

MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2021

On Wednesday, June 16, 2021, 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 Lenny Moore; Commissioner David Shull; Patrick Pannella, Executive Director; Eric London, Assistant Attorney General and Counsel; and Olga Escobar, Board Specialist. This was a virtual meeting due to COVID-19 pandemic public restrictions, with all Commission members and Commission staff calling in telephonically.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

PASSING OF DENNIS “COACH D” JAMES

JUNE 2, 2021

The Commission held a moment of silence in honor of Dennis “Coach D” James, a highly respected amateur boxing coach who volunteered for many years with the UMAR boxing gym in Baltimore and who passed away on June 2, 2021.

Executive Director Pannella stated that Mr. James devoted countless hours of his time to make a positive and lasting impact -- both inside of, and outside of, the boxing ring -- on the many young UMAR boxers he helped to train. Mr. Pannella also noted that Mr. James was licensed by the Commission as a second, and worked in the ring corner for several professional boxers affiliated with the UMAR boxing gym.

GOVERNOR HOGAN ANNOUNCES ENDING OF STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR COVID-19 - EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2021

Chairman Norman led a Commission discussion concerning the recent announcement made by Maryland Governor Larry Hogan concerning Governor Hogan’s decision through Executive Order to end the State of Emergency mandates and restrictions in the State of Maryland relative to COVID-19.

Chairman Norman noted that Governor Hogan stipulated that a 45-day administrative grace period be allotted for the ending of the referenced State of Emergency mandates and restrictions.

Chairman Norman stated that it is important for the Commission to ensure that its medical and administrative protocols for COVID-19 are consistent with Governor Hogan's directives.

UPDATING COMMISSION'S "COVID-19 MEDICAL PROTOCOLS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROTOCOLS"

The Commission held a discussion concerning the updating of its "COVID-19 Medical Protocols and Administrative Protocols" which have been approved by the Maryland Department of Labor and which are proposed to become effective on July 1, 2021. Revisions include the following requirements.

For all Commission-sanctioned events, a contestant, wrestler, judge, manager, matchmaker, second, promoter or promoter representative entering either the dressing room area or the ring enclosure area of a venue will be required to provide to the Commission a negative test for COVID-19 performed on the day before, or on the day of, an event. If an individual voluntarily chooses to provide to the Commission a copy of his or her vaccination card, and two weeks have passed since the individual was fully vaccinated, such a test will not be required.

Individuals who provide the vaccination card to the Commission will not be required to wear a mask.

With the exception of combative sports contestants, professional wrestlers and referees participating in their respective contests or matches, individuals who undergo the mandated COVID-19 testing will be required to wear a mask in the dressing room area or in the ring enclosure area. Individuals who undergo the mandated COVID-19 testing will also be required to utilize a separate dressing room area from individuals who provided the Commission with a copy of their vaccination card.

There are no mask requirements in the public seating area and public concourse of

the venue for either spectators attending the event or anyone who does not enter the dressing room area or the ring enclosure area.

Chairman Norman advised that the Commission will continue to monitor any additional COVID-19 restrictions which Maryland counties and Baltimore City have the authority and discretion to impose.

Chairman Norman stated that the Commission's protocol changes proposed represent a "very significant reduction" in both the restrictions for participants and expenses for promoters. He opined that this combined reduction will play a significant role in "allowing for the resurgence" of Commission-sanctioned events.

Commissioner Gast inquired as to the reason the Commission is invoking a mask requirement for individuals who are not vaccinated, but who provide the Commission with the required negative COVID-19 test.

Chairman Norman noted that recent medical developments of variants of the COVID-19 virus have identified "a risk related to both proximity and duration of exposure."

Chairman Norman further noted that Chief Commission Physician Dr. John W. Stiller, M.D. has highly recommended that individuals who test negative for COVID-19, but are unvaccinated, wear masks as a precaution due to the risk of contagiousness to themselves and to others.

Chairman Norman opined that the Commission is hoping that individuals being required to undergo a COVID-19 test as prescribed by the Commission may be motivated to get vaccinated to avoid both the potential financial cost of such testing and well as the burden of undergoing the additional test.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, seconded by Commissioner Boles, the Commission voted 3-1 (with Commissioner Gast voting against) to approve changes to the Commission's "COVID-19 Medical Protocols and Administrative Protocols" with regard to defining vaccination, test and mask requirements.

Executive Director Pannella recognized Dr. Stiller and Chairman Norman for their ongoing leadership in responding to the fluid nature of the COVID-19 virus by

overseeing the Commission’s ongoing efforts to adjust its referenced protocols accordingly.

“MARYLAND TORT CLAIMS ACT”

Chairman Norman led a Commission discussion concerning the current statute of limitations relative to the “Maryland Tort Claims Act”.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, and seconded by Commissioner Moore, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at 3:26 p.m..

David J. Norman
Chairman

Date: September 15, 2021