

Background Screening is Mandatory for Coaches, Officials and Team Leaders

USA Wrestling requires mandatory background screening for all member coaches, officials and state association national or regional team volunteer members.

Although the ISWA requires a background check and coach's membership for all Team Leaders and coach's involved in Team Indiana trips, it is impossible to monitor all club coaches. The background check, by USA Wrestling, gives ISWA member clubs an opportunity to screen all adults directly involved with your wrestlers. We urge you to make sure that all of your club coach's hold a current membership card that now includes a background check.

The cost of a background check is \$17.00, in addition to the card fee, is good for 2 years. A complete description of the USA wrestling Background Policy is available on our web site: www.iswa.com.

In order to complete your background check, you must go to themat.com and follow the instructions. This site requires that you log in and create a member ID and password. Coaches and officials who were members in 2008-2009 will not have to complete a background check in 2010. They need only purchase a current coach's membership card.

There are two primary reasons:

The first relates to responsibility. USA Wrestling and its clubs not only have a professional and moral responsibility to provide a "safe" environment for its members during sanctioned activities, but also a legal responsibility. We all want to know that when our children are under the supervision of another adult, the organization has taken reasonable steps to determine that those individuals are worthy of the responsibility to coach, officiate or chaperone minors. State and Federal courts have determined that associations and clubs can be held legally liable for sexual misconduct or abuse that can be connected to their sanctioned events.

In the past, this has not been an issue as USA Wrestling has enjoyed "full limits" of insurance coverage for acts of sexual abuse and molestation, but this could change if USAW were not to implement a mandatory background check program under their insurance policy. Therefore, the second reason for background screening is brought on by insurance, or the possible lack thereof.

According to a recent report, sexual abuse claims have increased over 200% in the past seven years. There are many theories as to the reasons but the fact of this increase has caused all insurance carriers to reduce or eliminate sexual abuse/molestation coverage from their policies, especially the policies covering activities where there is close interaction between minors and adults. In an effort to continue to provide this most important coverage, insurance companies turned to the process of background screening as a risk management tool to help reduce potential sexual abuse/molestation claims by identifying and eliminating individuals that might pose a threat from the group they are insuring. So it could become the case that without mandatory background screening in place, the insurance carriers may not offer any coverage to USAW for sexual abuse/molestation claims.

Purpose

USA Wrestling is requiring a background screening program to determine eligibility for USAW member coaches, officials and state association national or regional team volunteer members. Background screening has been implemented to promote a safe and supportive environment in which youth athletes can pursue their athletic goals. These background checks are also designed to provide an environment where parents of children can feel good about allowing their child to participate in wrestling activities. Please note that the screening is not intended to serve as a pre-employment background screening program, nor can screening guarantee that incidents of abuse or molestation will not occur. Background screening is designed as a preventative risk management tool, but does not insure inappropriate behavior will not occur.

Program Guidelines

The background screening performed on the members is based on the members' name, date of birth, address history and social security number. The program is designed to:

- 1) Protect the confidentiality of information and the privacy of USA Wrestling members.
- 2) Review members and prospective members screening on the criteria established by USA Wrestling
- 3) Provide those members who have been screened with an opportunity to challenge incorrect information found in the screening process before a result is forwarded to USA Wrestling.
- 4) Allow individuals in the case of a failed result, based on the USAW screening criteria and any action in those instances where the screening results produce disqualifiers to membership, to have the negative results forwarded to USA Wrestling for additional investigation.