

Advisory Board Meeting

Date: October 17, 2011

Format: In person meeting

Attendees: Pete Cornetta, Mark Spolodoro, Kevin O'Connell, Jose Antonio Guzman, Jerome Farnan, Mukesh Chaudhury

Absent: None

**Issue:** Parent grievance regarding the selection of a head coach. Parents' disagree with the coach selected for their children's team. Their position is that an incorrect decision was made by the Coach Selection Committee in regard to the most experienced, qualified candidate. Furthermore, there are questions in regard to the level of independence that existed in the process by which the coach was appointed.

**Process:** The advisory board spent in excess of 5 hours investigating and discussing the issues at hand. The process included a fact finding exercise that involved interviews with all members of the Coach Selection Committee (individually) responsible for this selection. Furthermore, independent interviews of others were conducted by members of the advisory board to further discover. In regard to the interviews conducted of the Coach Selection Committee, the advisory board was consistent in their line of questioning in order to gather answers/observations and/or discrepancies as to how the interviews were conducted and individual conclusions. Areas of focus included: (i) the format of the interviews, (ii) areas of priority regarding the questioning and evaluation of the candidates, (iii) whether there existed any prior personal relationships with any member of the Committee and a candidate, (iv) what the individual views of each candidate were and what separated the individuals in regard to their candidacy, and (v) whether there was any advantage offered one candidate over the other, given one individual's involvement in other areas of the FBA program.

Lastly, the advisory board met with the parent group to discuss the issues at hand and communicate the process of investigation, the findings and the advisory board's intended recommendation.

**Findings:** The advisory board is unanimous in its view that there was no evidence the process of evaluating the candidates was inconsistent or one candidate was offered any unfair advantage. There was no evidence that personal relationships, if they existed, played any part in influencing the selection of the coach. It was also clear to the advisory board there were three elements to the selection process: (i) the coach's application, (ii) the coach's resume and prior coaching experience (information submitted prior to the interview and discussed during the interview) and (iii) the interview itself. In regard to the interview, the objective of the committee was to observe a candidate demonstrating and articulating his/her philosophy, with the hope of hearing a level of consistency with that of the FBA and its intentions for the program. This consistency would demonstrate an alignment with that of the FBA and therefore, a willingness to work in concert throughout the year to further develop the program and the children in the direction desired by the FBA and the Executive Board.

It is the opinion of the advisory board that the interview played a critical role in the selection process. Prior coaching experience and resumes were acknowledged in both cases and the results of the interview, in the opinion of the advisory board, ultimately decided which coach was selected by the committee. It was clear to the advisory board, that the Coach Selection Committee felt that one candidate demonstrated

a more consistent philosophy with that of the FBA. The other candidate shared views perceived by the Coach Selection Committee that did not align as well with that of the FBA's mission, and therefore, was the critical element of differentiation.

**Recommendation:** The advisory board is unanimous in its view that there was no evidence the process was biased or slanted inappropriately toward one candidate. Furthermore, it is the opinion of the advisory board that the process and ultimate decision was thorough and consistent across all members. ***Therefore, the advisory board recommends no change to the current coach selection at this time.***

**Next Steps:** As a result of the investigation process and subsequent meeting with the parent group, the advisory board feels compelled to suggest next steps for all involved.

1. The parent group has continued to request an in-person meeting with the Executive Board with the intentions of sharing their concerns regarding the team and the children's further development given the decision. Although the parent group understands the direction of the advisory board in making their recommendation, they do not agree with this board's conclusion. Given the Executive Board was directly involved in the process in question, the advisory board agreed the first meeting with the parent group should be exclusively with that of advisory board. Having completed this meeting and hearing the parent group's position on this matter, the advisory board feels the parent group needs the opportunity to discuss their feelings with the Executive Board prior to it making a final decision on this matter. Given practices start as early as next Monday, time is of the essence. The advisory board recommends an immediate session with the parent group, the advisory board and the Executive Committee to offer the parent group the opportunity to discuss with the governing body that will ultimately make any decision on this matter.
2. The advisory board needs to develop a more thorough list of recommendations for change as it relates to the program and specifically the coach selection and tryout processes. Despite the advisory board's ultimate conclusion on this matter, it can understand one's perception of a lack of independence at times in this process. The advisory board will develop a list of suggested changes and points of emphasis going forward to avoid any incorrect perceptions in the future. The advisory board will distribute this list to the Executive Board under separate cover.
3. For the sake of the children involved, it is the opinion of the advisory board that strong consideration be given to an immediate meeting with the interested parties. The advisory board recommends the following process at the conclusion of that session: *Within 48 hours of the initial meeting with the parent group, Executive Board and advisory board, the Executive Board should make its final ruling on this matter and communicate it to the parent group and advisory board. Within 48 hours of this ruling, the parent group (individually) needs to respond to the Executive Board as to whether they support the final ruling and intend to have their child participate in the program this year.*
4. In the event the advisory board's recommendation is upheld by the Executive Board, consideration should be given to the concept of including some limited, initial involvement of an independent coach/mentor or supplemental development program for this team. This might ensure this grade's program takes the necessary step forward with its new coach. The parent group's view is this particular grade has suffered from inadequate development in prior years and some type of assurance that extra focus is given to setting this team in the right direction is necessary. *This concept would be intended for this team only and not the opinion of the advisory*

*board this become a practice throughout the league or program year.* Given the history of this grade and team, coupled with the entrance of a new coach, the advisory board feels this unique consideration is warranted. It was the sense of the advisory board that there was some initial acknowledgement by the parent group this idea would be additive to the team and therefore, this idea should be further explored at the next meeting. In the advisory board's opinion, it should be the Executive Board's ultimate decision as to what supplemental assistance might be offered to the selected coach.