

Building For Success

By Rick Bollenbach
Edmond North High School

The Program

Having a successful program is made up of several different components. I believe that one major key is to surround yourself with quality coaches and assistants who not only have a strong knowledge of wrestling, but even more so have a strong love and compassion for the sport and have an ability to relate with young athletes. This has to begin with the little league program and continue into your junior high program on up through high school. I know that accomplishing this can be difficult sometimes due to situations where you have a lack of support and cooperation from school administration. I have been fortunate to work in a school that has administrators who have helped me bring in quality teacher/coaches to help build our program. We have also been fortunate to have a little league program that has some extremely qualified coaches and outstanding parent involvement. The little league and junior high programs are truly the foundation builders for a successful high school program. I spent my first six years of coaching as a head junior high coach; therefore, I have a great deal of respect for the job and the challenges faced by these coaches.

The Coaching Staff

Our coaching staff is made up of three coaches all of whom provide different needs for our program. I started coaching in 1986 and spent my first six years as the head junior high coach for Edmond North

Junior High. I am starting my 10th season as the head coach for Edmond North High School. As the head coach, I plan and coordinate the practice each day and run the instruction and technique part of our workout with help from Assistant Coach Larry Tettleton. Coach Tettleton is beginning his fourth season as our assistant coach. He was the head coach for our junior high feeder program before joining the high school staff. He is a great motivator and brings a lot of enthusiasm and drive into our practice room. He is in charge of the conditioning part of our workout as well as helping me with technique and instruction. On the days the tempo is down in the room, the wrestlers are going to hear from Coach Tettleton. Our second assistant is actually a woman; Coach Dee Ann Wallar plays a very different role in our program. She has been involved with wrestling for the past 20 years in various ways such as helping run one of Oklahoma's oldest and best junior high wrestling tournaments. Coach Wallar does our score books, team and individual statistics and is in charge of our team managers. We put a lot of emphasis on our wrestlers academics and helping those who want to continue competing at the college level to find a place. Coach Wallar is basically a student counselor for our wrestlers making sure they are taking care of business in the classroom and meeting requirements necessary to get into college. All in all these two assistants are committed, dedicated, and vital to the success of our program.

Pre-Season

We begin our pre-season workouts on the first day of school, which is usually mid August and runs until October 1st. Our pre-season workouts are approximately one hour in length and consist mainly of conditioning and weight training. On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday we begin our workout with a 1 1/2 mile run followed by a 40-minute weight lifting workout. On Monday and Thursday, we do a chest, shoulder, and triceps workout; and on Tuesday and Friday, we do a leg, back, and biceps workout. On Wednesday, our only workout is a timed three-mile run. During these six weeks of preparation for our competitive season, I am constantly offering challenges for our wrestlers to set a new personal best in weight lifting and on the weekly three mile run. Posting improvements on a chart and displaying them in the wrestling room seems to help motivate the guys through this six-week session.

Competitive Season

Our regular season workouts begin on October 1st; this is the earliest we are allowed to start because of rules set up by the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association. We will spend the first couple of weeks reviewing the basic fundamentals and using a majority of our practice time drilling. I believe drilling is the most important part of a practice if the kids are taught good habits. This is when we work toward perfecting our technique and improving our quickness; therefore, the guys have to drill with a good tempo and intensity. I find motivating the guys after a loss or bad performance can sometimes be difficult especially during drill time. I find myself reminding our guys daily that in order to improve our technique, it is a must to make the most of drill time. I plan our workouts for an entire week when we are first get-



