

Off-Season Sports *for wrestlers*



By Bill Welker

A final concern for the wrestler in the off-season is to be actively involved in enhancing his cardiovascular endurance. This can be accomplished via many avenues of physical activity. We will begin with off-season sports.

In the spring, the wrestler could compete in track and field. The wrestler who is sincere about his physical endurance should compete in long-distance events, such as the 1500- or 3000-meter events.

Baseball is another great spring competition; it is outstanding for short sprint training but not for endurance workouts. Should a wrestler choose to play baseball, great! However, he should also consider doing extra running.

Two great autumn activities that are con-

ducive to cardiovascular efficiency are cross-country and soccer. The diligent wrestler would be wise to compete in one of these two sports before wrestling season.

Finally, the most popular American sport of the fall – football – is another athletic prospect for the wrestler during the autumn months. Like baseball, this extremely physical sport also requires brief bursts of physical activity during competition, but not stamina. So the serious wrestler who plays football needs to add running to his daily routine.

Off-Season Running for Wrestlers

If a wrestler is not competing in off-season sports, that promote physical endurance, he must design his own running program.

Following is an off-season running plan that has worked for many champion wrestlers. Because the wrestler is lifting on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, he should run on alternating days-Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Sunday would be a day of rest. These recommendations will maximize the effectiveness of a running program:

1. The wrestler must first perform flexibility exercises for the legs and arms before running.
2. During the summer months, the wrestler should run in the mornings and carry water to beat the heat.
3. The wrestler should run four to six miles.

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4. Interval training is an outstanding strategy for running. This method involves alternating running and sprinting. For example, the wrestler's initial pace could involve seven- to nine-minute miles, depending on his body build. If in doubt, he should ask for his coach's advice. While running, the wrestler would sprint 30 seconds every two minutes, using a stopwatch. Substitutes for sprinting include running up hills or steps during the workout.
5. When the wrestler's run is completed, he should cool down by walking for 10 to 15 minutes. At this time, he should

also hydrate himself by drinking enough water to make him feel comfortable. Off-season activities are very important for wrestlers who want to succeed in the mat sport. Summer wrestling clinics, postseason wrestling tournaments, weight training, and off-season sports and running are prerequisites for such achievement. As their coach, you are responsible for guiding them in such a positive direction.

Conclusion

The key to a championship wrestling program is how well you organize your daily practice drill and workout sessions to

fit the needs of your wrestlers. It is also up to you to develop and enact a well-rounded, year long strategy your wrestlers can follow. To use a movie-production metaphor, you are the producer, scriptwriter, and the director – do not let the actors down!

Note: This excerpt is from The Wrestling Drill Book (Chapter 7: Effective Practices and Off-Season Activities). The book can be purchased at humankinetics.com or Amazon.com.

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