

P.E. SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

WRESTLING



“Gold medals aren’t really made of gold. They’re made of sweat, determination, and a hard-to-find alloy called guts.”

Dan Gable, American former folkstyle and freestyle wrestler and coach, Olympic Gold Medalist

INTRODUCTION

Wrestling is a “basic sport” in the sense that it finally comes down to the strength and skill of one person pitted against that of another. Practically every muscle in the body is used in wrestling. Moreover, training must produce strength, speed and endurance. A participant must be in excellent physical condition.

The two most popular styles of wrestling practiced in the United States are the Greco-Roman style and Freestyle.



In the Freestyle form, a wrestler can use his/her hands, arms, legs and feet to overcome an opponent. This style also allows for great freedom of movement and allows both tripping and tackling.

The Greco-Roman style forbids the use of the legs and relies instead on arm and upper-body strength. The Olympic Games currently include both styles of competitive wrestling.

HOW WRESTLING MATCHES ARE PERFORMED

A wrestling match takes place on a mat with a circle in the center, about 28 feet in diameter. At the Olympic level, a match is composed of three 3-minute periods. On

the high school level, a match is comprised of three two-minute periods. College matches are made up of a two-minute period followed by two three-minute periods.

Typically, wrestlers are grouped by weight. High school wrestling has 13 weight classes, starting at 103 pounds and going up to 275 pounds. College wrestling has 10 weight classes, starting at 118 pounds. The advanced wrestler may enter any of eight different weight classes in international competition.



In the first period, wrestlers try to force their opponents onto the mat in a “takedown.” The period begins with the wrestlers facing each other in a standing position. A toss of the coin determines starting positions for the second and third periods. In the second and third periods, wrestlers can start while standing or can begin in the referee’s position, which means that the wrestler on the bottom has his or her hands and knees on the mat.

These are the three different ways matches are won:

By pinning the opponent’s shoulders flat to the mat.

By a technical fall or a 15-point lead.

By winning the most points.

A match can end in any period. Even if a wrestler has fewer points than his or her opponent, he or she can still win if he/she pins the other wrestler to the mat.

WRESTLING TECHNIQUES

When one wrestler gains control over another wrestler by bringing him/her down, a takedown has occurred and two points are scored. If a wrestler frees himself or herself from the opponent’s control and then gains control of the opponent, a reversal has taken place—worth two points.

Another two-point move is called a “predicament,” and occurs when one wrestler controls the other. The referee then decides that a near fall may occur. A near fall is worth two, sometimes three, points. In this move, a wrestler must pin one of his or her opponent’s shoulders to the mat and hold the other shoulder near the mat at an angle less than 45 degrees.

Two points are awarded if the hold is maintained less than five seconds. The move becomes a three-point award when the maneuver is held close to the mat for more than five seconds. If a wrestler can pin both of his/her opponent’s shoulders to the mat for five seconds, six points are awarded.

TAKEDOWNS, ESCAPES AND REVERSALS

The takedown, escape and reversal are important basic moves that beginners should master.

A **double-leg takedown**, one of the basic takedown maneuvers, begins when you put your foot between your opponent’s feet. Then take your lead knee to the mat and lock both arms around the opponent’s thigh. The opponent is taken off the mat and over your shoulders, then dropped back down on the mat.

The **high-crotch takedown** depends on quick reactions and strength. If an opponent grabs your neck, a counter-move is to take hold of the opponent’s elbow. The elbow is pushed toward the opponent’s body, then pulled out as you drop to your knee and place a free arm between your opponent’s legs. Lock your hands around your opponent’s leg. Then drive up to your feet with the single leg locked and trip your opponent to score a take down.