Coach Bollenbach



Kyle Evans-130 lbs.
2x state placer
Career Record: 65-19



Brett Behenna-160 lbs.
State placer
Career Record: 47-15



Charles Jones-152 lbs.
State Champion
2x state runner-up
Career Record: 96-8

tting started on the mat, and I use at least one day a week as a situation practice. A situation practice is when we spend a big part of practice starting the wrestlers with a partner from various situations and going full speed for 12 to 15 second spurts. This seems to be one of our guy's least favorite workouts, which is probably due to the intensity level they have to keep up over a long period of time. They are also being forced to work out of situations that are not necessarily their "bread and butter", which I feel it is a good way to better an individual's technique. Once we begin having our dual meets and tournaments, I plan our practices one day at a time based on the coaching staff's conclusion of our performances. The practice room is truly the place where coaches have the biggest impact on their wrestlers, but it is not just about preparing a practice and running it, we have a responsibility to motivate and prepare the kids mentally as well. A wrestler must have self-confidence if he is going to be successful at a high level, and self-confidence will come with good preparation. Last season, we ventured out of state for the first time to compete in the Reno Tournament of Champions in Reno, Nevada. This was a great experience and preparation for our team. All of our kids benefited from the experience and came back with more confidence just knowing they had competed at a national level and had been successful. We had to work hard in the off-season to raise enough money to make the trip, but it was well worth it. I feel that as a coach, you must continue to be a pupil of the sport with a willingness to continue learning, and I am not just referring to technique, but preparations. We have all had those nights when your team just does not perform well overall. I break down the week prior to that poor performance and try to figure out what I did wrong as a coach in preparing the team. When you are in the middle of your competitive season and you have all these things you know your team needs to work on, it's hard to realize sometimes that your team needs a physical break. I think it is important for a coach to be able to recognize when his team is worn out and beat up. Sometimes a day off can be a lot more beneficial than any practice. As the competitive season goes on, I gradually increase the amount of wrestling and conditioning we do in a practice. Four weeks prior to our regional and state tournament, we add a 6 a.m. morning run to each day. I feel this is as much of a mental preparation as it is a physical preparation. It is a big commitment for some of our kids to just get up this early in the morning, much less do a 30-minute intense run, but as much as they hate it, they enter the tournaments feeling

confident that they are prepared.

The Individuals

Even though as a coach I try to emphasize the team aspect of our sport, it is an individual sport and each wrestler requires individual specific needs. I try to take the individual talents that each wrestler has and build off those talents. I look back at some of the great wrestlers that have come through our program and although I see a lot of similarities, each one also had unique differences that helped make them successful. One of the biggest challenges is those kids with tons of talent, but are lacking self-confidence. Every wrestler has their area of weakness whether it is technique, confidence, quickness, strength, etc. This is why I try to make time to work with each wrestler individually and get to know them and their needs.

Post Season

At the conclusion of our state tournament, we take a week off before starting up our post-season workouts. We also have an awards banquet to honor all of our wrestlers for the hard work, effort, and time they have put forth during the season. We put a lot of effort into making the awards banquet a special evening; one thing we do is make a team video and put

music to it. The video has highlights of each wrestler and is usually about 20 minutes long. This is the wrestlers favorite part of the banquet. The post-season workouts consist of weight training and freestyle wrestling. We also combine with the other high school coaches in our school district and have a freestyle wrestling club that practices in the evening. The freestyle club includes elementary aged kids through high school. This is a great opportunity for the high school coaches to get to know and work with some of the younger kids who will be feeding into their programs later on.

Support

One of the best ways to help build a program is to have the support of your school administration, teachers, student body, parents, and community. I feel a coach has to promote his program. Oklahoma has a lot of great high school wrestling, but surprising to most, still does not get much media attention in our state. It is important that the community has the opportunity to read about the team and individual wrestlers in their local or state newspaper. There are many times when I have to write the article myself and then submit it to the newspaper. I know when the season gets going, coaches have plenty to do without staying up late at night after

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a dual or tournament and writing a news article, but if the community is not reading or hearing about your team, it is going to affect your attendance and support. A few years ago some of the parents of our wrestlers came together and formed a wrestling booster club. They established by-laws so they would have a solid foundation to the build the club from. The club was formed to bring our parents together and help meet the needs of our program. The parents have done a great job promoting our program and increasing our support. They have sold Edmond North Wrestling t-shirts, sweatshirts, and caps, which raises money and promotes the team at the same time. They have formed several fund raising activities, which have provided various needed equipment and allowed us to compete out of state. In summing it all up, there are many different things you can do to build your program, but it takes a great deal of time, hard work, and dedication from a lot of people who know and care about the sport.

