

TRACY'S IDEAS FOR USATF

Goal

- To have USATF provide each and every opportunity in and through our sports that our participants' / athletes' minds and / or bodies demand or desire.

Grassroots

- Hire approximately 24 USATF Association Executive Directors for targeted associations based upon the associations' potential. Committed runners / T&F fanatics, Sports Management degree graduates. They should report to USATF National in addition to their local board. Responsible for promoting and growing the sport locally, like I did. Must make the local associations more than volunteer organizations. Must make them legitimately relevant in the local community year-round.
- Must make the local associations more connected to, accountable to, and involved with National Office. They must be more local extensions of the National Office than stand-alone entities.

Promotions & Presentation

- Take our sports to the people.
- Our PR / Media Office / Press Officer must take a very entrepreneurial, aggressive and proactive approach where they are constantly pitching all manner of stories to every media outlet local, regional and national, as opposed to what I call the "SID approach" where they wait relatively passively to be contacted and provide them with the info and access they request.
- Treat spectators at major spectator driven T&F events as we treat participants in road races. Give THEM the goodie bag, commemorative medallion, program and T-shirt. They are just as much the targets of the sponsors as the runners.
- Create a weekly TV or webcast showcasing events from the week. All events to be covered. Masters, age-group, T&F, road races, race walking; USATF Championships and private events. Toni Reavis and Dwight Stones to host. Rich Jayne to produce. Ex-athletes in the business, such as Leslie Maxie and Nicole Haynes should be included.
- Is TV the right medium for us to focus our efforts and money on? Or can we avoid the airtime costs and put everything up on the web? We need to examine this from all sides with an open mind. And then, how do we better present our sport on that chosen electronic medium? Is there a better way to show how fast these folks are and how hard it is what they are doing?
- Provide media training, speech therapy, etc. for our leading athletes. We can't guarantee who will be on our national teams and or who the press will want to speak with, so this program needs to include more, rather than fewer athletes. Same group that receives insurance?
- When you have a liability, take advantage of it. Focus PR efforts on selling the American public and media on the wonderful stories of such U.S. athletes as Lopez Lamong and Meb Keflezighi.

Not just once, but constantly. Out of sight, out of mind. You can never tell our stories too often. Everyone's memories are very short.

- We cannot continue to sell our sport off of records and names. We cannot guarantee either of them like in the 70's and early 80's. We must sell our sport for what it is ... great individual -- and some team -- competition focusing on improvement and involving great work ethic and character. Our sport is sold that way through high school, and it is terribly successful on all levels there; and then we change overnight when it moves to the college and then pro levels to focusing on times and stars. Neither necessary or good. In fact, self-defeating and impossible. Let records and stars be the by-product and the icing on the cake of the competitions like they are in every other sport. If we sold basketball like we sell track, no one would be interested because no one has or will ever approach Wilt Chamberlain's records.
- Try to convince the shoe companies to create unique uniforms for each of their sponsored runners who are not on one of their teams (i.e. the Oregon Track Club), and if they are on a clubs, let's have the members wear their colors / uniform proudly (again, like the Oregon Track Club). Seeing 6 sprinters lined up in the same uniform, indistinguishable from each other by everyone except their friends and family is a disservice to the sport.
- Greatly increase / redirect our media efforts towards telling the personal stories of our athletes. We have to create connections with the public, make them relevant, not just their performances, which don't mean much to the general public, because they don't necessarily understand them or relate to them as they do to performances in other sports.
- Create alumni programs. Parties / VIP functions at USATF Championships and events. Keepsakes / commemorative items. Embrace members of our various national teams, and keep them in the USATF fold. It is an honor to represent the US, and that honor should be for a lifetime. Such an effort will create returns for both the athletes and the sport ... and it is something else to sell.
- It is an even greater honor to represent the US in the Olympics. I hope Nike will consider giving different uniforms to our Junior, Senior and Olympic Teams so that there can be some differentiation. I also hope that Nike will agree to insure that there is some equipment that ONLY the members of the teams will be able to get and that copies of some items will not be sold to the public.
- Consistent with the philosophy to include, as opposed to exclude; change USATF Championships' "Entry Standards" to "Entry Guidelines" guaranteeing anyone who has made the guidelines, entry into the competition, and allowing those that haven't, to make a case as to why they should be allowed to compete. Remember, there is always someone who will finish last; as coaches, we never set a limit on what someone could do (and have been frequently rewarded), and history is full of stories of folks who achieved when given the chance. It could also save a bunch of aspiring athletes money chasing qualifying marks.
- Add state flags to each national championship ... around the stadium and use them in Opening Ceremonies. Dress up the stadiums as well. Colored, imprinted bunting. (Red, white and blue? Logoed?) We need more "pomp and circumstance." The venues and presentation must feel

