



April 25, 2013

## **Record of Board of Directors Electronic Vote North American Hardcourt Bike Polo Association**

On April 23, 2013, the board of the NAHBPA undertook an electronic vote concerning a petition to disqualify the team Thinly Sliced Cabbage from the Eastside Regional Qualifier in Boston, for alleged improper registration.

The vote was conducted by email, required a quorum of five, required a simple majority, and closed at 9:30 p.m. Eastern Time on April 24, 2013. Board members were provided with a summary of the events as determined by the NAH Tournaments Committee and the secretary. Board members were also provided with statements and recommendations from the Eastside NAH Representatives, the Northside NAH Representatives, the Tournaments Committee and the Executive Staff.

### **Petition to Disqualify Thinly Sliced Cabbage:**

In consideration of the below, and other information, the directors voted **4-3 to deny the petition.**

Cascadia:	No
Eastside:	No
Midwest:	Yes
Northside:	Yes
South Central:	Yes
Southeast:	No
Southwest:	No

## NAH Findings and Summary of Events:

During the week prior to the Eastside qualifier, players raised a concern that the team "Thinly Sliced Cabbage" was improperly registered and was in fact a Northside, not Eastside, team. NAH checked HCBP.org, and noted that 2/3 of the team were identified as members of Boston Bike Polo, which would qualify the team for the Eastside. However, there was also conflicting information between LoBP and Hardcourt.org, and there were conflicting statements on the Eastside tournament thread.

Based on the conflicting information, NAH asked the Boston club the following question:

*Had a question about a team, "thinly sliced cabbage". Do you know this team? It was brought to my attention yesterday that they may not be legit? Help me with this. Pierre, reps need to help verify. I'm confident the rest of the registered teams are fine.*

In response, Boston Bike Polo confirmed:

*Thinly sliced cabbage are made up of 2 new boston people - pippa and zack, we know them and they have just moved here.*

In light of Boston's confirmation that 2/3 of the team were members of Boston Bike Polo, NAH was satisfied that Thinly Sliced Cabbage was properly registered.

Thinly Slice Cabbage competed at the Eastside Tournament and earned the 7th and final qualifying spot for North Americans.

Following the tournament, additional players raised concerns that Thinly Sliced Cabbage was not a 2/3 Boston team. In response, the team posted information indicating that while they were in the process of moving to Boston, they were still in Burlington, VT at the time of Eastside Registration, but had changed their club affiliation to Boston since they would be in Boston for the majority of the season. However, the current NAH registration rules state that the "trade-deadline" for a person's regional status is the date they register for the qualifier, and Thinly Sliced Cabbage was still in Burlington at that time, though they had changed their HCBP.org to Boston, and the Boston Club had apparently accepted them as members of Boston Bike polo.

The board needs to vote on whether the Thinly Sliced Cabbage result should stand, or whether the team should be disqualified. In the event that the team is disqualified, the board should consider whether the team can register for the Northside Qualifier.

## Statements and Recommendations:

### **Tournament Committee:**

We considered this:

(1) DQ or confirm result, (2) If the vote is to DQ, should TSC be permitted to play northside/any other qualifier?

Our collective response:

(All of the regions were represented within my committee discussions and we went through many scenarios etc to try to see this from all angles.)

- we would be inclined to go with confirming the results of the tournament and letting them stand; with these other notes involved
- clearly state that from now on teams in their situation, and all, will be recognized at registration and confirmed by regional and club reps involved.
- explain that it was not solely the fault of the team due to some internal nah restructuring, earliest reg time, etc
- try to use the language recently made
  - ("A players regional identity and competitive affiliation is ascertained by evaluating the place a player is most frequently seen playing, resides in, and/or can be confirmed by the regional and club reps as a residential player. The relevant date for a players regional identity is the qualifier registration date. A players regional identity is maintained for the entire season, regardless of subsequent relocation.")
- and possibly apply more for further clarity in defining regional affiliation

We also considered the situation with Ditka. We reason that the rule is now much clearer, and being made clearer still, than it was when the Eastsides opened registration. Besides which, the club reps and regional reps would have to approve this as well. The Boston club were the ones that originally claimed the TSC for their own as an Eastside team and the Eastside reps look to be in favor of allowing the standings to remain as is. This is quite different in the Northside region with regard to Ditka.

### **Northside Reps (All 3):**

Given that we created the structure of closed regions, we should not allow teams to qualify in any region but their own. If we don't enforce this rule now, when it has clearly been broken, it encourages other to break the rules. On those grounds we should disqualify TSC from the Eastside tournament.

However, if they are disqualified, then we are nullifying their standings, effectively meaning that they did not "compete in one qualifier." With that in mind, TSC can compete in the Northside qualifier, and should get their one chance to qualify.

I would also like to point out that part of this problem stems from the tournament organizers not understanding or enforcing regional identity, so it seems unfair to essentially ban TSC from the 2013 tour for what was a collective mistake. In addition, we failed to be clear and unambiguous about what

determines a regional identity, which opened the door for these problems.

Finally, after thinking about this some more, I think that making the decision to ban TSC from this tour will create the wrong persona for the NAH. We will become a punishing "police" organization, rather than the representatives of the community. I don't think that is something that will be very productive for us in the future, and is something we should consider when we make our decision. DQ'ing a team is a strong response, but banning them entirely for a collective mistake will seem extreme.

