

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Concerning The Pirate Wrestling Club, Perkins Wrestling, or wrestling in general.

Q. Are the Club practices mandatory?

A. Practices are not mandatory. We have an attendance policy to help try and keep things consistent. The attendance policy states that 60% of all practices need to be attended in order to compete in any of our matches. We realize things come up, kids get sick, and prior obligations may sometimes exist. If your child will not be competing as part of the club team, then you need not worry about attendance; however each practice missed is an opportunity to learn proper technique. We are also trying to build and promote unity and a team concept as well.

Q. What if my son does not meet the 60% rule. Are there any penalties?

A. Other than not being consistent and losing out on the technique and instruction, the only true consequence is not being able to participate in the Pirate Duels, Battle of the Biddies, or any other club sponsored events. The entry fee for these team duels is paid for by the club, and wrestle-offs are used to determine starting positions if necessary.

Q. I am not sure about this “wrestling” stuff. Is it safe?

A. Wrestling is tough! With any contact sport, the potential for injury; be it major or minor- always exists. However, under proper supervision and instruction, wrestling is statistically safer than football. A lot of twisting, turning, bending, and other types of movements occur during practices and matches, along with some physical and sometimes “rough” interactions as

well. But all in all, the sport is safe. The benefits your children will gain from the experience of wrestling far outweigh the risks of potential injury.

Q. How do I know if my son is ready for competitions and tournaments?

A. If your son feels excited about competing, then go for it. Having fun and learning- not winning, are the main objectives for most first and second year wrestlers. Winning and losing are a part of every sport, so if your son understands this, and is emotionally prepared for the ups and downs, then he will be well on his way to clearing the biggest hurdle. Most first year wrestlers that do compete are out there in a match having fun wrestling- no matter what the score is. It's only when they realize they have lost the match that it can become an emotional issue, with feelings, and pride being hurt. As a parent, it is important to not over-emphasize wins or losses to a beginner wrestler, so there is a fine line of understanding that needs to be considered. If a beginner does wrestle in one of the club-organized matches, he will be paired with someone of his weight and ability/skill level as best we can- so his attitude will be the best indication. On the other hand, I personally do not think any of our first year wrestlers should compete until at least half-way through their first year, unless circumstances warrant it (natural ability, progression, etc.). If you are really concerned about the decision to compete, just ask one of the coaches associated with your son's group and we will be glad to discuss your child's situation with you. There are a few tournaments each year that are strictly for 1st and 2nd year wrestlers that we will try to attend. Most tournaments do not split up kids by ability, (only by age/weight) so it is in your best interest as a beginner to attend as many of the club-sponsored matches you can, so your son will be paired against someone of similar ability and experience.

**Q. How do you determine what group my son will be in?
(Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced)**

A. The coaching staff makes the decisions based on the overall abilities and progress the kids make from year to year, and season to season. It's not uncommon to spend a couple of years in a specific group solidifying moves and techniques before moving on. The decisions really are based on each individual's ability, attitude, technique retention, and learning progress. There is a huge difference in the 3 groups; not only in the technique learned, but the training and workouts in general are harder as they move up. Just as in school, kids learn wrestling at different levels and paces, so number of years in wrestling is not always the best indicator of where someone should be placed. The final decision to move kids to different groups will be made by a committee of coaches who will assess and decide together.

Q. What backgrounds or qualifications do the coaches have?

A. Some of the club staff are actual coaches with the high school or junior high programs, with years of quality coaching experience under their belts. The remaining assistant and volunteer coaches have all had proper CPR and sports medicine training, as well as BCI background checks. All have been approved by the Club Administration as well. Our coaches share common beliefs, and understand their place and role within the system that is in place.

Q. At the various meets and tournaments, who coaches our wrestlers?

A. The club coaching staff will coach the kids at all club sponsored events, such as duel and tri meets, like the Pirate Duels, as well as any of the

matches scheduled during the week. The club coaches will also coach at the tournaments we attend as a team if the parents aren't comfortable doing so, as long as we know who needs coached. Since we started the club in 2004, we have felt that weekend tournaments are good connection time for parents and their kids. It is also a good time to learn and grow together in the sport of wrestling. Many parents enjoy coaching their own kids, and that is what we are encouraging our club parents to do at the weekend tournaments. We also understand that some parents are not comfortable coaching, and may be much happier staying in the stands or on the edge of the mat just watching or videotaping, which is fine too. When you check in at a tournament we attend as a team, if you need a coach, be sure to let our staff know this, and one will be assigned to your son(s). NOTE #1: Our coaches sometimes attend weekend tournaments on their own, as a way to spend time with their own son(s) and families. While it is certainly within reason to ask if they would help coach your children, they are in no way obligated to do so. If you are planning on attending a tournament that the club did not set up as a team event we would be sending coaches to, please make sure you take that into consideration. NOTE #2: If you will be mat side videotaping, yelling, or cheering in any way, make sure to be in the same corner or area that our coaches are in, so your child is not confused as to where to look for coaching instruction and encouragement. If there is a coach present, that is where we want the kids to look.

