

UNITED STATES AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Executive Board Annual Report 2020





Table of Contents

Year in Review.....	3
USAFL Member Clubs.....	8
Executive Board, Portfolios and Staff	9
Virtual Nationals	11
USAFL Foundation.....	12
Financial Management	13
2020 USAFL Contact List	19



Year in Review

366 pages fell from the calendar in 2020. In that respect, it was like any other year, or at least the ones that fall when we play catch up to account for the earth's rotation around the sun.

But 2020 was not any ordinary year. It is one that we will have to carefully explain to our children, grandchildren, niblings, and others who are either too young or not born yet, about what exactly living through this year was like.

We all are excited at the year ahead and the symbols of change in prospect. There is hope that we have, indeed, turned the corner, and that our lives will get back to some semblance of normalcy.

While 2020 was by and large the biggest challenge that many of us has faced, there were some sunny spots shining through the clouds.

We may not have had an Aussie Rules season here in the US. But this year was the one where we watched two American women duel in the top end of Australia, a flock of Americans embrace the game almost at first sight, a group of heroes emerges from our ranks, and the USAFL and its clubs found ways to adapt to growing the game in the middle of a global pandemic.

And, oh yeah, an American woman played in the highest level of the sport for the first time ever. And she rocked it.

Here it is, the year that was, 2020.

BATTLE OF THE YANKS

The year dawned brightly on the top end of Australia for a handful of Americans with professional aspirations in Aussie Rules. Two of them, April Lewis (Seattle Grizzlies) and Rosemary Kloh (Sacramento Suns), would be locked into battle during the competitive NTLF Women's Premiership campaign in Darwin.



Kloh touched down with Nightcliff and, less than 24 hours after arriving in the Northern Territory, found herself a part of a rising Tigers team. Her impact was so sudden that she was instantaneously given the nickname "Dusty," after the AFL men's superstar. The newly minted USA Freedom captain established herself as a defensive rock in her eight-game stint and helped propel the 'Cliff to a fifth-place finish and a finals spot.

For Lewis, however, this season was all about redemption. She had put an injury plagued 2019 VFLW season with Essendon behind her and was part of the backbone of a Southern Crocs outfit that would eventually go on to win the league title. Along the way, she kicked seven goals in fifteen games for the



Crocs while being in the team's best four times. It was an eye-catching season that accentuated her prowess as a tall offensive threat and may lead to her resurgence back in Melbourne.

While Rosie and April were undergoing their footballing ascendency, a road trod by other talented American footballers across the Pacific, another one had reached one of the furthest stars in the galaxy.

DANI BREAKS THROUGH IN FOOTSCRAY

As 2020 has taught us, sometimes in brutal fashion, nothing should ever be taken for granted. Dani Marshall becoming the first American to sign for an AFLW team in July 2019 sparked great excitement among footy fans across the sport's community, but it was far from a certainty as to whether or not she would play for the Western Bulldogs in 2020.

So, when the Colorado Springs native, by way of the Arizona Lady Hawks, took to the field wearing the famous tri-colors on February 8th against St Kilda, more than a few of us allowed ourselves to finally exhale and exalt in her triumph. That exaltation doubled in decibel size when she booted home a goal with her first kick in senior football. A truly unique club occupied by only one other American: Mason Cox.



The win was the only one for the Bulldogs in a tough season for the Daughters of the West. For Marshall, who would add two more goals through the truncated season, however, it was anything but a letdown. She is already back on the track for the 2021 season. We will be watching and cheering.

THE WORLD STANDS STILL...

The footy season was cranking up here, as it was overseas, through the first two months of the year. Two matches -- one in Florida, and one in Hawaii -- were in the books, and a handful of tournaments, including one in Houston and one in Richmond, glistened on the horizon. The news of a virus, like a gathering storm, was slow and ominous.

We all remember that week in mid-March when it was no longer a regional news story. COVID-19, all at once, was a part of our lives. We hoped it would be a temporary effect on our lives.

It would not be of course. We sit in the shadows of 2021 with the pandemic still very much a part of what we do on a daily basis. We have all been affected in profound ways. Some of us have had the virus and recovered. Some know loved ones who had it and recovered. Some did not. Our jobs, our routines, our paths in life, our plans, have all been shook to its core.



