

What to expect when you're wrestling...

How do I know if my child is ready for a tournament?

It is very common for parents to ask "is my son or daughter ready to wrestle at tournaments?" and it is a very difficult question to answer. Some kids have fun and learn at tournaments when they are very new to the sport, other kids may struggle with 1-on-1 competition against someone they don't know and many struggle with losing. It is very hard to see your child in tears over a loss but quite often they get over it in a few minutes, try to do the same! It is always good to remind them about being good winners and good losers and that there is always one of each in every single match at every level of competition.

How do I find a tournament to participate in?

There are many tournaments almost every weekend during from November through April. A good place to find local tournaments close to home is: <http://www.theguillotine.com/tourncal.htm>

Early in the season it is typical that more experienced wrestlers will be at tournaments, some kids wrestle 8-10 months of the year. It may be wise to hold off on going to tournaments until mid-January as there are a wider range of skills and experience showing up at tournaments. Some tournaments offer experience based bracketing (grouping) but all will bracket kids according to weight and either grade or age.

Most tournaments that are held on weekends are individual tournaments with no weight classes, anyone at any weight can show up and wrestle. It is much more fun for the wrestlers and the parents to go to tournaments that other Farmington families are attending so ask around!

There are larger tournaments including several "state" tournaments by organizations such as MYAS, MN/USA and NYWA. Each of these has their own qualifying procedures and some require a membership card. These tournaments will be clearly marked on the guillotine web site.

What should I do to get ready for a tournament?

Try to make sure some other people you know will be there, the kids will make friends quickly but it's easier to start out knowing other kids when you get there. No special equipment is required for most tournaments, you can wrestle in tennis shoes (no metal) shorts and a t-shirt or you can wear a singlet, wrestling shoes and headgear. If you were a t-shirt try to wear one that isn't too loose, hands get caught in them and sometimes they drape off of your shoulders and make it appear as though you are pinned when you are on your back. Many tournaments have vendors selling equipment.

Get plenty of rest and eat well, don't worry about what you weigh when going to a tournament, you'd rather have lots of energy for your matches than weigh a pound or two less and run out of energy quickly. Plan to get there at least 20 minutes prior to the completion of weigh-ins, which should be indicated on the flyer or web site. This allows a little time to park and get registered, etc.

What should I do when I get there?

Find a parking spot and head in to the building, usually a school. If it isn't clearly marked look for a stream of youngsters with duffel bags and follow the crowd. Once you get inside there should be

signs indicating where you need to go to register. The fees should be clearly posted on the flyer or web site but it will often be \$8-\$12 to wrestle and many tournaments charge spectators and coaches a few dollars as well. You'll need to fill out a registration slip which will generally have your wrestler's name, club (just "Farmington" is fine) and age or grade. Sometimes they'll have multiple tables for multiple age groups and occasionally there will be a place to designate your child's experience level on the signup slip. This is a touchy subject, it is difficult to properly group kids by ability and there will always be parents who want their kid to win so badly that they will understate their ability. If this happens there is little you can do about it except explain to your wrestler that there must not have been enough kids with the same skill level available so they had to group newer wrestlers with more experienced kids. Most tournaments will attempt to separate kids from the same club.

After you register someone will point you towards the weigh in area. It may be a gym, a locker room or a wrestling room. It could be hectic in there but find a spot to strip down to your shorts and socks and then head over to skin checks. Folks doing skin checks are often not doctors but they will be looking for suspicious looking rashes. If your child doesn't get to wrestle due to this they will almost certainly return your money and while a huge percentage of skin issues are non critical there's no sense passing something on to other wrestlers where it can spread through a wrestling room. During skin checks they will look over your arms, shoulders, back and chest as well as around your hairline; all areas things can crop up. They will also check your fingernails so try to get them trimmed neatly before showing up so you don't have to fight a dozen other people over a single pair of nail clippers in the weigh in room.

Once you get skin-checked they will weigh you in and take your registration slip. After that collect your stuff and head to the gym where wrestling will occur.

We're all signed in and ready to go, now what?

When you get to the gym look around and try to find other Farmington people, everyone usually tries to sit together. If you don't find anyone, keep looking and move to sit with the crowd! At some point they will call each age group, starting with the youngest, to a staging area. Often this is where you weighed in. Go with your child and head to the area and listen for instruction. They will call out a bracket/group of kids, usually 4 wrestlers per group, and send them to a mat for wrestling. They will go to the mat together and stay there until all wrestling, usually 3 rounds, is completed. At that point they will go together to an awards area and receive trophies or medals.

What do I do during the matches?

Try not to get too excited! More "coaching" often just confuses the kids. Encourage them and tell them to do their best and feel free to shout helpful reminders but watch a few matches and you will quickly see a parent/coach trying so hard to help their kid that they just end up confusing them. Tell your child they can always wait for a coach before they wrestle, just tell the referee/table workers. If you would like coaching help try to find a coach a little ahead of time and let them know which mat you will be wrestling on, it can get very hectic if we have 20-30 kids wrestling across 16 mats but we will always do our best to help!

Most importantly have fun and don't forget to shower as soon as possible. Put antibiotic cream on any cuts to get them healed up as quickly as possible, this goes for practice as well as competition.

Folkstyle Wrestling Scoring Primer

- **Takedown** - (2 points)
The scoring wrestler must take the other to the mat, and control him.
- **Escape** - (1 point)
The scoring wrestler must move from a "controlled" position, to a "neutral" position.
- **Reversal** - (2 points)
The scoring wrestler must move from a "controlled" position, to a "controlling" position.
- **Near Fall** - (2 or 3 points, also called "back points")
The scoring wrestler must hold the other wrestler so that both shoulder blades are within 4 inches of the mat, or one shoulder is on the mat and the other is within a 45-degree angle to the mat. If a near fall last for 2 seconds, you get 2 points; if it lasts for 5 seconds, you get 3 points.
- **Penalty Points** - (1 point for your opponent)
Your opponent gets one point when you commit one of the following:
 - **Illegal Hold**
A referee might stop the match for a "potentially dangerous" hold - this is not necessarily an illegal hold, and points may or may not be awarded.
 - **Technical Violation**
Examples are: intentionally leaving the mat, grabbing headgear, an incorrect starting position, locking your hands on your opponent if you are on top and NOT in a pinning position, or stalling.
 - **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**
If the conduct is extreme, the referee will stop the match and the offender will forfeit.

Many good web sites have information on wrestling scoring, one example is:

<http://www.jrpatswrestling.com/scoring-penalties/#scoring>

We will get something similar posted on our Farmington Wrestling site soon!