



**MSO COUGAR YOUTH
WRESTLING CLUB**

2017 – 2018

**INFORMATION PACKET
AND
TEAM GUIDELINES**

Latest info posted daily to www.msowrestlingclub.com during the season.

Welcome to the MSO Cougar Youth Wrestling Club!

Maplewood & South Orange residents in **grades 1–8** are eligible to participate in our wrestling club, which is a volunteer parent-run organization sponsored by the Maplewood Recreation Department. Please contact Program Director John Gigante with any questions (917-597-0588/johngigante@hotmail.com).

Our mission is to teach the world's oldest sport in a fun environment to foster **self-confidence, goal-setting and discipline**. In keeping with the core values of our great two towns, we are **an inclusive organization open to all** with an emphasis on healthy competition, sportsmanship, respect, and teamwork. To do your part for this mission, please take the time to read this packet and refer to it throughout the season as you familiarize yourself with our club.

We have revamped our website this year, so please explore www.msowrestlingclub.com for our current schedule, coaches' bios, club photos, links to other important online resources, and much more!

This packet provides information on the following:

- **Registration**
- **Coaches**
- **Uniforms & Equipment**
- **Practices**
- **Competitions**
- **Folkstyle Wrestling Rules**
- **MSO Wrestling Online**
- **Volunteer Activities**

Our younger wrestlers and those with little or no experience will participate on our **Novice Squad** and practice together on **Monday, Wednesday and Saturday**. Novice Squad wrestlers may, but are not required to, borrow an official club singlet to participate in multi-club competitions sponsored by the **North Jersey Jr. Wrestling League (NJJWL)**, in which we match up wrestlers by weight, age, and level of experience in an effort to ensure safe and competitive matches. For more information on the NJJWL, please see <http://www.leaguelineup.com/welcome.asp?url=northjerseyjrwrestling>.

Our older wrestlers and those with more experience are eligible to compete for a spot on our **Advanced Squad**, which practices on **Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday**. The Advanced Squad will be issued a full club uniform (singlet, shorts, warm-up jacket) and compete in dual-meets sponsored by the **Suburban Jr. Wrestling League (SJWL)**. Each dual meet is against one other club, wrestlers are matched up purely by weight, and we keep individual and team score. For more information, see www.SubWV.com.

If you have any questions about the information in this packet, please feel free to call or email. We look forward to another fantastic season!

Registration

Only Maplewood & South Orange residents in grades 1–8 are eligible. **Registration this year will be online only.** To register, please visit www.msowrestlingclub.com/registration. The fee is \$130, but **new wrestlers are welcome to try a few practices for free** (just register online and we will issue a refund if your child withdraws by early December). **If payment is an issue, please contact Program Director John Gigante to discuss in confidence.** Children who have not registered will not be allowed to participate, per the Department of Recreation guidelines.

Coaches

Our coaching staff is led by co-heads **Bryan McLaren** and **Marquez Roberts**, who are assisted by a group of dedicated volunteers listed below. To conduct fun, orderly practices and competitive matches, we need lots of help. **If you would like to help as an assistant (no experience necessary), please contact Program Director John Gigante.** You'll need to become First Aid/CPR certified and undergo a background check. Once that is completed, you are free to assist. **WRESTLERS AND PARENTS ARE EXPECTED TO GIVE ALL COACHES THEIR FULL RESPECT AND ATTENTION AT ALL TIMES.**

Bryan McLaren	Co-Head Coach	201-471-1589	bryan_mclaren@yahoo.com
Marquez Roberts	Co-Head Coach	973-666-4542	mroberts1@caldwell.edu
Jeff Alexander	Asst. Coach	212-300-7086	jeffalexander1970@yahoo.com
Adam Barriger	Asst. Coach	917-592-4454	abarriger@verizon.net
Marcus Carroll	Asst. Coach	908-303-1124	mars6390@gmail.com
Donal Connolly	Asst. Coach	732-207-3658	donal.connolly71@hotmail.com
John Gigante	Asst. Coach	917-597-0588	johngigante@hotmail.com
Dave Kreizman	Asst. Coach	862-252-1695	dkreizman@gmail.com
Seth Melnick	Asst. Coach	917-816-2573	seth@slmvideo.com
Mark Schiffer	Asst. Coach	917-232-2377	markschiffer@verizon.net

