

Who's to Blame for Wrestlers' Deaths? NCAA Ponders the Question

By Jack Roller

Are the following tragedies a result of the prevailing mindset among wrestlers? Regardless of risks, shedding pounds swiftly to compete in the lowest possible weight class offers an advantage over possibly lighter opponents.

Part of a wrestler's mentality is to keep going, keep going, and push themselves

beyond fatigue. Wrestlers consider themselves the best conditioned athletes that exist and they like the fact they can go where no one's gone before.

The instilled attitude among these kids is that if they push and push, it'll pay off with a victory. Such pushing had ended in death for three college wrestlers back in 1997.

Jeff Reese, 21, a junior from Wellsburg, NY, was working out in December to shed weight on the eve of his first start of the season when he collapsed. He died a short time later at a hospital.

University of Wisconsin-La Crosse wrestler Joseph LaRosa, 22, collapsed and died in November while wearing a rubber suit to help with his weight-loss effort dur-