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PWCA Scholarship Essay 2021
How Can We Improve the Sport of Wrestling?

By Jacob Sabol

To begin with... Who am I? I have been involved with the sport of wrestling for as long as I can remember. My dad, who was also my Elementary and Junior High coach, first took me to wrestling practices when I was in kindergarten as my older brother was a wrestler as well. Just being in the environment of the wrestling room at such an early age, I believe, set the stage for the mentality and effort that I put into the sport. Since the beginning, the sport has definitely taught me one very important lesson, that success does not come easy, and there is a price one must pay to achieve it. I have experienced numerous successes and failures over the years in all of my sports, but ultimately, the challenges that wrestling has presented to me has shaped me into the person I am today.

On to the topic: How Can We Improve the Sport of Wrestling? Many changes have occurred to the wrestling rule book over the years with much of it, rightfully so, being focused on the health and safety of its participants. The reason why wrestling has been able to last as long as it has is because of its ability to evolve and change over time. It has come a long way since its beginnings as being a way to train Greek soldiers in hand-to-hand combat. There are two items that I believe would significantly improve the sport of wrestling: Increasing the exposure of the sport on a local and national level and also adding more of an emphasis on the education of coaches about the goals of youth wrestling programs.

In my thoughts of improving the exposure of wrestling, I reflected upon how my fellow classmates and even my relatives viewed wrestling. Many of my classmates within my school have never even attended a wrestling match, let alone know how gruelling the daily practices can be. And my relatives often bombard my father or I with questions following a match because of their lack of knowledge or familiarity with the sport. To address this lack of knowledge, I would say that increasing the exposure of the sport on a national level would be an obvious step in the right direction towards improvement. The presence of the Big 10 Network broadcasting dual matches and ESPN having the NCAA Division 1 Championships is great progress, but I would argue that much more needs to be done. The promotion could include a sustained marketing campaign with an increased presence on social media, nationally televised commercials, and an increase in regional wrestling events featuring matchups with some of wrestling's stars (current and past NCAA Division 1, 2, & 3 champs along with future Olympic hopefuls). The wrestling fan base would support these types of events if they are marketed properly and treated like an "EVENT!" In addition, it would draw in an even more diverse audience.