And yes, the USAFL season was not spared. Neither was the AFL International Cup, which was postponed twice, derailing the dreams of a promising group of men and women who had hoped to represent their country in Australia.

...AND TAKES NOTICE



But sometimes things work out in odd ways.

As American sports leagues ground to a halt, the AFL decided to go ahead with Round 1 of their men's season, and a reconfigured AFLW finals series. Several games had already been on the TV schedule, but buried on more obscure channels such as Fox Sports 2 and Fox Soccer Plus.

So, with no other live sports on the foreseeable horizon, the powers that be took a chance and moved a couple of games to Fox Sports 1. And the response was near cataclysmic.

Sports-starved fans took notice and took to social media, wondering what on earth they were watching. Thousands of tweets from Americans and

Canadians floated across the web, and new footy fans were born. One of the loudest and most prevalent was former NFL punter Pat McAfee, who reveled in his "one night stand" with the AFL. Weeks later, while holding a USAFL-branded Sherrin, he even mused about one day playing in Australia.

Alas, the pandemic quickly caught up with the sport. The AFLW season was terminated before its rightful end, much to the chagrin of Fremantle supporters, and the AFL men's season went on hiatus for more than two months. But it eventually came back, and most of the curious fans who were there in March returned in June and were with the rest of us throughout the northern summer, barracking for teams they never knew existed when the ball dropped to bring in 2020.



IN MEMORIAM

In a difficult year in which we clung to what we loved and what kept life normal, we also said goodbye to members of our footballing family. Here and there, we have had to grieve over the years, but this of all years, there was profound and deep loss. And from the sadness came contemplative reflection on the people who graced our sport.

There was Pat Bilder, the former Baton Rouge Tiger and New York Magpie champion who helped the growth of football in Florida.



Sanford Wheeler, the second American to play in the AFL, whose determination and skill helped pave the way for future generations.

Lauren Rice; teacher, educator, explorer, and heartbeat of the Des Moines Roosters Football Club.

Jacinda Barclay; one of the most unique and dedicated all-rounders, whose efforts to grow footy abroad brought the Aussie Sparks to America in 2017.

Jake Ryan, survivor of the 2002 Bali attack, Gold Coast Academy coach, and talisman footballer, who played four seasons with Golden Gate and Austin and managed to play in a Grand Final in all three years he played in the USA.



And Alex Aurrichio. The former soccer goalie and New York Magpies premiership player who travelled all over Australia chasing his football dream and won friends with his big heart in the process.

AND ALWAYS LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

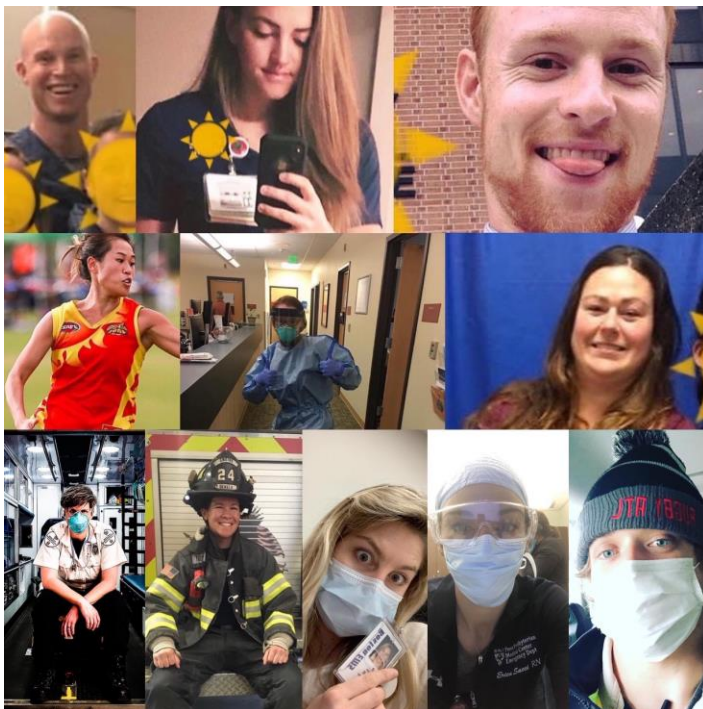
In spite of the pandemic, the USAFL added three new clubs this year; the Centennial Tigers, North Texas Devils, and Birmingham Bushrangers.