Q. What does my membership money actually cover?

A. Your membership covers various essential needs to keep our program running strong. Aside from the cost of the t-shirt & shorts, the money paid to the club also covers your entry fee into the Pirate Duels, and Battle of the Biddies. The club also has insurance policy fees, website hosting fees, App fees, custodial and building use charges, and the coaches and staff are minimally compensated with a clothing allowance from the spirit pack as well. (NOTE: Your club membership DOES NOT cover any admission fees

or your son(s) entry fee into the Perkins Pirate Youth Tournament or any other tournaments).

Q. What is done with the surplus of money, from fundraisers and such?

A. The club always tries to have money available for various expenses, and a lot of times we have specific things in mind we set out to raise money for. The funds are well tracked and documented with expense logs, which are shared with the Board of Advisors at each Administrative meeting we have.

Q. Who is in charge of the club? If I have problems/concerns, who do I see?

A. Coach Thom is ultimately in charge of the club. However, depending on what your needs are, there are several layers and levels within the chain of command. If you have a problem or concern, you should start with the coach or coaches in charge of your group. As a club, we are always open to suggestions, comments, or concerns that any of our parents and club members want to share.

Q. Are there penalties or punishment for poor grades or school behavior?

A. As coaches, our primary objective is to teach quality instruction, technique, and discipline, as well as the many values of wrestling-on and off the mat. If one of our athletes in the club is struggling to make good choices in school, we certainly want to know how we can help. Wrestling is a great tool in the influence and growth of a child's life, but sometimes taking it away is helpful too. In the past, we have made kids take a week or two off from practice until the school issues improve. Some of the older kids (5th & 6th graders) also need to understand the importance of good grades AND good behavior as they approach their junior high years, where academics and character are stressed daily in the wrestling room. Essentially, if we have a parent or teacher who needs help with a wrestler's behavior or grades, we will certainly do our best to help that young man see the importance of being a well-rounded athlete and good citizen.

Q. How can I become part of the coaching staff?

A. Each year we try to get one or two new people involved in our program as a volunteer coach. There is a series of requirements that must be fulfilled for someone to be considered, and we do not let just anyone be a coach. We have strict requirements and thorough policies that need to be met and understood before we consider anyone for coaching. We also stress that being a club coach is not a free pass to just work with your own son(s) among other things. It is a serious responsibility, but a fun one as well. I also look for our club dads to follow right up the ladder, and help out as an assistant at the junior high as their kids grow. Right now we have three of our PHS assistants that started with me as Club coaches when their kids were in 5th or 6th grade, went through the Jr high, and are now at the high school. All of my Junior high assistants are currently, or were club coaches as well, so it is a growth process for everyone to learn the technique and process of how we do things here at Perkins. If you have any questions, see one of our coaches about the process of getting involved.

Q. Do some of the coaches have negative feelings about kids or parents who also do other clubs or go other places to get more wrestling in?

A. Since the beginning of the club in 2004, we have always had a handful of kids who have gone to other clubs or additional places to get extra wrestling in. While we always encourage our wrestlers to get as much mat time as possible within reason, there are some issues that are caused by people going to other groups. In a nutshell, it has caused drama. We have had situations that have created divides among our kids and parents, for various reasons that I am not going to go into. Essentially for me, it comes down to loyalty. I do not mind our kids wanting to get extra help or mat time, in fact that is great in most cases. The only thing I have ever asked of these people is to stay true to the school and our wrestling program. Extra mat time is great, regardless if it is coming from Oak Harbor, Milan, Sandusky, or even your own basement, but not at the expense of what we are trying to do here at Perkins. When our own kids are not in our room, perhaps practicing elsewhere, they are not helping us build a program!

I do want to share a point of caution- and it is only my opinion of course. As a coach & father I don't want our young elementary wrestlers practicing or competing more than a couple days a week. When they get into 6th grade things change a little, as they need to start physically and mentally getting ready for Jr. High. I just don't feel our little guys should be wrestling 3 or 4 days a week, week in and week out. That's too much mat time for our younger kids to be doing. On top of that, as a teacher, I see the levels of stress and the amount of work our kids have to deal with in school everyday. Too much of any extra-curricular activity is only going to make things worse in the long run.

If our parents do two club practices a week, a tournament every weekend or so, and on top of that go somewhere else a couple times a week- it is too much wrestling in my opinion. And of course, if they are skipping our practices to go elsewhere- that's a problem. Ultimately though, its about the balance of life for these young men. If they have that much going on in their world at this age, when do they get to be kids? I just worry about some parents and what they are trying to accomplish. If they continue hitting the wrestling mat that hard and that often at a young age, all they are going to do is burn their kids out on the sport. Besides, I personally feel our Club provides everything our young wrestlers need, and I see no reason to go anywhere else. Our staff provides wrestling opportunities 11 months out of the year. There are always practices, open mats, clinics, and camps for our kids to attend. We take September off as a staff to rest up for the long haul of the Club, Junior High, and High School seasons, as well as getting the kids focused on being back in school. Ultimately, the level of overall success the club has, creates success at the junior high, which in turn feeds the high school. In a nutshell, the key to our potential as a program is the Pirate Wrestling Club! It is so important to get the kids and parents committed, and to believe that we have something special.