

**Board of Directors
Merrimack Youth Association Wrestling Program**

**P.O. Box 153
Merrimack, New Hampshire 03054-0153**

Parent Handbook
2010/2011 Season



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Dear Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to our sixth season of the Merrimack Youth Association Wrestling Program. Thank you for enrolling your wrestler. We enjoyed a very successful season last year and are excited about the season ahead. We have an enrollment of about 50 wrestlers this season with a very large group of Kindergarten – 3rd grade wrestlers. Many of our wrestlers will experience wrestling for the first time and some have returned to build on the skills they learned last year.

In my opinion, wrestling is the purest form of competition of all sports. There are no balls, bats, or racquets; no teammates to rely on; no weather to contend with during the match. It's just the wrestler matched against another wrestler of the same size. It's the longest three minutes your wrestler will spend doing anything. During a match all your wrestler will hear his lungs sucking in air and the coach yelling instructions from the corner. Your wrestler will strain trying to gain the advantage. And in the end, before your wrestler leaves the mat – whatever the outcome – he or she will shake the hand of the opponent and walk to the corner where our coaches will applaud the effort.

While winning is one of the goals of our program, it is not our most important goal. Our program focuses on the rewards of hard work, personal fitness, sportsmanship, and working as a team in addition to learning to wrestle. Together with your support and participation, we hope that the 2010/2011 season will be fun and rewarding for the wrestlers, the parents, the coaches, and the program overall.

This handbook was developed to provide you with a glimpse into our approach and methodology of teaching wrestling to your young athlete. We have also included information you will find useful (such as contact numbers, website address, and a primer of basic wrestling).

If you have any questions or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Wendy Gardenour
Director, MYA Wrestling Program

Description of the program

Our program is designed to provide a basic wrestling knowledge base to our young athletes. We depend on volunteer assistance in the form of board members, coaches, and team parents. Many parents have volunteered to help the team in various ways – we appreciate your assistance as it is a vital part of our program.

Some parents have volunteered as parent coaches. They will assist the head coaches in conducting practices, meets, and tournaments. We have also enlisted the help of some Merrimack High School wrestlers that will serve as mentors and also assist the head coaches.

Our program is open to boys and girls in K – 6 grades. Each wrestler will compete according to his/her weight and age. We also make every attempt to match kids based on their ability. We do not have weight categories and wrestlers do not have to “make weight”.

We will compete in meets as a team and optionally in tournaments on an individual basis. Meets will be scheduled with teams from neighboring communities. Every wrestler present for a meet will wrestle at least once in that meet. We are not part of a league and we do not keep team scores at the meets. Tournaments will be announced and each wrestler will decide to enter or not. There will be entrance fees associated with tournaments that must be paid by the wrestler – usually about \$15. The program will cover the costs of our k-4 tournament and the state tournaments at the end of the season. We would really like to see all wrestlers attend these tournaments.

Our focus will be multifaceted (order does not represent priority after #1):

- 1) First, of course, is the safety and welfare of each wrestler. Rest assured that your wrestler is supervised at all times by staff trained in first aid. Please take time to read our “No One-on-one” contact policy at the end of this handbook. Our head coaches are certified in first aid.
- 2) Provide the best wrestling instruction possible in an environment conducive to learning wrestling. Working on a basic understanding of wrestling, building strength and endurance while making the instruction fun.
- 3) Highlight the importance of nutrition and exercise in wrestling as well as in general health.
- 4) Endeavor to enhance the self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-discipline in each wrestler.

Our team will be divided into two practice squads (Squad #1: K-3 and Squad #2: 4-6). This will allow the older wrestlers to advance at a faster rate than the younger (and in most cases the less experienced) wrestlers. Squads will meet individually two times a week and come together for meets to wrestle as one team. Practice times and places will be posted.

We are developing an award program that will reward wrestlers for completing defined levels of instruction.

Wrestlers are expected to help prepare for and cleanup after practices.