Despite having to curtail recruiting and drastically change the way that teams trained, planned, and continued the social traditions that the sport has come to bear, a good number of clubs saw an uptick in participation and membership.

Where we could not gather in person, we could be able to see each other's faces, and stoke the fires of the future through seminars and workshops.

While we could not have a proper Nationals in California as we had done to climax the previous 23 seasons, we were able to come together, with the help of many of our friends from the AFL men's and AFLW community, to have a virtual celebration of the game unlike any other.

AND ALWAYS KEEP OUR HEROES



Off the field, this year has reminded us of the power of the community that the USAFL has built over the last two decades. It has also helped give us hope through the strength of our people.

In January, as wildfires raged throughout Australia, USAFL clubs turned Australia Day festivities into fundraising appeals for the relief effort. In all, more than \$50,000 were raised by member clubs for the Australian Red Cross and other charities, showing how important the bridge formed by Aussie Rules across the Pacific has become.

Months later, as the pandemic affected our safety and health in the US, those essential workers who play, coach, and umpire were called to the fore. Within the USAFL

community, there are nurses, doctors, paramedics, EMTs, first responders, and others on the front lines, tasked with safeguarding their friends, family, neighbors, and total strangers.



Their work has been tireless. From Philadelphia to San Francisco, Boston to Sacramento, Atlanta, Colorado and New York, they have put in many hours while also taking care of loved ones at home.

Many of them were among the first to receive the vaccines that were made available. As we begin to turn the corner on this and head towards the dawn of the new year, their work and sacrifices make us proud.

And thus this year is breathing its last, thank goodness. I hope the new year finds you healthy and happy and optimistic, because you absolutely should be. And I hope that the metaphorical skies clear and we are able to play football again on the ovals of America, and that we can sip Cooper's (or your beverage of choice).

For we are footballers, and we will bounce back.

Brian Barrish
USAFL Media Manager



USAFL Member Clubs



Club	Founded	Club	Founded
Arizona Hawks	1999	Louisville Kings	1996
Arizona Outlaws	2018	Little Rock Coyotes	2016
Atlanta Kookaburras	1998	Maine Cats	2018
Austin Crows	2002	Milwaukee Bombers	1998
Baltimore Dockers	2017	Minnesota Freeze	2005
Baton Rouge Tigers	2004	Nashville Kangaroos	1997
Birmingham Bushrangers	2020	New York Magpies	1998
Boston Demons	1997	North Carolina Tigers	1997
Centennial Tigers	2020	North Star Blue Ox	2017
Chicago Swans	1998	North Texas Devils	2020
Cincinnati Dockers	1996	Oklahoma FC	2017
Cleveland Cannons	2014	Orange County Giants	1998
Columbus ARFC	2008	Philadelphia Hawks	1998
Dallas Magpies	1998	Portland Steelheads	1998
DC Eagles	2017	Rome Redbacks	2018
Denver Bulldogs	1998	RVA Lions	2019
Des Moines Roosters	2010	Sacramento Suns	2009



Ft. Lauderdale Fighting Squids	2005	San Diego Lions	1997
Golden Gate AFL	1998	Savannah Hurricane	2019
Hawaii Eagles	2019	Seattle Grizzlies	1998
Houston Lonestars	2005	St. Louis Blues	1997
Indianapolis Giants	2013	Tampa Bay Tiger Sharks	2019
Jacksonville Saints	2018	Wasatch War Gulls	2019
Las Vegas Gamblers	2005	Wisconsin Wombats	2017
Los Angeles Dragons	2010		



Executive Board Members - 2020

• Seb Aguiari, President	• Heather Serpico, Secretary
• Scott Morris, Eastern Vice President	• Richard Horden-Gibbins, Treasurer
• David Bryant, Central Vice President	• Molly Halberstadt, Member At Large
• Lauren Skonieczny, Western Vice President	

