



DATE: October 22, 2020

TIME: 8:00 PM

LOCATION: Zoom meeting

Call to Order - 8:09 PM

USAWNJ Members

Purpose of Meeting – Update on events, the Covid shutdown, Committee reports, future planning

Attendees- Jeff Dickman, Nancy Zuena, Rick Puerto, William Terrell, John Welch, Pete DiBiase, Bryan Heller, Gary Brownell, Dave Mauro, Jason Nase, Ron Fazio, Lori Ayres, Dianna Barkman, Omar Feliciano, Chris Curtis, Edmund Mallqui

Approval of Previous Minutes

Motion: to approve minutes as provided in email

Motion- John Welch 2nd: Ron Fazio Passed unanimously

Treasurer Report-

Extensive line by line items were explained in great detail by Rick Puerto for the fiscal year 2019-2020.

Items were grouped by sector and reported as monies generated and expenses.

Bottom line: Income ~ \$304,029 Expenses ~ \$256,677 Net ~ \$47,352

Discussion-John Welch stated that there was a lot of information to look at and asked that the statements be mailed to us. He was given an affirmative answer and the report will be mailed along with clarification of the line item of “sports management” as requested by Bryan Heller.

Agenda Items/Reports

Scholastic-planning for middle school and under- **see calendars next page

Qualifiers/States- Rick Puerto/Jeff Dickman

Rick reported that the committee is looking at several possibilities to hold Qualifiers. One would be to book as if a normal year but that would probably be a “no go” since many high schools are not available. (ex. Fair Lawn) Another possible alternative is to book qualifiers at Sportika during the months of March & April. The thought here is to hold individual qualifiers on Saturday and Sunday with each day its own qualifier. For example: Toms River would be held the first Saturday. Randolph would be held the next day. The “host” school would be responsible for manning tables, check in, etc. This would provide income for both USAWNJ and the host school. Jeff stated that the committee will discuss the monetary distribution to host these events. The idea to be presented is to have all proceeds go into a common pot and be divided equally once Sportika and other fees have been paid. The stipulation would be that “host” schools must send people to work in order to share in the money. It would also show a continued partnership with the schools for the following years. Qualifiers/States are up in the air but this is a good starting point. There has been no discussion of states as yet. Rick will be holding a committee meeting to be scheduled within the next two weeks. Jeff has a meeting with the governor and liaison scheduled for Tuesday, October 27th to discuss intentions regarding opening up/relaxing restrictions on wrestling. Jeff would like to hear your

feedback on this but stated that “at the end of the day it will be the Governor’s decision as to the amount of people allowed in the venue.” We will then need to decide if it is even worth holding it.

Pete further explained using the Sportika facility. He believes that we have a way to run a large tournament using the facility and stay within the guidelines of the government. He felt we could hold the high school and the boys & girls matches. However, it would be difficult to run the little kids states unless it was broken into weekends by age group. Pete referred to the email he sent previously as to the logistics. It would be broken into running 2 weight classes (2 boys, 2 girls) to completion which would take approximately 4 hours. It would be less than 150 people in Sportika at any one time. There are multiple staging areas available utilizing 8 mats. The facility is large and has a second floor with a large gym. A request has placed to utilize it as well. Super 32 was used as an example where the SC Health Department determined that each room was a separate entity allowing 150 people. We are hoping that we can convince our state officials and Sportika to follow those same guidelines so that we can pull this off. With the second floor and rotating people in and out we should be able to make it work. Gimp worked out the times to accommodate a 32 person men’s bracket and a 16 person girls’ bracket. Pete has worked on ways to narrow the participants to those numbers without the districts and regions. He felt that trying to run too much and we are shut down because someone tested positive for covid would be disastrous. To avoid that he proposed that it be run in one weekend. Pete will be going to the Preseason Nationals in Des Moines and will evaluate the effectiveness of their set up. Pete feels that the details that USAW is using are “outstanding and amazing” and if you want to see the 8 page document he will send it to you. They are going out of their way to make it as safe as it possibly can be. Many of those same ideas would work at Sportika. Pete, like many of you, has a vested interest in getting some sort of event going, particularly at the high school level.

