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# Editorial

By Jack Roller, Guest Editor

## Elementary Wrestling: A Rewarding Experience

In my many years of involvement in wrestling, I have observed the elementary wrestling program as a coach, tournament director, state director, parent and spectator. From personal experience, being involved as a parent is by far the most difficult.

I am a firm believer and backer of elementary wrestling programs. Young wrestlers can benefit a great deal through participation in this character-building sport. Wrestling helps develop an aggressive attitude, self-discipline, self-reliance and self-confidence, in addition to being unexcelled as a means of acquiring physical efficiency, coordination, poise and effective use of the body.

The young wrestler, as in few other sports, will find himself in situations where he is on his own where success or failure depends upon his own intelligence, skill, speed and strength. The youngster must learn to make decisions on his own on the mat, such as when to try for a takedown, what maneuver to use for an escape, how to get a reversal and so on. He also must learn to follow a very complex set of rules, for whatever he achieves on the mat must be accomplished within the framework of those rules.

Wrestling is an "individual" sport at its best. Wrestlers are given opportunities for self-expression that are not possible in many team sports. The young wrestler knows that when he makes his team, he has accomplished this on his own merits; he was not merely chosen by the coach, he personally earned his spot on the team.

And when he does go out on the mat, the final outcome is his own responsibility. He learns how it feels to win, and to lose and how to deal with each. In wrestling, he alone faces the opponent and there is no credit or blame to share with teammates. It is difficult to conceive of a better method of preparing youth for situations which will call for self-reliance, initiative and the ability to decide upon courses of action under pressure or stress.

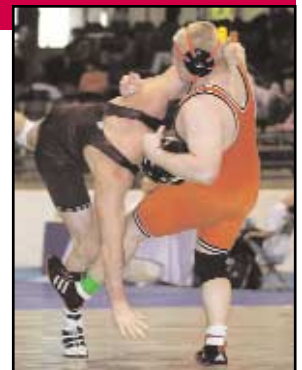
Because of this individuality of wrestling, I want to stress to the parents, that wrestlers in the elementary program are just young boys growing up. They will make mistakes. They are learning new and very difficult skills. Remember when your son loses, he needs you more than when he wins. It is easy to face winning, but hard to face defeat. Do not take the fun out of the sport for him. Do not "pressure" him to win.

Winning is important, but more important is what your young son is receiving from his wrestling program, regardless of his record on the mat.

The young wrestler usually must learn basic skills at this age if he is to go on and compete in high school and possible even college. But even if they don't go on with their wrestling, they are learning other important aspects about themselves, their bodies and competitiveness which will benefit them for years to come. 🏆

### Cover Photo

Steve Mocco (Oklahoma State University) using his patent foot sweep shows Ryan Allin (Wisconsin) why he is ranked #1 in the nation. Mocco won the semi-final match of the Reno Tournament of Champions, 4-2. Photo by Paul Swisher, Jr.

**NATIONAL ACTION WRESTLING PHOTO CONTEST**

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