



IGEM Council Meeting

June 21, 2017

Idaho Department of Commerce
700 West State Street, Boise – J.R. Williams Building
2nd Floor – Sawtooth Conference Room

IGEM Council Members Present:

Bill Gilbert
Dr. Neels Van der Schyf

IGEM Council Members on Phone:

Representative Luke Malek
Rick Stott
Von Hansen
Mike Wilson
Dr. Mark Rudin
Senator Kelly Anthon

Idaho Commerce Staff Present:

Matt Borud
Carmen Achabal
Jenny Hemly
Laura Conilogue

Others in Attendance:

Shane Slack – ISU
Geran Call – ISU
Tom Fischer – Fi-Ber Sports, Inc.
Mike Seibert – Fi-Ber Sports, Inc.
Mark Hughes – Hockey Consultant

Call to Order

Bill Gilbert called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Dr. Van der Schyf motioned to approve the previous meeting's minutes. Mike Wilson seconded. All in favor. Motion approved.

IGEM Investment Subcommittee Update – Bill Gilbert

This was the only project worth bringing forward to the whole Council.

Presentation and Funding Consideration

Project 02527 – HOPLite Skate Armor Testing

Revised presentation and budget form was sent to each member of the IGEM Council.

Questions

Why don't the competitors have a toe cover? Most of the other skate armor producers think that the plastic toe cover that is built into each skate is enough protection. Plus it costs quite a bit more to have protection over the whole foot, including the toe. Another reason is because this is also a new type of product, even the competitors have only been around for 5 years, so the market and the products are still developing.

Is there no armor out there that protects the toes? No. All the competition armor just covers the skate, the skate fender, and the laces. It is not a good solution. Fi-Ber Sports' armor covers the entire skate including the toe and the heel, which helps the expensive skates last longer as well.

Does the protection wrapped around the toe affect stability when skating? No. It is very close to the skate and it does not move around on the skate. Their competitor's foot guard moves on the skate.

Do their competitors have patents on their products? Yes, but the HOPLite patents have unique claims. The HOPLite patent references how the armor attaches to the skate, specifically with the three points of contact. They have spoken with the best patent lawyers in the country. It does not specify material, in case they find a material that works better. They have a patent in America and Canada.

Is this armor something youth leagues may begin to require? The HOPLite team is certain that this will become required protection eventually, just like helmets and facemasks.

Have you looked at companies in Idaho to manufacture the armor? They have a company creating their product in Chicago. Once they scale, and get bigger, they can bring it to Idaho, but the few places they have researched in Idaho do not have the ink jetted molding to manufacture their product yet. HOPLite may license with a big sports company that already makes sports products and has the ability to produce their armor.

Why haven't skate manufacturers made skates with more protection? The skates have become stiffer with newer, lighter materials, and it is less comfortable and flexible for the skaters. If more protection is put into them, they will just become tauter and not as easy to move around in, and that is worse for the skaters. The ideal playing combination is to have a lightweight skate with protective armor on top.

Have you done any research to determine if skate manufacturers plan to add more protection into skates? They have seen patents by skate manufactures with protection improvements in the skates, but they have not come to market.

Why is your production technology different than the competitors? HOPLite is using injection molding to produce their armor, their competitors are not. They can make 150 pairs an hour, a lot faster than their competitors.

Why are the competitors not using injection molding? Because it is cost prohibitive. It is expensive to manufacture a small amount of a product so it usually does not make sense to make that investment unless you are sure of your market.

What kind of capital investments has HOPLite acquired? They have angel investors, an investor from Montreal, plus their own money.

How much does it cost to manufacture a unit? About \$8.41/pair. Once they are producing higher numbers, it will be about \$6/pair.

What is the price of the protective gear? Average price would be \$130. That aligns with the cost of other hockey gear.

When will the product go to market? 300 pairs were recently produced, and some of those will be sold, but most will be used for testing. The HOPLite team wants to go to market as soon as possible.

Why did HOPLite decide to work with Idaho State University (ISU)? The ISU team has worked on robotics, and explosions, and knows how to gather data with high rates of speed. Plus it is more efficient to do the research in Idaho to get the data needed quickly.

Is the company in contact with professional hockey players? Yes, HOPLite is talking to several players in the NHL. However, they have not sent any products to them yet because they want to make sure the armor is fully ready before it is sent to them for use.

Rick Stott motioned to approve.

Von Hansen seconded.

All in favor. Dr. Rudin exited the call due to a scheduling conflict prior to the motion to approve. Carmen Achabal called Dr. Rudin for his vote. Dr. Rudin confirmed his approval to fund this project and sent a subsequent text to Carmen Achabal confirming his approval. This information was conveyed to the Council. Dr. Van der Schyf abstained. **Motion approved.**

Reallocation of Funds & No Cost Extension Request – Carmen Achabal University of Idaho Project

This extension was overwhelmingly approved through email.

When a No Cost Extension (NCE) or a change in scope is requested, if this request is submitted near a scheduled IGEM Council meeting, the Council will be asked to vote on the request during the public meeting. If the NCE or change in scope request is time sensitive and cannot wait until the next IGEM Council meeting, an email vote will be exercised.

Public Comments

No comments.

Review Action Items – Bill Gilbert

The next IGEM meeting is on August 24. It will be a joint meeting with the Council and Subcommittee, and the meeting will address all the ongoing IGEM projects.

Bill Gilbert adjourns the meeting at 10:05 am.