

U.S.A. PLOWING ORGANIZATION

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Hello friends. Thank you all for being so understanding with me getting this newsletter out so late after our 2024 National in SD. It has been 2 months since. Jeremy, Gene, Kevin, Hailey, and Conrad are back from the World Ploughing Match in Estonia. There are many things to report including 1) our USAPO National results in SD, 2) a USAPO Director's meeting, 3) the USAPO General membership meeting, and 4) the World Ploughing report from Estonia. Let's get into it.

USAPO National Plowing Competition in Arlington, SD July 11th through 13th, 2024

The 2024 USAPO National meet was held July 11th through the 13th in Arlington, SD. That is west of Brookings a bit. The SD State match was held before the National with concurrent USAPO National practice times. The weather was sunny and some would say on the warm or hot side. The National was held on John Gaard's land in Arlington with oat stubble. The renter of the land surely wanted to harvest his oats but had to change plans to have the stubble ready for competition. A very wide swather came in and laid the oats down and a large Krause silage chopper chopped the green oats into semis. The operation worked on an angle so as not to leave tram lines parallel to the plowing. Nicely done. The soil conditions were good and got better I think as one moved to the north. I did notice on the southerly end that if you plowed too deep one brought up some sticky clay which stuck to my non-plastic boards. Most standard classes were offered for the USAPO National, namely, Antique, Senior and Junior Open, Small Plow, Vintage Small Plow, and Reversible for senior and junior participation. This was the third year for the Vintage Small Plow Class that was well attended. Again, Ohio had a good contingent of plowpersons along with all the SD plowpersons.

The 2024 USAPO National Match was organized by the South Dakota State Plowing Association with special thanks to John Gaard, Courtney Gaard and her folks, Aaron Egeberg, Tim Brown, and Ryan Olson and the rest of the SD club. The onsite food was prepared by Courtney and her folks and was well received and appreciated. The banquet was held in Lake Preston at the Legion Hall. The food and venue were excellent.

The 2024 National Match was very well organized with good plowing conditions even though having to overcome oats-on-the-field just prior.

The top placings of the results are listed below.

National Open

1 st	Paytyn Hiestand	OH (208pts)
2 nd	Jacob Loehr	MN (205pts)
3 rd	Aaron Egeberg	SD (203pts)

National Antique

1 st	Richard Opdahl	IA (228pts)
2 nd	David Gaard	SD (208pts)
3 rd	Corey Goehring	SD (204pts)

National Small Plow

1 st	Joel Wagner	CT (274+259=533pts)
2 nd	Ray Elsberry	IA (259+227=486pts)
3 rd	Mike Rhoades	OH (240+227=467pts)

Vintage National Small Plow

1 st	John Gaard	SD (262+251=513pts)
2 nd	Joe Loehr	MN (257+244=501pts)
3 rd	Jask Olson	SD (242+241=483pts)

National Junior Open

1 st	Colton Hiestand	OH (205pts)
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National Reversible

1 st	Kevin Albrecht	SD (95+205=300pts)
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Competition notes – Good showing for SD with 6 trophy winners. I was glad to see a junior competing this year. Paytyn moved up to TJ's spot at number 1 in Open and Colton took over the 1st spot for Junior Open. It's a long trip to make from the other states but I am so glad the sport is still very active. Competition was fierce in the Open class as the National Open scores were within 5pts for the top 3 spots. MN came for business with Joe and Jacob Loehr both getting good trophy positions. Hailey Gruber plowed as a guest and took the top score in the Small Plow class with guest Brian Davenport from Ontario getting the second place score. Very tough competitors indeed. Richard Opdahl came up from IA to take David Gaard's usual 1st place in the Antique class.

2023 Spirit Award goes to Courtney Gaard

Courtney will be a new face to the National and SD matches with John Gaard. She and her folks did all the onsite food at the top of the hill in the tent supplied by the SD club.

2023 Sportsmanship Award goes to John Gaard

A special thanks to John for using his farm and getting conditions all sorted out with the green oats and all. Congratulations John.

Here are pictures of your 2024 USAPO winners. We are all winners but some get trophies. John Gaard made special trophies for this year, a single moldboard plow mounted on a wooden plaque. Quite a special award to me.



The 2024 USAPO Open Class



The 2024 USAPO Antique Class



The 2024 USAPO Small Plow Class



The 2024 USAPO Vintage Small Plow Class



The 2024 USAPO
Junior Open Class



The 2024 USAPO
Reversible Class



The 2024 USAP
Spirit and Sportsmanship
Award Winners

USAPO Directors Meeting Minutes

July 10, 2024

A USAPO board of directors meeting was held in Arlington just prior to the 2024 National Meet. Called to order by Pres. John Gaard at 8:20pm Central time on July 10th, 2024. Directors present were: John Gaard-SD, Robert Miller-PA, Joel Wagner-CT, Mike Fitz-IA, Gene Gruber for Mike Penas-MN, and Michael Rhoades-OH.

John Gaard handed out proposed USAPO rule changes for the directors to review.

