

Is wrestling a team sport? Coach discusses team aspect of sport

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Wrestling is hard, unbelievably hard. You want blood, sweat and tears? You'll get them in wrestling, guaranteed. If you ask a wrestler "why do you wrestle?" don't be offended if the response is "because you can't." Well, my friend, that's wrestling. If you can see the logic in this then you may just be a wrestler at heart.

The Independent has given me the honor and privilege of presenting a short series of essays on wrestling over the

course of this winter sports season. The concept of these essays is not to tell or teach the readers about wrestling, but is focused on understanding wrestling as, well, a way of being. So, before this turns into an essay of its own...I hope you enjoy this first essay and thank you for your time:

The Team Aspect Of Wrestling

Is wrestling a team sport?

Yes, it is; and No, it isn't. On the mat, during competition? No. Not really. Off the mat? Yes, but in ways that are different than other sports.

When you are competing on the mat you're just one, the world is gone and you're just one. You may have coaches in your corner, but the decisions are still made by you and no one else. You decide 95 percent of what takes place during competition. There is no team out there to back you up if you make a mistake; you are on your own. And you own all the consequences of any mistake you make. The answer to this? Work hard in practice, learn what the mistakes are and don't make them in competition.

As a sport, wrestling accepts all people, but not all people can accept wrestling. Other sports choose to eliminate members who are seen as weak or lacking the required skill set, this is called a "cut". Wrestling does just the opposite, it forces a person to make his own decision, choose to improve or choose to quit; the people who choose the latter are called quitters. There is only one varsity spot and there are no substitutions. So, wrestling attracts those who are not "qualified" to play other sports and those individualists who choose wrestling. Individualists are not known for their team commitment.

The "team" part of wrestling

takes place away from the competition. It takes place in the hearts of the individual team members. Unlike the other sports that say a team is only as strong as its weakest member, in wrestling a team is only as strong as its average member. Therefore, if your average team member is strong of will and heart you will have a strong team. People do not discover heart and will overnight and all of a sudden, "poof", they are good wrestlers. No, heart and will are developed like any other skill. And the development starts with a small decision that says:

"Today, this time, from this point forward I will no longer make excuses," or "today, this time, from this point forward I will not complain," or "today, this time, from this point forward I will earn good grades," or "today, this time, from this point forward I will not give up or quit," or "today, this time, from this point forward I will always make weight," or "today, this time, from this point forward I will (you fill in the blank)."

Once a decision has been made, it is up to the individual to figure out how to follow through on that decision. A team member will do whatever it takes to support this decision; whether it requires reading, talking with coaches or teammates, seeking advice from respected elders, or doing extra work outside of the classroom

or wrestling room. It must be understood that it will take time to develop heart and will; it is a continuous improvement process of righteousness, perseverance, and discipline. Each individual will develop at his or her own rate, and that is more than acceptable, as long as the team member is making the effort to improve. All that is required is that a team member work to be slightly above average compared to his teammates.

A person can verbalize that a decision has been made yet put forth no effort to realize the rewards of that decision; the result of this is loss of team respect and, more importantly, self-respect. A person can choose not to verbalize a decision and yet put forth no effort to realize the rewards of that decision; the result is still loss of self-respect. The difference is that once a person has verbalized a decision it is harder to give up on it for fear of losing the respect of teammates. Yet, what many people fail to realize is that if you don't have self-respect then you can't have the respect of others. This is because people make the mistake of holding the opinions of other's higher than their own. The reality of the situation is that your own opinion is more powerful than any second party opinion. It is crucial to realize that when you are doing your

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Kiwanis close to starting Key Club here

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and one community at a time. A new club in Vernonia will further the Kiwanis International mission of responding to global issues while also serving the needs of Vernonia Youth by performing valuable service projects.

Kiwanis clubs provide an excellent opportunity to meet other service-minded individuals and network with business professionals while making a direct impact on the community through volunteering. Area residents are encouraged to join the new Kiwanis Club and make a difference for children in the Vernonia community.

The first difference is the formation of a Key Club at Vernonia High School. This stu-

dent led service club will provide Vernonia students opportunities for leadership, community service, and fun. To start a new Key Club, \$600 must be raised. Some money was raised by the Salmon BBQ at the Salmon Festival, but attendance was low and the goal was not reached. Businesses and individuals are asked to help the Kiwanis Club sponsor the Key Club by donations. Make checks payable to the Kiwanis Club of St. Helens and mail to 404 Chinook Ave., Astoria, OR 97103. More information about Key Club, the world's largest service club for high school students can be found at www.keyclub.org

By joining the Kiwanis Club of Vernonia, members will be

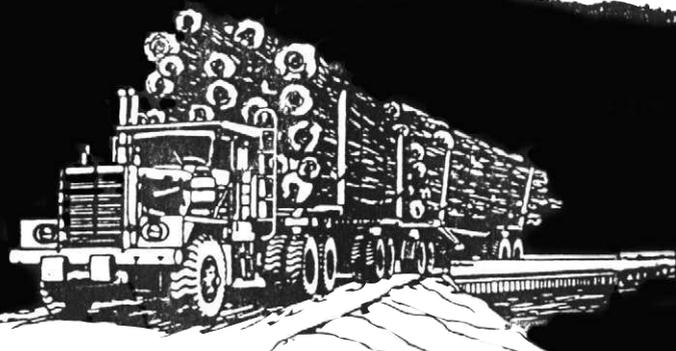
joining the Kiwanis family, which was organized in 1915. There are now more than 600,000 members in 8,600 clubs, in more than 90 countries and geographical areas. The Kiwanis family includes organizations for young people, including Circle K, Key Club, Key Leader, Builders Club, K-Kids, Kiwanis Junior and Aktion Club, who annually dedicate more than six million volunteer hours to strengthen communities and serve children.

To find out more about the Kiwanis Club of Vernonia and the Kiwanis family, contact Alice Robinson at 360-560-3301 or robertsonalice@comcast.net or Emil Nyberg 503-338-7400 or emilnyberg@msn.com or attend the meeting.

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