USAFL Staff

• Doren James, Executive Director	• Brian Barrish, Media Manager
• Kathryn Hogg, Webmaster	• Horacio Gutierrez, Accountant

USAFL Umpires Association

• Jonathan Mills, President	• Toby Persson, Umpire Goal Coach
• Steve Arnott, Vice President	• Jeff Persson, Field Umpire Coach
• Sid Caesar, Treasurer	• William Conway, Member at Large
• Seth McElvaney, Secretary	• Laurie Rupe, Member at Large

USAFL Women's Association

• Lisa Arredondo, President	• Lauren Skonieczny, Vice President
• Jessica Taylor, East Representative	• Diane Welch, Secretary
• Sara Rohner, Central Representative	• Anna Thexton, Treasurer
• Lauren Williams, West Representative	• Lauren Balsley, Member At Large

USA Revolution Coaching Staff

• Tom Ellis, Head Coach	• Matt Dinauski, Assistant Coach
• Jason Becker, Assistant Coach	• Brad Anderson, Team Manager
• Dan Sarbacker, Assistant Coach	• Steve Budrick, Head Trainer

USA Freedom Coaching Staff

• Christina Licata, Head Coach	• Brandon Snider, Strength & Conditioning Coach
• Martin Coventry, Assistant Coach	• Brienne Theisen, Development Manager
• Lucy Parrington, Assistant Coach, Development	• Cari Greving, Team Manager
• Dr. Ellie Somers, Team Physical Therapist	• Alan Gardner, Team Manager



Virtual Nationals



In a year like no other it was a USAFL Nationals like no other! On the eve of AFL Prelim Finals weekend – the USAFL hosted a USAFL Nationals Virtual Celebration showcasing the best of USAFL & AFL skills, competition and entertainment.

While we were not able to be together on the fields of Silverlakes Sports Park, California - we did manage to come together online and support each other through these tough times and celebrate our great game and US footy sporting community.

Co-hosted by USAFL Media Manager Brian Barrish and AFL Western Bulldogs 364 game legend & Fox Footy presenter Brad Johnson, this event provided clubs and individuals an opportunity to compete against others for some great prizes. There were 3 Nationals Challenges for clubs to enter participants in, as well as a chance for clubs to compete against each other.

The event also showcased AFL & AFLW special guest panels involving stars such as Nick Dal Santo (St.Kilda 322 games), Dermott Brereton (Hawthorn 211 games & USAFL Nationals 2016 guest), Brent Harvey (North Melbourne 432 games) for the men.

For the women it was US AFLW Western Bulldogs star Dani Marshall, Sarah Perkins (Gold Coast Suns), Abbey Holmes (ex-Adelaide Crows & current Fox Footy & Channel 7 football host), USAFL favorite Jessica Wueschner (Brisbane Lions) and Brooke Lochland (Western Bulldogs & Zena Ambassador).

Mason Cox made a special appearance analysing his dominate performance in the 2018 Prelim Final with Catapult Sports.



USAFL Foundation



During Virtual Nationals the USAFL Foundation was launched with USAFL co-founders Paul 'Plugger' O'Keefe and Rich Mann along with Paul Roos (Fitzroy Lions & Sydney Swans player) who was the first USA Revolution Coach before going on to Coach the Sydney Swans to the AFL Premiership in 2005.

The Foundation's mission is to provide ongoing financial assistance for the development of Australian Football in the United States.

The Foundation will act as an annual funding mechanism to the USAFL, a USAFL emergency fund for extreme situations, and to support the growth of Australian Football in the United States. Our goal is to raise over \$2.5 Million over the next three years to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the League in 2022, starting with raising pledges, in 2020, for \$1M.

The league has evolved over the last twenty plus years. Our first decade was "Building the Foundation" of the game. We were young and brash and made it up as we went along. We quickly grew from a handful of founding clubs to over 20. We launched the men's national team, the Revolution, in 1999. Our second decade was all about "Growing the Sport". Nationals had become too big for host clubs to manage so the league took on running the Nationals and it has ballooned into the biggest single weekend footy carnival in the world (including Australia). We launched women's footy in 2003 which has grown significantly and along with that came the women's national team, the Freedom.