Previous Minutes - Previous Director's Meeting minutes from March 18th, 2024 were reviewed. Bob Miller moved to approve the minutes and the financial report, Mike Rhoades seconded. Passed

Financial Report - The financial report from the last general membership meeting till the present was read. (Please see the financial report for the General Membership Meeting following these minutes.) Mike Rhoades moved to accept the treasurers report. Mike Fitz seconded. Passed

JHW recommended to roll the USAPO's CD into another CD when the current CD time is elapsed. Mike Rhoades moved to negotiate the CD interest rate when rolling over the current CD to a new term. Mike Fitz seconded. Passed

Director's Reports –

IA – Mike Fitz. IA is still looking for a new site for the IA championship due to recent flooding.

IL – Don Klehm. No report.

MN – Gene Gruber. MN State match will be on August 23-24. Jeremy Nietfeld and Gene Gruber leaving Aug 1st for Estonia with Hailey Gruber, Kevin Albrecht, and Conrad Gruber.

OH – Mike Rhoades. The 2025 National will be in OH August 8-9 on the Dirksen Farm. The OH State and National will be about 7 miles from Greenville, OH. OH State Championship will be in a few weeks. Expect 37 contestants with 5 new plowpersons.

SD – John Gaard. Welcome to the USAPO Nationals. There has been lots of rain so plowing conditions should be good.

PA – Bob Miller. PA States were in May this year. Down a little bit in attendance but a good group of plowmen.

CT – Joel Wagner. No report.

WPO Report – Gene Gruber. Nothing to report. The WPO is considering a 23 and under class for the Worlds. More to come.

New Business:

- New apparel report for the 2024 World Ploughing Meet. The USAPO representatives to the world meet in Estonia will have new jackets and t-shirts for 2024.
- Reviewed a 2010 USAPO financial report that included giving the USAPO world plowmen \$5000 for some expenses that also covered some land rental for prepractice. This practice of

supporting the USAPO world plowpersons has apparently been discontinued. However, about this time two containers with a conventional and reversable plow in each were fabricated so that USA plowmen could use good plowing equipment with borrowed or rented tractors at the world meets. In recent years our USA plowmen have been shipping personal tractors to the world meets and we have been paying minimal storage fees for the two containers still located in Germany.

- Gene Gruber recommends prepaying the container rental cost to keep in good standing. Gene provided a history of the containers. Additionally, Gene suggests that shipping personal plows to the world meets costs about the same as shipping the USAPO containers to the world meets with USAPO funding. This cost of shipping the containers maybe should be donated to the USAPO plowmen to help offset the cost of shipping personal equipment.
- John Gaard reviewed the updated rule changes – adding juniors and vintage classes and how to break ties. The tie-breaking process would be similar to that of the World Ploughing Organization and the Ontario International Plowing Match rules. Gene Gruber moves to accept the rules changes. Mike Rhoades seconded subject to review at the next board meeting. Passed.
- Need to approve the IA, IL, and OH directors for 2-year appointments. Joel Wagner moves to approve. Mike Fitz seconded. Passed.
- Election of USAPO officers was discussed. Mike Fitz moved to accept the existing officers. Bob Miller seconded. Joel Wagner suggests each director go back to their state memberships to see if anyone wants to be the USAPO Sec/Treas or help out the existing Sec/Treas. It was noted that the USAPO officers were elected from the Board of Directors. Passed.

Old Business: None

Adjourn –

Mike Fitz moved to adjourn. Mike Rhoades seconded. Passed.

Adjourned at 9:40pm.

USAPO Annual General Membership Meeting Minutes July 11, 2024

John Gaard presented a little history of the Gaard Family Farms, including a strawberry garden well known by the Gaard family. Also, John's Grandmother worked hard on the farm and learned that dresses should NOT be worn around tractor PTOs! John then congratulated the SD Plowing Association for helping getting ready for the 2024 National Plowing Event.

The 2024 General Membership Meeting was called to order at 7:07pm Central Time on 7/11/2024 by President John Gaard.

Minutes of last General Membership meeting were briefly discussed.

Mike Fitz moved to approve. Mike Rhoades seconded. Passed.

Financial Report - The financial report from the last general meeting of August 30, 2023 till the present was read.

Starting Balance from last meeting on 8/30/2023	\$18760.81
Income:	
Dues collected	\$1440.00
2023 National Fee collected	\$4000.00
2023 National Entry Fees	\$775.00
Uncashed Checks from 2023 as of 12/31/2023	\$300.00
Donations to USAPO	\$310.00
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	\$25585.81
Expenditures:	
USAPO Newsletter Costs	-\$717.57
2023 Award Checks	-\$875.00
Cashed Award Checks from 2022	-\$100.00
Cashed Award Checks from 2023	-\$75.00
WPO Dues	-\$3376.34
John Gaard for Tele Director's Mtg	-\$22.35
Plow Storage in Germany	-\$397.62
USAPO CD Investment	-\$10000.00
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	-\$15563.88

Net Bank Balance per Bank of America Report through May 2024	\$10021.93
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In addition, there were \$90 in Dues in June and a Donation from John Deere of \$250 that were not included in this report. Also, to date there are \$608.69 accumulated USAPO expenses yet to be paid.

