

# Creating Opportunities

## Starting a Girls High School Wrestling Program

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**Source:**

**USA Wrestling High School Development Committee  
Co-Chairs Joan Fulp and Andrea Yamamoto**

# Mission Statement

**The USA Wrestling Girls HS Development Committee is committed to supporting the athletes, coaches and state athletic associations in the process of growing girls wrestling.**

# GIRLS WRESTLING



**The Time is NOW**

USAW GHSDC

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# Key Components to Grow Girls' Programs

- 1. Start girls tournaments/divisions**
- 2. State office communication to coaches**
- 3. Girls Wrestling Should Be on Every Meeting Agenda**
- 4. Coaches Education**
- 5. Visibility at Every Level of Competition**
- 6. Add a Girls Division to the State Championship**

# Girls HS Wrestling: The Time Is Now

- Girls and boys deserve to COMPETE against their own gender.
- Girls competing in elementary and middle school need opportunities in high school (this is the gap).
- **Girls wrestling is not going away.** Everyone must be educated and prepared as wrestling attracts more young people to the sport.
- Girls should not have to shoulder the heavy burden of wrestling in high school without support and girls only competitive opportunities.
- Collegiate, National, World and Olympic communities have embraced girls wrestling and need the scholastic world to join them.

# Girls HS Wrestling: The Time Is Now

We are on the forefront of a ***dramatic increase in higher educational opportunities*** for girls wrestling.

- 71 colleges now offer girls wrestling
- The NAIA held their first national women's invitational wrestling championship in March 2019.
- The NCAA Women's Sports Committee voted in favor of approving women's collegiate wrestling for emerging sport status.

# STARTING A PROGRAM AT YOUR SCHOOL





# Getting Started: Your School

- **Start the conversation** with your school's leaders.  
Budgeting  
Staffing  
Transportation
- Determine your practice structure  
Same time and place: Girls and boys can train together  
Same time and place: Girls will only train with other girls
- Determine your girls competition philosophy  
Girls only compete against other girls  
Girls can compete against boys
- Can you bring a **positive adult female role model** into your program?

# Getting Started: Female School Survey

Surveys inform **every girl in your school** about the new team, educates them about girls wrestling and provides you an opportunity to learn what they want in a competitive uniform.

## SAMPLE SURVEY:

**Question 1:** Did you know our high school is starting a girls wrestling team?

Answer: YES NO

**Question 2:** This is a sport for EVERY girl! Did you know girls weight classes range from 100 lbs

- 200+ lbs? Answer: YES NO

**Question 3:** Did you know women's wrestling is a collegiate and Olympic sport?

Answer: YES NO

**Question 4:** Which competitive uniform option would you prefer if you were wrestling for our school?

(List images of NFHS options: women's singlet, compression top and shorts, board shorts and compression top)

# Getting Started: Recruiting

- Have a spring or fall meeting for interested girls. **Create a potential roster, address the one courageous girl early.**
- Speak with fall and spring sports teams.
- “New Girls Team” should be included in school newsletters, websites, social media and morning announcements.
- List weight classes “A sport for every body”
- Recruit in Pairs, encourage them to bring a friend.
- Martial Arts or combat sport experience is a plus.
- New Uniform Options
- Promote not competing against boys
- Higher Education Opportunities
- Promote getting in shape
- Many girls are trying out for wrestling as their first ever sport
- 2020 is an Olympic Year

# Getting Started: Your Wrestling Room

**Do I need to make changes in how I coach? VERY FEW!!!**

- Make sure you communicate expectations with your boys team
- Prepare and plan with your coaching staff
- Determine dress code for co-ed practice environment.
- Purchase a separate scale for the girls
- Hang posters, images, & girls wrestling information in your room.
- Consider a parent meeting just for the girls team.

# Teaching Skills

Teaching wrestling technique to girls must always be done with appropriate, professional methods including the language used to guide that process.

- Teach skills by verbally walking girls through technique.
- Use landmarks such as clothing to help identify areas where we apply holds, create pressure, position our heads, legs, arms or hands.
- Perform demonstrations on another coach
- Use your more experienced male or female wrestlers to demonstrate technique (kids love to coach other kids)
- Demonstrate technique on girls to help them understand pressure and direction of pressure.
- Work towards neutralizing your language so that your verbal instruction applies no matter who you are coaching.
- Use instructional videos
- Get Creative! New teaching methods will help your coaching across all kids.

You are probably already using these methods with your boys, notice there are **few differences**. Challenge yourself in how you teach wrestling technique to everyone in your program as you continue to strive for success.