### **Eastside - Delamare:**

TSC already competed in the Eastside and obviously affected the results of this tournament. Since this whole new format was based on teams playing only one qualifier, it does make sense to go for accepting the results. Overall, the new Eastside Reps have only had an inside view of NAH since a couple weeks ago. All that up-rise on LOBP after eastside, really got us thinking about what NAH should be about. The answer was clearly about overseeing and organizing a fun competitive bike polo organization for the players.

That's how Matt put it:

"I think in the past week we've seen how easy it is to quickly move from 'representing the people' to kind of representing ourselves and the NAH.

I'd hate to see the divide between the polo masses and NAH continue to grow, which i feel like if we don't do something to curb it, it will"

So the East Side vote would be to keep NAH as a board of players rather than make it seem like a tough tyrannic governing body. The vote of accepting the results therefore makes sense and more than just for our own PR. With this obviously we would like to see how we can improve this process for this year and the next:

- I would like to see a separate document on [nahardcourt.com](http://nahardcourt.com) (below the rules one) clearly specifying what the NAH structure is and what rules and expectations we have off the courts for each players thinking about playing in NAH sponsored tourney.
- We would like those responsibilities to be delegated to the regions. Have the club or regional reps involved in this and make sure people have clear expectation for next year.

### **Eastside - Krofcheck:**

Enforcing a DQ like this in a questionable situation would seem like a power move on the part of nah. Not what we need moving forward. Boston vouched for tsc. It's a technicality at best, based on registration timing.

Let it ride. Use this as a clear example of why this rule needs better clarification.

### **Eastside - Sprinkle**

Given these options, I'd go for accepting the result or DQing and letting them compete at northside. While

a DQ is perfectly acceptable, it may be heavy handed in the case in that they did move to Boston (as far as I can tell from the posts on the forum; albeit after the deadline which is the registration date). I don't recall there being explicit clear instructions when registering for the event what/when determines your regionality. Looking over our newly published 2013 ruleset also does not mention anything about this. This is something all of the regions now need to be aware of and look for in coming registration.

The more I think about it, the more I think we should accept it. It's already said and done. They've had their impact on eastsides whether we disqualify them or not. They were not technically eastsiders at registration open, but they were eastsiders by the time of the event. Shitty miscommunication, sure. But now we have to rectify that in the best way possible.

### **NAH President:**

Nov. 2012 - Jan 2013 - a simpler time. The system was eagerly accepted, the terms seemed clear and a loaf of bread only cost a nickel. What happened? Inflation in the latter case (and how!) but in the two former we can blame only ourselves. And by ourselves, I mean both sides of the table. NAH underestimated the detail and oversight that would be needed to effectively implement this system. But only because NAH never dreamed that people would choose to so willfully or accidentally disregard such a simple and clear message. There is dirt on every set of hands.

This is the basis upon which I'm analyzing this stupendous mess. The fact is NAH needs to be grounded again. It is imperative that NAH deliver a solution that restores confidence - to organizers and participants - that NAH can fairly defuse and resolve a situation in such a way that allows us all to move on.

I've heard/read two important truths in the past week. The first truth is that this regional affiliation business is wasting NAH's precious social capital, that it is hurting more than helping. (I've thought more than a few times this week, wistfully thinking of the open system of years past.) Now, this first truth also came with the opinion that NAH relax their stance, that the current system be recognized as a mere stop-gap until a skill-based, open system is established. So, Ditka gets to go to Northside, the Eastside results stand, etc.

I love this idea with my whole heart but I do not agree wholeheartedly. Because there is another function of NAH and that is to make decisions - make them and be held accountable to enforce them. Technically, NAH did it's homework, I understand. Nevertheless, the other truth here is that NAH could be setting a dangerous precedent to allow a team to qualify in this manner, innocent or not. Remember, one of the goals for people who will choose to participate in NAH's competitive system, whatever form it may take, is that they develop the habit of paying attention and a sense of accountability. Certainly this is more difficult when the message isn't displayed in a perfect fashion. Still, though Thinly Sliced Cabbage may have earnestly not gotten the memo, I'm sure there's a team or two who paid attention and knew right from the start. The grey area rears it's head - would it be just as well to assume that some paid closer attention to the details than others rather than use the degree of accessibility to information as the baseline?

In my estimation, a decision should be delivered that leaves no question of NAH's intent, while still fairly resolving the issue and acknowledging NAH's role in creating the situation. Provide a firm and fair

decision and move on. The decision that I believe best embodies these aims is to disqualify TSC, but allow them to compete in Northsides. Why allow them in Northsides? Because it's the solution that acknowledges both NAH's failings and the grey area between accessible information and paying attention as well the fact that most folks believe that this occurred not as an attempt to deceive but rather as an innocent mistake.

Should the board decide to allow the Eastside results to stand, I also understand that the situation with Ditka is different (prior knowledge).

**NAH Secretary:**

I think the best option is to let the result stand. We had questions come in about club affiliation for several players, and in most cases we knew who they were and where they were from. With TSC, that wasn't the case. We didn't know these players personally and the information on the various website was unclear. So we asked Boston, and Boston specifically confirmed. That has to be the extent of NAH's due diligence. NAH cannot be the arbiter of who belongs to what club – we have to let the clubs be responsible for that. Would NAH want to be in the position of going out and digging further even after the fact, and overruling Boston on the matter of who belongs to their own club? I don't think so. We have to take the clubs' word for this. We can clarify what our expectations are in terms of who the clubs can claim, but at the end of the day, we have to be able to trust the clubs' information when NAH's info and the info on the internet are unclear.