

USA Team Handball Strategic Planning

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Overview

- Historical Background
- Why Strategic Planning
- Current Strategic Plan Assessment
- Strategic Plan Update

Historical Background: One Perspective

- Dennis Berkholtz
(2 Time Olympian and
Former USATH Board
President)



Handball Heroes Event (Aug 2022)
Full Video: [Link](#)

Historical Background: Strategies with Limited Success

- National Team Focused Strategies
 - 1984 Olympics was the “high water” mark
 - Competitive teams, but Men placed 9th (out of 12); Women 5th (out of 6)
 - Performance has since declined and no Olympic qualification since 1996
- Youth based programs have also been implemented...also with limited success
 - 80s: Boys and Girls Clubs (Los Angeles)
 - 90's: Boys and Girls Clubs (Atlanta)
 - 00's: Future's Program (multiple locations)

And, these are just two areas of potential strategic focus

Historical Background: How Were Big Decisions Made?

- Personalities driving the conversation...
- Gut feel as to what is important...
- Whoever proposes some initiative first...
- Auburn Residency Decision in 2013
 - Biggest strategic decision of the past 25 years
 - Made with just 2 active members of the Board of Directors
 - No one involved had a grass roots background



No need to dissect the past... Just learn from it

Why Strategic Planning: It's Required

- USATH By-Laws

Section 6.2. Function of the Board.³

The Board of Directors represents the interests of USATH's membership, the United States Team Handball community and Team Handball athletes by providing USATH with policy, guidance and strategic direction. The Board oversees the management of USATH and its affairs, but it does not manage USATH. The Board shall select a well-qualified and ethical CEO and diligently oversee the CEO in the operation of USATH. The Board shall focus on long-term objectives and impacts rather than on day-to-day management, empowering the CEO to manage a staff-driven organization with effective Board oversight. In addition, the Board shall perform the following specific functions, among others:

- (A) implement procedures to orient new Board Directors, to educate all Directors on the business and governance affairs of USATH, and to evaluate Board performance;
- (B) select, compensate, and evaluate the CEO and plan for management succession;
- (C) review and approve USATH's strategic plan and the annual operating plans, budget, business plans, and corporate performance,
- (D) set policy and provide guidance and strategic direction to management on significant issues facing USATH;
- (E) review and approve significant corporate actions;



Why Strategic Planning: To Document What the Plan is

- Past meetings to discuss strategy
 - 2008 Team Handball Summit (St Louis)
 - 2012 Strategic Planning Meeting (Salt Lake City)
 - 2016 Club Symposium
- Lots of great discussion, but no documented follow up
- Finally addressed with the first strategic plan in 2019

Why Strategic Planning: To Provide Strategic Direction

Board Function 6.2 (D): “Set policy and provide guidance and strategic direction to management on significant issues facing USATH

- If there is a good strategic plan...
 - Management will have a better idea of what to do on an annual and day to day basis
 - Results can be tracked, measured and assessed
- If the strategic plan is lacking...
 - Management by default will start to drive strategy decisions

The strategic plan conveys strategic direction

Why Strategic Planning: To Support Decision Making

Board Function 6.2 (E): “Review and approve significant corporate actions”

- If there is a good strategic plan...
 - All proposed significant corporate actions should clearly align with goals and objectives already identified in the strategic plan
- If the strategic plan is lacking...
 - A strategic discussion will likely occur at the same time as the reviewing and approving

It's better to have strategic discussions that are not rushed or distracted by “shiny objects”

Current Strategic Plan Assessment

- Focus Areas
- Identified Actions
- Targets and Benchmarks

Current Strategic Plan: Focus Areas

USA Team Handball Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Overview

The Strategic Plan for USA Team Handball is divided into three areas of focus:

1. **Organizational Development** – stabilize the organization and prepare for growth between 2018 and 2028.
2. **Fund Raising and Marketing** – implement effective fund raising and marketing strategies to create a financially independent organization and brand recognition for USA Team Handball in the United States.
3. **Operational and Competitive Excellence** - create sustained operational and competitive excellence by improving the organizational infrastructure, policies and procedures, and revenue generation competencies of the corporation. Strengthen the talent acquisition pipeline and elite athlete development programs to ensure qualifications for the Pan American Games, World Championships and Olympic Games, achieving a Top 2 finishes in the Pan American Games and Top 6 finish in the 2028 Olympics.

