

**MINUTES
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL**

Wednesday, December 14, 2022
5:00 p.m. Mountain Time

Present:

Bruce Baumgartner, President, Chairman
Kerry McCoy, 1st Vice President
Joan Fulp, 2nd Vice President
Van Stokes, Secretary
Don Reynolds, Treasurer
John Stefanowicz
Rob Cate
Zac Dominguez
Mallory Velte
Veronica Carlson
Nate Engel
Mike Macchiavello
Rich Bender, Executive Director, ex-officio
Les Gutches, Associate Executive Director for Programs and Strategy
Gary Abbott, Director of Communications
Cody Bickley, Director of National Teams High Performance
Laura Peeters, General Counsel
Megan Ball, Executive Assistant
Morgan Benham, Manager of Corporate Partnerships

Absent:

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

1. PRESIDENT'S GREETING

President Bruce Baumgartner welcomed the committee. Secretary Van Stokes asked the Conflict of Interest question to the Committee. John Stefanowicz, speaking for the athlete members, said that as athletes there is a conflict regarding selection procedures, but it would not affect their ability to vote on the Executive Committee.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 9, 2022 MEETING

Motion to approve the November 9, 2022 minutes made by Don Reynolds, second by Van Stokes.
Approved

3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bruce Baumgartner noted the USOPC/NGB certification process that will occur in 2023. He noted that the compliance audit has been completed. USA Wrestling will need to change its bylaws to meet compliance and there will need to be a Board meeting. He noted issues concerning the definition of “athletes,” something the USA Wrestling AAC had worked hard on.

He will attend the Beat the Streets Los Angeles Gala and International event, and will go to Colorado Springs on January 5 for the staff holiday event and service awards. While there he will meet with staff and perhaps the USOPC. He is currently working on his travel schedule of international events to attend as part of the campaign process for the UWW Bureau election.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Rich Bender congratulated the Board for a great 2022 year in all aspects of the organization. He reported on the UWW Men’s and Women’s Freestyle World Cup, which had been held in early December in Coralville, Iowa. He praised Pete Isais and his team, especially on the effort to secure visas for Iran. The USA won the men’s division, and with a younger women’s team, placed fourth in their division. He noted some of the timing challenges of a World Cup in December.

With the fiscal year ending on August 31, Meredith Wilson is finalizing the annual report. Bender noted the 49 World medals won by USA Wrestling this year was a record. Other highlights included Amit Elor becoming youngest Senior World champion for USA, Jordan Burroughs record seventh World and Olympic gold, the USA winning the overall Senior medal count for the first time, membership of 270,000. Bender reported that November 2022 had been the largest membership revenue month in USA Wrestling history. Bender stated that the organization had a great year, with even better days ahead.

5. UWW REPORT

Rich Bender reported on the UWW Technical Commission meeting which had completed a few days prior, and did not include major rule changes. The Commission decided that 10 seconds would be the time that a challenge must be made on officiating calls. He noted that USA Wrestling will focus in 2023 on getting Bruce Baumgartner elected to the UWW Bureau. USA Wrestling hosted the Ukrainian women’s team in Colorado Springs prior to the World Cup, and at a camp in Iowa after the World Cup, which was mutually beneficial. He noted UWW would announce the sites and dates for the Ranking Series within a week.

Rich Bender also reported on the USOPC position about having discussions on how Russian/Belorussian athletes may be allowed to compete internationally again. The USOPC does not support letting them compete again, and certainly there is no consideration for letting the athletes represent their national team. Rich Bender also explained the change on Jan. 1 to a new USOPC president, Gene Sykes, as well as the new USOPC Board members.

Bruce Baumgartner gave information on the USA Wrestling Greco-Roman program, reporting that Herb House had become a full-time USA Wrestling employee and had to leave the Board. Rich Bender provided information on staff changes in Greco-Roman, as well as the fact that there will be additional new hires in the future. Cody Bickley and Les Gutches explained the hiring process. Rich Bender noted that Cody Bickley stepped up as interim Greco-Roman General Manager for the time being.

