
JOQ - Foil	22
JOQ - Epee	46
JOQ - Saber	9
SNQ - Foil	40
SNQ - Epee	47
SNQ - Saber	19

Quals Divided by Sex

Events	Expected Number of Entries
JOQ - Men	46
JOQ - Women	31
SNQ - Men	69
SNQ - Women	37

Discussion:

Five of the last 10 Division tournaments have lost money. Rental space has significantly increased post covid and with many qualification paths, we have a decline in fencers participating.

The Chair was contacted by Tigran that several clubs were interested in hosting the Division qualifiers. Tigran felt that the Division should not be losing money at all. Tigran suggested that clubs split the events and host them. The clubs would collect all the registration monies and hire bout committee, Referees, and return 10% to the division. Tigran spoke to a few clubs that were interested: Fortune Fencing, Los Angeles International Fencing Club (LAIFC), and United Fencing Academy. Michael said he could ask Brando Mesinese, if LAIFC is interested again.

Due to the number of events – the events could be split up by weapon or gender.

Mike Vasquez questioned, “Why hasn’t this been done before?” - It is a lengthy process.

Some clubs that are interested in bidding have organized large regional tournaments and would be capable of handling a division qualifier. It was opposed that not all regional tournaments organizers run these tournaments well. There are lots of factors to consider. For example: There was an event where the restrooms had no toilet paper. The bout committee (BC) is in charge of verifying membership. At the division qualifiers, it is restricted to us citizens or permanent Residents and also under Southern California Division. Any mishandling of the tournament, would also annul the entire tournament.

The Chair has brought this up with USA Fencing and one solution was to add additional events while hosting the qualifiers. The division has added additional events and still saw low numbers in registration. If the Division keeps losing money, the division will not be able to do anything else. The Secretary added that the Division should use the yearly rebates from USA Fencing to offset the costs of the tournaments.

Splitting the events by weapon would affect fencers that fence multiple weapons. If two clubs hosted on the same day; the fencer would not be able to do both. If there are events that have no bids, then the Division is left with an even smaller event that we would be forced to host, on days that may not be as free of conflicts as the date(s) chosen in the bid. The smaller the event, the less likely we are to have an event that is likely to break-even financially. The Vice Chair also mentioned that for the grounded strips (for epee and foil), if two clubs run the events on the same day, there are not enough Division strips to accommodate both events at the same time.

Tim Robinson summarized – There are two issues: Venue and Organizer. There is no one club that can run the entire event and can we trust the clubs to organize this. We could send an Observer from the Board to the tournament. There are 12 events for the JOs and Summer National Qualifiers. We can try to have clubs host the JOs and in parallel the division looks for dates to host the SN Qualifiers. It was suggested that it was not cost saving, if the tournament was held on multiple days due to cost of BC and Referees. As for venues, the Chair was looked at over 400 venues to no avail. Costs are too high. The tournament needs 8000 square feet of space.

Motion: Tim moved that we proceed with the plan to have clubs bid for the option of hosting the Division Qualifiers with the understanding that events that received no bids would be hosted at Tigran's club.

Ayes: 3
Nays: 5
Abstain: 1

The motion is dismissed.

Greg offered to reach out to LAUSD schools. The Southern California Scholastic League could also share a large venue and split the cost of Venue and referees as done in the past at Pasadena City College. Greg will also call the LA Civic Center to inquire of venues.

Next Meeting will be Aug 27th, 2024 at 7pm via Zoom.

Meeting Adjourned at 8pm

Respectfully submitted.

Karen Lieu (Secretary)