**2019 OAWA AGM**

**President’s Report**

First, welcome everyone to the 2019 OAWA AGM. I found myself in this position several months ago after a series of events that occurred over the course of the past year.

As you know the last two years have been a very difficult time for the OAWA. Executive meetings were inundated with threats of legal action and dismissal if we did not comply. We have dealt with a host of complaints most of which required outside committees to investigate. This was done to avoid any claim of favouritism on the part of the OAWA. In several cases legal action was required under great expense, close to $41,000. I will say that on every point of every case the OAWA was found to be in the right. Many of these legal battles could have been avoided with a simple apology. This option unfortunately was refused after many requests which put us into a costly legal position. To be clear official complaints to the OAWA could not be dropped, so we had to follow our constitution and proceed legally.

I want to make some apologies on behave of the OAWA Board of Directors. First, to our Provincial Director for the behaviour that was exhibited towards him over the past two years, no one should ever have to work under such conditions. Second to Team Impact for the incorrect information that was spread about them at the last AGM, related to a conflict of interest complaint. Lastly, to the membership as there was a confidentiality breach where the membership database was used for non-board/wrestling related business.

Several key members have worked exceptionally hard over the past two years dealing with a litany of complaints. Bob Parsons, Jessica Tang, Jason O’Neil and Laura Jones you are to be congratulated on your professionalism and ability in handling what for the most parts were baseless and costly accusations. Many thanks also to Sheldon Francis who stepped in as Treasurer after the resignation of our past treasurer. Thanks to Heather Sweezey for stepping in when the Women’s Development position was vacated, and Jeremy Latour for great ideas for developing our athletes.

**Challenges We Face**

I find that several coaches are hesitant to join the OAWA because of the required NCCP training needed to coach at various levels. The difficulty here is that the requirements for NCCP certification are not clear. It is much easier for them to coach at the high school level and then let their best kids travel with a club that has certified coaches. This leaves them out of coaching seminars and opportunities to update their technique.

Unfortunately, club kids are becoming technical superior to most high school trained kids and the gap is becoming much larger. For example, at the last few OFSAA’s I have been at the finals were 10-0 in almost all weight classes.

In many cases as well when a coach retires, he/she is not being replaced and the program dies. I know in my old area we are way down in school programs and number of wrestlers.

Graduates form University Programs are simply not going into teaching. It is far too difficult to get a job and our present political climate may force our present teacher’s into work to rule.

Wrestling in schools has dropped in numbers, as have almost all the other sports in all age groups. The trend is simply changing, and I am not sure what we can do about it. These are difficulties we are going to have to overcome and find solutions to.

**Our Present**

Fortunately, the last few months have found the OAWA Executive once again working cohesively together. New ideas have come forth and a training camp has been set up for after the Ontario Cup.

The Canada Summer Games is just around the corner and this is a highlight of age group wrestling in Canada. We are already in the process of setting up plans for this event and the search for coaches and athletes will begin shortly.

We are also working on NCCP courses making it easier to understand and get our coaches certified for National and International competitions.

Congratulations to all our coaches and wrestlers at the C/J Nationals. As a province we won every age group competition. Ontario again has set the standard for great coaching and preparation.

Just one last note, we the OAWA Executive are not the OAWA you the members are. We need your ideas and guidance to make our organization stronger. We want to hear your suggestions and how to implement them.

Lastly I want to thank Tim and the rest of the OAWA Executive and Board for all their hard work in promoting wrestling.

Thank you very much.

Bill Hogarth

President, OAWA