

MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

MINUTES WEDNESDAY - JULY 21, 2021

On Wednesday, July 21, 2021, the Maryland State Athletic Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman David Norman at 3:03 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.

FLYING V, LTD - ISSUANCE OF ORIGINAL PROMOTER LICENSE

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report. Flying V, Ltd. (“Flying V”) recently applied to the Commission for its original promoter license as a promoter of professional wrestling events in the State of Maryland.

Mr. Pannella noted that several wrestling events advertised as Flying V have been held in recent years in Montgomery County, Maryland, with a licensed promoter utilizing his license for this purpose and partnering with the company.

Commissioner Moore and Mr. Pannella recently interviewed Katherine Offutt, the promoter representative for Flying V, as a condition of licensure. They reviewed the license application and corresponding documentation submitted by Ms. Offutt on behalf of Flying V, and were satisfied that the promoter’s license application for this promoter applicant complies with the Commission’s licensing requirements.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, and seconded by Commissioner Moore, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the licensure of Flying V, Ltd. as a promoter.

“MARYLAND TORT CLAIMS ACT”

Chairman Norman led a Commission discussion concerning revisions relative to the three-year statute of limitations and one-year notice period of the “Maryland Tort Claims Act”.

COMMISSION-SANCTIONED EVENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Chairman Norman stated that the Commission has worked to proactively address the pandemic and offer promoters an opportunity to hold sanctioned events in the State of Maryland by establishing medical and administrative protocols for the COVID-19 virus, protocols which continue to evolve based on the fluid nature of the virus and the medical community’s understanding of, and response to, the same.

Chairman Norman recognized licensed promoter Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC (“Ring of Honor”) as the Commission’s “mainstay” promoter during the pandemic, further noting that Ring of Honor has worked closely with the Commission to protect the health and well-being of the wrestlers and referees participating in Ring of Honor wrestling events.

Chairman Norman reported that, while Ring of Honor held a series of wrestling events taped for television purposes and without spectators in attendance at The UMBC Event Center in Catonsville, Maryland, the promoter held its “Best In The World” pay-per-view event on July 11, 2021 at the venue and before a live audience.

Executive Director Pannella thanked Chairman Norman for his leadership efforts in guiding the Commission during a difficult period of time with the dual goal of creating work opportunities for Commission licensees and keeping them safe.

Chairman Norman opined that the Commission, as a collective group, “has worked hard to try to continuously refine our protocols to capture every scenario” presented by the COVID-19 virus.

Chairman Norman recognized Commission Chief Physician Dr. John Stiller, M.D. for his medical recommendations which remain at the core of Commission protocols. He also recognized Mr. Pannella for his written contributions in helping to create the protocols.

REVIEW OF JULY 2, 2021
PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING EVENT

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with an overview of the professional wrestling event promoted by James E. “Jim” Hardwick, advertised as “Extreme Dwarffanators”, and held on July 2, 2021 at The Charles County Fairgrounds in La Plata, Maryland.

Mr. Pannella stated that licensed promoter James E. “Jim” Hardwick and the participating wrestlers and referees complied with the Commission’s medical and administrative protocol requirements relative to COVID-19.

Mr. Pannella reported that he had a productive conversation with the two of the volunteer operators affiliated with The Charles County Fairgrounds, who indicated their receptiveness to more Commission-sanctioned events being held at this venue.

Mr. Pannella opined that The Charles County Fairgrounds is an attractive and strategic location for the holding of Commission-sanctioned events in Southern Maryland and particularly for professional wrestling events.

COMMISSION REVIEW OF THREE-DAY SERIES OF TAPED
RING OF HONOR PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING MATCHES
HELD WITHOUT SPECTATORS FROM JULY 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 July 11 - 13, 2021 at The University of Maryland Baltimore County (“UMBC”) Event Center in Catonsville, Maryland.

The first day of the wrestling activity, featuring Ring of Honor’s “Best In The World” pay-per-view event, marked the first time in the State of Maryland during the pandemic where a crowd was permitted to attend. Mr. Pannella noted that Ring of Honor made a promoter decision to reduce the number of tickets sold.

The following two days of wrestling activity included wrestling matches taped for television purposes and without spectators in attendance.

The 70 wrestlers who participated was the highest number of wrestlers working at a wrestling event held in Maryland during the pandemic.

The three days of taped wrestling matches were 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 was utilized as the hotel where participating wrestlers and referees stayed, where the required COVID-19 tests were performed, and where the required medical examinations of participating wrestlers and referees were 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.

Mr. Pannella reported that two areas of the venue were used for dressing rooms, with wrestlers who voluntarily provided the Commission with a copy of their respective vaccination cards utilizing one area and wrestlers who required COVID-19 testing utilizing another area.

Ring of Honor spaced wrestlers’ time at the venue apart and at different intervals to reduce the number of wrestlers together at one time either in the dressing rooms or at the venue.

