

Men's wrestling, women's golf added as CBC sports

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Central Baptist College announced Tuesday it is adding men's wrestling to the school's sports offerings, making it one of three colleges in Arkansas with a wrestling team.

"If you get beyond Arkansas, wrestling is a huge sport," President Terry Kimbrow said. "It's a wholesome sport — students of high academics. I think it's a great addition to our sports lineup."

To complement the new men's wrestling program, the college is also adding a women's golf team, Kimbrow announced.

CBC will offer a total of 12 intercollegiate sports programs in the 2010-2011 academic year.

Kimbrow said the decision to add men's wrestling grew out of a meeting with Greg Hatcher, president of the Arkansas Wrestling Association.

Kimbrow said he learned from Hatcher that nearly 50 Arkansas high schools have wrestling teams, but only one college in the state had a program. Hatcher offered to underwrite the cost of a mat and uniforms, which was "a huge expense," and to help the college find a coach, Kimbrow added. The CBC Board of Trustees voted Feb. 27 to add the two sports.

Hatcher said Arkansas Baptist College and Ouachita Baptist College both recently added wrestling teams. He said only 2 percent of high school wrestlers have an opportunity to wrestle in college

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because so few programs exist. The reason is that many schools dropped their teams in the 1980s when Title IX was passed, requiring schools to have an equal number of sports for males and females, he said.

"Obesity is a huge issue with kids, (and) wrestling burns 1,000 calories an hour — more than any other sport," he noted. "You won't see very many fat wrestlers. These are the fittest guys you'll see."

Athletic Director Lyle Middleton said Tuesday the addition of the new teams provides an opportunity for the institution to grow.

"When your teams are winning, your athletic program shows

success, and it filters through your programs," he said.

Middleton said some students are too small to play football but would do well in their weight class in wrestling.

"Wrestling has really exploded in northwest Arkansas. It's starting to filter down," he continued.

Middleton said CBC will be part of the Central Region, which includes eight colleges in Missouri, Oklahoma, Iowa and Nebraska. Weight classes start around 125 pounds and go up to about 285 pounds in 8-pound increments.

"The travel is broad. Greg (Hatcher) assured us that during our first year, we would host a lot of home matches," Middleton said.

The seasons are from November to December and January through February with a

national tournament in March, Middleton said. Wrestling scholarships will be available.

The search for a wrestling coach will begin immediately, and applications for the position are being accepted.

"We are anxious to get started recruiting from the nearly 50 high school wrestling teams in Arkansas and other states with wrestling programs," Kimbrow concluded.

Middleton will coach the women's golf team.

The women's golf program was suspended a couple of years ago because of a lack of interest; however, the men's team has been successful and has competed in several national championships, the college reported.

"It's time to bring the ladies golf team back," Kimbrow said.