Arguably #1 is mostly done, but #2 and #3 need to continue

Current Strategic Plan: Identified Actions

- Several actions are too specific for a strategic plan: Examples
 - Guidance to hire specific job titles
 - Initiate “Project France”
 - Integrate fundraising with the Salesforce platform
- These actions are too “tactical” and solution specific for a strategic plan
- It’s management’s job to figure out what specifically should be done

“Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.”
(Gen George Patton)



Current Strategic Plan: Targets and Benchmarks

- Many targets were very specific and ambitious; Examples:
 - \$2M sponsorship funding by 2020
 - \$5M budget by 2024
 - 6th place finishes at the 2028 Olympics
- Some targets were more realistic
 - Qualify for 2019 PANAM Games
 - 1,200 members by 2020

Set high, but achievable goals

Strategic Plan Update: What should be Updated

- Time frame
- Review focus areas and consider adding 1 more
- Pare down the number of specific actions
- Add objectives to the focus areas (goals)
- Recalibrate the timing due to COVID and other factors
- Reassess what should be measured and proposed targets
- Provide some top level prioritization

Strategic Plan Update: Working Group and Timeline

- Working Group
 - 2-3 Board Members
 - 2-3 At large members
 - 1 Outsider with experience on another strategic plan
- Timeline
 - 4-8 months?
 - Need to give new board members a chance to weigh in

Emphasis: Update, not a new effort

Strategic Plan Update: What Might be Missing

- Topical areas barely mentioned
 - Youth Development
 - Beach Handball



Strategic Plan Update: What Might be Missing

- A Looming Decision
 - Sooner or later USA Team Handball must decide what resources should be applied to support 2028 National Team efforts
 - Real costs and opportunity costs are substantial
 - In broad terms
 - This decision should be made transparently
 - This decision should be made strategically

A lot of money, time and energy could be expended for only a marginal improvement in team performance...
If that's the right decision, own that decision

Backups

Strategic Plan Examples

- USA Field Hockey: [Link](#)
- USA Rugby: [Link](#)
- USA Ultimate: [Link](#)
- USA Team Handball: [Link](#)

Strategic Plan Examples: USA Field Hockey



USA FIELD HOCKEY **STRATEGIC PLAN**

MISSION - OUR PURPOSE

We have identified five key strategic initiatives which outline how we will turn our vision into practice. They are:

- USA Field Hockey will **Grow the Game** by promoting and continuing to develop the sport for future generations to enjoy.
- USA Field Hockey will **Serve Members** by helping them achieve their field hockey ambition and creating value for continued membership.
- USA Field Hockey will **Succeed Internationally** with competitive success and enhanced performance programming.
- USA Field Hockey will be an **Effective Sport Leader** by allocating its resources efficiently to Grow the Game, Serve Members and Succeed Internationally.

USA Field Hockey will **Create a Safe Environment** for all participants through best practices, education, and prevention.



GROW THE GAME. SERVE MEMBERS. SUCCEED INTERNATIONALLY.

Strategic Plan Examples: USA Rugby

1

Sustainable Operating Model

- ▶ Develop a culture of innovation to drive **SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL GROWTH**
- ▶ Ensure USA Rugby has the right **TEAMS & TECHNOLOGY** to support the organization
- ▶ Design innovative and effective **GOVERNANCE MODELS**

2

Grow The Community Game

- ▶ Launch **YOUTH** programs and expand the number of kids playing rugby
- ▶ Expand **VARSITY** programs to support a long-term population of rugby players
- ▶ Continue cultivating **COLLEGE** rugby programs to encourage participation at all levels

3

Fan Base Activation

- ▶ Create **COMMERCIAL VALUE** by growing USA Rugby's brand value and monetizing engagement
- ▶ Identify opportunities to drive rugby's reach through traditional and new **MEDIA**
- ▶ Engage current and new fans through unique **EXPERIENCES** and innovation

4

High Performance & Talent

- ▶ Build a strong **TALENT PIPELINE** and organize a player development pathway
- ▶ Create a balanced **FUNDING STRUCTURE** to guide and support High Performance goals
- ▶ Advance holistic **ATHLETE WELLNESS**, both on and off-the-field

5

Diversity & Inclusion

- ▶ Drive **DIVERSITY** across all levels of the rugby ecosystem
- ▶ Promote **INCLUSION**, engaging all individuals with a passion for rugby
- ▶ Provide opportunity and **ACCESS** to otherwise underrepresented individuals and groups