



Date: 2\3\2021

Time: 8:00 pm

Location: via Zoom

Call to Order – 8 PM

USAWNJ Members as listed on email:

Jeff Dickman, Pete DiBiase, Lori Ayers, Gimp, Rick Puerto, Jason Nase, Bill Terrell,
Omar Feliciano, Bryan Heller, Ron Fazio, Nancy Zuena, Mike Foca, John Winkler, Dianna Barkman

Purpose of Meeting – Informal Idea Sharing Session\Scheduling

Attendees- Jeff Dickman, Pete DiBiase, Bryan Heller, Gary Brownell, Jason Nase, Ron Fazio, Lori Ayres,
Nancy Zuena, Dianna Barkman, Omar Feliciano, John Winkler

Not Attending- William Terrell, Rick Puerto, Mike Foca

Approval of Previous Minutes-NA for this session

Treasurer Report- NA for this session

Agenda Items/Reports-

High School State tournament
Fargo
National Dual teams
NJRTC

Scholastic-

Planning for high school

Main discussion focused on the question of whether we should and how to advertise that USAWNJ will run a high school states tournament if the NJSIAA does not commit to putting it on this year. There seems to be no progress on NJSIAA's part as to a decision. Many people weighed in with information they have received from speaking to NJSIAA organizers and opinions on when or if the organization will make a ruling.

Discussion

Pete: talked to Pressman last week and the discussion was about rolling out 30 sites for districts with no progress on states. Those sites do not necessarily coordinate with actual districts. We have a plan to have run a tournament over 3 days at Sportika safely. Should we advertise it?

Bryan: It's tricky since NJSIAA intends (?) to run it. What would the repercussions be if we advertised that we were going to do it?

Jeff: If we take HS states his feeling is that the NJSIAA is afraid that they will never get HS states back. Jeff feels that with Pressman's backing it will be a messy situation for the NJSIAA to run it the following year. If we advertise that we are going to run it, we would in effect be throwing the gauntlet down. It will force them to decide to put something on for the kids or hope that we do a terrible job and that it goes back to them. Jeff doesn't oppose advertising it but warned to expect a backlash.

Gimp: Doesn't see it as an entity for the NJSIAA to lose. It's their tournament and if they choose to run it next year so be it.

Jeff: He feels that USAWNJ will run an excellent tournament based on our successes in the past and restated his concern that there could be backlash if we run it.

Jason: He has been talking to Pressman several times a month since September and Jason feels that the NJSIAA is going to hold out for as long as possible to make a decision. The waiting on their decision will put us in a tough position to organize a plan at the last minute. His concern is that HS wrestling will be in a situation similar to the winter sports season right now with the inability to get off the ground. He's afraid they will not come through with a quality tournament without Atlantic City and will use that as a reason not to hold one. Jason's concerns are trifold. 1) That they will wait until the last minute and if they can make money off of it they will 2) The setup of districts and regions is not realistic and if one kid tests positive or is a contact trace it would eliminate 10 teams from advancing wrestlers the next week because of the quarantine period. 3) The NJSIAA is at the mercy of the Governor. Jason is in favor of moving ahead with USAWNJ's plan if only to force the NJSIAA to start moving on something and perhaps have a conversation with us to put a plan in place. He feels that no one wants to talk to us.

Bryan: agrees. He cited an incident recently regarding a basketball game played at Rumson in which they were shut down for 6 of 12 games because of an opposing team played them in the midst of a contact tracing violation. Jason cited a case at his school where the school was shut down due to a positive case and the team had 6 virtual workouts that turned out to not count in the quarantine period so the team had to stay out for another 6 days. Many cancelled games and a season that can't get a start.

General feeling is that it is not realistic to think there will be a normal post season based on what is happening during this current HS sport season, collegiate season, and now with Division III shutting down all winter championships.

Bryan: feels we are all on the same page that we should hold the states ourselves and has a concern as to how to put it out in social media in a positive light. He is looking at it from a public relations standpoint. Questions will be asked as to whether there is a conflict between the NJSIAA and USAWNJ.

Lori stated that the next NJSIAA women's post season wrestling meeting is February 18. She feels they are hoping that the 150 participant limit is revised but they are waiting for the advisory committee to give them guidance. They are playing with different scenarios and just waiting for the green light. She says she feels talking to Scott that they are planning the same thing for both men and women. She feels that the NJSIAA wants to put something on but their hands are tied. She feels that it shouldn't be an "us vs them" situation and perhaps we should reach out to them to discuss our participation first.

Jason: says the boys are getting the same message but it's a whole lot of nothing. Referees are calling wanting to know what's going on, newspapers are giving out useless information. Jason's feeling is that the NJSIAA doesn't even want to talk with us, not even a phone call. Coaches want to see this happen, they don't understand that in this situation it won't happen like they are used to. He is not too hopeful based on the current winter season.