APPROVAL OF PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING EVENTS

Executive Director Pannella led a Commission discussion in regard to the professional wrestling events currently scheduled to be held in the State of Maryland.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, seconded by Commissioner Boles, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following professional wrestling events promoted by Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr.:

Saturday, July 24, 2021 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Joppa Market Place / MCW Arena
1000 Joppa Farm Road - Joppa, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr,
advertising as Maryland Championship Wrestling
("MCW");

Friday, September 11, 2021 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Joppa Market Place / MCW Arena
1000 Joppa Farm Road - Joppa, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr,
advertising as Maryland Championship Wrestling
("MCW");

Saturday, October 9, 2021 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Joppa Market Place / MCW Arena
1000 Joppa Farm Road - Joppa, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr,
advertising as Maryland Championship Wrestling
("MCW");

Saturday, October 16, 2021 - 6:30 p.m. Starting Time
Maryland Sportsplex
1031 Benfield Boulevard - Millersville, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr,
advertising as Maryland Championship Wrestling
("MCW");

Saturday, November 6, 2021 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Joppa Market Place / MCW Arena
1000 Joppa Farm Road - Joppa, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr,

advertising as Maryland Championship Wrestling (“MCW”);

Saturday, November 13, 2021 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Hollywood Volunteer Fire Department
24801 Three Notch Road (MD-235) - Hollywood, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr,
advertising as Maryland Championship Wrestling (“MCW”); and

Saturday, December 4, 2021 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Joppa Market Place / MCW Arena
1000 Joppa Farm Road - Joppa, Maryland
Promoter: Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr,
advertising as Maryland Championship Wrestling (“MCW”).

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following professional wrestling events promoted by James E. “Jimmy” Morris, III under the condition that Mr. Morris renew his promoter license at some point prior to his next scheduled wrestling event:

Friday, August 13, 2021 - 7:00 p.m. Starting Time
Seven Ten
19930 Leitersburg Pike - Hagerstown, Maryland
Promoter: James E. “Jimmy” Morris, III,
advertising as Adrenaline Championship Wrestling (“ACW”); and

Saturday, August 21, 2021 - 3:00 p.m. Starting Time
Power Plant Live!
34 Market Place - Baltimore, Maryland
Promoter: James E. “Jimmy” Morris, III,
advertising as Adrenaline Championship Wrestling (“ACW”).

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, seconded by Commissioner Boles, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following professional wrestling events promoted by James E. “Jim” Hardwick:

Friday, September 10, 2021 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Tall Cedars Hall
2501 Putty Hill Avenue - Parkville, Maryland
Promoter: James E. Hardwick,
advertising as Eastern Wrestling Alliance (“EWA”);

Saturday, October 23, 2021 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Tall Cedars Hall
2501 Putty Hill Avenue - Parkville, Maryland
Promoter: James E. Hardwick,
advertising as Eastern Wrestling Alliance (“EWA”);

Saturday, November 13, 2021 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Tall Cedars Hall
2501 Putty Hill Avenue - Parkville, Maryland
Promoter: James E. Hardwick,
advertising as Eastern Wrestling Alliance (“EWA”);

Saturday, January 15, 2022 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Tall Cedars Hall
2501 Putty Hill Avenue - Parkville, Maryland
Promoter: James E. Hardwick,
advertising as Eastern Wrestling Alliance (“EWA”); and

Saturday, March 5, 2022 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Tall Cedars Hall
2501 Putty Hill Avenue - Parkville, Maryland
Promoter: James E. Hardwick,
advertising as Eastern Wrestling Alliance (“EWA”).

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, seconded by Commissioner Boles, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following professional wrestling events promoted by Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC:

Tuesday, November 2, 2021 – Wednesday, November 3, 2021

7:30 p.m. Starting Time

The UMBC Event Center

1000 Hilltop Circle - Catonsville, Maryland

Promoter: Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC,
advertising as Ring of Honor (“ROH”); and

Sunday, December 12, 2021 - 7:00 p.m. Starting Time

(Televised Pay-Per-View Event)

The UMBC Event Center

1000 Hilltop Circle - Catonsville, Maryland

Promoter: Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC,
advertising as Ring of Honor (“ROH”).

APPROVAL OF PROFESSIONAL MMA EVENT

Executive Director Pannella led a Commission discussion in regard to the professional MMA event proposed to be held at The Wicomico Youth and Civic Center in Salisbury, Maryland.

Mr. Pannella reported that the Commission was contacted by Brad Dalton, a representative of MMA promoter Stellar Fights, concerning the possibility of Stellar Fights holding its first MMA event in State of Maryland.

Mr. Pannella stated that he has been communicating extensively with Mr. Dalton concerning the Commission’s promoter license application process.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Boles, seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following professional MMA event promoted by Stellar Fights under the condition that Stellar Fights obtain its promoter license at some point prior to the MMA event:

Saturday, October 16, 2021 - TBA (evening) Starting Time

The Wicomico Youth and Civic Center

500 Glen Avenue - Salisbury, Maryland

Promoter: Stellar Fights,

advertising as “Stellar Fights”.

APPROVAL OF PROFESSIONAL BOXING EVENTS

Executive Director Pannella led a Commission discussion in regard to the professional boxing events proposed to be held in the State of Maryland.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following professional boxing event promoted by CyNation Sports, LLC under the condition that CyNation Sports renew its promoter license at some point prior to the boxing event:

Saturday, September 25, 2021 - 3:00 p.m. Starting Time
Rosecroft Raceway
6336 Rosecroft Drive - Ft. Washington, Maryland
Promoter: CyNation Sports, LLC,
advertising as “CyNation Sports”.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Boles, seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following professional boxing event promoted by Jeter Promotions, LLC:

Saturday, October 23, 2021 - TBA (evening) Starting Time
Live! Casino and Hotel
7002 Arundel Mills Circle - Hanover, Maryland
Promoter: Jeter Promotions, LLC,
advertising as “Jeter Promotions”.

SCHEDULE OF COMMISSION-SANCTIONED EVENTS

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the current schedule of professional boxing, MMA and professional wrestling events currently sanctioned and regulated by the Commission.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, and seconded by Commissioner Moore, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at 3:44 p.m..

David J. Norman
Chairman

Date: September 15, 2021