

**MINUTES**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL**

Executive Committee Meeting  
Wednesday, December 20, 2023  
5:00 p.m. MT

**Present:**

Bruce Baumgartner, President, Chairman  
Kerry McCoy, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Joan Fulp, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Don Reynolds, Treasurer  
Van Stokes, Secretary  
James Ravannack, Immediate Past President  
John Stefanowicz  
Pat Ream  
Veronica Carlson  
Zac Dominguez  
Nate Engel  
Rob Cate  
Mike Macchiavello  
Craig LaMont  
Rich Bender, Executive Director  
Megan Ball, Executive Assistant  
Cody Bickley, Director of National Teams High Performance  
Greg Dana, Director of Finance  
Aphten Goldman, Director of Business Development  
Richard Immel, Senior Manager of Communications  
Joe Russell, Manager of Men's Freestyle Programs  
Meredith Suess, National Teams and RTC Coordinator  
Pete Isais, Director of National Events

**Absent:**

Mallory Velte  
Stan Dziedzic, United World Wrestling

**1. WELCOME**

President Bruce Baumgartner welcomed the committee and called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM MT. He asked Van Stokes to read the Declaration of Conflict of Interest and Oath of Confidentiality. No conflicts were present.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 11, 2023**

Van Stokes made a motion to approve the minutes with the change that Zac Dominguez was present, Zac Dominguez seconded. There was no discussion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

### **3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Baumgartner attended Senior Nationals and the Stockyard Stampede in Fort Worth, TX last weekend. It was a positive weekend, and he applauded the efforts of those involved.

### **4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Rich Bender shared that staff are in the process of end of year reviews. Staff complete two reviews per year with a mid-year in July and end of year in December. He is fired up for next year already, and very proud of the performance of the organization through year end. He turned the call to Aphten Goldman, and she let the committee know USA Wrestling has now partnered with Air Force, Special Warfare. This will be the largest sponsorship ever outside of APS and Flo Wrestling.

Rich attended the USOPC Board of Directors meeting at NBC headquarters in Connecticut earlier this month. A lot of conversation revolved around Russian participation in the Paris Games and board members got an inside look on NBC's coverage plan. Salt Lake City has entered targeted discussion with the IOC for hosting the Winter Games in 2034. This discussion is reserved for the finalist city.

Before heading to Senior Nationals, Rich attended the United States Olympic & Paralympic Endowment board meeting in New York City. The event coincided with an awards luncheon where President Baumgartner was presented with the Douglas MacArthur Award.

Senior Nationals was an all hands on deck event, and Rich applauded all those involved in pulling it off a smooth event. Looking forward, staff will go on holiday break and many youth events are scheduled. On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, there will be a wrestle off in Denver for those challenging to represent the U.S. at the Pan American OG Qualifier in Acapulco, MX.

### **5. FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Don Reynolds shared that the committee met earlier this month to review September's financials. The numbers are well ahead of budget, but that may be timing related. By the end of December, we'll have a good idea of where things will be. There is a new travel expense policy approved by the Finance Committee that will be shared out. The department continues to make process improvements. The committee also approved the bonuses for the pan am qualifiers.

### **6. ATHLETE ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Johnny Stefanowicz shared that the committee had to reschedule the December meeting due to committee members schedules. Leading into the new year, the committee will meet the first week of January and meet with the Medical Advisory Committee to review their suggested updates to concussion protocols. The AAC has some gaps to fill in across the committees, and

Johnny will attend the Team USA AC summit in Atlanta in January. One of the goals of that summit is for NGBs to gain more autonomy with how EAH is distributed amongst athletes.

## **7. 2024 AGE GROUP PROCEDURES**

President Baumgartner turned the call over to Cody Bickley to cover the 2024 Age Group Procedures. The sport committees are meeting this week to approve the procedures. The big change is that in the same fiscal year we'll have two U15 Pan Ams due to the Olympics. Because there isn't a large time gap between the qualifier and competition, the U15 athletes will be selected from the US Open.

MFS met the night before this meeting, Greco will meet tonight. WFS the next night. The goal is to have the executive committee vote in the board portal to approve the procedures following the approval of the sport committees. Any updates or changes will be shared with the executive committee before they vote.

## **8. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT**

The last DEI committee meeting was November 8<sup>th</sup>. The next meeting is January 4<sup>th</sup>. Kerry thanked the communications team for their efforts the last year in adhering to the celebration calendar.

## **9. SAFE SPORT REPORT**

There is no Safe Sport report this meeting, however the USOPC Board of Directors has formally recertified USA Wrestling in Good Standing through 2027. President Baumgartner congratulated Megan Ball and all the staff for their hard work on the compliance audit and recertification.

## **10. WOMEN'S WRESTLING UPDATE**

Joan Fulp shared that many states are working hard to accommodate the large growth of girl's high school wrestling. Many states are having to consider separate state championships to ensure there is enough space and time. In Illinois, 114 schools have added women's wrestling. It is critical to continue to focus on guiding girls and women in leadership, visibility on women in the sport, and education for others. The Teal Course has had 4,800 individuals complete certification this year. The continuous goal should be to continue to build a better product for women and possibly change the sport as a whole.

## **11. NEW BUSINESS**

Rich congratulated Joan and the committee on the success women's wrestling and the Women's Freestyle team has and affirmed the continued focus on improving Greco Roman wrestling in the United States. He highlighted that we do have the best Men's Freestyle program in the world.

They've won back-to-back world championships for the first time ever, and all Board members will receive their commemorative rings.

## **12. EXECUTIVE SESSION IF NEEDED**

Bruce thanked Rich and the staff for their work making it a very successful year. The organization doesn't stop trying to improve and it shows. He wished everyone a happy holiday season and thanked everyone for their work in creating opportunities for boys and girls to reach their potential and grow the sport.

The meeting entered Executive Session at 5:50 pm MT.