

2023 Powerlifting America General Assembly Meeting

AGENDA / MINUTES

Embassy Suites at Hilton Scottsdale, Arizona
McDowell Ballroom
Saturday, June 3, 2023
8:00pm

1) Welcome message - President, Robert Keller

2) Roll call of Delegates

Robert Keller, President
Bill Helmich, Vice President via electronic method
Miryam Elm, Secretary General
Tamara Lopes, Treasurer
Mark Leebrick, SE Regional Director
Steve Mann, NE Regional Director via electronic method
Tim Mercer, West Regional Director
Rodney Elm, SW Regional Director
Bill Clayton, Technical Committee Chairman
LS McClain, Athlete Committee Co-Chair
Melissa Copeland, Athlete Committee Co-Chair
Mike Zawilinski, Executive Director - Non Voting
Maura Shuttleworth, Advisor - Non Voting

3) Accept the agenda

Agenda approved unanimously.

4) President's report - Robert Keller

Robert - Thank you to Miryam and Rodney Elm for organizing the event and a job well done. Introduced Board members. Sponsorships are the crux of the organization, without SBD and Eleiko we would not be here. Thank you again to our sponsors.

Currently a provisional member with the IPF. A vote will take place to become full members at the General Assembly Meeting in Malta.

Memberships - approximately 800 members ahead of where we were last year.

USADA - Drug testing is very important in the sport of powerlifting. We are working in conjunction with the anti doping agency and signed an agreement with USADA on March 3rd 2023. Victoria Patterson from USADA is here representing USADA. Thanked Victoria for their partnership with us. Victoria is excited to announce that powerlifting

america is the only powerlifting organization to have an agreement with USADA in the United States.

Excited to bring events, education resources about athlete rights, responsibilities and testing. USADA will be managing the results. Education will be there tomorrow with education materials. Victoria worked to get athletes tested around the world in her prior experience with ufc. Recognized by USADA for the education program for sub junior and junior athletes and will be working on out of competition testing.

Eleiko - working with PA to build the coaching program.

Tamara lopes provided additional details -

The course will be approved to receive CEU's

Online modules - test at the end of modules - 8 total

Once online portion is complete next step is to apply for didactic part of the in-person course Nutrition, basic a and p, basic kinesiology, good foundation for coaching, for level 1 club level, next national level, then international level certification.

Last year in 2022, we sent a national team to every championship. IPF was happy with the job that PA did in getting teams to IPF Worlds and the NAPF Championship. Mike will speak to that in his report. Athletes were able to lift in national championships without a pause. Congrats to Mike.

Social Media - Over 20k hits on IG. Paul Bellinger, great job thank you.

Bill Clayton, building referees, great job with referee tests.

Up 20-30 referees from last year. 30 plus states with referees.

Athletes committee - 2 of the best athlete representatives in the organization. They are available for our athletes with 3 additional members.

The way forward - working on a few things.

IPF Bench Press World Championships with close to 1000 athletes

BP Nationals in 3rd week in january, austin

Assembling the organization. The President and Secretary General positions will be elected in 2024.

Members will have a say and a vote. We feel this is important for our organization.

We are still building our infrastructure. We ask that members become involved. Even volunteering at a local or national meet. Be a voice for our organization. You are valued.

World Games - A way forward to be recognized by the USOC. Robert will undertake this project next year and will be working on IOC recognition with IPF President Gaston Parage and General Manager Emanuel Schieber.

5) Vice President's report - Bill Helmich

Powerlifting America conducted its first Sub-Junior, Junior and Masters Classic and Equipped National Championships June 18 and 19, 2022. During this competition, the first General Assembly was held. The General Assembly on June 3, 2023 will be the second General Assembly for the organization. This report will address the period of time between June 2022 and June 2023.

The International Powerlifting Federation (IPF) World Games were held July 8-10, 2022, in Birmingham, Alabama. I represented Powerlifting America and the United States as a referee on the platform and as a member of the Jury for this competition. The United States and Powerlifting America had three lifters medal in this event.