Mike Fitz moved to accept. Lyle Grimm seconded. Passed.

Directors Reports:

PA – Bob Miller. PA State Match was in May.

SD – John Gaard. No New Report. Next SD Match will be in Prairie Village in Madison, SD.

IA - Mike Fitz. Looking for location for the IA State Meet.

OH – Mike Rhoades. OH State match is scheduled in two weeks. Looking forward to hosting the National in August 8th and 9th 2025 near Greenville

IL – Don Klehm. No Report.

CT – Joel Wagner. No report.

MN – Gene Gruber. MN State match is last week in August.

WPO Report – Kevin, Gene, Hailey, Jeremy, and Conrad leaving for Estonia for the 2024 WPO Match in Early August.

New Business:

Rule changes were proposed by John Gaard. In general, they covered eligibility requirements, clarification of age for the Junior Class, adding Small Plow Vintage and Junior Classes, definition of 'rolling the plot', coaching restrictions, and how to break Ties. (JHW – Let me know if you want a copy of the new rules.)

Floor open to discussion –

Please note – Newsletter costs are minimized when I can send the newsletter electronically. Mailing is getting increasingly expensive. JHW will look into using UPS.

Thanks to Courtney's parents for food, the dollars go to the SD Plowing Association.

Mike Rhoades moved to adjourn. Tom Gower seconded. Passed.

Adjourned at 725pm.

World Ploughing Organization Ploughing Competition in Tartu, Estonia August 16th and 17th, 2024

The 69th World Ploughing Championship 2024 was held in Tartu, Estonia on August 16th and 17th, 2024. Gene Gruber and Jeremy Nietfeld were our USA Plowpersons with Hailey Gruber as Coach and Kevin Albrecht as the USA Judge. Our USAPO World Ploughing Organization representative was Conrad Gruber. I would venture that a mid-August date for the World Ploughing event is a bit earlier than customary. Of course, our team went to Estonia for a prepractice week of plowing the first week of August before the competition week of August 11-17.

There was a small group of Estonians running the world meet. They worked very hard to have a well organized event. The competitors had college dorms for accommodations similar to those in York England a while back. There was a tour day on Sunday before official practice. The tour went to a dairy farm with a farm museum and a nature park with working horse stables.

There was some rain during the prepractice week but the weather was good for final day of practice and for the competition days. It is reported that there were some tram lines in the plots but our professional plowmen were able to handle that. Our plowmen represented the USA Plowing Organization well. Both of our plowmen were in the conventional class. Gene Gruber was 4th in stubble with a score of 177 and 6th in grass with a score of 170 placing 6th overall. Jeremy Nietfeld did very well as well with a 14th in stubble with a score of 149 and 10th in grass with a score of 152, placing 12th overall. Some pictures of our team are below and from the pictures the weather looked very fine for the competition. Congratulations to our plowmen!



The USAPO Team in Estonia at the Flag Raising Ceremony



Our USA Team at the Blessing of the Plow Ceremony



Gene Gruber in Grass General Plowing Against His Neighbor



Jeremy Nietfeld Making Second Crown Pass After his Chip in Stubble

On a personal note, I joined this sport a number of years ago with my first plowing competition at a USAPO National in Belmond IA. It was the year that the Small Plow class competed only one day. Don Klehm won that year with his Oliver 77 and amazingly with an Allis Chalmers plow and then subsequently went to Croatia the next year. Dad said he would never own another Allis plow, we had Olivers and IH.

The previous year I had seen the plowing going on in Belmond and visited with Roger Neate in the USAPO tent when I asked him if I could plow too. Roger asked "Where are you from?" I said "Connecticut". Roger said "Oh, we don't have anybody from Connecticut, sure you can plow." Then he said "Do you know HOW to plow?" I told him I grew up on the farm kitty corner from the Prairie Homestead Show Site (that's not really an answer but there you go ...). That next year I plowed in the open class, on the South end not to hurt anyone's score, next to Jimmy Quinlin and that pounding John Deere diesel. It was an honor to plow next to a champion plowman and of course I love JD diesels. My friends from Belmond were watching and kept talking to me at every scratch. I went seriously over time but completed my plot with a borrowed JD plow from Esther MN behind my 38 Allis WF. After I achieved last place I think it was Don who came over and said "The plot looked pretty good but next time when you start plowing, just keep plowing".

You all need to know that when I was practicing and setting up this unknown plow, Don Klehm, my first USAPO friend, stopped by and gave my brother and me a lot of pointers. I knew then that this was a sport for me as so many were so friendly. I've made many friends since then. How else would I have met Werner Gruber, Bernie Nietfeld, the Gaards, Mike Fitz, Kevin Holl, Mike Rhoades and so many more too numerous to mention. We have a great sport and organization and we need to do everything possible to keep it going.

Joel Wagner, Sec-Treasurer

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See that I'm sending a membership form below for you all to use. If you see a red dot on your address, you are behind in your dues.

Make Check Payable to USAPO Dues \$30.00 for year(s)_____

Name_____

Street Address_____

City_____ **State**_____ **Zip**_____

Home Phone_____ **Cell Phone**_____

Email _____

Discontinue membership (sign)_____