

GREEN MOUNTAIN DIVISION

Annual Business Meeting Minutes—June 17, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 12:15 p.m.

PRESENT: Don Selby, Viveka Fox, Dan Crocket, Ray Schuppe, Sharon Schuppe, Kevin Kite, Alex Kite, Adam Glazer.

ELECTION: Viveka Fox reported that the unopposed slate of officers had received a majority of the votes cast. Don Selby moved to accept the results of the election. Viveka Fox seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed. The GMD's officers for the next season are:

- President: Don Selby
- Vice president: Paul Rossi
- Treasurer: Ray Schuppe
- Co-secretaries: Michelle McCauley and Kevin Kite

PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND DISCUSSION:

Electric bibs. Don asked Viveka for information about the new bibs required by the USFA for rated foil events. Viveka reported that we must use the new bibs if we want to rate foil. In her opinion, the cheap overlays for converting regular epee masks into the new foil configuration are unworkable; they are of poor quality, the conversion cannot be done quickly or easily, and the overlays are unlikely to last over time. Currently, Leon Paul offers a high quality mask that allows for quick changes from electric to regular bibs and back, but the mask costs more than purchasing separate masks. This situation creates a difficulty for new fencers entering the sport, because, as a practical matter, a new fencer will have to purchase separate masks for foil and epee. Concern was expressed that this might create an impediment to attracting new fencers.

Ray suggested that the problem might be resolved if the post of the epee were taped when facing a fencer who is using one of the new bibs in an epee bout. After discussion, this suggestion was considered unworkable because it would require a fencer to get his or her opponent to tape their tip, something that the opponent might not wish to do.

A discussion was then held about what the Division could do to solve this problem. One idea was for the division to purchase masks that would be shared by the clubs, but given the Division's traditional policy of trying to prevent the Division itself from owning things, this idea was rejected. Ultimately, it was decided that resolution of the bib problem should happen at the club level, rather than the division level. Viveka reported that she plans to purchase several rated masks or bib overlays for the VFA and that these masks would be available for tournament fencers to share; the club will not be able to purchase separate masks for each member.

Other solutions were suggested, such as having the clubs subsidize the purchase of the new equipment by members. (This thread was taken up again during the discussion of knickers below.)

Knickers: Don Selby noted that last year, the GMD had resolved (1) to require proper attire for all fencers over 12; (2) to buy some number of knickers for knicker-less people; and (3) to set up a “Knickers for the Knicker-less” committee to be headed by Don Selby. Don observed that he had not acted on these resolutions because he found that, by and large, people were all wearing knickers at the tournaments, and that he had taken to keeping a few extra pairs of knickers in his bag for those who did not have any.

Based on this report, a motion was made and seconded to rescind the knicker plan from last year and dissolve the committee. This motion passed unanimously.

A discussion was then held on the authority of the GMD to subsidize equipment purchases, even beyond knickers, up to, say, 50% of the cost to a fencer. It was noted that the GMD already had authority to make grants to the clubs for any use, and the clubs also had the authority to make scholarships or financial aid to their members. A discussion was held about possible tests for grant or scholarship eligibility, including whether a club carried insurance, whether a club sent a certain number of fencers to tournaments, whether a club has 10 paid USFA members, or whether a club is a USFA club. The consensus was that if a club was a USFA club, then the GMD would offer some level of assistance to the club. As authority to do this already exists, no board action was necessary. Ray could simply come up with a grant application for equipment subsidies.

USFA membership: There was a general discussion on the difficulties of interacting with the USFA, and the USFA’s apparent lack of interest in fencing at the club and division level.

Website: A discussion was held about the need to update the GMD website, to bring it up to date and make it more user-friendly. Tim Dart has done some code. It was agreed that Kevin should contact Tim and Adam to find out what's been done and update the website. Ray asked that any website changes keep the current tournament report process in place.