The North American Powerlifting Federation (NAPF) North American Championship was held August 15- 20, 2022, in Panama City, Panama. I represented Powerlifting America and the United States as a referee on the platform and primarily as a member of the Jury for this competition. The Women's team took second to Canada in Classic and the Men's team took fourth in classic while the Men's team took second to Costa Rica in Equipped.

The IPF Masters Worlds was held in St Johns, Newfoundland, Canada on October 8-15, 2022. I represented Powerlifting America and the United States as the Head Coach for the Masters Team. In total Powerlifting America won Six Team golds medals, Six Team Silver medals and One Team Bronze medal second only to Canada in Team medals. The members of the team set Nine World records – more than any other country in the world.

The IPF Equipped Open Worlds was held in Viborg, Denmark on November 14-19, 2022. I was invited as a representative of Powerlifting America to be the competition Technical Secretary for the meet and also was a member of the jury for the Competition.

The Secretary General, Miryam Elm, the Treasurer, Tamara Lopes and I became the Selection Committee for the development and creation of the various standing committees of the Federation. Currently the Athlete Committee and the Law and Legislative Committee have been or are being established. Position descriptions have been developed for the Chair and the Committee members.

Applicants for the Athlete Committee were solicited. Based on resumes submitted, applicants were evaluated. Based on the evaluation, interviews were conducted with several applicants and a five-member Athlete Committee was established. Currently the Selection Committee has identified and selected a Chairperson for the Law and Legislative Committee. The Selection Committee in conjunction with the Chairperson has worked together to finalize for ratification of the Constitution for Powerlifting America.

The Selection Committee and the Chairperson of the Law and Legislative Committee has developed a draft of the Position Description for the members of the Law and Legislative Committee. The Selection Committee is currently developing position description for the Technical Committee.

I have developed and have submitted as draft to the Law and Legislative Committee the following Policies: Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest, a Safeguard Policy, a Bill of Rights, How to Report Complaints and a Complaint form. The last two have been reviewed by the Treasurer. I have submitted a draft for discussion to the Technical Chairman, comments of the IPF rules of performance.

I will be coaching the Masters Team at the World Championships in Mongolia. I will also be assisting in coaching at the North American Championships for the Masters team members. I will also be preparing other policies and procedures as needed and working with the Executive Committee on finalizing the Federation By-Laws.

6) Secretary General's report - Miryam Elm

Thanked the board for work this past year in building the infrastructure. The work is time consuming and all is unpaid volunteer work.

Our commitment with each decision is to have complete transparency and to be in the best interest of the athlete.

Bylaws - We started work on the bylaws in 2022 and got approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way through them and to work on building out position descriptions for the board and to develop our committees. Our first committee to build out was the Athlete committee with Law and Legislation to follow.

We began work on developing a safeguarding policy and the discipline committee to give athletes a path to bring up issues in a way that is fair and equitable.

Elections are taking place in 2024. We are working towards a constitutional amendment that allows members to participate in the elections. Research into types of electronic voting software will need to be done. The IPF is using electronic voting in Malta. We will have an opportunity to see how their system works.

Sport for All - We formed a Sport for All Ad Hoc Committee. The committee is made up of Miryam Elm, Billy Keel, Chip Holquist, on the IPF Sport for All Commission and Gene Bell. We will be meeting soon and first on the agenda is to start work on securing a memorandum of understanding with the Special Olympics and to grow special olympics throughout the U.S. Establishing Paralympics within PA is on the horizon as well.

7) Treasurer's report - Tamara Lopes

Tamara - 501c3 - keeping organization accountable

Our accountant is keeping a close eye on our books
Looking at grants and foundations, we are looking at support funds that we can provide athletes to help with travel, training and world events.

Anti doping - 8k 2022 from (quadrupled, gold cadillac version) NEED ACTUAL NUMBERS PAID FROM IPF INCORPORATED AS AN IN KIND DONATION

In kind donations for anti doping controls

Powerlifting America Inc.

