November 2011 Local Association Summit Notes:

Steve Johnson USAC President and CEO started the summit with a brief review of Philosophy and the State of the Sport*.* About 10 years ago, USAC was in a crisis with falling membership and finances. Since then, there has been a re-organization with greater customer focus, long term planning and financial controls. There is a now a better recognition of the importance of grass roots support and role of elite athletics. Membership has grown steadily over most of this past decade although it was relatively flat this past year.

Some of the more significant changes on the horizon include:

* Financial incentives for use the USAC online registration system
* Establishment of Regional Technical Commissions
* Certification of Race Directors
* World Championships in Richmond in 2015
* Electronic Waivers and on-line 1 day licenses

Next, Gorden Weldon, who is the fairly new Managing Director of Membership Services discussed Membership Program Enhancements. He noted that Mountain Biking growth has been strong, especially in the southeast of the US. In 2012, the 7%/$2000 rule for permit fee will be reviewed. The goal is to come up with a revenue neutral change for rollout in 2013. There will be a new race predictor tool available on the website. While electronic waivers will be available, they are not for use by Juniors. In addition, the age of consent is not the same in all states. So, age 19 maybe the cutoff (or possibly 21 depending on Alabama state law).

The new ranking system will be based on a racer’s 3 best results. Beginners start with 600 points. Race quality is based on 90% of the 5 top ranked racers finishing in the top 10. The average of all finishers is then calculated and a points/place value (PPV) determined [ (Average-Quality)/(#Finishers -1) ] . 1st place in a race is worth the Race Quality value, 2nd is Race Quality + PPV, 3rd is Race Quality + 2\* PPV etc…

A racer will need 3 races within 12 months to have a ranking calculated. Eventually, better racers will get the better rankings. A bad race (dropping out) will not hurt a racers ranking.

Michah Rice talked about National Events and then Shawn Farrell talked about the Professional Officials’ Summit. This was the 1st summit since 1987. Some changes planned include a tiered fee structure for officials. There is now a National Technical Commission, with a 4 year term limit. Tom Nee from NY was among those listed. Each LA was also requested to nominate an Official of the Year.

Officials are now being evaluated. 25 were initially evaluated in 2010 with 128 in 2011. The plan is to expand these evaluations to include a dedicated evaluated, USAC staff, Race Directors, Racers and Teams among those who have input to these evaluations.

There is also a plan to also develop a progressive disciplinary policy for Officials. It will begin with a letter of Concern, then Reprimand, Review Committee, Downgrading, Suspension and eventually Refusal of License. So far, 2 or 3 Officials have made it completely thru the policy.

There is now a distance learning option for Level C Officials (DVD).

Different LA’s differ in who makes assignment of Officials for races and the criteria for selection:

* Qualified
* Equity of assignment
* Harmony within crew
* Harmony with event organizer
* Harmony with USAC
* Expense to Race Director

A draft grid for number and type of officials for various types and sizes of events was presented. I challenged the number of officials for smaller cross events (4-6) as being too many.

There has been a recent increase in the number of suits filed against Race Directors due to incidents involving Marshals. Marshals need training and a signed release form. They also need a good pre-job briefing. For example, they should be informed about chasers.

Power of Attorney is not accepted on release forms and also waivers must be legible.

There is insurance available thru USAC for both General Liability ($125 annually) and for director and Officer (quotes available).

Initiative for Certification of Race Directors was presented. Certification may be required for larger events. Low levels certification is possible with a few hours of internet type training modules. However, examinations (and maybe evaluation) is needed for higher levels.

LA’s need all types of paperwork. Signed W-9’s for payment related to services. 1099 if >$600/year. 990-N with IRS annually by May 15th (or 990-EZ or Full 990).

Collection of sales tax on race entry fees is a possibility in some locations.