A few things to know

1. Uniform are supplied by the wrestling program.
2. Wrestlers must wear headgear at all times while wrestling (including practice). Headgear is not supplied by the program and it is the responsibility of each wrestler to procure headgear.
3. Male wrestlers should wear athletic supporters (without a cup) – also not supplied by the wrestling program.
4. Mouth guards are optional and not supplied by the wrestling program. Mouth guards are required for wrestlers wearing braces.
5. No one allowed on the mats without wrestling shoes or socks. While a wrestler can practice in socks temporarily – wrestling shoes will be required for meets and tournaments.
6. Wrestling shoes should be carried and not worn to practices and meets. Wrestling shoes should not be used as street (everyday) shoes. They are to be kept free of stones and dirt that can damage the wrestling mats.
7. Please arrive at practice 15 minutes early so your wrestler can get shoes changed and help prepare for practice.
8. Fingernails will be checked prior to each practice. The length of a wrestler's fingernails is checked for safety reasons only – this is not a hygiene inspection.
9. Parents of wrestlers K–4 must be present at practices, meets, and tournaments – they cannot drop their wrestler off and leave. Squad 2 wrestlers can be dropped off, but the parents are required to check in and provide a contact number where they can be reached. Also, if there are behavioral issues with the child, the parent will be asked to stay for future practices.
10. We have a “No One-on-one Contact” policy to ensure that no adult is alone with a wrestler at any time. This policy letter is reprinted in this handout on page 27.
11. Personnel trained in first aid on-hand at all times.

Team Website

www.myawrestling.com

Our website will be an important tool for you as a parent. It has our most up-to-date schedule, all of the forms we use, contact information, a copy of this handout, and much more. We will also make announcements on the website concerning practices or other important information. We are currently working to make the website a more useful resource and you will see many enhancements in the near future.

Equipment Swap

Your wrestlers feet grow quickly and chances are your wrestler will outgrow his/her current wrestling shoes by next season. Please consider donating your wrestling shoes to our program at the end of the season. Additionally, if you are in the market for wrestling shoes, be sure to ask about our inventory of new and used shoes at great prices.

Fundraising

The income for our program is derived from registration fees, town funding, and fundraising. Funds are used to cover the cost of insurance, equipment, uniforms, etc. We make every effort to keep fundraising that involves the participating families to a minimum but the efforts and assistance of all parents and guardians will be greatly appreciated.

Schedule

We will provide an initial schedule at the Parent's meeting. This schedule will change frequently as we are able to coordinate with other teams. Please check the schedule on the website often for the most up-to-date schedule information. Practices have been scheduled to occur at the same time every week but we might try to schedule meets during practice times.

Tournaments are usually scheduled for Saturdays and Sundays. We will still have practice for those wrestlers not attending tournaments.

Typical Practice (subject to change – provided as an example of what to expect from our practices)

Warm up	3 minutes
- jogging	
Agility	5 minutes
- skipping	
- shuffle	
- stance	
- ladder drill	
Tumbling	10 minutes
- forward rolls 3 times	
- backward rolls 3 times	
- cartwheels 3 times	
- roundoffs 3 times	
Stretching	15 minutes
Legs	
- seated stretch (left, middle, right)	
- butterflies	
- push up position	
- one leg hold	
Arms	
- arm across (left, right)	
- arm behind (left, right)	
Neck	
- bridge (front, back)	
Strength	5 minutes
- pushups	
- situps	
- leg raises	
Water break	5 minutes
Clinic (semi-circle)	5 minutes
- review past moves	
- introduce new move	
Drills	10 minutes
- based on new move	
Wrestling	15 minutes
Game	15 minutes
Wrapup (with parents)	2 minutes
- review of practice	
- next practice	
- next meet	
Total	90 minute

Tournaments

Wrestlers of all ages can optionally compete in the season tournaments. Tournament competition is organized by grade and weight. Usually the tournament is divided into divisions based on grade. Typical divisions might be K-2, 3&4, 5&6. Brackets within the divisions are based on weight groupings (and as much as possible, experience level) and not predetermined classes as they are in Middle and High School programs. There are many different ways to arrange brackets.

Most tournaments are held on Sundays with some on Saturdays. Wrestling tournaments can last for 4 to 6+ hours, and can involve as many as 200 to 400 or more participants. Depending on the team schedule, there can be as many as ten or more tournaments throughout the season, some of which can be as far as several hours away.

Registration is usually taken in advance, however, wrestlers can sometimes register at the door when capacity has not been met. Mandatory weigh-ins are most often held the morning of the tournament approximately 1 to 2 hours before the first round of competition. At weigh-in, wrestlers' weights, ages and experience levels are recorded on slips of paper that are used to form brackets. Some tournaments have pre-determined weight classifications, and brackets are formed within those classifications.

A completed bracket sheet will show specific pairings for each match. After each round, bracket sheets are updated to show pairings for the following round. Winners continue to advance, while those that lose are typically eligible for "wrestle backs" in competition for third or fifth.

Four-man brackets are common with 8 and under age groups, and eight-man brackets are most common for older age groups. There is usually a 30 to 60 minute period before the tournament begins, when wrestlers can warm up and locate their bracket. Wrestlers typically wrestle two to four matches in any one tournament; however, it's possible in some situations to wrestle more.

Tournaments are organized in rounds, allowing wrestlers sufficient time to rest between matches. Before each round, pairings are determined, using result of the previous round, and wrestlers are called to a staging area or "bull pen".

