



**Date: 2\233\2021**

**Time: 8:30 pm**

**Location: via Zoom**

**Call to Order – 8:35 PM**

**USAWNJ Members**

**Purpose of (emergency) Meeting – Kids States\Do we still hold it?\Where?**

**Attendees-** Jeff Dickman, Nancy Zuena, Rick Puerto, Pete DiBiase, Bryan Heller, Jason Nase, Lori Ayres, Dianna Barkman, Omar Feliciano

**Approval of Previous Minutes-NA**

**Treasurer Report-NA**

**Agenda Items-change in number capacity at Sportika**

**Scholastic-Kids States**

**Update on HS States-NJSIAA** has committed to doing it along with regions. This is good for the kids. Jeff spoke to several athletic directors and they are in favor of us holding a tournament for the non-qualifiers and would send kids to it. Thoughts that it could be open for the girls to compete also.

**Jeff:** Sportika numbers were not clearly specified in earlier conversation. Sportika is allowed 35% of capacity but it includes all participants and personnel and is specific to the area we have booked. Capacity for the space we have booked is 35% of 1050 people. This is much less than what was originally thought. We are looking at revised numbers of total participants and work force involved with holding the event. Estimates are that it would allow only 125 wrestlers plus one parent each. We have essential workers that need to be accounted for in the reduced figures. Jeff's feeling is that it is a great opportunity for the kids but it is not a big enough tournament (qualifiers and second chance) to make it feasible. Jeff is worried that we would have to reduce the number of participants to a level that would make it impossible to cover our bills for the event. The idea was to put any extra money toward the freestyle\Greco season. He spent a great deal of time trying to figure something out to make it work. He spoke to Fran at the Sun Center regarding capacity. They can now hold 11,050. These are great numbers and great possibilities. He proposes we go back to the Sun Center for qualifiers, Kids states and the second chance\JV jamboree tournaments. This would require 9 days of bookings with a total cost of \$95,000. Broken down the numbers are: 1600-1700 kids that register @\$45 comes to about \$75,000 window and then 500-600 participants for the JV\girls tourney at the same cost it would bring us up to about \$100,000. This would cover our building fee. Door entrance money at \$15 (that we wouldn't have at Sportika.) The door take would be deducted from the bill. Estimates are that it could only cost us \$60,000 with the extra we would have paid being rolled back into the Freestyle season or whatever else. He estimates that personnel to man the tournaments would be about 150. Fran has a minimum of 50 workers (concession, door, custodians, security) Jeff was throwing out ideas for how to minimize our staff by only having those coaches\workers report on the day they are coaching\working (i.e. Lori is only at Sportika when the girls are competing, Jason comes on the final day, rotating staff) Cutting back numbers wherever possible. Original idea for Sportika was that the 1000

capacity was 500 wrestlers\500 parents but that is no longer the case. One of the questions posed was “How do we factor in the number of coaches in that 1000 number?”

**Rick** feels that 400 is way too many athletes plus the possibility of 400 parents and 150 staff. Then add 50 coaches and it will not happen. It will put us over the limit. There are currently 400 coaches’ cards at the scholastic level. That would put us way over the capacity. How do we tell what coaches that they are in? How do we manage who can come in and limit the number on the floor? Do we allow only one coach per club? What about the independent kids that don’t belong to a club? Who determines which coach is allowed and who is not? He is open to any\all suggestions.

**Jeff** called the meeting to get feedback and we are on a tight time frame. There are dates available at the Sun Center to move the qualifiers back almost a month and not interfere with the Freestyle season.

**Nancy** posed the question of sending out a survey to anyone who has done tournaments before to find out if they would come to the tournament if we hold it. She is worried that the turn out could be poor and we lose big money hosting it. She has had some coaches tell her that they don’t want to be in a gym for that long a period of time and wouldn’t participate in it. She would like to get a feel for the general opinion out there. Is it worth it? Will we get table workers etc. who want to sit in the Sun Center all day with 1000 people?

**Bryan** feels that we won’t get accurate feedback from a survey. His feeling is we just go with it based on the club that he works with. He feels we will get the numbers we need.

**Rick** wanted to know if those club wrestlers that Bryan spoke of were year round wrestlers or are we going to lose numbers to spring sports.