# REACHING YOUR COACHING POTENTIAL

- Coaching girls will make you a better coach across all your athletes.
- Girls want the same challenging practices, technique and opportunities to learn and compete as boys.
- Like boys, girls deserve to receive all the life-changing benefits wrestling has to offer.
- Girls need your leadership and life experiences to improve their lives.
- Girls should be mentored and encouraged to become future wrestling coaches and officials.

# INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES



# LEAGUE, DISTRICT OR SECTION

- Who can schedule an event?
- Coordinate with neighboring schools
- Showcase girls wrestling at boys duals
- Inter-school practices (check for approval)
- Joint transportation and staffing to all girls events or tournaments with girls divisions.
- Include Middle Schools on season plans



# ACROSS YOUR STATE

- Put Girls Wrestling on EVERY Agenda (not the last item)
- Advocate for Girls vs Girls Competition
- Create a Girls Wrestling Advisory Committee
- Create a Girls Coaching Network
- Consider Open Gym Weigh Ins (singlets on straps up)
- Consider a Coaches Association Survey
- **30 girls and 1 mat is a WIN!!!**



**SINGLET**

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

JOHN SACHS - TECH-FALL

USAW GHSDC

# Human Resources. Think outside the box

Many programs can support a girls team with their current staff, however if staffing is limited or you want a dedicated coach for the girls consider the following options:

- Great wrestling moms can become great girls coaches.
- The spouses of male head coaches make great girls coaches in their programs.
- Is there a former collegiate female wrestler living in your area?
- Is there a great female athlete working in your school system (elementary, middle school, or high school). Approach her about being a positive female role model for the girls team.
- Consider options through local clubs. If there is a club in your area currently working with girls, can that coach be approached about joining your program.
- Look for great coaches in your athletic department. Their methods of success apply across all sports and they can learn the sport with mentorship and support.
- Consider inviting female coaches of sports in your middle school to help with your girls team. YES, they can learn wrestling and will be an asset as they understand school and state policies.
- It's OK to think outside the box, you never know who will fall in love with this sport and become a passionate and successful wrestling coach and expand our wrestling community.

# Women's Singlets

- If at all possible avoid boys singlets. Purchase women's cut singlets.
- Recommend "High Neck or High Cut" sports bras for competition.
- Sports bras don't fix a boys singlet. The largest contributor to unnecessary exposure of a female wrestler in competition is a boys singlet.
- Survey your female students on the different types of uniform options.
- Spirit packs should include language for girls such as "lady tiger" wrestling team or "Riverview Girls Wrestling Team"
- **We do not want to "cover girls up" in wrestling. Girls need to be girls in appearance with a standard that is appropriate for the athlete, coaches, officials and spectators.**

# Why Not Boys Singlets?

“Last year, I had to wear a boy’s singlet, which I absolutely hate with a passion” she says. “It’s stressful to stay modest.” Her solution: a modified uniform girl’s cut singlet which has more coverage and, Ayres says let’s her “look more like a girl on the mat.” *Quote from Chloe Ayres, New York Post, February 27th*

*Photo credit to New York Post photos.*



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



# GIRLS PRACTICE CHECKLIST

1. Remove all jewelry and piercings before practice.
2. Long hair is braided or secured before warm-ups begin.  
Have back-up elastic hair ties ready.
3. NAILS - Sharp nails are dangerous to you and your teammates. Nails should be trimmed short with no sharp edges.
4. CLEAN Knee Pads and Mouth Guards (if wearing braces)
5. SHOWER - Reducing skin infection requires a proper shower directly after practice. Bring a towel, soap, shampoo and a CLEAN set of clothes. Girls with long hair, lift up your hair to scrub your neck and near your hairline.
6. Check Your Calendar GIRLS!!! If you will be on or close to your period be prepared. Check out LuchaFit.com for some helpful tips!
7. Wear a sports bra and t-shirt during practice. No tanks or crop tops.
8. Proper Bottoms for wrestling are thick tights, sweat bottoms, mid-thigh shorts (NO RUNNING SHORTS).
9. Wrestling Shoes
10. Don't forget your POSITIVE ATTITUDE!!!



