

...Off-Season Activities

By Dr. Bill Welker



The dedicated wrestler does not stop learning and training when the last practice of the season ends. He is continually looking for ways to improve his wrestling skills, muscle tone, and cardiovascular endurance. These objectives can be accomplished through a variety of activities during the postseason months. The following are off-season priorities for the aspiring state champion: summer wrestling clinics, postseason wrestling tournaments, weight training, and off-season sports or running.

Postseason Wrestling Tournaments

Of course, there is no substitute for experience when it comes to developing wrestling skills. So if a wrestler is determined to be a state champion in today's highly competitive athletic world, he will need to compete in post-season tournaments.

On the other hand, there are some very important concerns that must be addressed regarding the advantages of postseason tournaments for the wrestler. Following are recommendations for participating in open wrestling competitions after the regular season:

1. First and foremost, the wrestler should join a well-coached wrestling club that stresses conditioning as well as the basics of the mat sport. The surest way to get seriously injured at a postseason tournament is not being in sound physical condition. It would be a tragedy to miss in-season action due to a long-term injury sustained at a postseason wrestling tournament.
2. The wrestler should not be concerned with weight reduction when competing in postseason tournaments. Year-round weight watching will lead to wrestling burnout. This loss-of-desire phenomenon has ended the careers of many fine wrestlers.
3. Do not wrestle in too many postseason tournaments. Five highly competitive

wrestling tournaments would suffice. You don't want to peak at the end of summer but at the end of the wrestling season...at the state championships!

4. The wrestler's goal for wrestling in postseason tournaments should be threefold: First, he should continue to use successful moves previously learned in an effort to perfect them.

Second, this is the time of the year to attempt new moves. It doesn't cost the wrestler or his school's wrestling team anything if he fails to complete a new maneuver. The key is that the wrestler learns from the experience and makes the appropriate adjustments.

Finally, the wrestler should be constantly evaluating his progress with the assistance of his club coach. Summer wrestling tournaments must be viewed as a means to an end, preparing the wrestler for competitive action during the season.

Remember: college coaches pay far more attention to where you placed at states than where you placed in postseason tournaments.

Off-Season Sports

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 conducive 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 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.

Off-Season Running

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. It coincides with the weight-training schedule prescribed in the previous section.

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.
4. 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.

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.

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Note: The above are excerpts from The Wrestling Drill Book (Chapter 7 Off Season Activities) which can be purchased by contacting Dr. Bill Welker via his e-mail: mattalkwv@hotmail.com.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Coaches and Spectators) Coaches

No coach can be disrespectful during any wrestling competition. If so the referee would deduct one point from the violator's team score.

On the second offense, the perpetrator would be removed from the premises for the duration of the dual meet or the rest of that day of a tournament. Also, two more points would be deducted from his team's score.

Take note, when a coach's initial action is judged to be flagrant in nature, he would be expelled immediately – with the loss of two team points – for the duration of the dual meet or tournament.

Spectators

No fan may react in an unsportsmanlike manner toward the referee or opposing coach or his team.

This unbecoming behavior will result in removal from the gym, field house or arena on the official's request for the remainder of the competition.

Important Point: Neither team would be penalized any points from the misbehavior of an overzealous spectator. Also, it is the responsibility of the home school's administrator's to remove the offender from the premises.

Mini- MatQuiz

Q: A referee has been constantly harassed by a heckler in the front row of the home school's bleachers almost from the start of the dual meet. Finally, unable to put up with this unsportsmanlike behavior any longer, the referee stopped the match and asked the home school's athletic director to escort the spectator from the gymnasium. The visiting coach reminded the official that he must deduct team points from the home team for such poor behavior. Was the visiting coach right or wrong?

A: The coach was wrong. The removal of a spectator from the premises due to

unsportsmanlike conduct has no effect on the score of either team.

Mat Message

"I always tell students that it is what you learn after you know it all, that counts."

– Harry S. Truman

(Dr. Bill Welker can be reached via e-mail at: mattalkwv@hotmail.com)

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