Wrestlers are then escorted to the mat by bracket, as mat space becomes available. Some tournaments call wrestlers to the mat by name instead of using the "bull pen" staging method.

Tournament regulations usually limit the number of coaches allowed to coach from the edge of the mat. A referee starts and stops the match, awarding points when appropriate. When the match is over, wrestlers shake hands and return to

their coaches. In some cases, winners must sign the score card at the scoring table. Trophies or medals and sometimes ribbons are typically awarded for 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th, and sometimes 5th and 6th, after all matches in their bracket have been completed. Awards are sometimes presented at the scoring table immediately after the match, or as announced from the head table. Wrestlers are free to leave after awards are presented, unless there are team activities for which they need to be present.

How to Watch Wrestling

Our program teaches the Collegiate (or Folkstyle) style of wrestling. This is the same style that is taught in the Merrimack Middle School and High School programs. There are other styles but this section doesn't focus on them.

When you watch a wrestling match, be it MYA, Middle School, or High School, there are a few things you should be aware of in order to understand what you are seeing.

1. A wrestling **meet** consists of several **matches** (usually around 14) – 1 match per weight class. Weight classes are set by a governing body. Youth wrestling (our program) does not have weight classes – we simply match the kids up by grade, size, and ability. The Middle and High Schools use predetermined weight classes. In a meet, the teams accumulate points based on how many matches they win (see Scoring below). The team with the most points at the end of the meet wins.
2. Each match consists of 3 periods. In MYA and Middle School matches each period is 1 minute long. In High School matches each period is 2 minutes long. During a match each wrestler tries to score points (see Scoring below). The wrestler with the most points at the end of the match wins. Points are kept on a scoreboard or a flip type scoring mechanism in plain view.
3. It is common practice for each wrestler to wear an ankle band - one wears green and the other wears red. The referee will wear corresponding red and green wrist bands – one on each wrist. When a wrestler scores points, the referee will hold up the hand with the colored wristband of the wrestler scoring the points and indicate the number of points scored by holding up that many fingers.
4. In the first period each wrestler starts in the **neutral position** (standing up). To start the second period, the referee flips a coin and the wrestler who wins the coin flip is given the choice of 1) starting in the neutral position or 2) top or bottom in the **referee's position** (in this position one wrestler is on hands and knees and the other wrestler kneels beside on one knee grasping the other wrestler's waist and elbow) or 3) the wrestler can defer to the other wrestler and let them decide. To start the third period the other wrestler is given the choice.
5. The match starts when the referee has both wrestlers come forward from their sides, shake hands, and return to their starting marks (red or green lines) in the center of the mat. The referee will then signal them to begin wrestling. This is when match time starts.

6. At times during the match the referee will stop the action for various reasons: the wrestler might have gone **out of bounds** (beyond the large circle); headgear or shoes might have fallen off; etc. In any case, to restart the match, the wrestlers are brought back to the center of the mat. If neither wrestler had control of the other when the match was stopped the wrestlers restart in the neutral position. If one wrestler had control of the other when the match was stopped then the match will be restarted with that wrestler on top in the referee's position. If the referee stops the match for any reason, time is also stopped. Time is restarted when the referee restarts the match.
7. The match ends when time has expired or one wrestler Pins (see Scoring below) the other or scores a Technical Fall (see Scoring below). Each wrestler will be brought back to the center of the match and the referee will instruct both wrestlers to shake hands and then the referee will raise the hand of the winner. It is common practice for each wrestler to also shake the hand of the opposing coach after the match.
8. In a meet, matches are conducted one at a time and the gym scoreboard is usually used for scoring and sounding a buzzer to end periods. In a tournament there could be several matches going on simultaneously. Therefore, a single scoreboard cannot be used for scoring all the matches at the same time and each match will have its own scoring system. Additionally, the use of buzzers to signal the end of periods would be too confusing – there would be buzzers going off everywhere. So, in tournaments, you will commonly see the use of a **bopper** (a rolled-up towel, Styrofoam tube, or similar device). A few seconds before the end of a period, someone will go onto the mat with a bopper and, when signaled by the timekeeper, hit the referee with the bopper to signify that the period has ended. Sometimes the timekeeper will simply throw something on the mat to signal the referee that time has expired.

Scoring

There are several ways for a wrestler to score points in a match:

- **Takedown** – 2 points – Accomplished from a neutral position when one wrestler takes the other to the mat and gains control of that wrestler. Many times you'll see the points for a takedown delayed until the referee determines that one wrestler has control.
- **Escape** – 1 point - A wrestler that is being controlled by the other wrestler breaks that control.

