

## GREEN MOUNTAIN DIVISION

### Annual Business Meeting Minutes—June 9, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 11:13 a.m

**PRESENT:** Don Selby, Paul Rossi, Adam Glazer, Jennifer Dunn, Keegan Harris, Keith Puffer, Jack Brisson, Sharon Schuppe, Alex Kite, Viveka Fox, Ray Schuppe, Aggie Fredette, Julie Lamaroux

**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. The motion was seconded. The motion was unanimously passed. The GMD's officers for the next season are:

President: Don Selby  
Vice president: Paul Horak  
Treasurer: Ray Schuppe  
Secretaries: Kevin Kite

Viveka suggested that we need to cultivate new officers, especially for the post of treasurer, to both expand individual involvement within the division and to relieve division members who have been serving as officers for some time. She reminded everyone that the officers need only be adults. Up and coming, newer adult fencers would make splendid candidates for officers. Ray reminded everyone that the position of Treasure requires someone with a measure of financial acumen.

#### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND DISCUSSION:**

**Tournament Attendance and Cancellation.** Don opened discussion about strange quirks in tournament attendance and scheduling this year. Turnout was low at some events, and the Mid Vermont Melee was cancelled. Viveka suggested that the Mid-Vermont Melee suffered from late and poor scheduling, being scheduled for the first weekend after New Year's Day, with little lead time. Key people were missing for the date, and Ray suggested there was a referee shortage. In addition, school boards have been generally been slow to grant permission, leading to last minute scheduling. Digger reported that he cancelled the Mid-Vermont Melee in part because he was experiencing some personal disruption at the time, and because the preregistrations were very low. A discussion was held how to prevent these difficulties in future. It was decided to post the planned dates without first seeking confirmation from the schools, so fencers could plan on the dates; if the dates don't work then we will change them as needed.

**Grants.** Don observed that we don't have a formal process for giving out grants. He asked Ray to report on the viability of grants. Ray said we have money to give away (\$5000). A discussion was held about whether we should be holding so much cash, given we are a nonprofit. Do we have too much money? Will we have tax consequences? How should we deliver grants? Do we need a more formal process? Any process for delivering grants should be transparent; all the clubs need to be involved. There should be clearly written guidelines.

Don read the following proposed grant guidelines for individuals, prepared by Ray:

Individual: (Usually sponsorship for travel to larger competitions)

- Must show a financial need.
- Must be an active competitor at local tournaments.
- Must be dedicated to the sport as interpreted by executive committee.
- Should show promise of future achievements.
- Must provide copy of expense receipts within 2 months of grant.
- Previous recipients of grants will be given lower priority over new recipients.
- Typically will be limited to a % of the actual cost.

After the guidelines were read, a discussion of the particulars followed. Ray suggested that grant availability should be determined by a percentage of available funds. What percentage? Paul suggested there should be a maximum percentage set, with the percentage to actually be granted set beneath that ceiling by discretion. 75% max?

Should we take athletic ability into account? Preferences for more promising leads. Need confidentiality.

Don also read proposed club startup guidelines, prepared by Ray:

Club Grant: (Start up) For practice equipment (jacket's, dry foils etc)

- Must show a financial need.
- Must have a minimum of 7 USFA members that currently are unattached. List of names must be provided, can be prospective. However within 2 months of the grant 7 USFA memberships needs to be confirmed.
- Must show proof of insurance, either USFA club insurance or proof of insurance under a college or sponsoring organization.
- Must provide copy of expense receipts within 2 months of grant.
- Typically will be limited to a % of the actual cost.

Alteration: don't set such a high competitive membership number. Viveka suggested there ought to be a competence requirement if they are asking for money. Proof of insurance. Percentage only? This would ensure that new clubs were committed. Does this requirement create a horse-cart problem, where club can't start without money and without a club, they can't raise money.

Growth grants for clubs for equipment, weapons, clothing, and masks? Don read proposed club growth grant guidelines, prepared by Ray:

Club Grant: (Growth grant) For competition equipment (electric weapons, clothing, body cords, scoring equipment)

- Must show a financial need.
- Must have a minimum of 10 competitive USFA members.
- Must show proof of insurance, either USFA club insurance or proof of insurance under a college or sponsoring organization.
- Must provide copy of expense receipts within 2 months of grant.
- Typically will be limited to a % of the actual cost.

