

The last-minute cancellation of the August 27th USBA meeting and the delayed vote on any agreement with USSS has left everyone wondering what's going on. I sense a consensus on an agreement, led by athlete's pushback could not be reached.

The first discussions between the U.S. Ski & Snowboard, (USSS) and the U.S. Biathlon Association (USBA) began in secrecy in 2024. Most likely those unannounced and unreported meetings were initiated by USSS CEO/President Sophie Goldschmidt, most likely after the failed attempt of USSS to become the NGB for surfing and shortly after the USBA had moved its office to Utah.

The merger concept was first announced to the USBA membership by a message from the CEO in May, 2026, following meetings of the USBA BOD in March and April 2026 called by Chairman Bob Hall without required notice to the USBA membership. Jack Gierhart's message announcing a proposed merger with USSS immediately caused alarm by those familiar with USBA's history and its earlier separation from the US Pentathlon, and the formation of an independent US Biathlon Association in 1980.

They were alarmed because of their knowledge of the Ted Stevens Sport Act, which requires, that the USOPC;

- *"...shall recognize only one national governing body for each sport.."*
- *that an NGB must "demonstrate that it is autonomous in the governance of its sport,*
- *that it independently determines and controls all matters central to such governance,*
- *"does not delegate such determination and control, and is free from outside restraint",*
- *"demonstrates that it is a member of no more than one international sports federation which governs a sport included on the program of the Olympic Games or the Pan-American Games;" and*
- *"that sports on the Olympic Program in the U.S. must be governed by their own separately incorporated 501(c) (3), which is "recognized" by the USOPC as the NGB for the sport after having duly satisfied the Sports Act mandated NGB membership requirements".*

Since then, there have been Town Hall meetings where opposing opinions were dismissed, contrived working groups that never reported results and one-sided messaging from the CEO that has provided little transparency and reasoning behind the idea. Although it was presented as merger with the objective being primarily financial, the focus seems to have evolved into that of a "Strategic Operating Alliance" agreement, but still remarkably little

information about why this agreement is wanted, how it will operate, what problems it is intended to solve has been communicated. The evasive and vague answers provided by USBA leadership have failed to:

- be sufficiently specific about the change;
- show adequately why the change is needed;
- allow those directly affected by the change to have a say in the process;
- fully understand the group or community's cultures;
- keep those affected by the change informed about it;
- provide a reasonable timeline for consideration of the impact of the change.
- explain how delegating management and governance responsibilities to another NGB would satisfy compliance with the Ted Stevens Sport Act;
- explain how it might impact USBA certification and financial and potential resource grants by the IBU.

The pause in the rushed effort to obtain a positive vote for an alliance provides the biathlon community with an opportunity to voice their questions and opinions to those directly responsible for developing a proposal for a vote. Below is a list of Board of Directors email addresses for that purpose. It is provided so that each interested individual may send respectful personal messages directly to Board expressing their concerns on this issue.

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