

MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2021

On Wednesday, May 19, 2021, the Maryland State Athletic Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman David Norman at 3:00 p.m.. Present were the following: Chairman Norman; Commissioner Brian Boles; Commissioner Chuck Gast; Commissioner Lenny Moore; Commissioner David Shull; Greg Morgan, Commissioner, Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing (“O&P Division”), Maryland Department of Labor (“Department of Labor”); Kausar Syed, Deputy Commissioner, O&P Division, Maryland Department of Labor; 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.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

Commission minutes for the Commission meeting held on April 21, 2021, previously distributed to Commission members for review, were discussed.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Moore, and seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the April 21, 2021 minutes of the Commission.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

PASSING OF RICHARD “DICK” CARICOFÉ

MAY 14, 2021

The Commission held a moment of silence in honor of Richard “Dick” Caricofé, who held a promoter license with the Commission for many years and who passed away on May 14, 2021.

Executive Director Pannella stated that Mr. Caricofé was well-known for holding professional wrestling events in Hagerstown, Maryland and in other communities throughout the state. Mr. Pannella added that Mr. Caricofé enjoyed bringing

professional wrestling to the rural areas of Maryland, in particular.

**GOVERNOR HOGAN ANNOUNCES LIFTING OF
CAPACITY LIMITS ON INDOOR AND OUTDOOR VENUES
EFFECTIVE MAY 15, 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 lift the capacity limits on indoor venues and outdoor venues located in the State of Maryland effective May 15, 2021.

Chairman Norman noted that Governor Hogan stipulated that masks will be required for indoor venues until the point in time when 70 percent of Marylanders are fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

Chairman Norman stated that the Commission will continue to: (1) evolve its COVID-19 medical and administrative protocols to ensure that they are consistent with Governor Hogan's directives; and (2) assess, and address, the needs of promoters in all Commission-sanctioned sports and activities in this context.

**UPDATING COMMISSION'S
"COVID-19 MEDICAL PROTOCOLS AND ADMINISTRATIVE
PROTOCOLS FOR PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING EVENTS"**

The Commission held a discussion concerning the updating of its "COVID-19 Medical Protocols and Administrative Protocols for Professional Wrestling Events".

Specifically, the Commission considered the issue of requiring participants of a Commission-sanctioned wrestling event to show proof of vaccination or to provide a negative COVID-19 test to the Commission.

Deputy Commissioner Syed inquired about the legality of the Commission requiring licensees to be vaccinated.

Chairman Norman responded that, rather than requiring participants to be vaccinated, the Commission is giving them the option of presenting a valid vaccination card or undergoing, and successfully passing, a COVID-19 test.

Deputy Commissioner Syed noted that, in reference to the Commission requiring participants to show proof of vaccination or to provide a negative COVID-19 test, the Commission is different than all other board and commissions within the O&P Division in this respect due to the physical nature of the licensed activity and the typical prolonged physical contact between participants.

Commissioner Morgan expressed his support of the Commission offering the referenced option to participants.

Proposed revisions include the following requirements.

For all Commission-sanctioned professional wrestling 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.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, seconded by Commissioner Boles, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve changes to the Commission's "COVID-19 Medical Protocols and Administrative Protocols for Professional Wrestling Events" with regard to defining the vaccination card and test options available to participants.

**COMMISSION REVIEW OF THREE-DAY SERIES OF TAPED
RING OF HONOR PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING MATCHES
HELD WITHOUT SPECTATORS FROM MAY 11 - 13, 2021
AT THE UMBC EVENT CENTER**

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following review of the three-day series of taped professional wrestling matches without spectators which was promoted by licensed promoter Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment,

LLC (“Ring of Honor”), sanctioned by the Commission, and held on May 11 - 13, 2021 at The University of Maryland Baltimore County (“UMBC”) Event Center in Catonsville, Maryland.

The three days of taped wrestling matches were preceded on May 10, 2021 by Ring of Honor wrestlers and referees utilizing a designated wrestling “dojo” gym to practice in a ring and to engage in taped interviews for television purposes.

As selected by Ring of Honor for each of its wrestling events held previously in the State of Maryland during the pandemic, The Doubletree by Hilton Baltimore-BWI Airport Hotel was utilized as the hotel where participating wrestlers and referees stayed, where the onsite required COVID-19 tests were performed, and where the required medical examinations of participating wrestlers and referees was conducted.

Commission Inspector Stan Cheung and Mr. Pannella shared regulatory duties with regard to enforcing all Commission social distancing requirements for wrestling participants at the Ring of Honor gym and at the venue, with Mr. Pannella also maintaining a regulatory presence at the hotel for the licensing and medical examinations of participants.

The wrestling event was held in full compliance with the Commission’s current “COVID-19 Medical Protocols and Administrative Protocols for Professional Wrestling Events”.

**REQUEST FOR COMMISSION SANCTIONING OF
THREE-DAY SERIES OF RING OF HONOR
PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING MATCHES
FROM JULY 11 - 13, 2021 AT THE UMBC EVENT CENTER**

The Commission held a discussion in response to the formal request made by licensed promoter Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC (“Ring of Honor”) for Commission sanctioning of a three-day series of professional wrestling matches being held on July 11 - 13, 2021 at The University of Maryland Baltimore County (“UMBC”) Event Center in Catonsville, Maryland.

Executive Director Pannella offered the following report in this regard.

The first day of the wrestling event, featuring Ring of Honor's "Best In The World" pay-per-view event, will mark the first time in the State of Maryland during the pandemic where spectators are permitted to attend. Ring of Honor is working with the UMBC Event Center to determine the number of tickets to sell, and is currently considering a limited crowd attendance of 25 percent of the venue capacity.

The second day and third day of wrestling activity will feature wrestling matches taped for television purposes and without spectators in attendance.

It is expected that this wrestling event will involve the highest number of wrestlers working at a wrestling event held in Maryland during the pandemic.

The three days of wrestling activity will be preceded on July 10, 2021 by Ring of Honor wrestlers and referees utilizing a designated wrestling "dojo" gym to practice in a ring and to engage in taped interviews for television purposes.

As selected by Ring of Honor for each of its wrestling events held previously in the State of Maryland during the pandemic, The Doubletree by Hilton Baltimore-BWI Airport Hotel will be utilized as the hotel where participating wrestlers and referees will be staying, where the required COVID-19 tests will be performed, and where the required medical examinations of participating wrestlers and referees will be conducted.

Commission Inspector Stan Cheung and Mr. Pannella will share regulatory duties with regard to enforcing all Commission social distancing requirements for wrestling participants at the Ring of Honor gym and at the venue, with Mr. Pannella also maintaining a regulatory presence at the hotel for the licensing and medical examinations of participants.

The wrestling event will be held in full compliance with the Commission's current "COVID-19 Medical Protocols and Administrative Protocols for Professional Wrestling Events".

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, and seconded by Commissioner Shull, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the request of Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC ("Ring of Honor") to hold a three-day series of

wrestling matches on July 11 - 13, 2021 at The UMBC Event Center in Catonsville, Maryland.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, and seconded by Commissioner Boles, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at 3:36 p.m..

David J. Norman
Chairman

Date: September 15, 2021