Jeff: Has a plan in place for HS states. This meeting is to get consensus on releasing this information. Anticipates lots of media questions. He has reached out to the NJSIAA but they are not speaking to him. He offered a 60-40 split to partner with us. But no response from the president. Seems like coaches and Pressman are on board but no cooperation from NJSIAA. Jeff spoke to the Lt. Governor and others regarding the tournament. Our guidelines are a little more flexible than those of the State. Kids States are set up in 4 sessions per day with cleaning between, everything is in place-health plans, etc. and we would use the same procedures for the HS tournament. Jeff asked the question as to whether the officials would be on board for working the event.

Ron: Talking from AD perspective, in Newark with the highest cases, not only is competition guided by NJSIAA but also the governor, health department, board etc. which carries a lot of weight. Basketball season right now is doing everything possible to try to conform to mandates and avoid cross contamination but is still getting shut down. He said many of the officials would not participate for various health concerns for themselves and loved ones. The event in October in PA was a petri dish. It wasn't run well. Health regulations will dictate how we run the tournament. He is worried that once wrestling season starts programs are going to be shut down. He is not optimistic that we will have a season based on what he has seen during the basketball season. He feels we will see a lot of reluctance from the officials to participate no matter who is running it. He has confidence that we will run a good event. It's just the nature of the disease and what we are dealing with. Things are changing on a daily basis. NJSIAA will hold off until the last possible minute to make a determination. They are boxed in by legal speak

Bryan feels that they have a liability issue that we don't have. He feels that they want to do it but might not be able to because of contact tracing, regulations, etc.

Jason feels that, because of this, there is all the more reason to hold a tournament to help these kids.

Pete feels NJSIAA has too much red tape that they have to wade through. He spoke of his tournament experience in Iowa. People running the tournament have learned the lessons. He has safe plans for the Sporkita venue but without everyone coming on board (officials, mats, volunteers) we can't run it. Logistics for how many kids and how they are selected comes into play. Liabilities are there but USAW has taken those on. Gimp and Pete are using a program that tracks every kid that comes into their practice so they have a record. They plan to use it for our NJ events to help insure safety. The question is, "Do we start the wheels turning now?" We need to start planning now even if we have to cancel later.

Nancy questioned how we are going to hold a tournament with the restrictions on numbers of participants allowed at this point.

Pete has the numbers already worked out by dividing the weight classes into sessions spread out over a 3 day tournament with time built in for sanitizing the mats. Parents in a staging area and escorted in to view their kid. Not the states that everyone is used to but thinking out of the box to get it done. Streaming the event to keep the numbers down. The boys season ends April 24th so the states would be held April 30, May 1 & 2. It was originally announced that districts & regions would be run during a 10 day period from April 14-24.

Brian had heard that Districts would be held April 10 but didn't know how valid that was

Jeff We need to look at this from three headed angle. 1) If we post we force NJSIAA to do something to make a decision. They need to make a decision to give athletic directors and coaches time to prepare 2) we don't do HS States and run our own developmental tournament since we have the facility already 3) they do HS states and we run a tournament for the HS kids to wrestle one more time as a second chance event. FYI - Jeff was speaking with Tony Black and the freestyle\Greco dates for Fargo and other national tournaments are **not** changing, He would like to hold something so we aren't broke going into next year. This year is chalked up to be for the kids with looking toward a more normal season next year.

Jeff proposed that, on Monday, Bryan posts to all our media outlets that we have a plan to implement the NJ HS tournament with the criteria and details TBA. We need to do this now so USAWNJ and coaches can have everything in place when the time comes.

Discussion Feelings were that it needs to be announced but that the situation is fluid with Covid and regulations\mandates will no doubt change

Bryan weighed in on how to structure the announcement in the best possible light for both USAWNJ and the NJSIAA (announcement as released is below)

Everyone was in agreement. Lori reconfirmed that girls were also included.

Nancy asked for clarification on holding USAW membership cards for coaches and wrestlers. Jeff spoke of a USAW one day event sanction and a membership card that carries a separate fee just for that day without having to sign up for the year.

Jeff spoke of some of the health plans that are already in place from other tournaments that Desi has run and that the Health Department has been advising Jeff of some options

. HS STATES Press release: Posted 2\8\21

As we approach the 2021 High School Wrestling season, USA Wrestling New Jersey is in full support of and hopes the NJSIAA successfully hosts an individual State Championship event for both boys and girls. However, we also recognize the nuances, challenges, and potential roadblocks that may prevent the NJSIAA from completing its intended plans. Therefore, USA Wrestling New Jersey is simultaneously planning to host an individual state tournament from April 30 - May 2, for both girls and boys, as a backup plan. We are proceeding with planning as if our event will take place, to ensure we are prepared if the NJSIAA State Championships must be canceled. The event will not be run exactly the same as previous State Tournaments because we must abide by all COVID-19 protocols, putting the health and safety of the athletes, coaches, referees, event workers, and parents first. However, the event will host a field of competitors who have earned the opportunity to compete for a spot on the podium and we will crown 2021 State Champions if the NJSIAA does not. We will provide more details as they are finalized and appreciate your anticipated patience.

