



Santa Cruz Lawn Bowls Club
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Dec. 2, 2010

An open letter to USLBA:

We sincerely appreciate energy and concern that the USLBA Board devotes to the sport of bowls. There has been a revitalization and renewed energy much in evidence over the past two years. We have been working within PIMD, particularly with Councilor Souza, and wish to express our gratitude for her assistance. However, members of the Santa Cruz Lawn have several concerns regarding USLBA which remain unanswered.

The sport of lawn bowls in the United States has been in decline for several years and it is urgent that this issue be effectively addressed. In 2010, this was addressed by the hiring of a marketing firm and the creation of a marketing committee. In light of the fact that this firm has been retained for another year for an additional \$30,000, what benchmarks were used to determine the success of this investment? By what standards will success in 2011 be determined?

On this same issue of membership, it is easier to retain current members rather than to recruit new members. Based on the Bowls USA web site listings, there are 159 lawn bowling clubs in the U.S. Of these 100 are USLBA and 59 are non-USLBA (31%). What actions is USLBA planning to encourage these clubs to become USLBA members.

We, in the Santa Cruz Lawn Bowls Club, feel that increased direction and guidance are necessary to encourage the growth of our sport for its future success. Our national organization focuses on a steadily decreasing number of competitive bowlers rather than reaching out to the large number of club bowlers waiting for encouragement. Having inquired of various non-USLBA clubs, why they have opted out, a common complaint has been that members have no sense of belonging to the larger organization.

In order to develop a more effective USLBA, we recommend the following actions:

- (1) Division Councilors visit individual clubs at least annually. They will meet with club officers and members to discuss and advise on local issues that clubs are facing.
- (2) Membership Chair position to be filled (hired if necessary) and a data base of all members established. Through this data base USLBA should establish regular and frequent contact with all members. (Those members without computer access may receive the information through club mailing or posting of hard copy). Additionally, correspondence received from members can then be responded to in a timely, personable fashion.
- (3) Long range planning goals and objectives (one, five , 10 year plans) be posted on web site to assist divisions and clubs with their planning goals
- (4) Grant and loan programs for local clubs be established using reserve funds. Local clubs are the initial point of contact for new members. Financial help can be used to bolster recruitment programs, improve club grounds and facilities and assist with club membership programs
- (5) Monthly financial statements, balance sheets and annual budget to be posted on website (members only section if necessary)
- (6) Create e-membership cards which members can download upon payment of dues annually to prove membership in USLBA.
- (7) Post annual meeting agenda on the website in a timely fashion to allow individual divisions to discuss and advise councilors as necessary.

In the USLBA constitution, Article 2 ,C, states that one of the objectives is to develop coaching programs. We would like to encourage such programs to be developed. A credentialed coaching program could be standardized and operated at the local level much the same as the umpire program is run. Finally, we still remain unclear as to what criteria are used by USLBA in sponsoring tournaments. Are historical precedence, geographic diversity, or perhaps, number of participants, used?

Local clubs are the front line in recruiting and retaining members. We encourage USLBA to continue moving in the direction of renewed growth. Thank you for what you have done and we hope that we may be of assistance in the future.

Sincerely,

Christine Palochak, President Elect

Cys to:
USLBA Pres. Schans
SCLawnbowls.org
PIMD Board