

MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 2021

On Wednesday, April 21, 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 March 24, 2021, which were previously distributed to Commission members for review, were discussed.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, and seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the March 24, 2021 minutes of the Commission.

UPDATING COMMISSION MEDICAL PROTOCOLS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROTOCOLS FOR COVID-19 TESTING

The Commission held a discussion concerning the updating of its “COVID-19 Medical Protocols and Administrative Protocols for Professional Wrestling Events Without Spectators in Attendance” relative to professional wrestling events being held beginning in July, 2021.

The Commission determined that the updates being considered, and with key points described below, will not adversely affect the health and safety of Commission licensees, venue staff or members of the public participating or attending.

The Commission determined that, after Commission members have had the opportunity to reflect further on the updates being proposed, it will consider approving the updated protocols being proposed at its May 19, 2021 virtual meeting.

The Commission will permit a maximum amount of spectators to attend a wrestling event equal to 25 percent or less of the capacity of a venue.

The Commission noted that:

(1) this requirement does not supersede nor replace any determination made by the venue or the jurisdiction where the wrestling event is being held with regard to the maximum amount of non-participant spectators permitted, provided that the maximum amount of such spectators is equal to 25 percent or less of the venue capacity;

(2) spectators who are in family groups or arrive at the venue together will be seated together in a group or "pod", with each respective pod being distanced from each other pod or individual spectator by a distance of six feet in all directions;

(3) not more than six spectators who are coming to the venue together will be permitted in each pod; and

(4) this requirement is consistent with current Maryland State requirements and is the same, or less restrictive, than requirements currently imposed by numerous other states after taking into consideration a venue's size and total volume of airflow.

The Commission's revised COVID-19 testing protocols are as follows.

One week (seven days) or less prior to the first scheduled day of the wrestling activity (with the first day of wrestling activity including a practice and/or television interviews day), wrestlers, referees and Commission representatives will be required to undergo and successfully pass a nasal mid-turbinate ("NMT") molecular PCR swab test *or* nasopharyngeal molecular PCR swab test.

On the first scheduled day of the wrestling activity (with the first day of wrestling activity including a practice and/or television interviews day), wrestlers, referees and Commission representatives and everyone else entering both the designated wrestling gym and the venue will be required to undergo and successfully pass a rapid antigen swab test.

In the scenario where a wrestler, referee or Commission representative has received both vaccine shots for either the Moderna vaccine or Pfizer vaccine or the one shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and two weeks have passed since the referenced second shot or single shot (whichever applicable), such an individual may forgo the required COVID-19 molecular PCR swab test one week prior to the wrestling event and only undergo the COVID-19 rapid response test on the first scheduled day of the wrestling activity (with the first day of wrestling activity including a practice and/or television interviews day).

Throughout the timeline for testing as outlined above, each wrestler and referee will be required to practice strict social distancing.

Everyone entering the venue and/or a wrestling training center will be required to undergo and successfully pass a rapid antigen swab test on the first scheduled day of the wrestling activity (with the first day of wrestling activity including a practice and/or television interviews day).

Wrestlers and referees will be required to be isolated/sequestered in an isolation “bubble” at the hotel beginning upon arrival at the hotel and throughout the course of the wrestling event, but not later than immediately prior to undergoing and successfully passing a rapid antigen swab test on the first scheduled day of the wrestling activity (with the first day of wrestling activity including a practice and/or television interviews day). This requirement is subject to ongoing review as the medical consensus continues to develop.

Provided the ring rope, turnbuckle pads and canvas are wiped down and properly disinfected after each wrestling match with the appropriate cleansers/solutions to

combat the COVID-19 virus, the changing of the canvas between matches will not be necessary.