We are now in our third decade which is about "Securing the Future". We are like the college grad who is leaving home and entering the workforce. The USAFL Foundation is our 401(k) and we want to build it as part of our 25th Anniversary celebrations in 2022.

Each year the Foundation will support development activities, identified by the USAFL Board, that support the USAFL's mission of growing Australian Football in the USA.



Financial Management

The USAFL is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that maintains its books on a cash basis. The primary sources of revenue are from the annual grant provided by the AFL, dues from member clubs, individual player memberships, and several sponsorships. The primary expenses each year are a mix of training, supporting, and educating functions, all in accordance with the League's core programs and mission. Each year at the USAFL Annual General Meeting the Treasurer outlines the financial report of the prior year, and the status of the year at hand at the time.

The organization is the financial record keeper of all the events organized by the League, including the National Championships and training courses. The financial philosophy of the League is for events to be self-funding where possible. Consistent with past years, the League continues to maintain a part-time accountant for enhanced internal controls, compliance, and bookkeeping purposes.

The global pandemic due to the spread of COVID-19 struck, in March, just as the season was about to begin. The season was put on hold and all USAFL games and tournaments were eventually cancelled. As a result, minimal player dues and reduced club dues were collected. This led to a loss of \$33,400 for the year. The league was able to secure an Economic Impact Disaster Loan through the Small Business Administration as part of the federal government's CARES ACT. These funds will be used in the coming years as necessary to ensure the league can continue to operate. The goal is to rebuild the league's equity and pay back the loan as soon as possible.

The League remains in sound financial condition, subject to the continuation of funding by the AFL. To comply with US tax requirements, each year the League submits reviewed financials to an external accounting firm, which provides the USAFL with annual audit and accounting services and assists with federal tax compliance and reporting to the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS"). The following pages present the USAFL's balance sheet as of Dec. 31, 2020 and income statement for the calendar year 2020. At the time of printing, the 2020 tax return is not yet complete, and the figures presented below have not yet been submitted to the IRS.

Richard Hordern-Gibbings

Treasurer

treasurer@usafll.com



2020 USAFL Balance Sheet

	<u>Total</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
Australian	0.00
BofA, California	0.00
BofA, Missouri	197,953.90
Petty Cash	80.00
TD Ameritrade	1,357.52
USAFL - 2005 National Championships	0.00
USBank - 1813	39.95
Total Bank Accounts	\$ 199,431.37
Accounts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable	0.00
Total Accounts Receivable	\$ 0.00
Other Current Assets	
Other Receivables	0.00
Prepaid Insurance	0.00
Store Merchandise	0.00
Undeposited Funds	0.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$ 0.00
Total Current Assets	\$ 199,431.37
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 199,431.37
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable	0.00
Total Accounts Payable	\$ 0.00
Credit Cards	
Credit Card	1,729.32
Total Credit Cards	\$ 1,729.32
Other Current Liabilities	
Direct Deposit Payable	0.00
Other Accruals	0.00
Payroll Liabilities	
Federal Taxes (941/944)	6,091.19
TN Quarterly Taxes	900.00



Total Payroll Liabilities	\$	6,991.19
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$	6,991.19
Total Current Liabilities	\$	8,720.51
Long-Term Liabilities		
SBA Loan #6429717910		147,300.00
Total Long-Term Liabilities	\$	147,300.00
Total Liabilities	\$	156,020.51
Equity		
Opening Balance Equity		13,166.47
Retained Earnings		63,613.06
Net Income		-33,368.67
Total Equity	\$	43,410.86
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$	199,431.37



