

WEST VIRGINIA MAT THOUGHTS

... on Off-Season Activities

Part One

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Off-Season Activities

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.

In part one, we will be exploring the significance of summer wrestling clinics and postseason tournaments

Summer Wrestling Clinics

To improve technique, the sincere wrestler should attend summer wrestling clinics, prepared to take notes. He should not try to learn all the moves taught during the weeklong clinic, especially those so-called "clinic moves." These are maneuvers that look fancy but are rarely used or successful in competition. They are not founded on sound fundamentals. Clinicians present them to catch the eyes of the campers in order to teach the truly worthwhile moves.

The wrestler's prime objective should be to learn one or two new moves in each

area of wrestling (takedowns, escapes/reversals, and rides/pinning combinations). They should be maneuvers that suit his wrestling style and body type. For example, if a wrestler is tall and thin, he should pay special attention to novel leg-wrestling moves.

Finally, the wrestler must consider the moves that he has had the most success with in past competitions. With this in mind, when the clinician demonstrates the wrestler's favorite moves, he should write down those subtle additions to the maneuver that make it even more effective in a match.

Clinics can be very worthwhile in perfecting wrestling skills if the clinic participant lives by the following two guidelines:

- 1 The wrestler must keep focused on the preceding suggestions.
- 2 The wrestler must approach the clinic as though it were a classroom. It is not to be perceived as a place for competition but as a place for learning. Therefore, he should never be afraid to ask questions!

In abiding by these guidelines, the wrestler will find the clinic experience to be of great personal benefit on the mats.

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 postseason 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!

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.

In part two, we will examine off-season weight training and off-season sports or an appropriate running program.

Wrestling Words of Wisdom

“Success covers a multitude of blunders.”

- George Bernard Shaw

(Excerpt from *The Wrestling Drill Book, 2E* by Bill Welker. It can be purchased at www.humankinetics.com or www.amazon.com.)