Equipment and Uniforms

All wrestlers need **wrestling shoes** for practices and competitions. Footwear other than wrestling shoes damage the mats, and are never permitted in the wrestling room or otherwise on our mats. Socks can be worn to try out early practices, but they do not provide the traction necessary to wrestle. For sanitary reasons, wrestling shoes should never be worn outside the wrestling room. We operate a **Shoe Exchange** to provide previously worn wrestling shoes in good condition at no cost to any wrestler. If your wrestler needs a pair of wrestling shoes, notify the coaches before practice. If you have wrestling shoes that your child has outgrown, please donate them to our Shoe Exchange.

All wrestlers need **headgear** for practices and competitions. Headgear covers and protects the ears during the jostling of wrestling. Please label your wrestler's headgear.

Wrestlers with braces must wear a **mouth guard** for practices and competitions.

Wrestlers with long hair must wear a **hair covering** for competitions such as a Neoprene or Lycra swim cap (rubber/latex swim caps are not recommended because they are unforgiving and rip out hair during the jostling of wrestling). Long hair is defined as being long enough to obstruct eye sight in front and longer than the top of a collar in back.

Also consider **kneepads** to protect your wrestler's dominant shooting leg from mat burn.

Shoes, headgear and kneepads are available for purchase through our Team Store. You can also find them for sale, **along with mouth guards and hair coverings**, on Amazon.com or athletic footwear stores, Dick's Sporting Goods and Modell's (Modell's offers our club a 15% discount). Make sure to label all of your wrestler's gear!*

Uniforms for Competitions: To keep costs down for everyone, **we do not require our wrestlers to purchase a uniform.** Instead, we purchase uniforms out of club funds, and lend them to our wrestlers each year in exchange for a deposit. This requires your cooperation in caring for the uniforms and returning them at the end of the season! Please follow all care instructions on the labels, including not putting singlets in the dryer.

Wrestlers on our **Novice Squad** who pay a refundable \$65 deposit **will be permitted to borrow an official club singlet for the season.** If your Novice Squad wrestler is uncomfortable competing in a singlet, please discuss with Program Director John Gigante. We have a limited supply of alternate uniforms made up of compression shorts and shirts available on a first come, first served basis.

Wrestlers on our **Advanced Squad** must wear a singlet along with a full uniform. Advanced Squad wrestlers will pay a refundable \$125 deposit to borrow the team singlet, shorts, warm-up jacket, and duffle bag. We put a removable label on your wrestler's duffle bag before distributing uniforms. **If the label wears off during the season, please replace it.** Please also put a removable label (or tie a piece of yarn, string or ribbon) on your wrestler's warm-up jacket and shorts.* Just **do not write on the items** or otherwise mark them permanently.

Please pay the uniform deposit by check, separate from your payment for registration, so we can just return your deposit check at the end of the season.

SINGLETS AND UNIFORMS ARE FOR USE AT CLUB COMPETITIONS ONLY. Please do not allow the kids to wear them to practice, wrestling events in which our club does not participate, or any non-wrestling activities.

The uniforms must be returned at the end-of-season Awards Banquet. There will be a \$10.00 laundering fee deducted from the deposit for any uniforms that are returned unwashed. If the uniform is damaged, lost or stolen, you will forfeit all or some of your deposit for the repair or replacement (cost will depend on the item).

*** The coaches cannot be expected to gather up and hold onto the various headgear, wrestling shoes, warm-up jackets and shorts that are left behind after virtually every competition and practice. Please label them as described above. We will leave items where your wrestler left them and it is your responsibility to retrieve them.**

Practices

We conduct practices on weeknights for 1 ½ hours (6:30 – 8:00 pm) and on Saturday for 2 hours (9:30 AM – 11:30 AM).