- **Reversal** – 2 points - A wrestler that is being controlled by the other wrestler breaks that control and immediately gains control of the other wrestler.
- **Near Fall** – 2 or 3 points – Points are awarded for holding opponents shoulders at 45 degrees or less, to the mat, for two seconds (2 points) or five seconds (3 points). Sometimes called “back points”.
- **Penalty** – 1 or 2 points – Awarded to a wrestler for illegal holds, infractions, technical violations, stalling, or unsportsmanlike conduct committed by the other wrestler. Wrestlers are usually given a warning for the first offense. If the violations continue the referee could disqualify the offender and award the match to the opponent.

Teams score points if their wrestler wins a match. The number of points awarded a team is as follows:

- **Decision** – 3 team points – Winning a match by fewer than 8 points.
- **Major Decision** – 4 team points – Winning a match by 8 – 14 points.
- **Technical Fall** – 5 team points – Awarded when one wrestler accumulates at least 15 points more than the other wrestler during a match. The referee will end the match immediately.
- **Pin, Disqualification, Forfeit** – 6 team points – A **Pin** (sometimes called a **Fall**) occurs when one wrestler holds the other wrestler’s shoulders or scapula on the mat for two seconds. The referee signals a pin by slapping the mat and ending the match. A wrestler can be disqualified from a match for several reasons but usually for unsportsmanlike conduct or purposely trying to injure the other wrestler. A forfeit occurs when a wrestler fails to report to the mat for the match.

No One-on-one Contact Policy Letter

Board of Directors Merrimack Youth Association Wrestling Program

P.O. Box 153
Merrimack, New Hampshire 03054-0153

Date: November 5, 2009

To: All parents, coaches, and mentors

Subject: No One-on-one Contact Policy.

For obvious reasons, the MYA Wrestling Program Board of Directors has adopted the following “No One-on-one Contact” policy. This policy applies to all board members, coaches, mentors, and those working on behalf of the program. This is a “zero tolerance” policy.

Policy: **1. No wrestler (from our team or another team) is ever allowed to be alone with an adult that is not his/her parent or guardian. At least one other adult or wrestler should be present at all times.**

Example: A wrestler has a bloody nose and needs to go to the bathroom to wash it. If any adult accompanies the wrestler there must be either another adult or another wrestler present.

2. No wrestler will ever be left alone.

Example: A wrestler’s parent is late picking him/her up after practice. An adult and either another wrestler or another adult will stay with the wrestler until the parent arrives.

Wrestlers are not allowed to leave the practice area unaccompanied.

Board members, coaches, and mentors are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

All violations of this policy should be reported immediately to a board member (or member of the coaching staff who will immediately inform the board). The MYA Wrestling Program Board of Directors will vigorously enforce this policy.

Dave Maskiewicz, *Director*

Wendy Gardenour, *Assistant Director*

Code of Conduct

Wrestlers are not allowed to verbally, physically or psychologically abuse any other wrestler, coach, parent, or game official. All wrestlers will treat each other, parents, coaches, and officials with respect and dignity regarding language, attitude, behavior, and mannerisms.

All wrestlers will respect the property and equipment used at any sports facility, both home and away. No kicking at the edge of the mats or climbing on the rolled up mats.

All wrestlers will encourage good sportsmanship through their actions by demonstrating positive support for all wrestlers, parents, coaches and officials at every match and practice.

All wrestlers will treat other wrestlers, coaches, officials, parents and spectators with respect, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, or ability.

All wrestlers are to treat their training partners in practice with respect and should not intentionally harm or perform any moves not taught in the Merrimack Youth Wrestling program. All wrestlers will listen to the instructions of the coaches, parent coaches and mentors at all times.

There will be no biting, scratching, punching, etc to other wrestlers, coaches, or parents. This conduct may lead to being asked to leave the program.

Wrestlers should wrestle in a “clean” manner with no intent to harm their opponent.

Wrestlers should come to each game or practice ready to play and should give their complete attention to the coach. If a wrestler is injured, they are encouraged to sit quietly at the edge of the mat and pay attention to the instruction until they are able to continue

Illness/Medical Condition

If your wrestler has a medical condition, you should provide the coaching staff with the pertinent information regarding the condition. If your wrestler will need an inhaler and/or medication during practice or a wrestling event, you need to be present with the inhaler and/or medication and assist your wrestler with the administration of such. While some of our coaches are trained in first aid they are not authorized (and not trained) to administer medication.

Please do not expose your sick wrestler to the others – if he/she is displaying symptoms please keep them home.

Additionally, if your wrestler is diagnosed with something that might have been exposed to the other wrestlers, please inform the program as soon as possible.