After reviewing the medical community's ongoing emphasis placed on the value and importance of individuals maintaining a distance of six feet between each other for social distancing purposes, and having received the advice of its chief physician, the Commission will continue for now to keep in place its hotel isolation "bubble" requirements as defined in Commission protocols. Participants are required to be isolated/sequestered at the hotel beginning upon arrival at the hotel and throughout the course of the wrestling event but not later than immediately prior to undergoing, and successfully passing, a rapid antigen swab test on the first scheduled day of the wrestling activity (with the first day of wrestling activity including a practice and/or television interviews day). This requirement is subject to ongoing review as the medical consensus continues to develop.

In the scenario where a wrestler or referee has received both vaccine shots for either the Moderna vaccine or Pfizer vaccine or the one shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and two weeks have passed since the referenced second shot or single shot (whichever is applicable), such individuals are permitted to ride together to all associated event venues and including the hotel and wrestling training center.

Commissioner Shull opined that the Commission is being "very reasonable" by adjusting its COVID-19 protocols in keeping with the fluid nature of virus developments while maintaining high safety standards and reducing promoter costs.

Commissioner Boles expressed his support of the Commission's "cautious" approach in formulating ongoing changes to its COVID-19 protocols while working to maintain high safety standards and reduce promoter costs. He emphasized the value of the Commission continuing to require at this time the travel itineraries of participating wrestlers and referees in accordance these protocols due to the importance of isolating "hot spots" for the virus which may exist in the area from which an individual may be travelling.

Commissioner Gast expressed his support for keeping in the Commission protocols at this time the "pre-activity" and "post-activity" COVID-19 health questionnaires for participating wrestlers and referees as essential means of contact tracing.

Chairman Norman noted the importance of the Commission monitoring any additional COVID-19 restrictions which Maryland counties and Baltimore City have the authority and discretion to impose which exceed the COVID-19 restrictions being imposed by Maryland Governor Larry Hogan through Executive Order.

COMMISSION UPDATE ON TWO-DAY SERIES OF TAPED ROH WRESTLING MATCHES TO BE HELD WITHOUT SPECTATORS FROM MAY 11 - 12, 2021 AT THE UMBC EVENT CENTER

Executive Director Pannella led a Commission discussion concerning the Commission's regulatory planning for the two-day series of taped wrestling matches being held without spectators in attendance which is being promoted by Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC ("ROH") and held on May 11 - 12, 2021 at The UMBC Event Center in Catonsville, Maryland.

Mr. Pannella discussed all established Commission procedures and requirements pertaining to administering COVID-19 testing, isolating wrestlers and referees at the hotel, performing physical examinations of wrestlers and referees at the hotel, enforcing social distancing both at the hotel and the venue, and supervising the ROH wrestling activity at the venue in compliance with Commission regulations.

Mr. Pannella reported that he has once again received the full cooperation of ROH representatives, and was confident that all respective safety measures will be strictly maintained and enforced through the combined efforts of both the Commission and the promoter.

SCHEDULED COMMISSION MEETINGS

The Commission held a discussion regarding future meeting dates to be held virtually. The Commission agreed to hold the following meeting dates and times virtually:

- Wednesday, July 21, 2021 at 3:00 p.m..
- Wednesday, August 18, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.;
- Wednesday, September 15, 2021 at 3:00 p.m..
- Wednesday, October 27, 2021 at 3:00 p.m..

Wednesday, November 17, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.; and
Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 3:00 p.m..

**OVERVIEW OF FUTURE PLANS FOR O&P DIVISION PROVIDED
BY COMMISSIONER GREG MORGAN**

Commissioner Morgan provided the Commission with an overview of:

- (1) the future re-entry plan for Maryland state employees, with the building in which the O&P Division in the Department of Labor is located to be open to members of the public by appointment only;
- (2) the future plan for meetings for boards and commissions within the O&P Division to be held in a hybrid model which includes a choice of virtual attendance for board members and commission members; and
- (3) the Department of Labor's plan to relocate certain divisions, including the O&P Division, to its building located at 1100 North Eutaw Street in Baltimore, Maryland at some point between December, 2021 and June, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, and seconded by Commissioner Shull, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at 3:50 p.m..

**David J. Norman
Chairman**

Date: May 19, 2021