6. FINANCE REPORT

Don Reynolds reported the Finance Committee met the previous Monday, and approved September and October financial statements. He reported that so far in the new fiscal year, USA Wrestling was running well ahead of budget projections for income. He noted that October had been 23% ahead of the budget. Reynolds said that USA Wrestling is in a strong financial position at this time. He said the Finance Committee will meet in late January to look at November and December financial statements, and review the organization's investment policy. Les Gutches reported that the audit field work had been completed, and was now in the hands of the auditors.

7. ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

John Stefanowicz reported that the AAC had met in November, with the USOPC Compliance Audit results. He said that USA Wrestling's AAC had worked hard on this topic and deserved to have their compliance perfect. He noted that the negative items were nothing more than semantics. He said that USA Wrestling's AAC are trailblazers in the Olympic movement, and the USOPC Council wants other sports to mirror wrestling's AAC. He noted a future objective was to make sure the athlete voice was included in the Long Range Plan process.

8. TEAM SELECTION PROCEDURES UPDATE

Cody Bickley reported that the adjustments from the last Executive Committee discussion on procedures had gone back to the Women's Freestyle Sport Committee and the Men's Freestyle Sports Committee. He noted that the changes were tracking well, that we are now working with the USOPC on it, and that it should be wrapped up soon, with the procedures posted by early January. He said the age-group procedures would be finished by the end of January.

9. COMMITTEE VACANCIES

Bruce Baumgartner reported that Pat Culp, the state chair of Indiana, would serve out an opening on the Audit Committee. He noted that there is a vacancy for the chairperson of the Greco-Roman Sport Committee, with Herb House now on staff. He discussed his thoughts on that replacement, and after some input from the committee, said he would give it more thought before making the assignment.

10. LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Van Stokes indicated that the updated Long Range Plan would need approval from the Executive Committee or Board. He reported on the June in-person Long Range Planning in Colorado Springs to refresh and refocus the 2024 plan. The updated document retained the same strategic priorities, but had many revisions. The Board was briefed on this process at the August meeting. The Executive Committee now had the new Long Range Plan for review. After the plan is approved, staff will complete the annual operating plan. Rich Bender noted the broad participation in the process. Don Reynolds praised the USOPC staff leadership in the meeting.

Motion to approve the Long Range Plan as presented by Van Stokes, second by Don Reynolds. Approved.

11. DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Kerry McCoy reported the committee had met the night before. There are two new members, USA Wrestling staff member Lorraine Rorabaugh and referee representative Kenny Taylor. Topic included continued discussion on the transgender issue. He noted that it had been discussed to outsource some of the content for celebrations. He reported that he had met with Travis Shives, new executive with FloWrestling, who pledged to work with the committee on being aligned with our values. He also noted a discussion by the committee concerning the Iranian fans at the World Cup and some protests there. He explained the limitations on flags and signs for all spectators at the event, which was the policy of the arena.

12. LITIGATION, SAFE SPORT AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

Laura Peeters updated the committee on litigation. She noted that a few employee issues had been addressed, with USA Wrestling following the law and having outside counsel involved. She noted plans to improve HR procedures. Les Gutches said USA Wrestling will be pursuing outsourcing some HR activities with a good provider identified. Laura Peeters said that does not take away from staff managing internal employee issues. She praised the athletes for their efforts on the Long Range Plan. On the Safe Sport front, she said year end reporting is being done, and that USA Wrestling must post a new investigative process on the website. She explained the 2023 Safe Sport event audit, which will have a two-week notification.

Laura Peeters gave an update on the USOPC Compliance Audit. She indicated the process is continually being adjusted by the USOPC. She noted a few areas where USA Wrestling had to make adjustments, and for the most part, those audit corrections have been sent into the USOPC. She noted that in 2023, there would be the USOPC certification process, which she was confident USA Wrestling would be successful

13. WOMEN'S WRESTLING REPORT

Joan Fulp thanked the Long Range Planning Committee for acknowledging the growth of women's wrestling. She noted that USA Wrestling's female membership is up 30% so far this fiscal year. She gave a detailed update on growth in a number of states, and noted that data shows that girls growth has helped boys growth. She noted collaborative efforts with the D1 Women's Wrestling group. She explained that Wrestle Like A Girl leader Tela Bacher is focused on coaches education, and is pushing for a cooperative approach to this

14. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

The Executive Committee went into Executive Session at 6:12 p.m. to discuss the Executive Director Evaluation Process.