Statement of Activity

January - December 2022

Cash Basis

TOTAL Revenue

Contributed income

Corporate & foundation grants	\$50,000.00
Total Contributed income	\$50,000.00
In Kind Donation	\$
Event Revenue	\$35,005.00
Membership Dues	\$127,050.00
Sales	\$4,175.00
Sales of Product Revenue	0.00
Services	0.00
Total Revenue	\$216,230.00

Cost of Goods Sold	\$31,304.19
Shipping	\$501.90
Total Cost of Goods Sold	\$31,806.09
GROSS PROFIT	\$184,423.91

Expenditures

Advertising & marketing	\$3,250.40
Contract & professional fees	\$6,855.81
Accounting fees	\$894.00
Anti Doping Fees	\$7,920.00
Coaching Fees	\$24,427.84
Total Contract & professional fees	\$40,097.65
Event Costs	\$46,505.99
Event Contract Labor	\$3,020.53
Event Fees	\$21,740.54
Event Travel & Lodging	\$10,646.38
Event Venue Costs	\$25,301.04

Misc Event Expenses	\$5,094.90
Referee Fees	\$1,106.63
Reimburse detail needed	\$931.76
Staff Meals	\$2,151.91
Total Event Costs	\$116,499.68
Insurance	\$6.74
Liability insurance	\$2,357.20
Total Insurance	\$2,363.94
Merchant Fees - Paypal	\$3,945.79
Merchant Fees - Stripe	\$5,990.92
Occupancy Rent	\$211.00
Total Occupancy	\$211.00

8) Executive Director report - Michael Zawilinski

Membership:

2022 Total 1817

2022 6/3: 999

2023 6/3: 1901 + 902 (90.29% increase)

World Championship Teams

56 World Champions

13 Team Championships

Sanctions:

2022 Total: 55 (including 3 Nationals)

2023 As of 6/3: 73 (Including 5 Nationals)

2024 2

Media:

Instagram: 20,000 followers (4700 going into 2022 Classic Open)

Peak - we reached over 1 million accounts with 3 million views in 30 days.

YouTube:

Late February Started to expand our YouTube Content including post meet press conferences and podcasts. So far, we included press conferences at classic open national and here classic age and equipped national. Podcast has had 38 episodes and is looking to expand the type of content.

Staff:

Media Paul (September 2022)

7 Volunteers

Operations: Luke Mellon (May 1, 2023)

Store: John Helmich (May 1, 2023)

Notes:

- Growing staff horizontally to be prepared for the wave of athletes coming
- We need more (more meets, more referees, more of everything)
- Expanding Sponsorships and Strategic Partnerships
- Website development
 - Hall of World Champions
 - Academic Championships History
 - Recognition (Teams and All Americans Certificates)
 - Newsletters/Website News
 - Expanding Event Director Resource Center
 - Sanctioning process is going to be updated with a workflow including regional chairs (Aug/September)
 - Increasing information for members
 - Regional Information
 - International (coaching and lifting in and for other federations)

9) Regional reports

Region 1 Northeast, Steve Mann

Pennsylvania, New York, New Hampshire working with directors in New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland and New York City. Looking for new directors and locations. Have a lead on potential meet directors, persons to talk to. Expanding with Ray Williams, who is holding an event.. We will have opportunities to get into states to run an event. Where we are running meets we are growing. Word is out that we are present.

High point this year. 1st high school nationals. With over 230 lifters. More events are coming this fall.

Region 2 Southeast, Mark Leebrick

Current Membership

1. Alabama-2 Members, 2 Referees
2. Arkansas-0 Members
3. Florida-243 Members, 15 Referees
4. Georgia-44 Members, 5 Referees
5. Louisiana-71 Members, 6 Referees
6. Mississippi-20 Members, 4 Referees
7. North Carolina-18 Members, 4 Referees
8. South Carolina-5 Members, 0 Referees

9. Tennessee-18 Members, 4 Referees

421 Members, 40 Referees

Recent Competitions

1. Alabama-0 Competitions
2. Arkansas-0 Competitions
3. Florida-22 Competitions, 3 National Championships
4. Georgia-2 Competitions
5. Louisiana-2 Competitions
6. Mississippi-2 Competitions
7. North Carolina-2 Competitions
8. South Carolina-2 Competitions
9. Tennessee-2 Competitions

30 Total Competitions

Upcoming 2023 Competitions as of 5/22/2023

Florida-6

Louisiana-1

The Southeast Region has hosted thirty competitions since the inception of Powerlifting America, with three of those being National Championships. We are always in search of competition directors and referees in order to grow the Southeast Region as well as Powerlifting America.

