

WRESTLING USA MAGAZINE

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

High School Female Wrestling

By Cody Bryant, Managing Editor

Wrestling USA Magazine has been publishing the United State Girl's Wrestling Association (USGWA) ranking since 1999. The USGWA is an organization founded by Kent Bailo which started with the Michigan Girl's State Championships in 1997. Kent began the USGWA Girl's National Tournament the following year and has seen a steady growth ever since. At the high school level, female wrestling has continued to grow since 1990. Much of the growth is contributed not only to Bailo's passion of starting a national tournament, but the opportunity girls now have by the availability of wrestling scholarships and the dream of making the World and Olympic teams.

There are four states that have girls wrestling sanctioned by their high school associations; Hawaii, Texas, Washington and Tennessee. When looking at the participation numbers of female high school wrestlers, it's not surprising to see Texas (1,640), Washington (569) and Hawaii (412) among the top. The state of California has the second most with just under 1,500 participants. Female wrestling started with a meager 48 wrestlers in high school in 1980 (the following 7 years no more than 18 wrestlers). It wasn't until 1988 that female high school wrestlers topped 100 participants and now twenty years later there are over 6,000 female wrestlers in high school.

Personally, for me, female wrestling at the high school level has been a tough sale for several reasons. One of the years that I coached at the high school level I had a girl come out for the team. I initially didn't have a problem but as the season progressed she became more and more of a distraction on the team. It was difficult to get any of the boys to practice with her and I began to have problems with her in the wrestling room and on trips. I wasn't allow to discipline her like I would any other team member without it being viewed as discrimination according to my administration. It truly wasn't fair to the rest of the team and I wouldn't have tolerated it with any other wrestler. I do believe that she was wrestling for all the wrong reasons and I have witness other girl wrestlers working hard and honestly wanting to be successful at the sport.

Wrestling has basically been my life and having three daughters, you would think I would have been an advocate of girls wrestling. I did let my youngest daughter wrestle in the middle school program two years ago as a 6th grader but she only wrestled other girls. She didn't wrestle the following year because her mom and I were not real supportive with the high school scene so she decided not to wrestle. I don't know what she plans to do this year, but I told my daughter that if she would like to wrestle in high school next year that I would support her.

As a full time volunteer coach with my father at Big Sky High School, I was at a tournament the second week of the the season that had five girl wrestlers. I was standing behind some wrestlers from another school that were watching their teammate who was wrestling a girl. They made was some crude remarks during the match before they realized I was standing there. I thought to myself, "how would I feel if that was my daughter out there with wrestlers talking about her like that?" Not too good. I believe that as girls become more competitive in wrestling boys and as the numbers continue to grow these attitudes may change. I sure hope so.

As Always, "Let's Be On The Go Together,"

Cody Bryant

Trivia - Name the state that has the most number of high schools with female wrestlers based on the 2008-09 NFHS participation numbers? The first person to email me (cody@wrestlingusa.com) with the correct answer will win a Wrestling USA Magazine t-shirt.

Cover Photo

2009 Warren Williamson / Daktronics Open - Northern State's Donnie Bowden uses wrist control and an inside trip to return North Dakota State's Jordan Engen to the mat in their 165 lb. match. Bowden went on to win 8-2. Photo by Mike Smith/ MatShots.



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