In general, the **Novice Squad** will practice Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, while the **Advanced Squad** will practice Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

However, the coaches will evaluate wrestlers during the first weeks of the season to assign club members to the different practice days in an effort to ensure our wrestlers of all ages, weights and skill levels have compatible practice partners.

If you have any questions about which practices your wrestler should attend, please discuss with our coaching staff.

Wrestlers are expected to attend all practices for their assigned group. All wrestlers must arrive at practice 15 minutes before the start time to be dressed and ready.

TYPICAL PRACTICE: Each practice will feature a warm-up, an instruction and drilling period, conditioning and live wrestling. If time allows, novice practices may end with a wrestling room game or competition as a reward for good behavior.

NEEDED FOR PRACTICE: Please provide your wrestler with **two (2) filled water bottles** for practice. In addition, all wrestlers need wrestling shoes and headgear, and those with braces should wear a mouth guard. Wrestlers are to wear close fitting athletic wear (t-shirt and shorts and/or sweats) to practice. Avoid clothing with zippers, buttons, and pockets as they can scratch skin and trap fingers. In addition, please ensure your wrestler's fingernails are clipped short. ***Wrestlers are NOT to wear team uniforms to practice.***

DISCIPLINE: Maintaining discipline during practices for the safety and fun of our wrestlers is of paramount importance. With this in mind, we must enforce a few rules:

- **Wrestlers may not leave the wrestling room**, except for sanctioned water breaks in the East Gym (wrestlers may not leave the gym to enter a hallway under any circumstances unless accompanied by a coach).
- Bathroom breaks are discouraged because they are disruptive and difficult to supervise. **Please ensure your wrestlers use the bathroom before practice.**
- Two water breaks will be given during practice by the permission of the coaches. Please provide your wrestler with **two (2) filled water bottles** for practices. This will aid in keeping the children in our sight throughout the course of practice (rather than wandering into the hallways to find a fountain).
- Disruptive wrestlers will be given a **timeout**. If the behavior continues, the wrestler's **parent(s) will be called for an early pickup**. Parents of repeat offenders may be instructed to attend future practices to supervise their child. In any event, **after the third serious disruption, the wrestler will be removed from the club.**

Please walk your wrestler to and from the East Gym for practices. You're welcome to stay to watch, but do not have to. If you arrive early, please stay with your wrestler until enough coaches arrive to supervise. Please ***pick up your wrestler promptly*** at the end of each practice or make other arrangements. Coaches will do their part to end practices on time.

Competitions

Our club participates in three types of competitions, explained in greater detail below: (1) informal round-robin “jamboree” events for our Novice Squad (“**Jamboree Events**”), in which 3-4 matches take place simultaneously and we try to get every wrestler at least two matches (nobody is eliminated from further competition because of a loss and we do not keep team score); (2) more formal dual or tri-meets for our Advanced Squad (“**Meets**”), in which we compete against two or three other teams, one match happens at a time in weight-class order and we keep individual as well as team score; and (3) **Tournaments**, in which there are formal brackets for each weight class, wrestlers are eliminated if they lose, and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners are declared for each weight class.

Wrestlers are not required to participate in competitions to be part of our club. Some of our wrestlers may not be ready or wish not to participate in competitions. Please discuss with the coaching staff if you have any questions about your wrestler’s readiness or willingness to compete in our competitions.

Spectator support is important to club morale. The sport can be highly competitive and at most meets and tournaments opponents will have a large cheering section. **Please make every effort to come watch our wrestlers compete, and spread the word among your friends and family.** Have your wrestlers wear their MSO-branded hats, t-shirts, and sweatshirts to school the day of each competition and tell their friends to come watch!

