



Your First Competition!

To lessen confusion, and hopefully lead to a more enjoyable experience, we explain here what new MSO wrestlers and their parents can expect at their first competition.

Overview: Our Novice Squad participates in 5-7 informal **Jamboree Events** mostly on Saturdays sponsored by the North Jersey Jr. Wrestling League (**NJJWL**). Each event is attended by 3-7 other towns. No team score is kept, but individual matches are scored to introduce our new wrestlers to the formality of competition. Scoring is explained at the end of this packet. **We match up wrestlers by weight, age, level of experience, and aggressiveness** in an effort to ensure safe and competitive matches. We do this by rating our wrestlers with a number system on **index cards**, which are then paired up at the **Head Table** against the index cards of comparable wrestlers from other towns to create a match. Because we rely on the subjective rating of the wrestlers from other towns, it is not a perfect system, and mismatches unfortunately do occur. But it is not the norm and every effort is made to avoid mismatches. The host town runs the Head Table, and tries 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. These events can 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 when and on which mat your wrestler is due to wrestle, so we can ensure a coach is present to guide your child through the match.

It's a Long Day! No doubt about it, wrestlers and their parents are in for a long day. Typically, Jamboree Events last 3-4 hours for 6 minutes of wrestling. We encourage our wrestlers to use their free time to learn by watching other matches and cheering on their teammates. But it's helpful to bring a **book, playing cards or other activities**. Because these events are chaotic and crowded affairs, **we caution you against bringing expensive electronic devices**.

What to Bring: Clip wrestler's nails the night before or morning of the competition. Wrestlers must wear: (1) official club **Singlet** or **MSO-branded compression shorts & shirt**, (2) **Wrestling Shoes**, (3) **Head-gear**, (4) mouth-guard (if you have braces), and (6) Neoprene or Lycra hair-covering (if your hair is long enough to obstruct eye sight in front and longer than the top of a collar in back). **Also pack a water bottle**. Host towns usually sell pizza or sandwiches, but you may want to bring healthy snacks. **Please label your gear! Someone always leaves behind their headgear, shoes, or sweatshirt.**

How to Get There: We usually host a couple of home Jamboree Events at CHS, but **travel is required** for away Jamboree Events. We rely on parents to get their wrestler(s) to competitions on time. Jamboree Events are generally held in the Middle Schools of neighboring towns, such as **Summit, Livingston, Clifton, Verona, Caldwell, and West Essex**. We will post the locations of upcoming events on www.msowrestlingclub.com at least the week prior, and ask that you follow your GPS to the designated location.

When to Get There: Arrive forty-five (45) minutes to one (1) hour prior to the start time. **Make sure you alert the coach in charge of the index cards when you arrive.** This will ensure that your index card is submitted to the Head Table so you can get matches. Wrestlers will warm up together as a team on the mats prior to the start time.

How to Find Your Match: Usually, there are 3 or 4 mats set up, each labeled with a number, featuring different matches going on simultaneously. Most towns project on a screen the mat number and names of wrestlers scheduled to compete in upcoming matches. **It's imperative that wrestlers and their parents watch the screen, and inform one of our coaches when their match is coming up.** There are usually just 2-3 of our coaches present to handle the matches of 30-40 of our wrestlers, so it's impossible for them to keep track of it all.

Your Match: When your match is next, you are "on deck". When there is another match in front of yours, you are on "double deck". And when there are two matches in front of yours, you are "in the hole". **When you are in the hole, alert a coach, go to your designated mat and start to warm-up on the side of the mat.** When your match is called, go to the score table and let the scorers know you are there. The referee will take you out to the center of the mat, and your coach will be in the corner.

At the start of your match:

- **Shake your opponents' hand firmly and look them straight in the eyes**
- **Get in your wrestling stance** and wait for the whistle
- Your coach will be present to encourage and offer instruction during the match. Concentrate on the moves you've practiced and try to **tune out all other voices except the instructions of your coach.**

When your match is over:

- Go to the middle of the mat and again **shake your opponents' hand firmly**
- **Look them in the eye and tell them "good match"** whether you won or lost
- Look for the other team's coach(es) and shake their hand(s) firmly
- Come speak to your coach before your parents or returning to your seat

Wrestling is an emotional sport! You will be frustrated when you lose. That's ok. But you must shake your opponent's hand and the hand(s) of their coach(es). **You must not throw your headgear** or talk back to referees or your opponent. **PARENTS:** There will be tantrums and crying. This is normal. But your child must shake hands before leaving the mat. **Please speak to your child in advance about this.** Losing and especially getting pinned in front of others with nobody to rely on but yourself, is a difficult experience for many young wrestlers (and parents!). But those are the very conditions that teach life lessons and develop character, which separates our sport from others. We ask that you **let the coaches coach.** Do not go onto the mat to intervene or take your wrestler away before a coach speaks with him or her. Let us help your child develop the maturity needed to keep their composure, whether they win or lose.

It's not about winning and losing! At the youth level, help us **keep our wrestlers focused on developing their skills** at these competitions, not wins and losses. It's hard, but we must teach them to **judge their performance not by a win or a loss by whether they properly executed the techniques we've covered in practice**. Did they stay low and circle in their stance? Did they keep moving on bottom, or break down their opponent from the top position? One of our wrestlers might fall on top of an opponent and get the pin, while another will execute a great double leg or stand-up but ultimately lose by a point. Who do you think learned more? We ask that, as parents, you reinforce this message.

You Represent Maplewood-South Orange! All parents and wrestlers need to understand that at each competition, you represent our great Two Towns, and the MSO Wrestling Club. Be polite when cheering for your wrestler. **Do not boo, laugh at, or use foul language towards opponents, teammates, coaches or referees**. Be respectful towards the spectators from our neighboring towns! All are expected to honor the tradition of MSO Wrestling. We will not tolerate unsportsmanlike conduct, or abusive or rude behavior.

When to Leave: After 2 matches, or if you haven't had a match for a while, alert a coach who can approach the Head Table to see if you are likely to wrestle again. If not, feel free to leave without the need to stay for your teammates' matches (although we encourage our wrestlers to stay for a while to cheer on teammates). In any event, **always let a coach know when you're leaving so they can "pull your card" from the Head Table**.

Folkstyle Wrestling Rules: "Folkstyle" wrestling (aka "collegiate" or "scholastic") is the type of wrestling practiced in US high schools and colleges. It is different than many styles practiced around the world and featured in the Olympics (Freestyle & Greco Roman). The object of all styles is to put your opponent on his/her back. A pin (or fall) is recorded when both of your opponent's shoulder blades touch 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 on changes in control. Taking an opponent to the mat, escaping from or reversing control, or turning an opponent's back to the mat all result in scoring. This differs from Freestyle & 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.