Jeff Hansen then presented on High School racing. He described several areas (Michigan, Texas, Sierra Nevada and Virginia) where High School leagues have been started. Generally, there is 1 person who spear heads the efforts. Presentations or information meetings are held within High Schools for interested racers. Typically, these are MTB leagues for safety purposes, but Cross could work just about as well.

Jeff will be making a “Getting Started” packet available on the USAC website. Also, there is a breakaway group, NICA, that has formed a conference outside of USAC. While successful, it is more structured and has a higher franchise fee.

Talked briefly with Randy Inglis regarding use of mixed field rule for Cyclocross upgrades. Then found California upgrade official, who stated that it does apply.

Regarding Mountain Biking. If we really wanted it, NYSBRA could probably assume responsibility for this sport within New York. Nationwide, it is a growth area. Just need to discuss with Randy.

Sunday November 6,2011: Open Forum

Discussed 30% denial rate of upgrade request with NYSBRA. Suggested that website could be enhanced to make requirement clearer to racers. Seemed to be accepted by Johnson.

Long discussion on new Ranking and Race Quality system. Concern about riders affecting results by dropping out was reviewed.

Discussion on womens racing. Problems are encountered with Cat 4 to 3 jump since 3’s typically race with 1 & 2. Suggestion made to not always include highest category.

Long discussion on who exactly is responsible for submittal of post event paperwork. There is a variety of responses by the different LA’s. The girls in the office stated that paperwork submitted by LA’s are generally of the highest quality. One issue is that some promoters have been pended because the Chief Referee didn’t send in the paperwork. A suggestion was made for USAC to simplify the paperwork by creating separate forms for Road, Track and Cross.

The USAC site does not work very well for non-competitive events.

Long discussion on all the problems with previously licensed racers racing with 1 day license. Also, the cost of the licenses was discussed and reviewed. Steve Johnson implied that if anything, he’d raise the cost of 1 days license. Cost of dual licenses is also an issue. Johnson stated it’s a white collar sport and that value was more important than cost. (In other words, he wants to improve quality.)

Some LA’s charge for races and some LA’s charge for the year. Washington State, supplies a cloth number for the season as well as all types of costly road signs that meet the states requirements. They defended it as working very will and clarified that rental numbers are available. However, they are 4 digits too. Also, California LA’s supply Officials with photo timing equipment (Apple Laptop and 2000 frame/second camera).

Steve Johnson stated that there is a potential for LA’s to customize the distribution of the $.40/$.40 rebate for use of the on-line registration system.

Sam Callan then went over Rider Skills clinics. In some cases these are followed by races where the mentors ride along and provide safety directions while not affecting the outcome of the race. Some LA’s provide mentors special jerseys and free entry for mentoring. There are also post-race debriefs which can last as long as 30 minutes. Claims were made that these racers are much safer and more likely to remain in the sport. Racer retention was discussed which led into a discussion of Women’s racing since there is not Cat 5.

Goals:

* Lower trepidation
* Improved racing skills
* Improved safety – fewer crashes
* Higher retention
* Connect with Coach
* Connect with LA

Comments were made about potential problems with Coaches using these session as opportunities to build their business as opposed to improving skills. So, some LA’s are very selective as to how can hold a clinic or mentor racers. There is talk of requiring a certified skills instructor to oversee clinics and sign off for the LA.

USAC will offer CSI Clinics (Jan/Feb 2012)

* Must be USAC level 1 or 2 coach
* Must attend and pass on bike course
* Some grandfathering
* Can be funded by rider, club or LA
* CSI must do multiple clinics to retain certification

Fisher from NorCal provided an outline (and offered to fly to New York too).

Rule Changes potential to change Cat 5-4 upgrade wording to use the word “finish”.

Mentored races may count for double.

There was some talk of requiring a skills clinic for upgrades with an advanced clinic for Cat 4 -3.

Concluding comment:

Some LA’s are huge, especially on the West Coast, are very developed and organized and seem to be dominated by Officials’.