**Lori** stated that her club has about 1\3 of the normal amount of members this year. However, that 1\3 would definitely attend

**Bryan** asked for the number of participants in the qualifiers in the past.

**Jeff** replied that the average was 400 kids at each qualifier times 9 qualifiers or about 3600 kids. He cut that in half to have a safe number to run the events this year in terms of finances. He feels that if we can’t get those numbers we should bow out gracefully with the understanding that we would have liked to have these events but that it was not feasible when looking at the cost to run it. We can’t bankrupt ourselves holding it especially at the Sun Center.

**Jason** asked if perhaps we hold one and see what the turnout is like.

**Nancy** responded with the question as to what do we tell those kids who came to qualify expecting to participate in a state tournament.

**Bryan** entered the conversation with the suggestion that if the numbers who register are small we can go back to Sportika. What would be the parameters for Sportika if we went back there in terms of numbers if we did it in the same manner as we would have done for HS states? Breaking it into maybe 6 hour sessions and spread over how many dates we have.

**Jeff** said we can crunch the numbers with Desi and Pete already has a lot of the numbers. The question still remains, “What do we do with the coaching staff? The coaches will cut into those numbers severely.

**Pete** suggested that we are missing the staging area idea in the discussion. He posed 2 things we could do to limit the numbers in the venue. 1) Only so many coaching passes on the floor at one time. One coach leaves another takes his place similar to Iowa. Staging areas could be the second floor gymnasium, which is a separate entity, or\and also a tent outside. Use it as a staging area for coaches with a TV screen or use Trackwrestling to see when your wrestler is coming up. Procedure would be that 1 coach and 1 wrestler come in pick up the pass and report to the mat. Staging areas could be set up as “in the hole” and those coming up within a certain number of bouts.

**Nancy** was concerned that we would be over capacity in the venue and who would be controlling that. Pete made it clear that the areas would be outside the building and not be in the capacity count. There would be only one way into the building and one way out eliminating any rushing of the floor. Escorts have been used to bring

the coaches and participants to and from the mats. When done they exit the building and are out of the capacity count. Nancy was concerned about paying a number of escorts for the day. We would only need escorts for the number of mats set up and Pete seemed to think we could find enough volunteers. Pete cited his experiences from Iowa and how smoothly it ran.

**Bryan** expressed that if we look back at the dates we have available could we break the divisions down to a specified number of kids and run it all in that session we could get it done that way. Is it possible? How many dates are booked at Sportika for kids?

**Jeff** replied that it is a possibility but there are not enough session in a day to accommodate the 5 divisions that we have. We have 7 dates booked.

**Bryan** was crunching the numbers. Capacity (35% of 1050 approximately 380 .minus 8 mats-12 officials, 16 table workers 10 security . That would give you 100 kids plus 1 parent each with a surplus of about 40 people for help. Bryan then suggested that we take the total number of days (7) that we have for qualifiers and states, divide them into 2 sessions (14), then run them as a division and call them the states without a qualifier. With 100 kids per session we could run 1400 kids through the 7 days.

**Discussion** centered on factors to consider which included selection of participants and financial. Bryan feeling was that limiting the kids and having a tournament would be better than just cancelling the tournament again this year. We would need to make it clear to the public that we are numbers restricted by mandates and protocols and that this is the only way to get it done. Financially we are looking at \$250 for each referee per day times 12 refs is \$3000 plus \$4000 for the facility plus mat rentals \$1600 for 8 mats. Add in 10 security staff @\$250 = \$2500, Table workers have been paid in the past but we will need to look for volunteers. Total at this point is \$11,100 per day. Last year's entry fee \$45 will only net us \$9,000. Plus we need to add in the cost for the computer guys, tents, and electric. Pete estimated that if we raised the fee to \$55 we would come close to covering the initial expenses. Bryan's revised total was approximately \$85,000. Charging \$60 a head per wrestler would get us closer to the cost. Bryan's feelings were when it comes down to doing it or not having a tournament people will pay the extra \$15. Rick's elephant in the room-last year the \$\$ were up a little bit so we may be able to take a little bit of a hit but not so much as to get killed. His feeling is that we can't go higher than \$60 especially since they need to purchase a USAW membership card. Pete suggested that we look into getting sponsors for the event.

