

### **Youth Wrestling Safety, Scrutiny, and Protections**

First, the sport of wrestling has three styles of wrestling to include Folkstyle, Freestyle, and Greco-Roman each of which has been around for a very long time. Folkstyle wrestling is conducted in the United States by youth, high school, and college level wrestlers, and is the primary main format conducted during the winter months between November and March every year. Freestyle and Greco-Roman are conducted year-round by the international community, while the U.S. organizes these types of formats for practice and competition during the spring and summer periods. The Northern Virginia Wrestling Federation principally operates during the winter months and hosts Folkstyle related events.

Second, wrestling is not conducted in a manner depicted by television WWF although it is very entertaining. Youth, high school, and collegiate wrestling rules are highly scrutinized by coaches, referees, and governing bodies to ensure a high degree of physical safety. Therefore, rules are established to prevent injuries by only allowing legal “moves” for competition.

<https://www.nfhs.org/activities-sports/wrestling/>

Third, standards and business practices dictate appropriate facility requirements for wrestling practices and competition. Typically, high school wrestling rooms and gymnasiums are used. Occasionally, cafeterias and auxiliary spaces are used as well. Private facilities are also often found to host clinics, camps, and competition events too. The community has a culture of practitioners with experiences to prevent unnecessary risks. The use of public facilities is scrutinized by county and high school officials.

Fourth, the USA Wrestling organization along with its affiliates promote a safe and positive training environment free from bullying, hazing, harassment, emotional distress, physical abuse, or sexual misconduct from coaches, administrators, parent, referees, or others.

<http://content.themat.com/AbuseandHarassmentPolicy.pdf>

Sixth, coaches, instructors, and managers who are in close contact with youth are subjected to background screens before accepting such positions. The screens are conducted by a professional investigation group for USA Wrestling, and coaches may only obtain a coach card upon successful completion of the screen every two years. <http://content.themat.com/BackgroundPolicy.pdf>

Fifth, the wrestling community teaches and encourages athletes, parents, and coaches the concept of good sportsmanship prior to, during, and after competition. Unprofessional or illegal behaviors will not be tolerated by the community at large. Foul language, rude remarks, intimidation tactics, and name calling are considered unacceptable. Smoking, drugs, and alcohol are prohibited on school grounds. There are many checks and balances in the system at the federal, state, and local levels to manage issues in this regard. Parents, coaches, and athletes are required to sign codes of conduct.

Overall, parents and athletes alike find the sport the wrestling very rewarding in terms of physical and mental accomplishments. Athletes gain high confidence, self esteem, and a sense of achievement whether they win or lose. They learn how to focus, control their emotions, and improve through technique, physical conditioning, practice, good partners, and competition.