2020 USAFL Profit and Loss Statement

	<u>Total</u>
Income	
1050 Capital Donations	75,339.00
1250 Donations	21.72
1260 Fundation	1,357.52
1375 Membership Dues - Clubs	13,981.97
1380 Membership Dues - Players	
1380-02 Arizona Hawks Football Club	100.00
1380-03 Atlanta Kookaburras Inc	100.00
1380-05 Baltimore/Washington Eagles FC	650.00
1380-10 Columbus Jackaroos	250.00
1380-11 Dallas Magpies AFC	300.00
1380-12 Denver Bulldogs AFC	100.00
1380-19 Minnesota Freeze	200.00
1380-23 OC Bombers	100.00
1380-24 Philly Hawks ARFC	25.00
1380-26 Portland Power AFC	100.00
1380-27 San Diego Lions FC	300.00
1380-28 Seattle Grizzlies	200.00
1380-33 Sacramento	100.00
1380-34 Des Moines Roosters	150.00
1380-37 Fort Lauderdale Fighting Squids	100.00
1380-54 Hawaii Eagles	625.00
1380-57 Rome RedBacks	100.00
1380-59 Centennial Tigers	100.00
Total 1380 Membership Dues - Players	\$ 3,600.00
1385 Supporter Memberships	4,241.00
1550 Sales of Equipment	0.00
1650 Sales of Merchandise - Clothing	-590.00
1800 Sponsorships	5,858.93
2000 US Revolution Donations	200.00
Unapplied Cash Payment Income	0.00
Total Income	\$ 104,010.14
Cost of Goods Sold	
3800 Costs of Merchandise - Footballs	
3800-01 Costs of Merchandise - Footballas Nationals	1,922.93
Total 3800 Costs of Merchandise - Footballs	\$ 1,922.93



Total Cost of Goods Sold	\$	<u>1,922.93</u>
Gross Profit	\$	102,087.21
Expenses		
3150 Bank Charges - Fees		578.24
3250 Board Retreat		3,858.61
3950 Dues & Subscriptions		1,736.35
4350 Travel		1,133.78
4400 Insurance		1,166.00
4450 Legal & Professional Fees		2,989.26
4650 Office Expenses & Supplies		1,745.86
4660 Web Hosting		1,826.15
4700 Postage & Shipping		475.37
4750 Promotion & Advertising		720.00
5000 Storage		600.00
5225 Western Regional Tournament		
5225-02 Rent or Lease		100.00
Total 5225 Western Regional Tournament	\$	<u>100.00</u>
5250 Visa Transaction Costs		300.00
5300 Wages & Commissions		14,845.18
5400 Nationals		
5400-03 Rent or Lease		5,000.00
5400-12 Storage		2,846.28
Total 5400 Nationals	\$	<u>7,846.28</u>
5483 Revolution Expenses		10,572.75
5484 USA Freedom Expense		5,000.00
5486 Umpires Grant		5,000.00
Payroll Expenses		
Taxes		5,202.00
Wages		67,999.92
Total Payroll Expenses	\$	<u>73,201.92</u>
QuickBooks Payments Fees		453.66
Supplies		2,324.38
Unapplied Cash Bill Payment Expense		0.00
Total Expenses	\$	<u>136,473.79</u>
Net Operating Income	-\$	34,386.58
Other Income		
Other Income		1,017.91
Total Other Income	\$	<u>1,017.91</u>
Net Other Income	\$	<u>1,017.91</u>
Net Income	-\$	33,368.67



2020 USAFL Contact List

Executive Board

Seb Aguiari	President	seb.aguiari@usafl.com
Heather Serpico	Secretary	heather.serpico@usafl.com
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Lauren Skonieczny	VP West	lauren.skonieczny@usafl.com
Molly Halberstadt	Member At Large	molly.halberstadt@usafl.com

Program Coordinators

Jonathan Mills	Umpire Association President	jonathan.mills@usafl.com
Jeff Persson	National Umpire Coach Director	jeff.persson@usafl.com
Lisa Arredondo	Women's Association	lisa.arredondo@usafl.com

National Coaches/Staff

Tom Ellis	Revolution Head Coach	revolutioncoach@usafl.com
Christina Licata	Freedom Head Coach	freedomcoach@usafl.com

Advisory Board

Mark Motlop	Australian Advisory Board	mark.motlop@usafl.com
Doug Drinkwater	Australian Advisory Board	doug.drinkwater@usafl.com

Staff

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Horacio Guterrez	Accountant	accountant@usafl.com
Kathryn Hogg	Webmaster	webmaster@usafl.com