



BEST PRACTICES

WHAT TO DO IF A FEMALE WRESTLER JOINS YOUR TEAM

The National Wrestling Coaches Association is dedicated to serve and provide leadership for the advancement of all levels of wrestling with primary emphasis on scholastic and collegiate programs. The membership embraces all people interested in amateur wrestling.

To serve as an educational and informational source is part of our mission. That is why we have provided you with some guidelines and ideas to better serve your program if a female chooses to join your wrestling team.

Best practices for male coaches of female athletes:

Communicate your expectations. Welcome the female athlete on to your team and communicate with her that you expect all of your athletes to follow the rules and guidelines of your program, regardless of gender, and you will treat her the same as you would treat any of the males on your team. She will also be expected to meet the high standards that you have created for your male athletes.

Coach her like a man, treat her like a woman. Men and women are different. They differ in how they communicate, how they are motivated, how they handle their emotions, etc. Female wrestlers are women first, and wrestlers second. However, coach them as you would a male wrestlers while being sensitive to their needs as a female.

Provide adequate supervision. Ask one or more female adults in the wrestling community or within your school district to supervise your female wrestler(s) before and after practice in the locker room and for weigh-ins. In addition, you may want a female adult to be available to her so she can freely communicate special female needs. A coach's wife or wrestler's sister may be a good option for this.

Protect yourself. In a public educational setting, you must be proactive in protecting yourself from any harassment suits. Be sure to have other athletes around when working with a female athlete. If a meeting or film review is required with her, simple steps like keeping your office door open are important. Once again, communication is very important. You may want to encourage your female athlete to invite a friend to join the team for a variety of reasons.

Have a meeting. It is most wise to have a meeting regarding your expectations of all involved when a female joins your team. Organize a Parent-Athlete-Coach meeting to enhance communication about the new dynamics of your team. It might be in your best interest to include administrators as well.

College opportunities. In the 2008-09 season, there were 13 women's collegiate wrestling programs. If your female athlete is passionate about wrestling, she may be interested in competing on an all girls team in college.

Girls do not always have to wrestle boys. There are many opportunities for female wrestlers of all ages to compete against other females. Contact your state federation's women's director or inquire about organizations such as USA Wrestling or USGWA. A female wrestler may choose to practice with your team and compete outside of the season.



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**NATIONAL WRESTLING
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the voice for high school and
college wrestling