We focus on teaching our wrestlers good sportsmanship. More than most, wrestling is an emotional sport, so we work with our wrestlers to **develop the maturity needed to keep their composure**, whether they win or lose. MSO wrestlers are expected **to honor the tradition of MSO wrestling**. After each match, our wrestlers shake our opponent’s and our opponent’s coaches’ hands. MSO wrestlers do not talk back to the referees, do not throw their headgear, and do not trash-talk opponents. **This applies to parents and guests as well.** During matches, all parents and guests (unless directly involved with running the event, i.e., Coaches & Score/Time-Keepers) must sit in the stands or area designated for spectators. No guests or parents should at any time be on or near the wrestling mat. All participants and spectators will refrain from booing and use of foul language towards opponents, teammates, coaches & referees. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** Wrestlers who violate our code of conduct will be subject to discipline, including missing one or more competitions and/or dismissal from the club. Spectators who violate our code of conduct will be removed from the event.

Novice Squad:

Our Novice Squad participates in 5-7 informal **Jamboree Events** sponsored by the North Jersey Jr. Wrestling League (**NJJWL**), which are included in your registration fee. In these events, **we match up wrestlers by weight, age, level of experience, and aggressiveness in an effort to ensure safe and competitive matches.** The league makes an effort to ensure each wrestler gets at least two matches, but it all depends on the weights of the wrestlers who show up, their ages, and levels of experience. You’ll find these events to be chaotic affairs, with multiple matches going on at once, and some disorganization. For this reason, the coaching staff depends heavily on parental assistance to help us identify on which mat your wrestler is due to wrestle and when, so we can ensure a coach is present to guide your child through the match.

The NJJWL also sponsors two (2) end-of-season Tournaments, in which there are formal brackets for each weight class, wrestlers are eliminated if they lose, and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners are declared for each weight class: (1) the “Novice NJJWL Tournament” is open to 1st and 2nd year wrestlers only; and (2) the “Open NJJWL Tournament” is open to all of our novice wrestlers. In addition, we may alert you to Optional Tournaments during the season in which your wrestler is eligible to participate. Tournaments typically cost \$15 per wrestler, and parents are responsible for registering their wrestler(s) online in advance.

We usually host a couple of home Jamboree Events, but **travel is required for away Jamboree Events and Tournaments**. We rely on parents to get their wrestler(s) to away competitions on time. For more information on the NJJWL, including event locations, see <http://www.leaguelineup.com/welcome.asp?url=northjerseyjrwrestling>.

Advanced Squad:

Our Advanced Squad participates in dual and tri-meets sponsored by the Suburban Jr. Wrestling League (**SJWL**), which are included in your registration fee. These meets are far more structured than the Novice Squad Jamboree Events. One match happens at a time in weight-class order, wrestlers must weigh-in to make sure they “make weight”, and we keep individual as well as team score. In addition, **referees check fingernail and hair length and wrestlers will be barred from wrestling for lack of equipment or other rule violations**. For more information on the SJWL, see www.SubWL.com. The SJWL also sponsors an end-of-season Tournament, and we may alert you to additional Optional Tournaments during the season. Tournaments typically cost \$15 per wrestler, and parents are responsible for registering their wrestler(s) online in advance

Home Meets usually begin at 7 PM on weeknights & 10 AM on Saturdays. Wrestlers should be in the wrestling room by 6:00 PM or 9:00 AM, respectively, prepared to help set-up the mats and then weigh-in.

Away Meets usually begin at 7 PM on weeknights & 10 AM on Saturdays. Wrestlers should arrive at the visiting location by 6 PM and 9 AM, respectively, for weigh-ins. Travel is required and we rely on parents to get their wrestler(s) to meets on time.

