January, 2020

Happy New Year! As we start a new decade, we want to tell you about your Region.

The USAPA Great Plains Region is one of 11 Regions under the USAPA umbrella. This Region covers seven states – Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and Wyoming. There are 2500 USAPA members in our Region.

The leadership positions under the Regional Directors are Education Regional Ambassador, Nancy Steffy, and District Ambassadors for Colorado: Jean Marsh, Ken Marquardt, Robin and Jerry Santoro, and Stephanie McDonald; Eldonna Coats, Kansas; Christ Watts, Montana; Bill Roehrs, Nebraska, and Justin Griffith, North and South Dakota, and 118 other Ambassadors throughout the Region.

The fundraising arm of the Region is the USAPA Great Plains Region Non-Profit (GPRNP). Board members are Steve and Ramona Boone, Nancy Steffy, Bill Holt (Ambassador from Nebraska) and Peggine Tellez, Regional Tournament Director.

The major fundraising event for the non-profit is the USAPA Great Plains Regional Championship (GPR). As fundraising revenues have increased, more activities in the Region are being funded. A key activity is Nancy Steffy’s efforts to attend every state conference in our region with educators who can help grow the sport of pickleball. GPRNP funds the booth fee and handouts. Nancy has even created a mobile court system so that attendees actually get to play the game inside a conference center.

The Region has begun funding travel for District Ambassadors and others who are conducting free clinics, attending meetings and helping with outreach across the states. We have the largest Region by area – one trip to Big Sky, Montana, from Colorado Springs is an 11 ½ hour trip each way!

A new funding initiative is for Professional Pickleball Registry participants. GPRNP is paying the $100 fee for every Ambassador, plus a small travel stipend, to attend PPR classes. This is standardizing training for the teachers in our midst who take this training back to their home areas and teach, all helping to spread the pickleball message.
Many people ask us why the Championship is so expensive. Hopefully it helps to think of it as raffle ticket for a charity – plus lots of stuff and fun! GPR is priced in the middle of other regional tournament charges…not too high, not too low – just right!

The 2020 GPR will have some significant added costs. Because numbers have increased, we have hired a professional team to run registration and daily desk operations (about $4000). Referees will continue to be the biggest expense (estimated over $10-$15K to include a referee coordinator). There will also be rental of the courts at Colorado College, plus tape and nets. ($1000 for courts alone.)

Ordinary costs include security, which will be another $1500 (did you know that in the early days a dedicated team of volunteers put up everything at six am with car lights to see, and then took it down every night? Raising funds has helped hire the security staff and kept our volunteers sane.) We also donate $1000 to the local Park and Recreation in appreciation of their support – they are out there cleaning the court every morning. And who can forget the port a potties??

There are sundry expenses of medals, volunteer food, players gifts, pickleball tournaments and paypal fees, etc. Key staff are paid a small honorarium in recognition of the year they dedicate to making the tournament a success.

Historically we have contracted with the local club to provide wonderful volunteers and store the equipment they and we have bought over the years. They received the tournament proceeds and all proceeds from their silent auction (about $5000).

Due to the nature of expenses this year we instead offered the local club a 50/50 split in proceeds, continuing to allow them sole proceeds for their silent auction. Their business model required a flat fee, which the GPRNP Board could not financially guarantee.

We have moved on to other groups for support. We are confident the pickleball spirit is alive and well to make GPR another resounding success. We will be going out soon with specific requests for volunteer areas needing to be filled.

We are proud of you and of the tremendous work you are doing throughout the Great Plains Region. You are teaching newbies, working with communities to build facilities, and helping grow the sport we love. Be sure to post what you are up to on our Facebook page: USAPA Great Plains Region Pickleball.

We are honored to be your Regional Directors. Thank you for your support.

Best wishes, Steve and Ramona Boone

USAPA Great Plains Regional Directors