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Guest Editorial

By Jack Roller

Wrestling Terrorist, Out of Control!

Did terrorism just begin on 9-11-01 or has it been here always? Some of you may condemn me for comparing such tragedies...that which fell upon American soil last September 11th to the ones we see each week at children's sporting events.

One is out right war that cost thousands of American lives and of course will alter our way of life for years to come. As ludicrous as it may seem, they have a cause for which they are more than willing to die. The others, at kids sporting events, are simply loving parents and coaches that just lose control being caught up in the moment! They are usually sorry later while claiming temporary insanity. These wrestling terrorists are much like the other terrorist...they rule by fear and intimidation. They threaten their wrestler, the opponent, other coaches, referees, or any one in a position of authority.

Wrestling does not have a monopoly on such violence. Let me take a moment and give some examples:

On July 5, 1999, at the Burbank Ice Arena in Reading, Massachusetts. A 42-year-old man named Thomas Junta was ejected from the arena after threatening his 10-year-old son's coach, Michael Costin, 40-years-old and father of four young children. After practice, Michael and his three sons were preparing to leave the arena when Junta returned back inside and the scuffle resumed. Costin was thrown to the ground and beaten into a coma from which he would never awaken. Two of his children said they barely recognized him. Junta was arrested on a charge of misdemeanor assault. When Costin was pronounced dead two days later, prosecutors stiffened the charge to manslaughter. Junta was freed on \$5,000 bail but faces a trial after which, if found guilty, he could be sentenced to twenty years in prison. All stemmed from a simple hockey practice. On July 11th, the reverend at Costin's funeral told the 200 mourners, "Pride and anger can be virtuous and vicious." He also stated, "Sports can build up or take away."

Following a little league game in Sacramento in April 1999, a man who was coaching his son's team beat up the manager of the opposing team. The assailant, who had been ejected by a 16-year-old umpire for verbally disrupting the game, was convicted of felony assault and sentenced to 180 days of work furlough.

A Tamaqua, Pennsylvania, man was convicted of corruption of a minor and solicitation to commit simple assault for giving \$2 to a 10-year-old little league pitcher to hit a batter with a fastball.

Police had to be called to quell a brawl in which at least 50 parents and players went at one another at the end of a football game involving 11 to 13-year-olds in Swiftwater, Pennsylvania.

A soccer dad in Eastlake, Ohio, pleaded no contest to a charge of assault after he punched a 14-year-old boy who had scuffled for the ball with the man's 14-year-old son, leading to both boys' ejection. The punch split the victim's lip. The man was sentenced to 10 days of community service and ordered to undergo counseling.

A former corrections officer was sentenced to 30 days in jail for assaulting a 16 year old referee in La Vista, Nebraska, at a flag football game for six and seven year old boys.

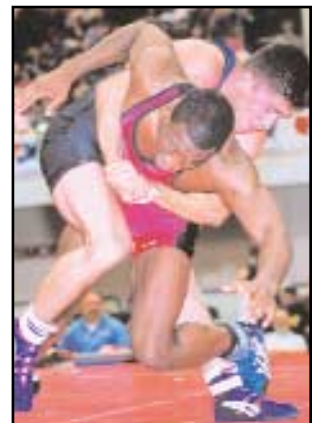
So, all of that to say that wrestling is not the only little league sport with serious problems. When you have run national events for over 21 years, usually nothing surprises you! Wrong! Last season, World of Wrestling experienced a very unique season.

We had more insufficient funds checks in one season than we had in twenty-one years. This forced us to go to guaranteed funds for entries and cash at the events. A few

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Cover Photo

2002 USA Wrestling World Team Trials Championships. Greco 163 lbs. Keith Sieracki, U.S. Army vs. T.C. Dantzler, New York Athletic. Match 1: Dantzler dec. Sieracki, 3-1; Match 2: Dantzler decisioned Sieracki, 8-1. World Team Member: T.C. Dantzler. Photo by John C. Johnson.



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