Participation on the MSO Advanced Squad is a privilege earned through hard work and commitment. We expect cooperation and good sportsmanship. Advanced Squad wrestlers must wear their full uniform at each meet (singlet, shorts, warm-up jacket). Wrestlers must remain in the designated team seating area at all times, cheering their teammates on, before and after their individual match. No eating is permitted during the meet because it is unfair to teammates who are still competing and distracts from the meet. If a wrestler does not show up to a meet, we will likely have to forfeit his/her weight class, hurting the team. So, please give us as much advance warning as possible of anticipated absences so we can line up a suitable replacement wrestler. For last minute absences, please text or call the Head Coach or Program Director John Gigante.

ALL ADVANCED SQUAD WRESTLERS MUST STAY THROUGH THE ENTIRE MEET UNTIL ALL OF THEIR TEAMMATES HAVE COMPLETED THEIR MATCHES AND THE MATS ARE ROLLED UP! We are a team and we will compete as a team.

Any Advance Squad wrestler who fails to live up to his/her responsibilities to the team or violates our code of conduct will be subject to discipline, including missing one or more competitions and/or dismissal from the club.

State Qualifier Tournaments:

We encourage our Advanced Squad wrestlers to compete individually in USA Wrestling’s NJ State Qualifier Tournaments. These Tournaments take place on eight (8) Sundays throughout New Jersey during the season. We will notify you in advance of each tournament. To participate, each wrestler will need to apply (and pay for) a USA Wrestling membership card. The top three (3) finishers in each tournament qualify to compete in the USA Wrestling NJ State Championship Tournament in Trenton in March.

Folkstyle Wrestling Rules

“Folkstyle” wrestling (aka “collegiate” or “scholastic”) is the type of wrestling practiced in U.S. high schools and colleges. It is different than the predominate styles practiced around the world and featured in the Olympics (Freestyle and Greco Roman). The object of all styles is to put your opponent on his or her back. A pin (or fall) is recorded when both of your opponent’s shoulder blades are exposed to the mat at the same time, resulting in an immediate win. If nobody gets pinned, the wrestler who scores the most points wins.

Folkstyle scoring focuses mainly on changes in control. Taking an opponent down to the mat, escaping from or reversing control, or turning an opponent's back to the mat are all scoring situations. This differs from Freestyle and Greco Roman, which don't encourage escapes or reversals.

Folkstyle rules have changed over time, and vary among the youth, high school, and college levels. But, in general, expect there to be three (3) periods varying in length among levels from 1-2 minutes each, and there are five (5) ways to score points in a folkstyle match: Takedown, Escape, Reversal, Near-Fall, and Penalty.

Move	Points	Description
Takedown	2	From a neutral position (both wrestlers standing with neither having control), one wrestler gains control over the other down on the mat
Escape	1	From a defensive position (bottom), one wrestler gains a neutral position and the other has lost control
Reversal	2	From a defensive position (bottom), one wrestler gains control over the other, either on the mat or in a rear standing position
Near-Fall	2-3	One wrestler exposes the other’s back to the mat at a 45 degree angle or less. 2 points are awarded if the position is held for 3 seconds, and 3 points are awarded if held for 5 seconds
Penalty	1-2	Penalty points are awarded for illegal holds, stalling, and technical violations like unsportsmanlike conduct. In general, first and second violations result in 1 point each, a third violation results in 2 points, and a fourth violation results in disqualification

MSO Cougar Wrestling Online

We will communicate this year primarily through our newly re-launched website www.msowrestlingclub.com. **Please check the website frequently, and especially 2 hours before each practice and competitions for changes.** We may also send alerts by email and/or text, so please make sure we have your most up-to-date contact information.

In addition, MSO Cougar Youth Wrestling operates a **private Facebook group**. Please ask to join our group (msowrestlingclub), and one of our administrators will admit you. We ask that you be active members by posting photos and videos of practices and matches, and sharing footage with your family and friends. Help us spread the word about our club!

Volunteer Activities

A volunteer parent-run organization like ours can only survive with active parental involvement. **And we thrive when everybody gets involved!** The success and enjoyment of our children depend on it. With that in mind, we ask you to reach out to the coaches to volunteer your time to help with at least one of the following activities. As you will see, it takes a lot to run our club!

