

Promotion Ideas for Junior High & Middle School Wrestling



By Scot Davis

Probably the most important aspect of having a quality High School Wrestling Program is to have a quality Junior High or Middle School Wrestling Program that feeds that high school program with good participation numbers and quality experience. A good program needs good numbers of participation to really be successful. If the numbers aren't there, a program will have a lesser chance of having quality wrestlers. And, if there are fewer wrestlers available, there's less chance for there being successful ones too. Not everybody is going to be a "Super Star." There's always a combination of the good, the bad and the mediocre. Now don't take this wrong, I think as a coach we owe the same efforts to all our wrestlers, no matter what their level of success may be. "Everyone" deserves our coaching efforts! However, if you want your team to be highly successful you better have some winning performers in your lineup too. And, the more...the better!

"And then there were none!" That is a statement my coaching staff always used to refer to fewer wrestlers participating in our program. This meant we were motivated to getting as many numbers as we could to participate. With those increased numbers there was always better opportunity to have some of those individuals becoming quality performers too.

With the above in mind, in the following I have listed some ideas I have used with our Junior High or Middle Schools to help create interest for our sport and influence higher numbers of participation. I hope these might provide you some additional ideas you may not of thought of. See below:

- 1-Booster Club Membership
- 2-Create a website for your program.
- 3-Send out a Newsletter
- 4-Get a Team Picture in your Junior High/Middle School Newspaper
- 5-Recognize past accomplishments in your Wrestling Room or Gym with pictures, plaques, etc.

6-Put interesting stats on walls in the Wrestling Room or Gym.

7-Establish some tournaments to raise funds and promote your programs. This also gets people in your program involved

8-Have a good "Post-Season" get-together...Pizza Party!

9-Wrestling "Media Guide." Secure local advertising in this book.

10-Print plenty of your "T-Shirts" that advertise your program.

11-No matter what grade a student is in, get them in the practice room. Tell them there are no weight classes. Use a Ranking System. Rank #'s 1-5. #1-Much experienced and #5 is "First Year" wrestlers. Important to wrestle only wrestle other wrestlers of the same ability, age and weight. Keep ranking confidential. Promote "Team Unity." On match day, all wrestlers wear the team shirt or warm-up jacket.

12-Spend money on advertising your tournaments...it works!

13-On registration night give out Stocking Hats, Arm Patches, Trading Cards and Team Posters for sale. Everyone gets their T-Shirts too.

14-Attendance: Example: Make the first 20 practices in a row and get a pair of practice shorts.

15-Recruiting ideas "LEGAL RECRUITING" that is: A. Get one "new" wrestler to come out and receive a Team T-Shirt.

16-Head High School Coach comes to "Registration Night." Important presence for Registration Night.

17-Include parents whenever possible, such as fundraising events, helping at tournaments, etc.

18-Secure corporate sponsors for tournaments...if possible? This makes your money go farther.

19-Develop and be part of a curriculum and philosophy for your entire program.

20-Make an annual Team Poster with a theme and post in your school.

21-Establish a “Worker Deposit Fee” to secure more help from parents for your program at locally run tournaments or meets. When they work their ‘Worker Fee’ is returned, either way you get help or their worker fee....a Win, Win!”

22-At registration night, and meets, have plenty of souvenirs to sell.

23-Get good Coaches! All coaches are the same level. If one coach gets an award, then “ALL” coaches get a duplicate of that award. “WE” coach as a Team! Everyone has their contribution in demonstrating technique/moves. Bring in High School Coaches on a rotating basis whenever possible. The younger wrestlers feel important when this is done, and it gets everyone, both coaches and wrestlers, familiar with each other. This makes for an easier transition from one level to the next.

24-“Off-Season” – Keep the interest “alive” whenever possible. Do weight lifting with wrestlers that aren’t in fall or spring Sports. We even do a summer lifting program. A lot of repetition, no max lifting. Eight weeks for each season. “Lift right... Lift light...Lift often!” Do “off-season” wrestling. Promote the Freestyle and Greco Roman Styles Wrestling Programs. Go with those wrestlers to some of those tournaments. Wrestling Camps, Individual or Team Camps.

25-If possible? Have your Head Junior High Coach be a teacher in that building. This makes for smoother communication, a better opportunity to recruit wrestlers

26-Promote good sportsmanship with those wrestlers so they are well prepared and familiar to know what is appropriate and or not appropriate when they reach high school.

27-Have a bulletin board in sight for wrestlers and other students to see posted match/matches results and pictures.,

28-Provide the local media with match results, such as radio, newspaper and cable tv station.

29-ALWAYS take attendance. Make wrestlers accountable in attending practice. Wrestlers must learn to be responsible!

30-Try to get a designated site for practices and meets. Get the Gym scheduled for your matches! Make these a major event! Not just something held in the cafeteria or none traditional area of the school.

Make it a BIG DEAL!

31-Present any awards or trophies to the Principal of the school.

32-Have “Favorite Teacher Guest Nights” at various “Home Meets.”

33-Make for some “FUN” practices when possible. Besides technique and drills, have some games, and music at practice.

34-Do a “Team Chant” before a meet like the high school team does.

35-Try “NEW” things whenever possible to keep things interesting, because the attention span of wrestlers that age can be short.

36-Get your team in a “Team Conference” to help build your schedule and promote and promote some natural rivalries.

37-Promote a few Junior High Wrestlers to the Ninth Grade Team where possible. This provides more match opportunities and exposure to a higher level of competition. It builds ‘Team Spirit’ and ‘Camaraderie.’

38-Don’t waste a Wrestler! Promoting a wrestler to a higher level should be done with great care. If a wrestler does not want to move up a level, or demonstrating difficulty once moved up, return them to the junior high. More harm than good can result if a wrestler is forced into an older and tougher competition they do not desire.

39-Build or purchase a “Wrestling Trophy Case” and locate it in an area of high visibility!

40-Finally, constant communication cannot be overstressed! When everyone is informed on what is going on it will make things MUCH easier for everyone. That means you too!

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