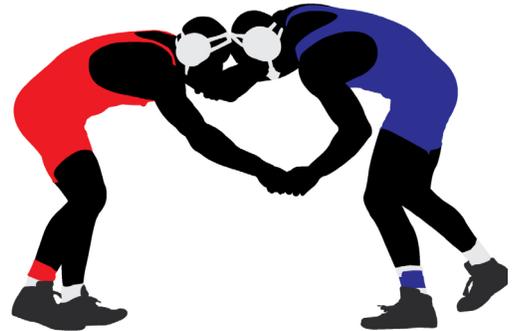
Two other takedowns that rely particularly on strength are the **bearhug** and the **headlock**. In the bearhug, you grab the torso of the opponent, throwing the opponent to the side or pushing him/her backward so that the opponent falls.



The **headlock** requires you to wrap an arm around the opponent's head and force the opponent down or throw him/her to the side.

The **inside-leg stand-up** is a basic escape maneuver. This move allows the wrestler on the bottom to get free and try to gain control.

The **short-sit-out** is an escape move that allows the wrestler on the bottom to get his/her legs into a sitting position. Escapes can sometimes be difficult to accomplish, especially if the wrestlers are evenly matched in size/strength.



The **side roll and switch** are two reversals that are especially good for beginning wrestlers to master. The reversals start from the bottom position and depend on strength and quick reactions in order for the bottom wrestler to get on top.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Psychological factors are all-important in wrestling. All other things being equal, a wrestler has a better chance of success if he/she has a strong will to win. Confidence in one's ability is as important in wrestling as is the ability itself. So is concentration and the ability to focus exclusively on one's performance and one's opponent. Remember, however, that confidence is not some magic ingredient that will help you win matches. Confidence is gained by hard work and the development of wrestling skills.

Wrestling also demands year-round practice. In this respect it is not a sport for everyone. Certainly, it's not a "weekend" sport like golf. A young wrestler must work on building strength through resistance and aerobic training, proper nutrition and rest.



EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING

Wrestling requires only a minimum amount of equipment. Wrestlers traditionally wear an outfit called a singlet—a one-piece garment with shorts and a sleeveless top. Shoes are lightweight, ankle-high and without heels. In recent years, protective headgear covering the ears has become a standard requirement.



WRESTLING NOTES

Wrestling exists in two versions in North American popular culture: as a legitimate sport and as a form of entertainment. As a sport, wrestling does not have the popularity of football or basketball. But as a form of entertainment, as witnessed in associations such as the World Wrestling Federation, it fills arenas, magazines and TV screens.

Wrestling is a competitive sport in high schools and colleges. Many high school teams operate under the jurisdiction of their school district and state athletic association. At the college and university level the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sponsors wrestling as a male sport. The type of wrestling done at the college level is known as scholastic wrestling or folk-style. With some modification this style is also practiced at the middle school and high school level.

Females are finding their way onto the wrestling mat. Some high schools are permitting competition. Anchorage Skyview's Michaela Hutchison worked her way into the championship round of the 103-pound weight class at the state wrestling championship round in Anchorage, Alaska, several years ago. Hutchison won the match to become the first female in the nation to win a prep state wrestling title against males.

The International Federation of Associated Wrestling Styles is the national governing body for amateur competition of this sport at all age levels.

The Pan American Games are an Olympic-style competition for athletes from all nations of the Americas and are conducted every four years, always one year before the Olympic games. Wrestling is one of the popular sports at this venue.

A recent rule change now makes two moves illegal: straight-back suplay and straight-back salto. Rationale: The straight-back salto and straight back suplay are dangerous regardless of which body part (head, neck, or shoulder(s)) hits the mat first.

Wrestling is also an Olympic sport, where Freestyle and Greco-Roman are the only permissible styles. Both Greco-Roman and Freestyle wrestling classifications are divided into 10 weight classes (for the Olympic Games), ranging from 48 kg. -130 kg.

Olympic rule changes have increased the spectator enjoyment of wrestling. In 1989, matches became one-period, 5-minute contests. This change decreased the importance of endurance and increased the importance of speed and skill.

The greatest American heavyweight freestyle Olympic wrestler is Bruce Baumgartner, who has been in Olympic competition in 1984, 1988, 1992 and 1996. He holds four gold medals and one silver medal.

Check out the following websites to learn more about this sport:

www.ncwa.net

www.ncaa.com

www.intermatwrestle.com