special. National championship venues and the experience as a whole, must feel special to all involved, but especially the athletes.

- At our Championship events set up displays showing how high, far, and fast the WRs and ARs are. Also, can we move some of the HOF exhibits to our Championship venues?
- Press-wise, our Championships must also feel user-friendly. Yes, we must give the athletes the necessary space to do their “thing,” but we must do everything in our power to help a generally ignorant and uneducated press present our sport and our athletes the way we want it presented. This includes providing them personal background and “hooks and angles” for every entrant in writing (all of which can be obtained from the athletes themselves as a part of the entry / check-in process) in addition to their PRs, Championship histories, and other “athletic numbers.”

Athlete Development

- Create the National Track & Field League for the spring season in the U.S. Team competition. About 6 combined male and female teams drafted by Team Coaches / Managers. All post-collegiate U.S. athletes / citizens are eligible. To provide quality “training meets” during the spring U.S. season. 5 weekly dual meets followed by a championship over 6-8 week period beginning in early April / late March. We would avoid the weekends of the major relay meets like Penn, Drake and Mt. SAC (though, perhaps for visibility, it might make sense to hold meets on those weekends as a part of those Relay extravaganzas . National Team / Olympic Coaches and Managers could be the Team Leaders, as could agents or professional coaches. Teams would represent cities. Eugene, LA, Austin, Boulder, San Diego, NYC, Boston, Albuquerque, etc. with a connection to / involvement with the sport. Limited number of team members active each week to allow for individual training, competition, and injury issues. Full schedule of events up to the 3/5K, including the 4x100 and 4x400 relays. Each participating athlete and coach would be paid the same amount per meet for participating. Prize money would be additionally awarded to the teams based upon the season’s results.
- Create USATF half marathon team championship circuit using half marathons around the country. USATF and events supply prize money. Training camps, agents, and shoe companies supply teams. Toni Reavis’ idea.
- Attempt to expand Mary Wittenberg / NYRR / NYCM’s support of our LDR Training camps to other events, organizations and sponsors.
- Solicit National and State High School Federations to add Racewalking as an official and scoring event in the various state high school track & field programs.
- Seek meetings with NCAA and solicit them to add scholarships for track & field.
- Seek meetings with leading athlete managers.
- Seek meetings with leading NCAA and post-collegiate coaches.
- Discuss HS track situation with the National and State High School Federations and the National Scholastic Sports Foundation.
- Revive the annual US vs Russia (formerly USSR) Dual Meet with a big team payday in addition to individual prize money. All events, ideally including the 10,000 and a race walk for each sex.

(We want our entire team competing together.) A one or two day meet would work, though, a two day event MAY make more sense financially and PR-wise, and a one-day meet may require dropping some events. An approximately \$2,000,000 budget, including \$1,000,000(?) for individual event prize money, \$500,000(?) for the Team Prize, which could be broken up into Men & Women, as well as Overall. Paid for by Russian oligarch money or Nike, which sponsors both countries?

