

Titans Water Polo Executive Team Monday, December 20, 2004

On-deck classroom, Nepean Sportsplex

Present: Pierre Tremblay, President
Douglas Hodgson, Finance Director
Carolyn McGill, Registrar, Secretary
Biljana Pavicevic, Past-President, Special Events Director
Guy Tanguay, Competitive Program Director
Deanna Barry, ILWP Executive Director
Rosemary Bickerton, Facilities Coordinator
Clem Pelot, City Relations and facilitator for brainstorming session

Call to order at 7:15 p.m.

1. Review of Agenda

This was a special brainstorming session in preparation for a Strategic Planning Session. A few priority items were discussed at the beginning of the meeting.

2. Status Reports and Other Business

Policy on Tournament Budgeting

Information/Discussion: Pierre is incorporating several points suggested by experiences on a recent tournament trip, and will have the final version soon.

Youth Girls Attending at Ontario Junior Provincials

Information/Discussion: In a recent email exchange, Biljana expressed concern that Junior men's and women's provincials being on the same weekend as the Titans Cup might deplete the volunteer pool for the club's premier event of the season. Referee and minor official development is a key objective of the Titans Cup. As per coaches' replies, there will not be a Titans men's team at the Junior provincials, but our youth women do plan to participate. There may be some cadet girls on their roster.

Action: Guy will email Alison to request her roster for the Junior Women's Provincials.

Training for Team Managers

Information/Discussion: There will two separate sessions: Academy and Cadet/Youth.

Action: Guy will set dates early in 2005 for the manager training sessions.

Tournament Withdrawal

Information/Discussion: Parents' reluctance to drive in snowstorms led to the Titans Cadet girls team withdrawing from the Laval invitational tournament. Executive members were concerned about how this reflects on the club. By consensus, situations such as this should be resolved by consultation involving the team manager, the coach, families and the Executive.

3. Brainstorming Session

Clem Pelot facilitated. He explained that his role was to offer expertise and to bring out ideas from participants. He asked everyone to listen actively and to be realistic.

Clem presented a cyclical model of applied strategic planning, attributed to Judy Kent. The three main areas are: situational analysis → strategic framework → operational or business plan. Then the cycle begins again, so that the organization is constantly adapting to a changing environment. The cycle has the following sub-steps:

- Preparing to plan
- Taking stock
- Values
- Vision and mission
- Gap analysis
- Goals, action plan
- Implementation and evaluation

Before the brainstorming session, Clem did a situational analysis, using the following sources:

- Interviews with stakeholders
- Review of David Hart's vision from 2000 (achievements vs. planned are on track for the four-year point in the plan)
- ILWP group visioning session
- Other documents and background Clem has seen in his role as city liaison

The values step was by-passed, assuming consensus for now (but this can be re-visited later, if deemed necessary).

Draft Vision

Clem explained that a vision describes an organization that is better in some way. A vision compels an organization to go forward and take responsibility. It should be clear, succinct and realistic, but challenging. Clem presented elements of a potential draft vision, based on his "fast-track" situational analysis.

- Greater promotion and awareness/appreciation of water polo
- Growth in participation/all ages (continuous opportunities)
- Integrated tiered system for delivering water polo – Titans exist within broader network.
- Club focuses on one thing, but integrated model in Ottawa market. Extends beyond city to province of Ontario.

Discussion

Growth:

- Defined in terms of both numbers of participants and in demographic profile (all ages, all levels – players, referees, coaches, volunteers)
- Can also refer to an individual's personal growth, regardless of ability or aspirations

Suggestions for additional elements of vision:

National recognition as a centre of excellence
 Leadership development
 Catalyst
 Sustainable system (fits into schools, other clubs, city, etc.)

The three points are closely related and inter-dependent.

Is it part of our vision for the Titans to be #1 at nationals?

Would have big implications for coaches. At present we do not have an elite concept. Our current approach is somewhere between competitive (at an elite level) and recreational. Creating two streams has been discussed.

There are two potential models:

1. Recreational program building into competitive program, as per the vision for the last four years, in which ILWP feeds into the competitive program. The current vision was aimed at being one of the four largest clubs in Canada in terms of: size, number of athletes going to nationals, and number of tournaments won.
2. Side-by-side recreational and competitive programs, which supports healthy lifestyles. If we want to move in that direction, this may require a discussion of values. [Clem: For now, the assumption is that the Titans want to stay the course. The other model would require re-structuring the club. Now there is a seamless transition. With distinctive programs, there is a lot of potential for conflict.]

I Love Water Polo / Recreational vs. competitive programs

Implicit in David's vision is that ILWP is more than a feeder system for competitive programs.

Cut-off at age 12 may be too low

We could have more Academy teams, with some that were competitive without being elite

At this point, there was consensus that these elements of the vision captured the future of water polo and the Titans. Clem asked participants to put three stick-on dots next to the words they thought were most important in the preliminary draft vision. Clem will craft a vision statement incorporating these elements.

Mission Statement

Clem presented elements of a draft mission statement that would express a purpose or function for the Titans.

Eastern Ontario/National Capital region mandate (healthy lifestyle)
 Growth of the club (membership)
 Youth focus (8-17), opportunities for all ability levels
 Partner in a broader network (work with OWPA, schools)
 Leadership development
 Balance recreation and competitive

Discussion

Jurisdiction may go beyond NCR (e.g. Cornwall)

Leadership may take place at national and provincial levels (e.g. by influencing board of WPC, Biljana sitting on OWPA).

Youth focus – We already have affiliated programs for older athletes: seniors, adult recreational, and the girls house league. With a wave of 1990 and younger athletes coming through, we may want to review the situation in the competitive program, so that young people don't start to drop out at 15. In any case, programs should be integrated, with seamless transitions for players. Focusing on youth doesn't mean the target group is exclusively youth.

Balance means some mix of recreational and competitive programs, not necessarily 50/50

Clem asked participants to once again place dots next to their priorities within the draft mission.

Next Steps

Clem showed a flip chart with samples (only) of priorities, as an illustration of the next step in the strategic planning process.

- Expand ILWP
- Increase percentage of girls
- High school programs
- Club sustainability
- Advocacy at city of Ottawa

There was no discussion of this item.

Clem will craft a vision and one or two mission statements and circulate these to the Executive. The next planning session will be 2-3 hours in length, and will have a practical focus.

Adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

Next regular Executive Meeting: Monday, January 3, 2005, 8:00 p.m., Nepean Sportsplex