

Support People



By Scot Davis

Long gone are the days of just the Coach and his team, with nothing more than parents and fans in the stands cheering them on. To have a successful athletic team today a Coach needs to develop and rely on numerous people that support the program, from grades K-12. This is even more evident and important in the sport of wrestling. These key “Support People” will make a difference in developing a successful wrestling team and program. They are absolutely vital and play a key role, sharing many different attributes useful to your program.

With the above said, I would like to break down the various assets any high school coach has available if they just reach out to the people around them who may have interest in the program. Sometimes even recruiting such help you can encourage and develop their interest to your program from people that had no previous connection to your sport. Look for these people and recruit them, as they are all around you and possess many different talents and skills that will benefit your wrestling program. They just need a little encouragement and nudge to get started. Once they do, they will realize the value and contribution they can make to a program, and most importantly, so will you! They often get hooked on Wrestling after being around it too.

In my 46 years of coaching I have encountered numerous opportunities in utilizing various individuals with varied abilities and talents that have made a strong contribution to our wrestling program. In the following I have identified a breakdown of these so-called “Support People” that can contribute greatly in so many ways to your program.

First of all, your High School Administration has to be supportive and you as coach need to include them in some decision-making, as well as keeping them informed. Their support is vital and how you work with them will probably determine what opportunities will be provided to your program. Lets face it, “they control the strings of power,” and they can make decisions that will affect your program in either a positive or negative way. Work closely with these people, always keeping them informed, whether it be good news or negative news...share it! Keeping them informed will head off potential issues that may arise, and believe me, there will always be situations that challenge the smooth operation of your program. Don't make these



2019 Dream Team Classic Wrestling Dual Team USA vs. Team Illinois - 160 lbs. Matthew Olguin (California) doing a head stand while trying to control Jared Head (Illinois) as he rolls through. Olguin won by technical fall 22-7. Photo by G Wyatt Schultz.

surprises to your administration. You don't want to be left on an “island” without a boat. The help of your administration can make things much easier for you. They can, and should be, one of your strongest support groups!

Secondly, I believe your Coaching Staff has to be another vitally strong support group. Include your coaches in decision-making as well, and show them how you respect and value their contributions to the program. Utilize their various talents and knowledge. They will make your job much easier. You will find too that they want to contribute, and having them take an active role demonstrates to your wrestlers their value to the program. This creates a greater degree of respect for them from your wrestlers too. Certainly your coaching staff will appreciate this, and it provides them a high degree of self-respect and worth to the program. This will help you in their support for you. Mutual respect will be the result of this and you will have solid allies to battle any criticism from the public or with your wrestling team and program. Again, don't put yourself on an “island.” You need the support of your staff!

In respect to your coaching staff, make sure you are familiar with all levels of your program, grades K-12. As Head Coach, you need to

emphasize a philosophy for the whole program. This means you must be aware of the unique contributions these people can provide to your program. Obviously a common philosophy must be emphasized, and this must be maintained in respect to the technique and moves taught. Your whole staff can help with this, and each coach probably has some unique knowledge of various moves that can be used. No matter what, your coaching staff is one of your most important support groups, and including them in on decisions and demonstrating to them their value to the program will pay great dividends for you and your wrestlers.

Another major support group for any coach or program is the Booster Club. It is pretty hard in today's economy and the financial need our schools are in to survive without the support of a "Booster Club." Not only their financial support is needed, but the physical contributions of these adults to conduct fundraisers, setup or tear down at meets and tournaments or banquets, or helping at various events. The support and recognition of your program will be the result of these people's participation. Within the Booster Club there will be numerous people with many different skill levels you can draw from for help.

As I said, within the Booster Club there will be numerous people with many different skill levels you can draw on for help. Some of these are Statisticians, very helpful to keeping stats of your wrestlers; Media Guide Chairperson: This individual is somebody who heads up recognition of your program through the all-important media guide. Here you can utilize individuals who can fundraise to get your media guide printed, and have artistic skills, someone like an Artist or with an artistic flair that can help with the layout and design of your book. Advertisers (various companies) can be included in this Media Guide and not only their financial support is helpful, but they help promote your program with their involvement. Many conversations are created in these shops and stores around town regarding your program from those that are involved.

Local Television can certainly be a highly useful tool to promoting your program if you have this available. This kind of support is of great significance. When I coached at Owatonna High School (MN) we had a cable station in the community which featured a half hour "Owatonna Wrestling Show" that aired 18 times per week. This show featured coaches, wrestlers and other "Support People" within the community. People from all levels of business or holding various positions within the community appeared on these cable broadcasts. A parent with a broadcasting degree volunteered his time to serve as broadcaster. This was done for both television and radio broadcasts.

Yes, we also utilized local Radio broadcasts of our meets too, and businesses supported these broadcasts with their advertising.

With regard to broadcasting media, the written form is of course well utilized as well. It helps to have a Sportswriter that has a knowledge of Wrestling for this. I always make certain our newspaper gets a good written summary sent to them by me after every meet or tournament so the information is accurate, also providing some perspective on the wrestling. Newspapers like this as they don't always understand all that is involved with our sport. These sports writers also appreciate the "inside scoop" to give their readers. Accountants or Treasurers can be vital to a wrestling club and overall program. These people must be trustworthy and accurate, If not, your program can be greatly harmed. Be selective in who you appoint to these positions. Handling possibly thousands of dollars is a responsibility you should not take lightly! Make sure you select a responsible individual who has the utmost in integrity. These people are absolutely vital to your program.

