

MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL

Tuesday, October 12, 2021
6:00 p.m. Mountain Time

Present:

Bruce Baumgartner, President, Chairman
Mark Reiland, 1st Vice President
Joan Fulp, 2nd Vice President
Kerry McCoy, Secretary
Van Stokes, Treasurer
Veronica Carlson
Mike Juby
Steven Thorpe
Mike Macchiavello
John Stefanowicz
Rob Cate
Rich Bender, Executive Director, ex-officio
Les Gutches, Associate Executive Director for Programs and Strategy
Gary Abbott, Director of Communications
Laura Peeters, General Counsel
Pete Isais, Director of National Events
Morgan Rabine, Manager of Corporate Partnerships

Absent:

Craig LaMont
James Ravannack, Immediate Past President
Stan Dziedzic, United World Wrestling

1. WELCOME

Bruce Baumgartner welcomed the Executive Committee members after doing roll call, and asked anyone who might have a conflict of interest on any topic to share that at the appropriate time.

2. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2021 MINUTES

Motion to approve the September 14, 2021 minutes made by Mark Reiland. Second by Steve Thorpe. Approved.

3. PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Bruce Baumgartner reported on a busy but successful month for USA Wrestling. He was in Oslo, Norway, where the USA won a record 15 medals. He was proud of how everyone from USA Wrestling (athletes, coaches, staff) performed. He also went to New York City for a very positive

Living the Dream Medal Fund Big Check Presentation, and noted that Jeff Watters has become a new steward for the program. He reported that USA Wrestling was considering the Bout at the Ballpark event in Arlington, Texas on Feb. 12 for the in-person Executive Committee meeting. Baumgartner noted he would be in Belgrade, Serbia for the UWW Congress in early November, and that the November 9 Executive Committee call will be moved to a different date.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

Rich Bender updated the committee on the press conference announcement earlier in the day about the Bout at the Ballpark, where Oklahoma State will face Iowa and the USA men's freestylers will face Iran at Globe Life Stadium in Arlington, Texas on February 12. He noted that there will be some women's wrestling added to the event, with details to come.

He reported on the Technical Commission meeting he attended during the Senior Worlds in Oslo, Norway. Coming out of the meeting was the awarding of the 2022 and 2023 Men's and Women's Freestyle World Cup to the USA, as well as the final Ranking Series Event in 2022. In his meeting with UWW President Nenad Lalovic, there was discussion of the USA hosting the 2027 Senior World Championships as a test event for the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. In the meeting, they discussed the qualification system for the 2024 Olympics. It looks as if just five athletes will qualify in each weight from the 2023 Worlds (rather than six), with an additional qualification spot added at the Last Chance Qualifier. He also reported that the USA Wrestling membership was off to a fast start for the new 2021-22 fiscal year.

5. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS UPDATE

Rich Bender and Les Gutches gave an update on the record performance of Team USA at the 2021 World Championships in Oslo. The USA won 15 medals, seven in men's freestyle, seven in women's freestyle and one in Greco-Roman. The USA placed second in men's freestyle behind Russia and second in women's freestyle behind Japan. One more match victory by the USA men's freestyle team would have given them the team title. Bender said the mood was the same with both freestyle teams – pleased with seven medals but hungry for more, with a goal of winning the team title. There were many challenges with the Olympics and a full World Championships back to back, but the USA was able to persevere, and a lot more ahead to accomplish. Gutches noted that the U.S. wrestlers looked crisp at the event, the best they had looked. Many lessons were learned in the preparation during COVID that will help moving forward.

6. FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Van Stokes noted that the new Finance Committee members from the JOWC and Athletes Advisory Committee had not yet been named. The committee was hoping to meet for the first time this fiscal year in late October. July and August financial information will be available soon. He noted that the annual audit was about to start. He also said that September and October

membership was off to a good start, but a key time to evaluate this year's trends would be during November and December. Rich Bender answered some questions about recent staff hirings and plans for personnel in the near future. Pete Isais gave information on new Events employee Richard Razo and Gary Abbott provided update on new Communications employee Joe Wedra.

7. ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Mike Macchiavello noted that the AAC had a goal of having all of its committee assignments made by October 25. There would be an AAC Executive call later in the week.

8. D, E & I COMMITTEE UPDATE

Kerry McCoy reported on the most recent committee call, which he described as spirited. He talked about trying to minimize missed opportunities within the organization in regards to executing diversity heritage celebrations. He noted that there was much work to do moving forward in a variety of areas. Van Stokes reported on receiving USOPC training on "implicit bias," and that it was done in a professional way. He noted two areas of change, external and internal to the organization. Rich Bender noted that USA Wrestling is paying attention to diversity, with an understanding that more diverse is better. He also noted that Rule 50 is becoming a hot topic within the Olympic Community, and educating and informing athletes is key moving forward.

9. SAFE SPORT UPDATE

Laura Peeters reported on an uptick in Safe Sport reports coming in. She also noted some issues with the U.S. Center for Safe Sport. She said that with Congress requiring the Olympic movement to increase its financial support to the Center, that the NGBs and USOPC wants to make sure the funds are well spent and that the Center is providing good service to the Olympic family. She noted that the USOPC has a new athlete safety policy that USA Wrestling is now reviewing.

Rich Bender reported on the first in-person NGB Council meeting held in two years, and that the feedback on the Center is that there does not appear to be any accountability. He noted that the athlete community has become upset with the performance of the Center, and that should bring additional attention to the issue.

10. BOARD OF DIRECTION VACANCIES

Bruce Baumgartner reported that he is not yet ready to give his input on the two Board vacancies, which includes a replacement for the position open with the passing of Greg Strobel, as well as the required independent Board member position. He would like the new Board to be filled before he moves forward in this area. He noted that he will make his recommendation in this area in November.

11. NEW BUSINESS

Rob Cate addressed his belief that USA Wrestling needs to aggressively develop a marketing strategy and shared his thoughts on how this could be addressed at the staff level. Rich Bender and Bruce Baumgartner agreed to consider his input in these areas.

After discussion, Bruce Baumgartner decided that the next Executive Committee meeting would be held on Wednesday, November 10 at 8:00 p.m. ET.

Rob Cate suggested that USA Wrestling put attention on the November 13 college match when Oklahoma State visits Stanford, which marks the first home wrestling match since the Stanford community saved the wrestling program (and 10 other sports).

Motion to adjourn by Mike Macchiavello, second by Rob Cate

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.