Mason Dixon tournament- Will be held. Jason offered to help Rick with providing coaches for the event. Lori asked if they were planning on having girls participate. Tournament officials are looking to limit the size altogether this year and are just hoping to have it at this point. They are still looking for an outside of a school venue. Lori’s concern was providing the younger girls in NJ a chance to compete. Rick spoke to the Maryland director who promised that a meeting would be set up with team coaches and other directors to discuss having girls added to the tournament going forward.

Discussion- Nancy Zuena pointed out that everything right now is tentative based on the covid restrictions placed on New Jersey. Numbers allowed to gather need to be increased for any plan to work. With the 25% occupancy up to 150 people allowed it would be difficult to even hold an event. John Welch asked if there was a possibility of running the event in 2 venues close by to reduce the number of people gathered in one place. Nancy raised the question as to whether parents would send their kids if there were no spectators allowed in the venue. Rick answered by saying that the two venue option would hold many logistical problems to be worked out (equipment, personnel, etc.) The cost to run a multiple venue event would increase exponentially. The committee had discussed putting on 4 tournaments in one weekend but the cost would be so exorbitant that it wouldn’t make sense. Lori asked if there was a date when the decision needed to be made in order to hold the events. Rick replied that Sportika will open up to us if the Governor opens up the restrictions placed on wrestling. Sportika has partnered with USAWNJ and is willing to work with us. Rick assumes we would need a “drop dead” date for Sportika. Nancy asked about the cost to rent Sportika for 4 weekends/2 days/& store mats. Rick clarified that we would have to rent mats for the events. Jeff later added that the cost for Sportika was still being worked out and that, with the number of anticipated kids, that Sportika may do us a favor and only charge \$5 a kid. Jeff stated that he was trying to

work the \$5 per kid option in lieu of a straight rental fee since rental for the 4 days of Northeast Regions is a total of \$1500. The 8 days for qualifiers and states would kill us. Nancy asked about concessions and Jeff stated that the concessions will be ours and not run by Sportika. Jeff is planning on having the “hosts” of each qualifier running concessions. Lori inquired as to whether there would be any girls’ events running alongside the boys events since there is Girls States and Middle School Nationals. She suggested perhaps holding beginner events. Rick said he would take that into consideration at the next council meeting. Bryan queried as to whether there is any regulation as to prevent kids entering the qualifiers on back to back or all days if it is held at Sportika. Jeff stated that there would be nothing to deter them from entering all 8 qualifiers other than distance to the venue. There hasn’t been a restriction in the past. From a business aspect it would bring in more money but...on general principle, based on current restrictions, maybe not but there is nothing to keep them from entering all of them.

Scholastic-planning for high school

Rick reported that Jeff has been in touch with NJ Coaches Association who have reached out to USAWNJ to help out with NJ states because of our expertise in running large events. Jeff stated that we have been given permission to run a high school kids championship if it is allowed. Jeff spoke to Dan from Sportika and he was told that at the next Sportika meeting that USAWNJ was going to be voted in to hold the event. Jeff booked the dates (February 26-28, March 4-7, 2021) for the event based on that information. But again, everything is up to Governor Murphy.

Discussion- Nancy stated that her AD said that it wasn’t set in stone that there wouldn’t be a HS states. Jeff answered by saying that February 13th was the date set to make the decision. Instead of districts and regions there was talk of adding 2 extra dates to the HS schedule to accommodate a sectional type competition with only 4 teams competing. Similar to a semi and a final in a regional group thing with teams being allowed to opt out of it. Even that is not set yet. Pete brought up the article regarding the NJSIAA stance on USAWNJ running the event. Pete stated that he was amazed that the NJSIAA would be worried about our nonprofit organization and our motives. We only have one motive-provide opportunities to wrestle. A speculation (by Jason, I believe) was made that the NJSIAA felt that if we run it well there would be no need for them to continue to run one. It is a big money maker for the NJSIAA (but not for us) and that they are reluctant to turn it over to our organization that can do an awesome job of running it and salvaging the season. Lori asked what the next steps would be. She felt that the NJSIAA in some ways have their hands tied in terms of what they are allowed to do. Jason agreed that they are at the mercy of the governor. We have a little more leeway since we are not tied into high schools. NJSIAA is not even talking about districts and perhaps closing just like the individual cross country season. Jason continued to say that if an individual outdoor sport is having these kinds of issues it doesn’t look good for an indoor sport in the heart of flu season. Lori stated that she thought the NJSIAA couldn’t back us and that the Coaches’ Association is our best bet for getting the word out to the student athletes. Jason stated that the Coaches’ Association has given us their full support and want their students participating. The only snag is that the NJSIAA would consider our tournament an “out of season” one and not allow the coaches to coach their kids. Lori pointed out these 2 problems and asked Pete if we were putting together a proposal to present to the Coaches’ Association. Pete replied that he had already done that. He said we gave them alternate ideas but felt they were stuck in the mindset of what has always been done in the past and not thinking out of the box. Pete can’t imagine them running any type of event. For us to put it on we need to think outside the box within the parameters of the restrictions at the time. Bryan made the point that we don’t really need permission to run it if the NJSIAA won’t sanction it because we are a separate entity. Lori reiterated

