



VSA Meeting Minutes

Date: March 9, 2026

Call to Order: 6:00 PM

Attendance: Rich DeGraff-Murphy (President); Kyle Koenig (Secretary); Matt Spitznagle (Treasurer); Keith Roberts (Risk Management); Bill Edwards (SRA); Andrew Minnis (ED); Lori Levinson (Ops Director); Jason Marika (TD)

Remote: NA

Absent: Emily Milbank (Vice President)

Guest(s): NA

Approval of Minutes

- Previous meeting date: **February 9, 2026**
 - Motion: **Approve minutes as written**
 - Result: **Approved unanimously**
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Public Comment

A. NA

General Board Reports

President's Report – Rich DeGraff Murphy

■ USSF AGM

- Atlanta, GA (Feb 19th - Feb 21st)
- Cindy Parlow Cone - re-elected to President of US Soccer
- VSA AGM/Forever Summer Facility highlighted in the Opening Video of the Event!
- National Training Center Opening late April which will be the home of our 27 national teams
- Hosting
 - 2026 World Cup
 - 2028 Olympics
 - 2031 Women's World Cup

■ Strategic Goals for US Soccer

- “US Soccer Success” through winning at the highest levels; global competitiveness & creating pathway clarity for players/families
- “US Soccer is yours” providing accessibility, transparency and engagement with collaborative ownership
- “US Soccer everywhere” to have soccer be the most played sport in every US community
- **Two New Life Members Inducted**
 - Mary Harvey - retired US Soccer goalie (1991 World Cup) & her contributions to US Soccer off the field
 - Peggy Pagliarzo - 50+ years of service / pivotal in referee development & board service in Kentucky & national level.
- **New Members**
 - Project Inspire Foundation (BSO) - Inspire Soccer League - a national soccer league for athletes with intellectual disabilities.
 - United Adaptive Soccer Association - focus is on inclusive programming & filling gaps in adaptive soccer for individuals with disabilities
- **Financials**
 - 6% core revenue growth.
 - 30% total revenue increase (World Cup impact).
 - Surplus of \$5.9 million after investments.
 - Opening and first full-year operation of National Training Center allowing for new revenue streams.
 - Major investments: \$3.2M in grants for grassroots programs, enhanced member services, support for women/girls via Kane Women’s Institute, and Soccer Corps Foundation outreach.
- **By-law revisions**
 - Administrative Changes - No impact.
- **NEW PATHWAY STRATEGY**
 - Primary discussion in sessions & out of sessions all weekend (*Andrew will have more details in his report*)
- **RAP**
 - Revising matric to a tiered multiplier system
 - Yellow card (non-physical): No multiplier.
 - Orange infraction: 2x multiplier.
 - Red infraction (non-physical): 3x multiplier.
 - Physical abuse: Maintain current multiplier.
 - Non-physical v Physical Abuse
 - Inconsistent application & confusion around non-physical abuse (dissent)
 - Finding excessive penalties for relatively minor verbal incidents
 - Need for guidance materials to define & distinguish offenses

- Discussion over flexibility in administering penalties.
- Distinguishing between player minor v Referee minor and adult player/coach v Referee minor offenses - current matrix too severe for minor on minor offenses - need to make adjustments - perhaps separate matrix for this category of offense.
- Exploring three strikes rule with possible future mechanism for reducing or managing strike counts via education
- MORE guidance to come!
 - Including more education of minor referees on interpreting & reporting abuse
 - Classification of offenses
 - Hearings & protecting minors however allowing for the accused to question their accuser
- **Consortium**
 - Consortium of 17 state associations (now reaching over 1 million players), focus on shared services and joint national grant applications.
 - Plan to hire an experienced grant writer.
 - Advisory committee kick-off; Andrew and Rich attended.
- **Media & Partnerships**
 - Appeared on a TV segment with Play Abroad (European player exchange/recruitment). Expecting to use footage for promotion.
 - Board visit to Rache Champlain Cable facility; video being edited for mid-March release.
- **VSA Member Advisory Committee**
 - Held first of five planned meetings

Vice President's Report – Emily Milbank *(Submitted electronically)*

- **Awards Committee**
 - Reached out to members of last year's Awards Committee;
 - All are interested in returning to the role / still waiting on Nate Scott's commitment
 - Working with Lori Levinson on advance venue planning for next year.

Treasurer's Report – Matt Spitznagle

- Current Balances (M&T Bank as of meeting): \$310,000 total; \$80K checking, \$41K referee, ~\$190K savings.
- Year-to-date: \$8,000–\$9,000 in the black; slightly ahead of prior year.
- Starting work on quarterly and annual budgeting; budget meeting to be scheduled.

Secretary's Report – Kyle Koenig

- Nothing to report

Risk Management Report – Keith Roberts

- Had one verification placed on hold for failure to disclose prior misdemeanor convictions. Ultimately granted after back & forth.
- VCIC Background Check process transferred to Lori to have more timely return on checks. Flags will be forwarded to Rich or Keith to address.

