



**“BUILDING CHARACTER AND CONFIDENCE THROUGH COMPETITION”**

### **How to improve your high school wrestling program?**

Congratulations! You have gotten wrestling started at your school and have probably gotten a season or two under your belt and now you want to improve your wrestling program to make it one of the elite in the state. Here are some suggestions.

1. **You need a wrestling room** – If your school doesn't have a wrestling room try to get a classroom or a Junior High gym or an auxiliary gym that is all yours where you can have your mats rolled out and taped down and the wrestlers can feel like they have a place that's all their own. You can decorate this wrestling room with pictures of previous All State wrestlers, put boards up that list all your previous State Champions, have record boards for Most Takedowns, Escapes, Near falls, and Pins in a season, and equip your wrestling room with pull up bars, jump ropes, exercise bicycles, etc. You could ask for donations from loyal parents and friends to really give yourself a first class place to practice.
2. **Get your kids exposure** – You can do this by sending in the results to the newspaper in your area. Please be sure to type up the results and make it very easy for the newspaper to reprint your results. Be sure to list the wrestlers from both teams, the scores of the individual matches, and the team score. Your kids will really look forward to reading their names in the paper.
3. **Be sure to have your wrestling results announced over the intercom system in the morning** – Having kids hear their names over the intercom and other kids hear about successful wrestlers will make other kids want to join and make the kids who are wrestling very proud. You also need to get a bulletin board in school where you can put a picture of each wrestler in action with a little caption underneath it about who is wrestling and how he won the match. This again will help recruit more wrestlers and excite those that you currently have.
4. **Try to schedule a wrestling match right after a basketball game or right before one where fans can come and see a doubleheader** – Also be sure to have wrestling a part of the pep rallies just like they do for football and basketball and recognize and honor your wrestlers.

5. **On wrestling match dates have all your wrestlers wear a t shirt or warm-up to school to let everyone in the school know that tonight there's a wrestling meet**
6. **Host a tournament at your school where you have to recruit volunteers to help work the wrestling tournament and get more and more people involved and more people exposed to the sport** – Everybody will be interested in seeing the home team wrestle and make it easy and convenient to see wrestlers vs. having to travel.
7. **Be sure to get wrestling memorabilia printed for both of your wrestlers, parents, and fans** – have t-shirts and warm-ups printed up and sell them, even make a little profit. You will have walking billboards walking throughout town promoting your wrestling program.
8. **Bring in motivational speakers to attend your wrestling practices from time to time to help get the kids fired up** – Be sure to invite non wrestlers to your wrestling room or to your auditorium to hear these speakers that might encourage other kids to join the wrestling team.
9. **Volunteer to do a weeks worth of instruction during physical education on the sport of wrestling** – Have all the kids in the P.E. class wrestle in a tournament where you draw up the brackets and find out who the champions are at each weight class for the kids in physical education who have never wrestled before. This will help you discover the talent and some of the kids in P.E. class will discover they have a wrestling talent as well. You want to do this in the early grades all the way down to kindergarten to get young wrestlers wrestling earlier.
10. **Start a Junior High wrestling program** – to get your 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders involved earlier. If you simply don't have the staff to coach a Junior High team have them practice with your high school team at the same time and start developing your stars for the future.
11. **Encourage your wrestlers to go to the Arkansas Wrestling Academy** – or another private clinic after your school wrestling practices or in addition to them on some of your off days. These wrestling academies can also help your kids in the off season become better wrestlers. Because wrestling has so many moves it won't hurt them to learn some new things from somebody else and be working year round.
12. **Find a volunteer coach to coach a youth wrestling team at your school** – youth wrestling teams can have everybody practicing together from kindergarten through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Getting a great volunteer can ensure the success of your high school program in years to come. Be sure to include these kids and the coaches at your high school wrestling banquets and honor them for the hard work they've put in.
13. **Be sure to have a high school wrestling banquet at year end and honor your wrestlers** – If you can do it in conjunction with other sports programs or at an assembly it will be more powerful than just having your own wrestling banquet as you want the kids to get recognized in front of all the students in the school to encourage more students to participate.
14. **Have an E-Newsletter that you get a volunteer to print out and send every two weeks to all the wrestling fans, the school administrators, the youth wrestlers, the junior high wrestlers, the high school wrestlers and anyone associated with your program.** – This will help build enthusiasm for your sport.

15. **Get Parents Involved!** - Moms and Dads are always excited to see their children succeed. They have excellent contacts with other parents and members of the school community, which is one more avenue of advertising and recruiting both team members and team support.
16. **Order wrestling jackets with patches for All-District and All-State-** Have the kids sew their medals they've won on to their jacket so that everyone can hear the clanging sound when they walk. This will help other notice wrestling.
17. **Subscribe and get your parents, wrestlers and fans to subscribe to wrestling magazines such as USA Wrestling, Win Magazine, and Amateur Wrestling News.**