that our student athletes need to be aware/understand that the Coaches' Association supports the event and that the athletes be educated on the format. She also expressed a concern for proper coaching that was brought up earlier if the event will be considered out of season and will be a violation of the coaching regulations set by the NJSIAA. She had spoken to a few coaches about putting in for a waiver in order for the coaches to be able to coach their own kids. The general feeling was that it would not be accepted. Jason confirmed that had heard the same from those he had spoken to earlier that day. Pete spoke to the point that NJSIAA would have a problem if every single coach violated the restriction and that he doubted that every coach would be suspended. It would be really bad publicity for NJSIAA especially since they espouse the idea that they are kid centered. Pete feels if we apply enough pressure on them that they would have to give in and approve a one year waiver in these unusual circumstances but it would have to be "all in" for the coaches. Jason was not worried that the coaches would not be in favor of the waiver. However, he feared the pressure put upon them from their respective athletic directors to follow the NJSIAA rules and not corner their kids. Lori asked what would be the next steps. She asked if Bryan and Jason could talk to the other coaches share what we are talking about and update us on what their next steps are. Jason (I believe) said that has been expressed and has spoken to Scott Pressman, who has the ear of the NJSIAA and a coach himself, has been trying his hardest to get them to conform but is getting nowhere. The NJSIAA does understand where we are coming from. There are a lot of referees and coaches in support of Pete's proposal and they just want to have some event that resembles a state tournament at the end of the year for their kids. Two suggestions were put on the floor to "skirt" the coaching rules- trading/switching the kids/schools you would be coaching (ex. Princeton would coach Howell kids and vice versa), having the parent in the corner with the coach behind them as a "spectator." John cautioned that we keep all this to ourselves and not let any thoughts out there that we might want to get in a contest with the NJSIAA until a final decision has been made to avoid making enemies. Pete agreed that we don't want to burn any bridges at this time. Lori asked Pete what we could do to help push this along. Pete said we need an official ruling that states are not going to be held but everything is in a holding pattern in the hope that things will improve with the covid restrictions and it will be a nonissue. Pete is not optimistic that this will resolve itself with the prediction of a new wave with the cold temperature and the beginning of flu season. We are spreading the word as best we can and we are looking at the end of February to hold the event. We need someone in the NJSIAA to make a decision so there aren't 2 states held if we go ahead. No one knows what February will look like and information changes week to week. Bill (I believe) asked how long it would take us to put this all together. He is assuming it would take longer than a week. Bryan expressed that he thought it was already moving along with the idea that we will be holding it. Pete is confident that he can get it done from Thanksgiving to the dates booked. He stated that the choices for boys & girls participating needs to be in place by the end of the first week of dual meets. If the 32 boy and 16 girl brackets there are going to be nominations for those spots and a group will be tasked to create a ranking system. This will be fluid and change based on performance week to week until the top 32/16 are chosen. They would then be seated as they would have any other year. Placing freshman would be a problem. Pete's idea of the committee would be 2 people from each region, 4 college coaches, 3 from USAWNJ, possibly a former coach and an official who has seen these kids in action. Pete has a website designer all set who can create a way for coaches to nominate their kid into the 32 (\$50 to nominate-if they can't afford it there will be an opportunity to ask for donations to cover the cost) Can add kids in all the way up to the week before states. A lot of thinking outside of the box. Lots of kids looking to win a title in NJ without finding alternate states to move to.