Number of competitive members requirements might limit certain clubs. Viveka suggested, maybe 8; there should be some push to raise competitive members if a club is asking for electric equipment. Digger suggested that making it a push causes the trouble of pushing, rather than encouraging growth. (We're talking USFA members here.)

Don motion. Paul second. To accept guidelines. Motion carries.

Grounded strip discussion? Ray wants to get out of the equipment business. Discussion of UVM request for strip. If purchased by grant, GMD would want a string attached to use at events.

**USFA Membership/Nationality.** Don reminded everyone that only US citizens or legal permanent residents can participate in qualifier events. Meet managers need to be clear on that requirement and request proof of nationality. A suggestion was made that tournament descriptions on Askfred should state that requirement explicitly to forewarn Canadian fencers.

Should there be minimum number of fencers for events? Digger suggested that was part of what happened in January. After discussion, it was decided that with respect to qualifier events, the point is moot, because if there are less than four preregistrations, the pre-registrants are automatically qualified, and the event is cancelled.

A discussion was held about how qualifiers not making money. VFA lost money on NJOs. Frustration was expressed. There's work put into the qualifier events, but not much happens. A suggestion was made that we pair some other event with the qualifiers, because many people don't plan to go to the qualifiers because they don't plan to attend the qualified events later one. Paul offered to hold the qualifier events because his venue is free, and there is no money to lose; Viveka expressed concern that that moving qualifiers far away from VFA members may reduce attendance overall.

A discussion was held about reclaiming GMD equipment, if club has gone defunct. Don will investigate and try to reclaim any such equipment.

Website. Kevin reported that progress on the GMD website was stalled by a combination of personal difficulties and inability to gain access to the existing GMD server. Don made motion have Kevin, Adam and Ray to spend money on a new website, with a cost limit of \$150 per year and \$100 for startup. Keegan seconded. Motion passed.

#### **VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

**Tangible "Thank Yous."** A discussion was held about the best way to recognize people who have been very helpful with fencing and the division. After discussion, it was determined that the EC has discretion to do this. A motion to consider a permanent, formal process of thank-yous was tabled.

**Composition of the EC.** A discussion was held about the need for a tie-breaker in the Executive Committee (EC) in the event of tied vote. Research determined that the by-laws have a formal process for breaking ties on the EC. A further discussion was held about the composition of the EC, which, in practice has been limited to the four elected officers. The Bylaws indicate that each club is entitled to be

represented by at least one member on the EC. In order to properly constitute the EC, we need to identify the member clubs and their respective club representative to the EC. Viveka will do that, and will provide a list to supplement the minutes.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Ray reported that we have extra money. He explained that we have been making money from coupons expiring and not being used. GMD is in good financial shape.

**Registration Fees.** Viveka mentioned confusion about registration fees for events. She suggested that GMD clubs should keep registration fees standard across the clubs and hold to a 5-day preregistration requirement.

**Amount of Grants.** Ray suggested a recommended cap for grants: Twenty-five percent (25%) of the year's previous funds should be eligible for grant funding in the next fencing season, with a maximum of 12.5% to be used in the first half of the season. However, this rule would apply only when the previous year's balance is \$2666.67 or more. If the previous year's funds are below \$2500, the grant funding shall be limited solely to amounts in excess of \$2000. A motion was made to accept this limit. It was seconded and passed.

### **COMPETITION CALENDAR**

Prior to discussing the competition calendar, a number of calendar-related topics were discussed:

**Youth Involvement.** Viveka asked for ideas regarding ways to improve youth involvement. Suggestions: Create "novice" tournaments, a circuit of novice events, with each hosted by a different club. It was suggested these novice events could be held after practice? However, members pointed out that the advantages of holding such events at meets are that novice fencers will be able to see a meet, and see what it's like. Moreover, practices are for all fencers to practice. We can hold "novice scrimmages" for unrated fencers at a tournament and it's OK with USFA. Doing so, however, will make tournament days longer, and imposes on refs who will be fencing. We also don't want to interfere with unrated events.