International Style

Pete stated that the USAW schedule for Freestyle & Greco is set and that Fargo and the National duals will exist. There is a schedule with dates and sites for everything except Junior Duals (which could be in August) Our problem is how we get to Fargo. In a normal year all the airline tickets, rooms etc. would have been completed in October and November by Pete and Gimp.

He stated that there are tickets that need to be redeemed from Southwest Airlines that could be used to cover transportation for the duals teams. How we pick the teams will need to be discussed because of the close timeline to reporting names to the airline. Southwest does have name changes so we may be able to sneak in under the wire by choosing team based on our states. The larger problem is getting to Fargo. It will look different from every other year and will be possibly be like entering every other tournament with parents being responsible for transportation, board, and housing. Pete feels we should not be responsible for putting 50 kids in a dorm room and having one or more getting covid. He also does not want to expose the coaching staff by having the coaches watching over them in the dorm situation. If we are housing them in a hotel, they will need a parent chaperone since they will be underage and unable to book a room themselves. He is worried about liability for actions if they are not supervised in a hotel room. He feels that the duals are smaller (approximately 15 kids) and are much more manageable.

Nancy asked for clarification regarding fee for the name changes and the deadline dates to use the Southwest Airline tickets. She also asked for the number of tickets it involved.

Pete answered that there was no fee to change names and that the deadline was extended an addition 3 months from the original one year period. We have 60 tickets that should cover the duals. The only hiccup with that is that the Junior duals have neither a place nor date for the competition.

Jeff- is in favor of the parental responsibility with getting their wrestler to Fargo and we would try to make arrangements for the NJTEAM to stay in one hotel. Set a firm date to let USAWNJ know they are interested in going so we can plan. We will cover what we usually supply (singlet, bag, etc.)

Pete has a list of all the hotels in the Fargo area and we will try to find one that will give us a group rate that we can share with the parents. He also has an entire travel packet drawn up with rates, flights, restaurants, rental cars, etc. that he can share with parents.

Question Posed If a parent goes that has a bronze level coaching card, are we going to allow them to coach their kid?

Jeff answered that the parents will still have to go with our NJ rule that the wrestlers must be coached by our NJ Bronze certified coaching team.

Question Posed What if a kid belongs to a club and the parent pays the way to Fargo for the club coach so he/she can corner their child?

Jeff threw out the idea as to whether we allow this year because of the special circumstances but he has reservations regarding coaching behavior that would shed an unfavorable light on NJ. Club coaches would also be asked to coach other NJ kids should the need arise and not just “Johnny”. If we need to we place one of our official NJ coaches in the corner with the club coach. He asked for Lori & Jason’s opinion on the matter.

Omar stated that there should be a minimum of coaches that we should allow to go out. It’s a NJ thing.

Jason feels that we need to represent as an organization

Bryan suggested that perhaps if we have an “interview process” in that situation that lets parents and club coach know that they will be removed if there is any inappropriate behavior.

Gimp made the point that USAW will be limiting the amount of coaches we are going to be allowed to send. We need to have a process to choose coaches

Jeff Depending on the number we are allowed, we may have our answer to that parent that wants to coach or send a club coach with their child.

Lori brought up the question setting a precedent for athletes showing up at day camp with their club coach prior to going to Fargo.

Jeff assured her that there are set guidelines\ requirements that will be in place to take care of that. Mentioned was that they would need to come to 2 of the 3 camps, developmentals, clinics, qualifiers. He foresees no issues with it this year because of the shortened season.

Question Posed by Jason as to how we are going to make up the NJTEAM.

Jeff answered that we are going to do it “old school” with each division head choosing his own team of quality kids with possibly using NE Regions as a tie breaker or qualifier to be in the selected pool to be asked to go. These help with seeding as well. Omar and Jeff take care of schoolboys and have used a point system based on performance at events. The schoolboys are HIGHLY encouraged to attend these mandatory events if they wish to be considered for National events. Jeff suggested that the Cadets and Juniors use the same system.

Information gathering for International Style

Pete is going to be sending out an email with an interest questionnaire regarding intentions of participating in any of the National events as well as membership info. Included will be a current schedule as it stands now.

Lori would like input into the email to include specific info for the girls’ competitions.

Everyone- Please look over the documents that Pete sent out regarding Covid protocols and clinic information. Tracking information would be taken. Please contact him if something needs to be changed or clarified.

Jeff will be sending a calendar of USAWNJ events. Check out the website that Bryan updated.

Jeff asked for an update regarding the NJRTC. General opinion was that they have been restricted by our state guidelines and had their hands tied. Jeff would like to see us keep Jersey kids in Jersey instead of moving to other RTC programs. Money talks.

Adjournment– 9:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Dianna Barkman USAW ID: 111295101

Acting USAWNJ Secretary

Dianna R. Barkman 2 /19 /2021