

MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

MINUTES - JUNE 17, 2020

On Wednesday, June 17, 2020, the Maryland State Athletic Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman David Norman at 3:02 p.m.. Present were the following: Chairman Norman; Commissioner Brian Boles; Commissioner Chuck Gast; Commissioner David Shull; Patrick Pannella, Executive Director; Eric London, Assistant Attorney General and Counsel; Olga Escobar, Board Specialist; and Joe Koff, promoter representative for Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC. Absent: Commissioner Lenny Moore. This was a virtual meeting due to COVID-19 pandemic public restrictions, with all Commission members and Commission staff calling in telephonically.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

Commission minutes for the Commission meeting held on May 20, 2020, which were previously distributed to Commission members for review, were discussed. Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, and seconded by Commissioner Shull, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the May 20, 2020 minutes of the Commission.

COMMISSION EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE COVID-19 VIRUS

The Commission presented the following progress report in regard to the Commission's efforts to address the COVID-19 virus and the pandemic's impact on the respective sports the Commission regulates.

The Commission expressed its full adherence to, and compliance with, the "Maryland Strong: Roadmap to Recovery" stages for the COVID-19 virus instituted in the State of Maryland by Governor Larry Hogan. The Commission notes that, under Governor Hogan's directive, local jurisdictions are free to impose more restrictive requirements if a jurisdiction determines that increased restrictions are needed to address the COVID-19 virus in this particular jurisdiction.

Chairman Norman stated that the Commission is taking constructive steps "in a

rapid manner” to address the COVID-19 virus in preparation for the point in time when Commission-sanctioned events are permitted to be held in Maryland.

Chairman Norman stated that the Commission, under the medical leadership of Commission Chief Physician Dr. John W. Stiller, M.D., is currently engaged in conducting research to create a Commission document specifically designed to set medical protocols and administrative protocols relative to COVID-19 testing for professional wrestling events without spectators in attendance.

Dr. Stiller, Chairman Norman and Executive Director Pannella are currently meeting virtually on a weekly basis for said purpose. Dr. Stiller is researching and reviewing the medical accuracy of COVID-19 tests while considering, and addressing, the marked fluidity of the COVID-19 virus. Chairman Norman and Mr. Pannella are working to obtain information concerning how other athletic commissions and jurisdictions are addressing the COVID-19 virus and are implementing COVID-19 testing.

ROH REPRESENTATIVE JOE KOFF ADDRESSES COMMISSION

Joe Koff, promoter representative for licensed promoter Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC (“ROH”), addressed the Commission and expressed the following.

ROH has recently cancelled certain scheduled ROH events in other jurisdictions due to the pandemic.

Mr. Koff explained that the ROH’s position in addressing the COVID-19 virus has been to be “very cautious”, while “putting humanity and responsibility ahead of dollars.”

ROH is currently in need of producing content for its ROH television show featured on television stations across the country which are affiliated with Maryland-based Sinclair Broadcasting. ROH fans and the referenced affiliated television stations alike have been requesting the same. To that end, ROH is desirous of receiving a Commission sanction to hold a multi-day series of wrestling matches for television taping purposes at The UMBC Events Center in Catonsville, Maryland. No

spectators will be permitted to attend the wrestling matches.

Mr. Koff stated that ROH is seeking a “glimmer of hope” that the Commission, in its due diligence and in consideration of its long-standing track record of wrestler safety, will consider its request for a Commission sanction of wrestling matches to be conducted under strict Commission control and supervision.

Mr. Koff stated that ROH is pledging to support an “uber-safe environment” wherein only ROH personnel, Commission staff and venue staff will be granted entrance into the venue.

ROH is prepared to adhere to all COVID-19 testing requirements and all social distancing measures set by the Commission. ROH is planning to hold its multi-day series of wrestling matches for television taping purposes at some time in the early part of August of 2020, if possible.

Chairman Norman reported that, in the near future, the Commission anticipates submitting its medical protocols and administrative protocols relative to COVID-19 testing for professional wrestling events being held without spectators to the Maryland Department of Labor for consideration and approval.

Chairman Norman noted that the Commission’s submission of the same to the Maryland Department of Labor is being impacted by the “fluidity” and evolving nature of both the COVID-19 virus and COVID-19 testing.

Executive Director Pannella stressed the vital importance of isolating ROH wrestlers and referees at the hotel selected by the promoter for the entire period of time prior to the wrestling activity which will be designated by, and required by, the Commission.

Mr. Koff advised that, in preparation for receiving the Commission’s medical protocols and administrative protocols relative to COVID-19 testing for professional wrestling events being held without spectators, ROH is already considering certain social distancing measures to implement at the hotel where ROH wrestlers and referees will be isolated.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, and seconded by Commissioner Shull, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to adjourn the meeting at 3:35 p.m..

Patrick Pannella
Executive Director