International Style- Pete Dibiase

Moving to the Freestyle/Greco Season Pete felt that we could run a tournament similar to the scholastic season proposed at Sportika. Some brainstorming ideas included running qualifying events at individual clubs. Clubs would perhaps run X amount of weight classes within a week with different clubs taking different age groups and splitting it up. They have also talked to Flo about streaming some of the states. Perhaps we can have the parents watch to limit numbers to conform to existing guidelines at the time. Lots of things need to go right and fall into place to have it work. Clubs would have to cooperate and events would need to be held in non-high school gyms/wrestling rooms. There are many things to think about with lots of moving parts. It's going to take a good amount of work and cooperation but Pete is willing to put in the time to make it happen. He believes that will still make it financially feasible. Pete is positive we can run freestyle states the same way as scholastic states. It would just take more than one weekend. We can run boys & girls high school, juniors and cadets both styles the same way. For the little kids and other divisions we would really have to think outside the box or do another weekend; possibly breaking the divisions up by weekends. The other option is to not have it at all.

Discussion-Both Lori and Jason thanked Pete for all his efforts. Jason put his full support behind the efforts taken to salvage some sort of season for our wrestlers. Bryan echoed his thanks as well

Calendar-Jeff Dickman

Jeff explained the calendar (see below) and the options for running qualifiers/states.

January/February- Regular dates that are our normal dates to hold qualifiers are Plan A. Rick and the committee will hold meeting to see if this is possible. If that fails-

March/April- Plan B. Jeff has booked 3 weekends in March (3/13-28/21) and 1 weekend in April (4/3 & 4/21)

Each day will be a separate scholastic qualifier. Again, Toms River would be held the first Saturday.

Randolph would be held the next day. They would be in the same order as they would be in a normal season. Kids states are tentatively scheduled for April 9--11

If this fails-???

April/May-International style developmental events are tentatively blocked out for Sundays beginning on April 18th and running through May 30th.

Northeast Regions are penciled in for May 7-9, 2021.

Women's Council Update

Elections- Ed Mallqui was elected Vice Chairperson. Incumbents in the secretary and chair positions will continue to serve (Wendy and Lori). A new social media page, New Jersey Girls USA Wrestling, is now on Instagram and Facebook and Lori encouraged everyone to take a look and follow. The Women's Council is brainstorming ways to get more female participation by perhaps holding more beginner events in folkstyle perhaps next year. There were a several NJ girls competing at Super 32, not a USAW event, but can be used for ranking for Fargo.

Financial Considerations-Discussion

It was expressed that if we can't generate income if we can't hold tournaments then we need to limit our expenses. Because we hadn't been able to hold a season many of the budget items will be held over for the coming year so there shouldn't be the big ticket items. Jeff has encouraged everyone who run clubs to have their members purchase USAW cards to generate some monies for USAWNJ. Bryan commented that it is a tough sell with the season the way it is. Dianna agreed and suggested that if you are able to run your club, it could be a selling point for the insurance aspect.

Bryan speculated that Fundraising without holding tournaments or any kind of gathering will be challenging aside from some kind of online “telethon” type event similar to Beat the Streets. Possibly a virtual card similar to Rokfin. Unsure of the financial aspects, might be something to look into at a later date. Possibly an All Star event or something similar to highlight to our community. Pete stated that he had been talking to the Full Circle people and there is a possibility we can do something with them (PA Power??) Something that we can sponsor in conjunction with Full Circle (Rokfin group).

Pete brought up that USAW is not sold that Fargo will be run how it has always been. There is a possibility that it will be held as an open event rather than a state generated tournament. If we qualified people like we always have but it would be up to the parents to get their kids to Fargo. We would provide coaches for the kids, if the need them, once there. That format is still up in the air but it would mean less financial outlay for USAWNJ. It would also eliminate financing and planning transportation for the teams as in the past.

USAW Update

Update cards – Board members are in the process of updating their cards. There are no issues with blocked members.

Other business

Jeff apologized for being late but had an ongoing emergency. He wanted everyone to know that we are all doing the best we can and hopefully we will be seeing some wrestling. If not we need to take the stance that “it is what it is” and is out of our control. We will survive and get going again. Jeff will be taking the brunt of the feedback and will handle all the complaints. Please forward or direct any issues to him. You may give them his cell number

Adjournment– 9:26 PM

Motion: to adjourn

Motion- Rick Puerto

2nd: Bryan Heller

Passed unanimously

Executive Session Tabled - will be rescheduled

Respectfully submitted,

Dianna Barkman USAW ID: 111295101

Acting USAWNJ Secretary

SECRETARY APPROVAL:

(Signature & Date)

Dianna R. Barkman 11/5/2020