In general, these are the areas in which we need assistance:

Administration – Responsibilities include scheduling practice dates/location with the CHS Athletic Department, coordinating the competition schedule with the leagues, planning Parents Meetings, and managing background checks and First Aid training for coaches.

Assistant Coaching – Responsibilities include assisting at practices, meets, and tournaments, and voting for end-of-season awards. Experience not required. The more eyes we have on our kids, the better we will be able to help them learn the sport!

Awards Banquet – We recognize the accomplishments of our wrestlers at the end of the season during a “pot-luck” style dinner at a local church or community center, in which every family brings a dish. Responsibilities include securing the venue, distributing the Evite and Signup Genius to coordinate which meals/supplies folks will bring, preparing a photo/video montage of the season, and purchasing awards using club funds.

Communications – Responsibilities include updating our website and Facebook group frequently, securing coverage of club meets in local publications (e.g., Maplewood Leaflet, Matters Magazine, News-Record) and Facebook pages (e.g., SOMA Swap Lounge, TAP Into SOMA, Village Green), recording meet results to the SJWL website, and reporting end-of-season summary and team photo in the News Record/PTA newsletters.

Concessions – We operate a concession table to raise funds during home meets. Responsibilities include purchasing inventory using club funds, setup and breakdown of the table and inventory, managing the cash box, and replenishing inventory. In the past the Concession has sold candy, bagels, drinks, fruit and other snacks, as well as club gear like shirts, sweatpants, and other branded apparel.

Fundraising – Responsibilities include overseeing our corporate sponsorship program, conducting 50/50 and Tricky Tray raffles at home Jamboree Events, helping with concession sales, and organizing can drives, bake sales and car washes.

Home Meets (Set Up, Clean Up, Scorekeeping, Timekeeping) – We will need 4-6 strong adults to help our wrestlers with set-up and breakdown for home meets (move, unroll, tape and mop mats and set-up chairs and table for clock/scoreboard). Some heavy lifting is required. Set-up starts approximately 1 hour prior to meet and breakdown takes about one-half hour. In addition, we need 2 scorekeepers and 1 timekeeper per match.

Photographer/Videographer – We would like one individual to video each of our Advance Squad meets (so our wrestlers can review their technique), take our official team photo and portraits of our Advanced Squad wrestlers, and take other photos throughout the season for posting on our website and Facebook group and use in our recruiting efforts.

Recruiting – Responsibilities include coordinating recruiting booths at local events (e.g., Maplewoodstock, South Orange Play Day), securing recruiting messages in local publications (e.g., Maplewood Leaflet, Matters Magazine, News-Record) and Facebook pages (e.g., SOMA Swap Lounge, TAP Into SOMA, Village Green), emailing past club members and neighborhood association lists, obtaining site listing and promotional emails by both Maplewood and South Orange Recreation Departments, obtaining permits to hang banner above Maplewood and South Orange Avenues, distributing flyers, etc.

Team Building – Responsibilities include coordinating in-season activities like movie nights and attending CHS and Rutgers wrestling meets, and offseason activities like summer camps and get-togethers at places like Treetop Aerial Adventure, Gravity Vault and High Exposure Parkour.

Team Program/Sponsor T-Shirts – Responsibilities include producing a Team Program, featuring sponsor logos and messaging, and photos and blurbs of our Advanced Squad wrestlers, as well as producing and ordering a sponsor-branded t-shirt for all wrestlers.

Team Store – Responsibilities include selecting and overseeing a vendor with expertise in wrestling gear and online shopping experience, and choosing appropriate items and prices to maximize convenience for our parents and fundraising opportunity for our club.

Uniforms/Shoe Exchange – Responsibilities include taking inventory of existing uniforms (singlets, shorts, jackets), purchasing additional items, distributing uniforms by size, collecting deposits, and accounting for missing and unwashed items at the end of the season. To operate the Shoe Exchange, collect and distribute previously used shoes in good condition to wrestlers who express interest.