VICE-PRESIDENT’S REPORT: Paul Rossi, via email, expressed concern about promoting and increasing kid membership. He suggested that the GMD create some sort of packet that would help draw young fencers in, both to the clubs and to tournaments. A general discussion was then held on ways to improve youth membership and participation. Alex suggested that Sunday tournaments interfere with church and that youth tournaments should be held on Saturday as often as possible. Alex also suggested that some youth fencers might not be going to tournaments because they fear they aren’t good enough to compete. Viveka suggested using collectible awards, with a final prize, to encourage attendance at all the youth events. Viveka agreed to fashion such a prize system to be implemented at this year’s youth tournaments.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The GMD's net worth is at a record high. This is due to some reduced expenses, particularly with respect to awards.

The GMD has not received any membership rebates from USFA yet.

The GMD currently has a surplus. Ray observed that tournament events have been delayed over the last year due to printer troubles, and he moved to use a portion of the surplus to purchase a fast, reasonably priced laser printer for the GMD. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Don observed that our net worth had been climbing consistently over recent years and asked why. Ray attributed the increase to reduced award costs and reduced scholarships to JOs.

Ray also reported that there have been some reporting mistakes, particularly with respect to coupons and receipts from tournament events. He moved to require that coupons and receipts be submitted with tournament reports to reduce the reporting mistakes. Viveka seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Event fees were discussed. It was decided they should be kept the same during next year's season.

COMPETITION CALENDAR:

A discussion was held about avoiding scheduling conflicts that reduce attendance at tournaments. It was agreed that tournaments should not be scheduled on dates that the SAT would be administered.

Other topics discussed during the schedule planning included:

Women's events: A discussion was held concerning whether women's events should be continued as separate, rated events. It was observed that, based on attendance records, our women's events were not servicing out-of-state fencers, which means that our primary interest in holding women's events should be for the benefit of our division members. A discussion was held about holding women's events as special pull-out events, as was done at Fort Ticonderoga this year. Such events would have to be unsanctioned events and would not support a rating. There was a sense that such unsanctioned, pullout events would nonetheless be enjoyable and of value to our division membership. A discussion was held about which tournaments might best support such a pullout event, and it was decided that the October Open might best serve that purpose. This decision was incorporated into the tentative tournament schedule.

Adult participation: Viveka expressed an interest in encouraging increased adult participation at tournaments. She suggested that Development Day be devoted to adult fencers and that Development Day include a social component after the event. These suggestions were incorporated into the tentative schedule.

After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and agreed to by unanimous vote to accept the following tentative tournament schedule:

- Fall Foliage (Open & E) – UVM, Sept 29
- October Open & Youth (with women pull out like Fort Ti) – Westport, October sometime
- JO Qualifiers – VFA, Nov 3 or 4
- Development Day (Adults, party, unsanctioned) – VFA, Nov 11
- December Open & Youth – Upper Valley, December sometime
- January Open & E – Digger, January sometime
- Groundhog Open & Team – Westport, Feb 2 or 3
- Foil Epee Doubles & Unrated – Upper Valley, Mid Feb
- Middlebury Open (Youth, Vets, Open, Unrated) – VFA, Mar 2 & 3
- Summer Nat. Qual. & Ref Clinic – UVM, March 28 or 29
- April D & Youth – Upper Valley, April sometime
- Full Circle Foil (Open, E or U) – Westport, early May
- Fort Ti – VFA, May 25

NEW BUSINESS: Sharon suggested awarding a “Spirit Award” to recognize ongoing enthusiasm and/or sportsmanship by youth fencers. It was decided that the Junior Team, headed by Sharon, would create a procedure to monitor the youth fencers during the youth events, to identify appropriate candidates for the award, and to choose the eventual recipient. Sharon accepted this charge on behalf of herself and the Junior Team.

ADJOURNMENT: No further business presenting itself, Don moved to adjourn the meeting, Viveka seconded the motion, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 1:47 p.m.