I was fortunate to marry a woman with great typing skills, and this has benefitted me greatly over the years. You need to find such a person, or Typist, for your wrestling program, as there plenty of this kind of work to be done. Along this line, it also helps to find somebody with computer skills. A Technology Person can be a real asset to your program, developing a website, Facebook page, etc. This might include a Video Production Specialist too. There always seems to be a parent or student that is skilled at this and cannot only do as mentioned, but put together a dvd presentation with season highlights of your team to be viewed at your post-season banquet, or on cable television. Of course a Photographer is a must for any program too. There always seems to be someone that has a talent and interest for this too. These photos can be used for promoting your program and included in a highlight video, media guide, etc.

It also helps to have a Seamstress. Someone who can mend uniforms. My wife has done much of this over the years. I have found several Mothers are willing to do this as well. There are other things to that can be done too. My wife sewed a 60 feet by 15 feet banner that hung in our Hockey Arena, used for our huge "Owatonna Open" wrestling tournament. It was a large undertaking, but looked great at the arena and really helped identify our tournament to the public. I remember the local Chamber of Commerce calling to find out where we purchased that banner as they wanted one to use for the community.

There are times when mats have to be hauled from one site to another. My experience is that if you have people, especially Farmers,

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2019 Dream Team Classic Wrestling Dual Team USA vs. Team Illinois - 170 lbs. Quinlan Nelson (Illinois) with a high single leg on Edmond Ruth (Pennsylvania). Ruth won by technical fall 22-7. Photo by G Wyatt Schultz.

in the community, they have the trucks, equipment and physical capabilities to do this. They also possess a great work ethic in getting things done! A number of Fathers can often be classified in this category too.

The Bus Driver can also be a very valuable asset to your program. If you can find that one bus driver that likes wrestling and can drive the team on a regular basis, it makes everything much easier for the coach. The Bus Driver learns the schedules and routes necessary for wrestling events, and some of these drivers have become favorites amongst our wrestlers, parents and fans.

If you can find a Wrestling Official willing to come and talk with parents and wrestlers at the beginning of the season and explain the rules in a "Q & A" session it is helpful to everyone associated with the sport. Knowing the rules of the sport is beneficial to everybody!

All programs have Student Managers, but we've had different positions aside from the typical manager's role. Managers usually keep score and help with stats or even cleaning up blood, etc. Some are skilled at putting stats on computer programs, such as Trackwrestling. Another group we called Mat Assistants or sometimes referred to as Mat Maids, would help more with the promotional aspects of our sport, such as decorating wrestlers' lockers, selling souvenirs, etc.

The School Cooks at your school can be extremely helpful too.

We have had them prepare special lunches for our wrestlers when going on long trips. This is helpful as some of our wrestlers' parents who work long hours don't always have time to do this.

School Custodians are definitely key people to any sports program. These people can really make life easier for any coach. Who really runs the school... the custodians!

The Athletic Trainer also plays an important and crucial role for all sports programs. They can help your athletes (wrestlers) get back in the lineup sooner with the proper care or diagnosis of injuries. A coach must keep in communication with this person and inform them of any injuries or complications that may arise. A good Trainer can save on expensive medical costs.

A Team Doctor can be an extremely valuable person to have if your program is so fortunate to have one available. Often times a team gets lucky to have a Doctor who's son wrestles, or they just like to be part of the program. Certainly an extremely valuable resource to have be part of your team or program.

At Owatonna we ran a huge tournament, the "Owatonna Open" and held it in the community's Four Seasons Civic Arena. The Arena Manager then of course became a valuable source in running this large tournament with up to 1800 participants at times. We had to move some 16 mats into the arena, and set up tables for scoring and sales of various items from sport clothing and equipment vendors. It was a large undertaking for over 20+ years, and the Arena Manager certainly helped make things easier with his support. This made for a great fundraiser for our wrestling program and many local people helped in running it. You would definitely classify these people as "Support People."

At Owatonna high school we were fortunate to raise a great deal of funds through Minnesota's "Charitable Gambling" laws, namely pull tabs. We raised well over \$100,000 to \$150,000 for our program each year. To do this you needed an individual willing to put in many hours at three community bar/restaurants. This Gambling Manager played a significant role in our fundraising for our program. If you have the opportunity to do this for your program I highly suggest it. However, make sure you get a Gambling Manager you can trust! This individual will be dealing with large sums of money, with no room for errors being made.

These are some of the key "Support People" I have found over the years that if feeling welcomed to your program can make a major difference to the smooth operation of any program, and with this support, comes successful sports teams as the result!

Editor's Note: Coach Scot Davis is the winningest coach in amateur wrestling history with a career high school record of 1129-197-4. He is a 2-time National "Coach of the Year" (1998 NHSCA & 2007 Wrestling USA Magazine. Runner-up in 2006). He was 2009 USA Dream Team Coach, 2009 Master of Wrestling Award Winner and 1986 Bob Dellinger Award for "Outstanding Wrestling Writer" in the USA.