We are talking about 7 open individual tournaments by divisions. (Bantam Open, Junior Open, etc.) It almost comes to a first come\first served event. Registration for it was compared to buying tickets to a popular concert, covid appointment, and Super 32s. Pete emphasized that we need to do some out of the box thinking because these are not normal times.

**Nancy** revisited the idea of finding table workers if we aren't going to pay them. Pete's experience was that the clubs provide a table worker when they come. Jeff suggested that Bryan put out a notice that we are trying to put together the tournament and ask for volunteers to help run it. Several people talked of their experiences of going to tournaments where not only was the club required to provide a table worker but an official as well. Jeff asked to group to sleep on it. Think about some ideas and formulate an email to share thoughts among this group. Some options that Jeff has looked at include a tent outside Sportika with a tunnel to the back door, having 2 tents since the upstairs gym was included in the 35% capacity of Sportika, coaches would be charged (\$5?) to get into the event hoping to deter some people from wanting to get on the floor. In Sportika you are literally on the floor, not like at the Sun Center. We can police some of that by telling fans that they cannot videotape from the corner and they need to stay behind the rope. Jeff hopes that if we publicize the parameters that we are working under that we can avoid any rowdy parents. Jeff wants a tournament but doesn't want it to hurt next year's kids because there is no criteria

**Lori** talked about perhaps running registration like Super 32 where there are two registration dates, one for those who meet a certain criteria, and one for others to fill in the bracket. General feeling was that it might be

the way to go. Nancy commented that it defeats the purpose of having an open tournament. Rick pointed out that it did but it also made the tournament more select environment and adds more weight to calling it a State Championship as opposed to a State Open. Jason was in agreement that it would provide a better quality event. **Jeff** charged Bryan to work on numbers and logistics with Desi and John for exact numbers for a 7 day tournament. Pete ask that before that happens that he and Rick get together to look at the average numbers per divisions\weight class along with the financial aspect so that Bryan's group knows what they are looking at in those terms. Jeff has that information from John and Desi from past 2 years and will get it to Bryan. Planning discussions began among the group. Bryan set up a session between himself, Rick and Pete to talk through it with numbers and iron out a rough plan. Peter referred to it as a jigsaw puzzle that we have to put together to complete the picture. Jeff also gave Bryan the task to work with John and Desi on preparing the registration form.

**Jeff** asked for clarification...Sportika or Sun Center? Pete's opinion was that it would be easier to run at Sportika. Rick felt that at Sportika we would be better able to control the attendees than the Sun Center just based on the architectural design. Nancy's concern was that would the Sun Center let us hold our deposit until next year without forfeiting it? Jeff is setting up the contract for the Sun Center to extend it for two more years to hold our deposit.

**Circling back** to limiting coaches, Jason wanted to make sure we specify that each kid has only one coach when he enters the building to compete. He suggested that when they register that the list their coach on the form. Coaches could end up with more than one kid that he is coaching (akin to Fargo) and that will bring down the number of coaches in the capacity count. Bryan agrees...each wrestler lists 1 fan and 1 coach at the time of registration. Only one coach per wrestler in the corner with the fan\spectator\parent behind the ropes videotaping and cheering. The coach could be the parent as long as they have a current coaching card which carries the necessary background check. Only the person listed as coach on registration will be allowed on the mat coaching. Parents\spectators will be on the bleachers at Sportika and will only be in the building for the duration of their wrestler's match. In and OUT.

**Jeff** discussed security with Angelo regarding the screened fence. They made plans to visit the venue the following day.

**Jeff** set us about the given tasks and reviewing the flyer that will be posted on the USAWNJ site in an easy to find manner. Review of the costs of registration was gone over again as was the criteria, clarification of our keeping the attendance fees and concessions, streaming deal with Flo, shirts, championship singlets, medals, and plaques are already ordered. Sportika was finalized as the venue and Jeff would speak to Fran regarding the change from the Sun Center.

**Rick** spoke with Pete about possibly jig sawing the dates that we have as a block.

We then played "pass the host to Rick" and adjourned this section of the meeting. Rick, Jeff, and Nancy stayed on to discuss other topics.

**Adjournment**– 9:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Dianna Barkman USAW ID: 111295101

Acting USAWNJ Secretary

*Signature & Date)*

*Dianna R. Barkman 3/5/2021*

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