



Resolution Facilitation: A First for Wrestling Canada By Greg Mathieu, Executive Director, Wrestling Canada

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As a result of an injury, an athlete was unable to participate at our Olympic Trials. We, at Wrestling Canada, therefore needed to go through our internal process to deal with an injury petition. After exhausting our internal procedures we asked the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC) to take on the case. An Arbitration Agreement between two wrestlers, and the national association was drawn up and signed by all parties and the case management began with an administrative meeting.

At the administrative meeting, we were reminded that all parties entering into Arbitration must participate in a Resolution Facilitation process before the case is heard by an Arbitrator. As the representative of the association, I pointed out that the issue seemed to be polarized and that we had only one entry per weight class and could not satisfy both wrestlers in this matter. The SDRCC Executive Director duly noted the concern but advised that it would still be beneficial to carry out the Resolution Facilitation meeting.

That meeting was scheduled and each of the parties had a representative to discuss the matter with the facilitator, in this case Graeme Mew. After the initial positions were set out, the facilitator worked with both representatives of the athletes involved to see what they felt would be a fair outcome. The discussions that seemed to have no middle ground eventually turned at one point and both parties began to search for a satisfactory compromise.

In a matter of one hour the process, which I thought had no legs, was up and running and moved to a successful agreement which both parties and our association agreed to, thereby avoiding the Arbitration process. The solution was one that all could live with and make work, through terms that would guide a wrestle off to be held. This was a much better resolution than one party winning and one losing, without the chance for it to be solved on the playing field (on the mat, in our case).

As a result of this Resolution Facilitation process, we have a positive outcome, without the acrimony of a hearing or negative attacks within our sport community. We fully endorse and recommend this approach to other national associations who might feel that Arbitration is the only course to follow.