**Fun day! (Development day).** This year, Fun Day could be oriented toward novice adult and teen fencers. Fun Day could be used as a kick-off for three novice scrimmages. Fun Day could use a sorting hat, with random teams. This day can be used to teach novices how to use electric equipment and how to use standard score sheets, etc. in a non-intimidating, noncompetitive format.

Sharon observed that for teenagers, the social aspect is important. How can we make Fun Day more social for teen fencers? Viveka suggested that Junior Team could organize an icebreaker, or ref teams, etc. Perhaps an afterparty social event, with an emphasis on Inclusiveness and sociability.

**Gender specific events.** Because gender specific events haven't seemed to work well in the past, they were not highlighted in this year's events. Viveka was asked if we received any complaints due to their absence. Viveka said we only received complaints from out-of-state people who are used to those kinds

of events. Viveka suggested we should serve our core fencers. After discussion, it seemed there was no need to include gender specific events this year.

**Youth Passports.** A discussion was held about the effectiveness of youth passports this year. The passports seemed to work well because the numbers for youth events were up. The physical object of the passport seemed to work well, even though kids lost them often. Viveka suggested that having the schedule in the passport also worked well. Website should have the youth circuit schedule available.

**Youth events.** A discussion was held about the number of youth events to be held. Scheduling five (5) youth events was suggested, with Paul holding a youth foil and Viveka holding a youth epee at Fort Ti). Don suggested scheduling 5 and leaving clubs free to add other any youth events they'd like. There was concern that adding extra youth events would put a strain on our ref resources, and concern that youth events should not be scheduled unless the organizer was certain the sufficient support personnel were available. Discussion was tabled.

**Spirit awards.** The effectiveness of the spirit awards was discussed. The consensus was that the spirit awards were a good idea, poorly executed. After discussion about how the execution of the award might be improved, it was suggested that the spirit award be dropped.

**Sabre.** A discussion was held about whether sabre could be developed more fully within the division. It was noted that, although Tyler Ford is out there, he's not in touch at the moment. It was observed that without consistent teaching support, sabre doesn't seem to prosper. Keegan reported that UVM is interested in growing sabre, but the sabrists are generally self-sufficient; without teaching, it can't grow. Viveka suggested that maybe UVM could host a sabre event or a sabre team challenge. Viveka nominate Keegan to get in contact with c or higher sabrists and discuss what we can do to grow sabre.

**Ref's clinic.** John wasn't available this year to hold a ref clinic. It was observed that we have a ref shortage, and we need to grow refs. Ray suggested we require one rated ref in each club. Perhaps Junior Team could make it a requirement to become rated?

### **Proposed Competition Calendar.**

After discussion, the following Proposed Competition Calendar was adopted:

Date	Organizer	Event
September 28, 2013	UVM	Fall Foliage Classic: Open, E and Under
October 12 or 19, 2013	Westport	Open & Youth
November 16, 2013	VFA	Development Day
November 17, 2013	VFA	JO Qualifiers
December 7, 2013	Upper Valley	Open, E and Under or Novice
January 11, 2014	MidVermont	Open and Youth
February 7-8, 2014	Westport	Groundhog Open: Open, Youth, E and Under
March 1-2, 2014	VFA	Middlebury Open
March 22, 2014	Upper Valley	Foil Epee Doubles U and under
April 26, 2014	UVM	D & Youth

April 27, 2014	UVM	Summer National Qualifiers
May 3 or 10, 2014	Westport	Full Circle Foil: Novice, E and Under, Youth
May 24, 2014	VFA	Fort Ti: Epee and Youth

**[At this point, I was out of the room for a brief period to help Michelle depart for NY—any input on what occurred in my absence would be appreciated.]**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Digger reported that he has a sabre student who hasn't competed but is going to MIT for sabre class. Would clubs let other clubs come in to witness sabre? Keegan agreed to look into the situation.

Julie Lamaroux suggested it would be helpful to hold clinics, where adult fencers could receive individual coaching. She also suggested expanding events to include raffle prizes and other things.

Jack Brisson suggested that the winners of the first foil and epee novice events in could receive a USFA membership.

**Meeting Adjourned 1:57 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Kite