**WRESTLING USA MAGAZINE
NATIONAL WRESTLING COACHES ASSOC.
CLIFF KEEN ATHLETIC**

**Wrestling USA National High
School Team Rankings
Wrestling USA Top 25**

By John Hennessey

1. Blair Academy, New Jersey
2. St. Paris Graham, Ohio
3. St. Edward, Ohio
4. Great Bridge, Virginia
5. Easton, Pennsylvania
6. Northampton, Pennsylvania
7. Absegami, New Jersey
8. St. Rita, Illinois
9. Glenbard North, Illinois
10. Apple Valley, Minnesota

11. Simley, Minnesota
12. Poway, California
13. Davidson, Michigan
14. Massillon Perry, Ohio
15. El Reno, Oklahoma
16. Providence Catholic, Illinois
17. Clovis, California
18. Ponderosa, Colorado
19. Vacaville, California
20. Walsh Jesuit, Ohio
21. Wasatch, Utah
22. Owatonna, Minnesota
23. Columbus DeSales, Ohio
24. Evansville Mater Dei, Indiana
25. Marcus De Niza, Arizona

**Top High Schools North West Region
WA, OR, ID, MT, WY, AK**

By Dan Randles

1. Newberg, OR
2. Hermiston, OR
3. Butte, MT
4. Polson, MT
5. Thurston, OR
6. Lake Stevens, WA
7. Libby, MT
8. Sedro Wooley, WA
9. Blackfoot, ID
10. Sidney, MT

**Top High Schools Mid Eastern Region
KY, WV, VA, NJ, MD, DE**

By Bill Swink

- Fredericksburg, VA
1. Blair Academy, NJ
2. Absegami, NJ
3. Great Bridge, VA
4. Parkersburg, WV
5. Jackson, NJ
6. Mount Saint Joseph, MD
7. St. Mark's, DE
8. Phillipsburg, NJ
9. Parkersburg South, WV
10. Christiansburg, VA

**Top High Schools Mid South Region
MO, KS, TX, OK**

By Richard Fergola, KWCA President ,
Topeka, KS

1. El Reno, OK
2. Edmond North, OK
3. Ponca City, OK
4. Ray-Pec, MO
5. Broken Arrow, OK
6. Park Hill, MO
7. Oak Grove, MO
8. Hoxie, KS
9. Blue Springs, MO
10. Manhattan, KS

**Top High Schools New England Region
ME, MA, CT, RI, VT, NH**

By Jeff Peterson

1. Mt. Anthony, Bennington, VT
2. Salem, NH
3. Danbury, CT
4. Lowell, MA
5. Central Catholic, Lawrence, MA
6. Concord, NH
7. Ludlow, MA
8. St. Johns Prep, Danvers, MA
9. Foxboro, MA
10. Noble, ME

**Top High Schools South Eastern Region
NC, SC, GA, FL, TN, AL, LA**

By John Lawton

Tarpon Springs, Florida

1. Brandon, FL
2. Bradley Central (Cleveland), TN
3. Cary, NC
4. McEachern (Powder Springs), GA
5. Jesuit (New Orleans), LA
6. Summerville, SC
7. Countryside (Clearwater), FL
8. Collins Hill (Suwanee), GA
9. Father Ryan (Nashville), TN
10. (tie) South Dade (Homestead), FL
10. (tie) Dutch Fork (Irmo), SC
10. (tie) Brother Martin (New Orleans), LA
10. (tie) Orange (Hillsborough), NC

**Top High Schools Southwest Region
CA, NV, UT, AZ, CO, NM, HI**

1. Poway, California
2. Vacaville, California
3. Wasatch Utah
4. Marcos de Niza, Tempe Arizona
5. Clovis, California
6. Centennial, Las Vegas, Nevada
7. La Cueva, Albuquerque, New Mexico
8. Calvary Chapel, California
9. Rio Rancho, New Mexico
10. Iolani Honolulu, Hawaii

**Top High Schools Northeastern Region
NY, PA, OH, MI, IN**

1. St. Paris Graham, Ohio
2. Easton, Pennsylvania
3. St. Edward, Ohio
4. Northampton, Pennsylvania
5. Davison, Michigan
6. Massillon Perry, Ohio
7. Walsh Jesuit, Ohio
8. Akron St. Vincent, Ohio
9. Evansville Mater Dei, Indiana
10. Johnson City, New York

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