- Include a Junior Dual Meet with the Russians, held at the same time and location as the Senior Dual. We must grow our youngsters in that big-time, highly visible environment, creating that sense of Team and of Team USA from the very beginning. Such an experience will pay big dividends down the road.
- In addition to the Russian Dual, stage a series of international dual meets for our Junior athletes with other countries. Why? I can't think of a greater and more energizing experience for a young, developing athlete than representing their country and seeing the world. We also need to bring back TEAM into our sport for both the press and general public, as well as our athletes. It can't just be about PRs, marks, records, and rankings. We all know that just doesn't resonate.
- International Relay Dual, Invitationals & Championships could be equally interesting and entertaining, and helpful to both our sport and our athletes' development.
- Pursue Doug Logan's USA vs Jamaica Relay / Sprint Dual idea.
- Every four years, include the US Junior Championships with the Olympic Trials, assuming the international calendar permits it (unlike in 2008).
- Place a real effort behind putting together our absolute best Senior National XC Team – especially men's – and go after the Kenyans and Ethiopians at the IAAF World XC Champs. Success would be a huge shot in the arm for the development of US long distance running.
- The body is always capable of more than the mind believes. Create a tour of HS and Junior Championship events for the Jim Ryun's, Marty Liquori's, Mary Slaney's, and Robin Campbell's of the world, as well as the HS age African stars, so that they can tell our HS and Junior age distance runners what they did / do.

Partnership Growth

- What do we really have to sell? The key to growing our sponsorship base is identifying, repackaging, and growing our inventory of saleable entities and programs.
- Seek meetings with Nike, including hopefully Phil Knight. Use Steve Miller(?), Vin Lananna, John Chaplin, Alberto Salazar, and the like as entrées.
- Seek meetings with other USATF sponsors.
- Seek meetings with 501-c-3 not-for-profit foundation fundraising consultants. We are NOT maximizing our opportunities in this area.
- Seek meetings with USOC leadership, including past leadership including Ueberroth, Ctvrtlik and Scherr.
- Seek meetings with USADA and WADA leadership.
- Seek meeting with USATF Foundation members.

- Seek meetings with IAAF leadership and other international leaders in our sport such as Dave Bedford, Ian Stewart, etc.
- Seek meetings with NYC, Boston, and Chicago Marathon leadership.
- Work with National T&F and CC Coaches Associations to bring them back into the USATF fold and enhance their impact and involvement with USATF.
- Work with Running USA to bring them back into the USATF fold and enhance their impact and involvement with USATF.
- Research the resumes of every Fortune 500 CEO, President, COO, Board Member and other “leaders” to find track & field and running connections and reach out to them. Also do “reverse searches” by reaching out to every HS and college track and XC coach and ask them which of their alumni have gone onto notable success in business or are particularly well-off.

Operational Issues

- USATF must be first, a service organization supporting our sports and all the organizations and individuals involved with our sports and doing things; and second, a governing body. We need the former desperately. We don’t really need the latter. And to that end, USATF National and local should not compete with its various constituencies, but rather find ways to support them.
- Re USATF Championship events, we need to look to include – not exclude -- local associations and management as long as events are conducted within USATF guidelines and deliver committed sponsor benefits.
- Look at Liability Insurance provider agreements / pricing.
- Review efficacy of Fast Forward and other USATF printed publications. Would these publications be better online? How does it pencil out financially? What does it add to our members’ experience?
- Examine USATF’s approach to drug issue. Spend time with Frank Shorter, PR specialists. Why does track & field get killed every time we catch a drug cheat, and other sports such as football, basketball, and baseball don’t? There it is just “a violation of the league’s substance abuse policy” and a short suspension. Can we become more like them PR-wise?
- Look to have USATF do business with and use as vendors, people that have been involved with the sport and have been doing business in the sport. Support those that support us. Reward loyalty to the sport. That has not always been the case.
- Consider moving USATF National Convention to another date, which may be more conducive to more of our constituency being present and getting involved with USATF. Perhaps the week before or after the USATF Outdoor Nationals, encouraging the attendees to come to the Nationals?
- Seek out meetings with all the past CEO / Executive Directors and Presidents (Logan, Masbach, Cassell and Roe).
- Seek out meetings with CEOs of other NGBs, especially skiing, swimming and gymnastics. Speak with Steve Miller about his experiences / lessons with / from bowling.