

The **7** Basic Skills *of Wrestling*

Wrestling, man's oldest and most challenging sport, can trace its history back 5000 years. Inscriptions on the walls of the tombs at Beni Hasan, Egypt, show maneuvers that are the same as those practiced in any wrestling room today. Although there are an infinite number of moves and countermoves to the sport, each is based on a series of specific skills. This article describes the skills as outlined by the U.S.A.W. Wrestling National Instructional Staff. With these skills as a foundation, a well conditioned and mentally prepared athlete can shoot for and attain championship status. One of the seven basic skills will be published in the next issues of *Wrestling U.S.A Magazine*.

To successfully move your opponent from a position of stability (a good stance) and to reduce his potential power (mobility), you must eventually make contact with and control his hips.

To do so requires that any movement in his direction not be just to him, but literally **THROUGH** him!

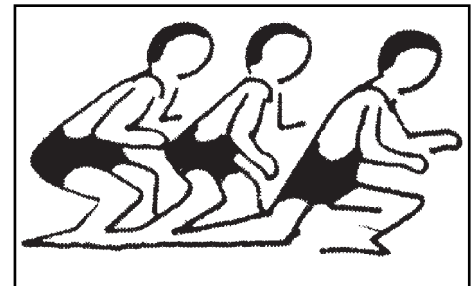
This forward motion through him should be directed toward his hips or the predetermined location where his hips will be at a given instant.

If you were to draw a line on the mat that represents the direction and the distance of

your forward motion into your opponent, it should run directly to his hips (through his legs) and to a point of at least three feet beyond.

However, this type of deep penetration is dependent upon having first properly lowered your level (Skill No. 3).

The fourth skill in the sequence of seven is that of penetration. By definition we are talking about driving your hips to and through your opponent's hips. Holding your head up and keeping your arms back while you let your hips lead the way is one of the most difficult tasks in wrestling. If you have properly lowered your level before you start to



POSITION 4 PENETRATION

penetrate, you will at least have your head up and your back straight.

The problem now becomes one of keeping your hips coming forward so that you don't get overextended and bent at the waist. By taking a natural step forward and thrusting your hips as you do, you will be in a position to take another natural step with the other foot. By continuing the process, you can create a low level, rhythmic striding effect across the mat.

When incorporated into a double leg take-down, deep penetration will put you completely through your opponent before he can react. It is important to keep in mind, however, that your step should not only be deep but directed to your opponent's hips. You can't step to where he was. You must anticipate where his hips are going to be.

With deep penetration, a good arm drag can end up with a secure double leg take-down. With even greater penetration, the arm drag can develop into a back trip. Note that the head is up, the back is straight and it is the power and thrust of the hips that secures the final takedown.

The same basic principles hold true on the mat. Too often, in executing a roll, the bottom man will try to wrap his opponent around him as he pulls away. Instead, the bottom



Brookings, SD - Travis Gottschalk (South Dakota State) grapevines the arm and leg of Calen Nicholl (Northern Colorado) during their 197-lb. match at the SDSU vs. NCU dual. Gottschalk went on to win by decision 5-1. Photo by Mike Smith/MatShots Photos.

man needs to concentrate on coiling himself up into a fetal position, all the time working back up and into his opponent. When he finally uncoils, he will do so after having driven to and through his opponent's hips.

Another maneuver from the feet that emphasizes the importance of deep penetration is a high crotch takedown. The wrestler's hips lead on this maneuver, which enables him to secure his opponent's upper leg. Once in this position, the opponent has very little control over his own hips and

therefore cannot lower his level or rotate his body to counter the attack.

With this kind of penetration, it is very easy to pull your opponent right past you.

Ricky Stewart on Penetration:

Next to motion, penetration is probably the most important skill. To get a good takedown, you have to penetrate with your hips. It's not only with the shoulders and head...you have to get your hips into the man.

All good wrestlers realize that to score they must be able to control and move their opponent's hips. To do so, they must get their own hips into and under their opponent. This type of movement, penetration, is the fourth of seven basic skills leading to a successful wrestler.

Next: Lifting

NWCA Cliff Keen National Duals Mark Perry (Iowa) dec. Stephen Dwyer (Nebraska). Photo by John Johnson.