State Referee Report – Bill Edwards

■ Recruitment Status:

- 100 referee recertifications to date (300+ total needed, expecting ~200 recertifications).
- 90 new referees pending or completing class; 4 classes remaining.
- Late surge in recertifications expected in April.
- Target: ~390 referees certified if all complete.

■ New mentor program:

- Outreach to those not certified last year; intent to improve communication.

■ Recertification/Advance Clinic

- No fitness test for refs planned this year;
- advanced clinics will be required for State Cup referees.

■ VPA / PE Credit Proposal

- Discussed proposal (from board) to partner with VPA to allow ref work to count toward high school PE credit—a potential recruitment strategy to explore with high school athletic directors/principals.

Executive Director Update – Andrew Minnis

■ AGM Key Areas:

○ NU-Comp/Competition Structure Changes

- New competition pathway (tentatively named “NU-Comp”) in development; merging USYS National League and US Club’s NPL.
- Direct registration to the Federation (bypassing state associations), potentially affecting VSA revenue—immediate impact is minor (20 current players).
- Final NU-Comp league structure/guidelines pending (due by end of March at meeting in Fort Worth).

○ Pathway Strategy

- Federation effort to clarify the developmental path from youth to adult national teams.
- Working group includes Andrew; NDAs in place with USYS until the Dallas meeting at end of March.
- Financial and governance tension between USYS and US Club; some states more exposed to potential revenue loss.
- Example: Illinois association could see significant executive salary drop if bypassed by direct registration.
- Uncertainty creates anxiety among state associations; more information coming end of March.

○ Board Actions/Facts

- No immediate action needed by BSA board until more is known post-march.
- Ongoing fact-finding and participation in decision-making at the Federation level.
- **Consortium Membership**
 - Consortium is exploring direct membership with U.S. Soccer.
 - Upcoming meeting at end of the month in Dallas to discuss further.
- **Member Advisory Committee**
 - First meeting held with a range of club sizes; positive feedback on improved transparency, engagement, and regional relations, especially with Southern Vermont.
 - Next meeting: March 18th, to explore competitions.
- **Vermont Champions League (2026–27 Season Launch)**
 - New initiative to unite youth and adult soccer through a “Champions League” style event (December–April).
 - 8 youth teams/division; 8 adult teams in both men’s, women’s, co-ed.
 - Fundraiser for youth scholarships; all games at central facility.
 - Working toward unified state registration.
- **Partnerships/Sponsorships**
 - **National Life:** Multi-year sponsorship with focus on volunteering and support for underserved communities and mental health initiatives.
 - **NBT Bank:** New 4-year banking partner, sponsoring Spring Festival, World Cup watch parties, literacy education, and top soccer program uniforms. \$25,000/year (\$100K total).
- **Financial Administration**
 - Moving banking from M&T to NBT; need for president to become an account signer.
 - Ongoing issue with referee account credit/debit cards, expected to be resolved with NBT.
- **Referee Data & Mentoring Initiatives**
 - Proposed partnership with Fair Whistle for referee feedback/mentoring platform—\$2,000 for 500 game reports, to be voted on by referee committee.
 - Exploring usage of VO Cameras (ref-tracking video) for virtual mentoring/training; initial setup cost \$1,000 per camera, free ongoing subscription.
 - Survey to be sent to referee committee and referees for feedback before investment decisions.
- **Upcoming Board and Staff Retreat**
 - In planning phase; goal is strategy and team building—potential venue: New England Revolution match.

Operations Update – Lori Levinson

- **League Registration**
 - Current: 254 teams registered (same as last year with expected last-minute additions, targeting 270–275).
 - Registration closed at 11pm on March 9th.
 - GotSport in-person visit March 10th to assist with schedule/groupings.
- **Scheduling**
 - Scheduling draft to be published, clubs can request modifications.
 - Protocol for stacking games to optimize referee assignments handled mostly by clubs.
 - Scheduling draft deadline: April 6; finalized schedule expected early April.
- **Competition Division Structuring**

- Divisions now numbered (D1–D5) instead of named (e.g., Mountain), with a team ranking guide to improve parity.
 - Flexibility for teams to request divisional moves as needed.
 - **State Cup and Other Events**
 - State Cup scheduled at Tree Farm; registrations ongoing.
 - July board meeting proposed at Champlain College based on past facility issues (lighting, audio); board agreed.
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Technical Director Report – Jason Marika

- **FC Stars Event (ODP)**
 - STARS assessment completed—positive results but likely not to be repeated next year due to workload
 - **Coach Education**
 - Coach education improvements: new curriculum focuses more on player development rather than session management.
 - Upcoming coach certification April 26th (Fusion club; 15 coaches enrolled).
 - All past participants certified; plan for future in-person sessions.
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Other Business / Good of the Game

- **FC Star Event**
 - Several ODP teams had successful FC Stars tournaments (including U10 Girls Champions, U12/U13 Boys & U15/17 Girls Finalists).
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Executive Session

- NA
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Adjournment

- **Motion:** Adjourn
 - **Result:** Approved unanimously
 - **Time:** 7:30 p.m.
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Next Meeting

Date: **April 6, 2026**

Time: **6:00 p.m.**

Location: **VSA Offices - Forever Summer Fieldhouse**