## Girls Wrestling Resources

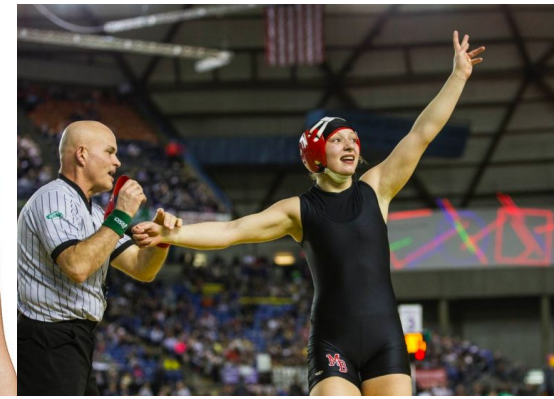
LuchaFit.com

Wrestle Like A Girl

USA Wrestling

# COMPETITION CHECKLIST

1. CLEAN uniform, double check your gear bag.
2. Undergarments: No thongs under singlets. They do show and are not appropriate for competition use. **Know the rules**, you must wear undergarments that completely cover your buttocks.
3. Consider purchasing a High Neck or High Cut Sports Bra. **Know the rules**, you must wear a sports bra that completely covers your breasts during competition. These can easily be found online.
4. Ear Protection - Adjust it the way you like it before you arrive at the competition site.
5. HAIR - **Know the rules**, if your hair is long remember your elastic hair ties and hair cover. **Know the rules**, elastic bands stored on wrists can cost you a point.
6. NAILS - **Know the Rules**, sharp nails are dangerous to you and your opponent. Nails should be trimmed short with no sharp edges.
7. CLEAN Knee Pads and Mouth Guards (for Braces)
8. Check Your Calendar GIRLS!!! Bring everything you need to manage your period. Always bring extra.
9. SHOWER - Reduce Skin Infection. Bring a towel, soap, shampoo and a clean set of clothes.



10. Don't forget your WINNING attitude (The four B's): Believe in Yourself, Be A Risk Taker, Be on the Attack, Be a good Teammate!!

Maintain an appropriate and legal appearance. The conversation about you should be focused on your great wrestling and athleticism, not your attire.

Check with your coach to discuss other items that should go into your gear bag like your student ID, nutrition/hydration items, and homework.  
**Stay on those books! Wrestling doesn't pay the rent but your education will.**



# Coaching Girls: Resources

- **USA Wrestling - Head Coach Terry Steiner Letter: Why Not Girls Wrestling?**  
<http://content.themat.com/women/WhyWomensWrestling-Steiner.pdf>
- **[LuchaFit](#) - Katherine Shai 2019 US Women's National Team Member, 2019 Final X Runner-Up. Website dedicated to female wrestlers.**
- **Wrestle Like A Girl - Sally Roberts** <https://wrestlelikeagirl.org>

# Video & Webinar Links

**Trent Kroll and Andrea Yamamoto - Starting a Girls Wrestling Team**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqswNx1HVM8&t=125s>

**Chris and Lori Ayers - Girls High School Wrestling in New Jersey.**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfV9JHNDEaA&fbclid=IwAR2R57-4\\_nojkhxF2-ta0Z49t50IPcYZb5-QBaROrPFsx3pTDzon4hE6BDU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfV9JHNDEaA&fbclid=IwAR2R57-4_nojkhxF2-ta0Z49t50IPcYZb5-QBaROrPFsx3pTDzon4hE6BDU)

**SWEAT EQUITY /CANADA -Video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9lwwFd9K9k&t=944s>

**The Warrior Rising - Wrestle Like a Girl**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4zn6Nytzyl&t=10s>

# LuchaFit for Girls Wrestling



- Difference in coaching boys and girls
- Underwear for female wrestlers
- Managing your period at a tournament
- What you learn as the only girl on the boys team
- I lost to a girl (this is a girl vs girl article)
- College Wrestling section with numerous articles about college
- What you don't know about being a female wrestler
- What to take in your bag to competition - Art of preparation
- Moving past a tough training session
- When you should be journaling
- Packing snacks for your competition



[luchafit.com](http://luchafit.com)

# LINKS TO LUCHAFIT.COM ARTICLES

<https://www.luchafit.com/blog/emma-randall-differences-between-coaching-boys-and-girls-wrestling>

<https://www.luchafit.com/blog/choosing-underwear-for-female-wrestlers?rq=%20singlet>

<https://www.luchafit.com/blog/managing-your-period-at-a-tournament>

<https://www.luchafit.com/blog/what-you-learn-as-the-only-girl-on-the-boys-wrestling-team>

<https://www.luchafit.com/blog/i-lost-to-a-girl>

<https://www.luchafit.com/college-wrestling>

<https://an.athletenetwork.com/blog/what-you-dont-know-about-being-a-female-wrestler?>

<https://www.luchafit.com/blog/insight-into-the-art-of-preparation>

<https://www.luchafit.com/blog/moving-past-a-tough-training-session>

<https://www.luchafit.com/blog/when-should-you-be-journaling>

<https://www.luchafit.com/blog/packing-snacks-for-your-competition>





**SWEAT  
EQUITY**



# Thank You

Your leadership has and will make the difference.

We celebrate your willingness to create new possibilities for girls high school wrestling.

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