We are in the process of securing a venue to host 2024 High School Nationals in New Orleans/Kenner. The venues we are in negotiation with are within five miles of the New Orleans Airport. The venues provide shuttle service to and from the airport. There is a lot to offer in the area and we plan to organize tours and other attractions for the athletes and coaches.

Region 3 Central, Vacant

Region 4 Southwest, Rodey Elm

States within the region, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma and Hawaii.

Meets have been held in

Arizona (9 meets)

New Mexico (6 meets)

Texas (4 meets)

Held (1) meet in Southern California in 2022

We sanctioned a meet with a meet director/gym in Hawaii at the end of 2023 and are working to help train their referees there. They plan to hold several meets a year there.

Planning to assist another meet director there in 2023.

Have new meet directors in Arizona.

Growing referee pool to support meet directors and holding free Meet Day 101 workshops regularly to help athletes and coaches understand what to expect at their first meet.

3 Special Olympic meets were also held in 2023 and plan to grow Special Olympics in Arizona.

Beginning work with the Regional Directors to build the Regional Pathways for future regional events.

Region 5 West, Tim Mercer

We're beginning to gain a bit of momentum in the West Region. I just came onboard as the West Regional Chair earlier this year, to relieve Tamara, who is doing duty as the PA Treasurer. My focus in the short time in my role has been to begin to establish PA in the Northwest. The West Region includes Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. California and Nevada held meets in 2022 (as well as this year) but no other states in the region had held meets leading into this year. We just held a meet in SW Washington (the greater Portland-metro area) in April, and have another on the calendar for October. We're also working on leads to hold 2 meets in the Seattle area in 2024.

We've been working on building the referee infrastructure in the Northwest as well, as we've administered one referee exam, gotten multiple other referees grandfathered in from a USAPL credential (and more of those to come), and have some lined up for testing later this year.

The rest of this year we'll be focusing on onboarding meet directors and referees in the region, as well as following up on meet leads in other cities. If we can continue to hold meets in California, Nevada, & Washington, we can build some forward momentum, while looking towards Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Alaska in the future. If anyone has leads on gyms in the region who want to host or direct meets, or PA members who want to become referees, please send them my direction.

10) Committee reports

a) Technical Committee

Want to thank referees that have helped locally at meets. Referees helping meet directors. We have performed zoom proctoring of state tests. We are trying to be creative to help meet the needs of meet director in holding meets.. Electronic test - mike has worked to flow seamlessly. the process for results to get to the test taker. We are working to build national referees. If you know referees from other organizations we are accepting referee transfers. We will review their credentials and if they are a good fit we will transfer their credentials.

If I can help meet directors to build out referees, please reach out.

Every referee goes through background checks. We believe in safeguarding principles and have reviewed several companies. Background isn't superficial but is a thorough vetting to protect members.

Safesport - we must be recognized by the USOC. We take the safety of our members seriously. 189 coaches and referees have passed the background check. Board members have been screened in addition to committee members.

b) Athlete Committee

The Athlete Committee kicked off in early April of this year. The members of the athlete committee are Michael Rodriguez, Cyndi Line, Knute Douglas, LS McClain, and Melissa Copeland. We're here to support all of our athletes and look forward to being a resource.

Athlete experience Survey in the near term. Broad reaching survey. Interested in getting as much feedback as possible. Pointing resources in the right direction. Input is important. We do want to be sure we are a resource for you all.

