



Our Mission: To improve the quality of life for GLBTQ individuals by building community through the sport of volleyball.

Minutes of the Tuesday November 28th, 2017 Meeting of the Tournaments & Open Play Leadership Group

Location: Café Duke, 140 W 51st St, New York, NY

Meeting Attendance: Joe Hemsing (Chair), Eric Eichenholtz, Max Szadek, Andrew Dowdye, Stephen McMillen, Joseph Mignano, Greg Rubin (by phone), Bleron Samarxhiu, Nick Sullivan, Alec Troxell, Clifton Wallace

- I) Welcome – Joe called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Greg Rubin was on the line through the phone.
- II) Activity Updates
 - A) Gotham Cares Mixer – Max Szadek gave an update regarding the mixer. Two guest speakers will be there and Rachel from AIDS Walk will have gifts to distribute. Even though thirty-three players will certainly be playing (as of that moment), the mixer is officially sold out.
- III) Old Business
 - A) Drag Tournament – Clifton gave a recap of the Drag Tournament. The group now has a structured schedule and template that can be reused in future Drag tournaments. There were four teams both sessions and the photo booth was an enormous success. Facebook Live would help to draw more attention and the event should be advertised sooner (earlier than 2 ½ weeks). Joe added that because last year's Drag tournament lacked success, it would most likely take at least year for Drag tournament's popularity to rise.
 - B) Green/Golden Apple Recap – Joe and Eric provided a recap of the Green Apple Tournament (C-level only). Golden Apple (NAGVA BB) was canceled due to not enough players registered. The main takeaway of the NAGVA-encouraged Green Apple was that some people felt some teams weren't C-level. Lew Smith ran both tournaments this year but next year has said he will run Golden Apple only.
- IV) New Business
 - A) Spring Fling Eligibility
 - i) Overview – Eric gave an overview of the Spring Fling tournament and the issue with Division 7 players. Spring Fling is C-level and thus for beginner-level players, but the final games have resembled B-level and perhaps BB-level games. About two-thirds of the players are from Division 7 and the rest are from other divisions. The reasons for people staying in C-level is to be the big fish in the small pond or to stay with friends. This allows players to create super teams with the prime example being The Oxidators. Some captains who want to compete with these super teams go to Big City and Urban to look for players who would most likely be classified as Division 6 or higher in Gotham. Division 7 is the ceiling for many players and the stress is carried from Division 7 all the way to Division 9 this season.
 - ii) Proposals – Eric gave several proposals to solving the issue and the team provided feedback. One proposal was to create a list of exceptions and to create a rule stating that you cannot maintain eligibility if you've staying in Division 7 for a while. Players who refuse to move up are dictating to leadership their levels. Other ideas were to consider Division 6 part of the tournament and to create a list of certain exceptional or dominating players. Eric's other proposal was to create **a two-tier tournament: C-level and a C+ level** (transitory tier). The details to such a system are tentative, but C+ would include any player from Divisions 7-10 and two players at most from other divisions. The C-level tier may have to be capped to at most three Division 7 players because Division 7 now resembles more B-level

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than C-level. The team confirmed that it would be best to have two gyms (Howe and Rustin) for this.

- iii) Other ideas – The team responded to Eric's team with many ideas and questioned the rigidity of the Division 6/7 line. If a player has been in a certain division for a while or if he has been in a Top Three team, he should be rated. A controversial idea was to cap how many times a player can participate in the Spring Fling tournament. Another was to reclassify Division 7 as B-level, but the Division 7 representative is strongly against reclassification and that would cause a huge group from Division 3 – 7. A well-supported idea was that captains can veto, the entering team chooses either the higher or lower tier, and **the tournament director has the power to reassign.**
 - B) Reunion Tournament reschedule – The Reunion Tournament was supposed to happen this Sunday with the mixer but has now been pushed into spring.
 - C) Implementation of New Eligibility for 2018 – The group confirmed implementation of the new eligibility rules is certain and discussed how to spread the word. Ideas included wallpaper, create a page or tab on the website titled "New for Spring 2018," and an email blast. It should have a spin on it for improving play. **Promotion should start first with the division captains and then at friendship tournaments, at pre-tryout open plays,** and at the EOS party. Greg suggested that promotion should start as soon as this weekend. A Facebook Live stream after the New Year would be helpful to explain the new implementation.
 - D) Review of Open Play numbers – Joe provided handouts of statistics for the participation in Open Plays. There is a surge in participation for players in the lower divisions by the end of the season. Division 9 participation has decreased this season due to increased participation of PowerPlay in the Division 9-PP open play. One solution was to move D7 into the D3-6 open play and D9 in to the D7-8 open play. However, this would crowd out an already well-selling open play. Another remedy would be to cap the number of players per division in the open play (such as 10 in D9, 10 in D10, and 10 in PP). Spring schedule will be done in the December meeting and is not confirmed yet due to lack of permits. BB-level players want brunch on Sundays so the group can alternate and shuffle around the levels on Sundays or have BB tournaments in one gym and B tournaments in the other gym at Rustin. There should also a survey at the end of the season for open plays or friendship tournaments for Division 1-2.
- V) Reports
- A) Board of Directors – Eric mentioned there were amazing leadership ratings (90% approval rating) at the end-of-season survey.
 - B) A&O Leadership Group – The Gotham Cares mixer is Sunday and the Gotham Shopping night is Tuesday with ten percent of the proceeds go to AIDS Walk.
 - C) Training Leadership Group – The women's friendship tournament was an enormous success. The group should be conscious of the fact that tournaments have been leaving a lot of trash behind.
 - D) Division Play Leadership Group – The end-of-season tournament will be at CCNY and Rustin.
 - E) Grievance – Greg mentioned that one player needed to leave due to injury.
 - F) Elections & Nominations – The group thought that 'applications' should replace 'nominations.'
 - G) No reports for Finance, Operations, Website Redesign, and Volunteer Coaching
- VI) Next meeting Leadership Group meeting – TBA. Meeting adjourned at 9:16 PM.