

To: Open Cup Committee

From: Paul Marstaller

Date: March 21, 2021

Re: Minutes from Open Cup Committee Meeting 3/19/2021 – APPROVED 3/26/2021

The Open Cup Committee held a meeting via conference call on March 19, 2021. The meeting started at approximately 12:05 p.m. ET and lasted approximately an hour and 15 minutes.

1) Roll Call

Committee members present: Arthur Mattson (chair), Stu Holden, Brett Luy, Shonna Schroedl; Todd Durbin joined at 12:15 p.m. ET and left at 1 p.m. ET.

Committee members absent: None.

Others present: Paul Marstaller, Neil Buethe, Brad Pursel, Dr. George Chiampas; Greg Fike joined midway through the meeting.

2) Approval of Feb. 2, 2021, Meeting Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes of the Feb. 2, 2021, meeting without edit.

3) Update on Change to Open Cup Policy 203(a) – Player Eligibility

Paul Marstaller reported that the USSF Board of Directors and National Council ratified all changes made by the Committee to Open Cup Policy 203(a) at their respective meetings during U.S. Soccer's Annual General Meeting in February 2021.

4) Current pandemic impact on tournament – Decision to play or cancel Opening Round

After a review by Dr. George Chiampas, U.S. Soccer's Chief Medical Officer, of the current impact of COVID-19 on U.S. Soccer's ability to stage the early rounds of the 2021 tournament, the Committee recommended staging the Opening Round if a set of COVID-related protocols could be agreed to by all the parties. Paul Marstaller suggested that such protocols needed to be in place by Friday, March 26, prior to the Monday, March 29, deadline to decide whether the Opening Round can proceed. The Committee will meet on March 26 to review such protocols for possible approval.

5) Consideration to allow clubs to opt out prior to draw/selection

The Committee had no issues allowing Open Division teams to opt out of the tournament without penalty, if any wished to, prior to being selected to participate.

6) Method to determine qualifiers for 2021 competition

The Committee approved the following methods for determining participating teams for the 2021 Open Cup:

- a) Division I – Major League Soccer: Top 8 U.S. clubs from the 2021 regular season based on average points per game as of May 3 (i.e.: after three weekends of play)
- b) Division II – USL Championship:
 - a. 8 playoff teams from 2020 (with Sacramento replacing Reno); or
 - b. 4 semifinal playoff teams from 2020 (if tournament starts w/ Round of 16)
- c) Division III – NISA and USL League One:
 - a. Top two teams from each league in 2020; or
 - b. Top team from each league in 2020 (if tournament starts w/ Round of 16)
- d) Open Division – Local Qualifiers (including USASA Amateur Cup winner), NPSL, USL League Two:
 - a. The USASA Amateur Cup winner plus one club drawn randomly from each of the three qualifying pools; or
 - b. Two sides drawn randomly from the four teams listed above (if tournament starts w/ Round of 16)

7) Method to determine pairings/home teams

The Committee approved the following methods for determining pairings and home teams for the 2021 Open Cup:

- a) Opening Round (8 games, 16 teams) – Each Division II team paired against the geographically closest non-Division II team. If three or more teams are from the same proximity, pairings for these teams will be made by random selection. Home team determined via coin flip if both teams apply to host and have a venue that meets minimum requirements. Covid requirements to be followed in each game are that of the more stringent league in the pairing.
- b) Round of 16 (8 games, 16 teams) – Teams pooled on a geographic basis into groups of four, with each group consisting of two Division I teams and two Opening Round winners (or two lower division teams if the Opening Round is canceled). If multiple choices are available for creating the groups, the composition of the affected groups will be determined by random selection. Draw conducted within each group so that each Division I team is paired against a lower division club. Draw held May 4 if Opening Round has been canceled, May 6 if Opening Round is played. Teams who apply to host having a venue that meets minimum requirements will have hosting priority. Covid requirements to be followed in each game are that of the more stringent league in the pairing.

- c) Quarterfinal Round – Winners from each Round of 16 group to be paired. Hosts will be determined by the Round of 16 Draw.
- d) Semifinal Round and Final – Semifinal Round pairings will be determined geographically, hosts for both rounds will be determined by random selection following the Quarterfinal Round.

8) Schedule for Open Division Clubs for 2022 Tournament

The Committee approved the following schedule for Open Division clubs for the 2022 tournament:

- Aug. 2, 2021 – Entry Deadline for National Leagues
- Aug. 9, 2021 – Entry Deadline for Local Qualifiers
- Sept. 1, 2021 – Roster Submission Deadline
- Sept. 18-19, 2021 – First Qualifying Round
- Oct. 16-17, 2021 – Second Qualifying Round
- Nov. 20-21, 2021 – Third Qualifying Round
- Dec. 18-19, 2021 – Fourth Qualifying Round

9) Next meeting: Friday, March 26, between 12 p.m. and 6 p.m. ET

10) Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

11) Adjournment

With no other business, the call ended at approximately 1:20 p.m. ET.

– END –