In the next couple months, we plan to release an athlete experience survey. We're interested in hearing about the experiences and concerns of all athletes within every age group and every level of competitive experience.

We're also beginning working on resources for meet directors. Without meet directors, we can't offer more local meets to our members. It's important to make sure they're getting the support they need to be successful so that they and the athletes at their meets have a positive experience.

We're currently working to set our agenda of work that can be done to support our athletes over the next year and we want the feedback of the membership.

c) Law and Legislation Committee - Maura Shuttleworth is currently serving in an informal capacity. Helped revise constitution language to its current form.

The committee oversees policies, code of conduct and complaint procedure. A screening procedure will be in place,, sent to appropriate direction and a discipline committee will hear disciplinary issues, appeals etc.

11) Approval of reports -

Action Reports were approved unanimously

12) Proposals and Amendments Vote to Ratify the Powerlifting America Constitution

The board recessed for approximately 10 minutes to review constitution language following discussion related to board members serving as volunteers without compensation.

Action The Board voted unanimously to ratify the Powerlifting America Constitution as amended.

13) Elections will be held in 2024

14) Unfinished Business - None

15) Future National Championships

Bench Press Nationals will be in Austin in January 2024

Working on securing locations for all nationals in 2024 and some in 2025

16) Questions from our members and related discussion

1. Q - Add weight classes beyond the 84+

A - We have accepted the IPF member federation rules and policies and weight classes fall under IPF rules.

2. Q- Now that the rules have changed regarding head on the bench, meaning it's not necessary for judges to see if the head is lifting or moving since that is allowed now, I have a question. Can we wear hats or beanies on the bench now? It would be much more sanitary.

A - This applies to another federation.

3. Q - Can we get some clarity and definition around Article 14? There are international athletes who are coaching at local non-PLA meets, there are coaches who are seen at both PLA and non-PLA national meets.

In the IPF rule book, the wording is "international powerlifting" which would be a common word and IMHO mean it only applies to meets held which international competition, which national or local meets would not fall under A14.

I believe clarity is needed for all members and especially experienced members coming into PLA.

A - Everyone under the IPF umbrella needs to follow all rules and policies under the IPF umbrella for testing. All our athletes are under a different program, in an effort to have all athletes going in same direction for testing

4. Q - Is there anything that can be done to make being a powerlifting coach who coaches athletes across federations a more viable prospect? Currently, coaches have to align with one or another federation and I think no one wins in these cases of exclusivity, even if the reason is WADA's clause.

A- We are discussing the parameters about coaching under Article 14 with the IPF Executive Committee in Malta

5. Q - High school level lifters should be allowed to compete in a state competition regardless of federation and still be able to qualify for nationals. Q - Allow high school level lifters to finish out season with HS program and still have opportunities for nationals. Q - Allowing scholastic programs to be exempt from article 14.

A - Currently, high school programs can use their unsanctioned meets results to use as a qualifier for national events. Programs are moving to hold state meets that are unsanctioned to help qualify athletes for nationals.

6. Q - When offered a position on the World Team or NAPF Team, a lifter should only be able to select one. This gives another lifter a chance to compete internationally and build a base of athletes with international experience.

A - Athletes that win their spot on the team have the choice to accept to compete on the world team and can be listed in the alternate pool for the NAPF team. Each team has selection criteria listed on the website.

7. Q - Are we going to get a balance sheet for 2022? What were the incomes and expenses? How much money was spent on drug test? How much income was brought in from meet directors to cover drug testing? How much income was brought in from sponsors? How much money is currently sitting in the bank account?

A The information was provided during the treasurer's report.

8. Q - Can we include Special Olympic lifters, teenage lifters and collegiate lifters and masters lifters in paying a discounted membership rate.

A This is a challenge to manage being such a new organization. At this time we do not have a mechanism to allow different membership options.

9. Q - We have a very limited number of referees in Tennessee and surrounding states. What is the plan for increasing referees in the southeast over the next year and how might I best help this process along?

Regional Directors can help while working with Technical Chairman to help recruiting efforts.

17) Adjournment