

## **USA Wrestling initiates athlete safety procedures into media accreditation and operations procedures**

USA Wrestling, the national governing body for wrestling in the United States, has announced sweeping changes in its media accreditation and operations procedures, starting immediately.

All media seeking to receive credentials to cover an event on USA Wrestling's national and regional schedule will be required to pass USA Wrestling's background check, as well as go through the U.S. Center for Safe Sport's online training. These will be available to journalists online and will be provided free of cost to all members of the media seeking accreditation.

These new procedures will be put into operation at the next major USA Wrestling national event, the U.S. Open Wrestling Championships, set for the South Point Hotel and Arena in Las Vegas, Nev., April 24-28. This event will feature five different competitions, the U.S. Senior Open, the UWW Junior Men's Nationals, the U.S. Masters Freestyle and Greco-Roman Nationals, the U.S. Grappling World Team Trials and the Western Regionals.

These media procedures are part of USA Wrestling's efforts to increase safety in the sport, which includes requiring background checks and Safe Sport training for national staff, coaches, referees, medical staff, state leaders, club leaders, event directors, event volunteers, vendors and others. In addition, USA Wrestling has and will continue to inform adults affiliated with USA Wrestling about their responsibilities for mandatory reporting of suspected abuse.

USA Wrestling's goal with these programs is to provide as safe an environment as possible for athletes participating in USA Wrestling events and activities.

USA Wrestling is believed to be the first national sports organization to initiate athlete safety procedures as part of its media operations.

As an organization, USA Wrestling is hoping to help create a national and international system for media accreditation and operations which protects all athletes, including children and adults, from any form of abuse.

"USA Wrestling is reaching out to the entire sports industry to work with us to establish media accreditation and operations procedures which protect athletes, while allowing legitimate media to do their jobs in reporting on sport," said Gary Abbott, USA Wrestling's Director of Communications.

All previous media accreditation acceptances for the 2018 USA Wrestling season will no longer be in effect. All journalists must fulfill the new requirements in order to receive a media credential at the U.S. Open and the remainder of the national and regional events on the 2018 USA Wrestling schedule.

Journalists will be able to take the background check and receive the Safe Sport training through its membership website, [USAWmembership.com](http://USAWmembership.com), beginning on Monday, April 16.

USA Wrestling is creating a free media membership category, which will be required to receive a media credential at USA Wrestling events. Media seeking accreditation must contact USA Wrestling Director of Communications Gary Abbott via email at [gabbott@usawrestling.org](mailto:gabbott@usawrestling.org) to receive instructions on how to complete the required procedures.

When media members go through the necessary procedures to receive USA Wrestling media membership, they

will be able to print off a media membership card, which will be required to receive accreditation at the USA Wrestling national and regional events. Media will still be required to apply for each specific event they wish to cover.