



Town Hall Meeting – Questions and Board Responses

Question/comment: A lot of people would like to see Girls better represented at State next year. The same as boys. Please bring the finalists out front and center to have their names called and shake hands.

Response: We LOVE this idea. Our State Tournament Committee is aware and are making plans to do this at next year's State Tournament!

Question/comment: With USA Wrestling implementing the PIN rating system for seeding at regional level and national level tournaments, when will Team AL start inputting tournament data to USAW so that more accurate seeding can be made at the state, regional, and national level? In the 10U division alone, GA's use of the PIN system for seeding resulted in 98% accuracy in the Quarterfinals, 78% in the semifinals, and 91% in the finals. I believe that implementation of this rating system will take the human error/bias out of the equation and influence the kids to attend more of the tournaments to solidify their state standings.

Response: Our plan for next year includes utilizing USA Wrestling's new Tournament Software to run tournaments. This will replace TrackWrestling. In this case, participants will also register for tournaments through the USA Wrestling system as well. Utilizing these systems will allow us to keep track of all tournament participation and utilize the results to apply what you are suggesting. In addition, the USA Wrestling Tournament Software will represent a per-participant cost savings. Look for more information on this topic as we approach the season.

Question/comment: The Florida Panhandle youth wrestlers used to be included into the state tournament since they live so much closer to the tournaments here than in Florida. This was wonderful and gave them so many more opportunities but it was taken away. I would love to ask the committee if they would consider allowing it back. We go to all the

local tournaments leading up to state and it would so nice to be allowed to participate in the finale. Thank you for your consideration.

Response: We understand the disappointment associated with our decision to limit Regional and State tournament participation to Alabama residents. The Regional events are direct qualifiers for the State Tournament. We do feel the need to limit opportunities for Alabama Regional and State championships to Alabama residents. We continue to welcome out of state participation in non-qualifier events.

Question/comment: Why is the board controlled by one club?

Response: Clearly, this is not the case. The Board is a diverse group with many clubs and wrestling interests represented. Moreover, Board members are expected to put the interests of the organization above personal interests. This is a topic that is oftentimes at the forefront of discussion. Board decisions are always voted on by the entire Board.

Question/comment: What is the process for hosting a tournament?

Response: Great question! Putting the folkstyle schedule together has become a year-round process. We have a Tournament Standards document as well as a Tournament Checklist document published on this website. Also, we have established a Tournament Committee who are working diligently, as we speak. The head of the Tournament Committee is, Ray Galyean. Ray may be reached at: (256) 324-7888 or at: raygalyean@gmail.com. Please reach out to him sooner than later!

Question/comment: Can the mats be cleaned in between the morning and afternoon sessions during tournaments? My oldest has picked up scalp ringworm from a tournament before.

Response: Yes, they can be. And we need to do a better job of that. We will discuss implementing that into the Tournament Standards for the upcoming season. Thanks for the suggestion!

Question/comment: Birthday rule. My son just turned 5 in November and will have to move up wrestling 7-8 year olds. My other son turned 9 in November and will have to

wrestle 11-12 year olds. This could get them hurt. I know they wrestle in same weight class but 2-3 years of maturity and puberty beginning effects a lot of things.

Response: TALK TO NORM AND JP ABOUT DOBs!!!

Question/comment: I'd like to start a youth team recognized by the board

Response: Please email Clem Tanaka, Communications Director at clemster@aol.com.

Question/comment: As someone who directs sports in the city where I work, I know firsthand how challenging running an organization can be. Even in an ideal world, problems will always arise. However, I firmly believe in transparency and adhering to rules. I acknowledge that exceptions are sometimes made for specific situations, and I also believe in honoring hardships.

Response: Thanks for the comment. We are most definitely like-minded in this regard. There are occasions where exceptions to rules are necessary. In these cases, we are committed to full transparency. If you have a specific case where an exception was made, please know that you can email us directly and request a clarification.

Question/comment: How are the regions divided? River Rats and Alpha are only 14 minutes apart, and both are Wetumpka clubs. As the director of city sports for Wetumpka, I'm familiar with most of the youth in both clubs. I find it disheartening that Alpha Club must travel to Gulf Shores for their regional tournament when they're so close to Alexander City. Alexander City tournaments are my favorite of the season. My only complaint is that the lady on the microphone can be overwhelming, but I understand she's trying her best to keep the event organized.

Response: The regions are divided by the number of participants within a given area and their geographical location. The board is always looking to improve the number of participants within each region. Three years ago it was determined a few clubs needed to be shifted to other regions to help the regional numbers. The board is always looking at how the numbers grow over each season to determine if shifts are needed to not overload any one region.

Question/comment: I was extremely disappointed that the regional tournament didn't take place this season. Rumors spread, and many in the wrestling community were dissatisfied, feeling that the few kids attending the Tulsa tournament took priority over USA Alabama Wrestling, especially since Tulsa occurs twice a year. I was also concerned about the small tournament sizes this season. Last year, most tournaments reached maximum capacity, but this year saw a significant decline. I don't understand the cause, but it was definitely disappointing.

Another issue was the new age chart, which aimed to increase participation in older age divisions and align with Tulsa and other major tournaments. However, we saw a significant decrease in participation U6 and U14. My oldest child actually won't be able to participate his 7th grade year due to failing a grade and being too old.

Response: We share your disappointment in having to cancel the Regional events last year due to the threat of bad weather. As always, we felt compelled to put safety first and were forced to make the tough decision to cancel. Unfortunately, there were no suitable dates to make up the events. The decision to hold the Regional events on a date that didn't conflict with Tulsa Nationals was made before the season started; we had no way of anticipating the bad weather forecast that would ultimately lead to cancelling the events.

Re age classifications, moving forward age groups will be listed as U6, U8, etc... For example, if the athlete has yet to turn 8 by January 1 of the wrestling season, he/she is considered eligible for U8, and so on.

Question/comment: The cost to participate in wrestling this season also increased, not only for wrestlers but the coaches. I would hate to see the decline of wrestling be due to it not being affordable anymore.

Response: We agree. Be assured, we are always working to balance the desire to keep our product top-notch with rising costs. One example to attempt to keep rising costs in check: we are moving away from TrackWrestling (\$\$\$!) and toward the USAW new registration and tournament admin software. We anticipate that this will save the organization money, make more dollars available to the host clubs, and keep the cost of participants/spectators from rising.

Question/comment: We have wrestled with USA before and loved it, this go around I can truly say this season was the worst wrestling season we had since our family started

wrestling, but it had nothing to do with how well the tournaments were ran and more to do with the new rules, expenses, lack of participation, and state venue.

Despite criticisms, I believe the board has done an excellent job. I appreciate that you've given the wrestling community a voice and allowed us to share our thoughts on the season. It can be draining to deal with various parents, coaches, and athletes, but I'm proud to say that every child at every tournament felt safe. I didn't witness any misconduct from parents or coaches, as they knew they'd be held accountable for their actions. I utilize the same procedure in my ball field parks. If the head coach can not control their spectators or assistant coaches, not only will the unruly be ejected and suspended from games, so will the head coach!

Response: Our goal as an organization is to always improve and do better. We are dedicated to providing the best possible experience and with that better quality. With the change to USA came more rule enforcement and safety measures. With all of this said, the board has already taken measures and secured a venue capable of providing everything we are looking for.

Question/comment: I will also say there was never a time that I reached out and did not get communicated back to. The Communication this year truly was unmatched. Even if nothing this season changes, my boys would still participate again this upcoming season.

Response: Thank you for that! The value of efficient communication is a top priority!