

CAC to institute high school wrestling

By Martin Couch
Staff Writer

The Central Arkansas Christian Mustangs will introduce wrestling as a high school sport next year.

As one of the first schools in central Arkansas to involve wrestling in their athletic program, CAC administrators decided to offer the winter sport in a club format to its students.

The Arkansas Activities Association sanctioned wrestling as a club sport and have plans to include it in the regular high school athletic sanctioning body when at least 16 schools in the state institute it as a sport.

"We were approached by some people in northwest Arkansas and we got the administrative support," said CAC athletic director Doug Killgore. "We're going to give it a good effort to get the seed planted here in central Arkansas."

The Arkansas School for the Blind is one of the few high

schools in the state to have wrestling as a sport in its curriculum and joins northwest Arkansas schools like Fayetteville, which has an

"The AAA has sanctioned wrestling as a club level sport and told us we could travel to places like Oklahoma, Tennessee and Missouri..."

- CAC AD Doug Killgore

established program, and Bentonville, which will begin wrestling as a new program next year like CAC.

"The AAA has sanctioned wrestling as a club level sport and told us we could travel out of state to places like

Oklahoma, Tennessee and Missouri, who already have well-established wrestling programs in their athletic associations," Killgore said.

Wrestling will be available for boys in grades nine through 12.

"There might still be some facility issues to deal with and we have the coaching staff ready to learn more about it through clinics and the like, but our football coach is all for it," Killgore said. "It's a crossover with football as far as the interest in strength. I think we're headed in the right direction."

Meets will begin on Saturdays in January at CAC with the Mustangs possibly competing with other schools like Harding Academy in Searcy and Memphis University School.

"We're looking to get in six to 10 events under the circumstances," Killgore said. "I really see wrestling as an uphill climb with the Little Rock schools, but it is a low-budget sport with an initial

investment of getting a mat."

A positive for the participants would mean that more participation doors would be opened for the "little guys."

"It gives those guys who are still too small to play football a better opportunity to participate in sports," Killgore said. "They would wrestle other guys in their same weight classification."

Killgore said that it will take some "juggling" of after-school practice in the school's smaller gymnasium, where the matches would be held. So far 40 boys at CAC are interested in the sport.

"I think if we get 18 to 25 of those guys out, that will be able to do it," Killgore added.

Killgore is familiar with wrestling after having participated in it when he was school-age in Michigan and Mustangs head football coach Tim Perry taught wrestling in Tennessee, but will not be coaching the sport at CAC.

"We're looking forward to adding it to our athletic program," Killgore said.