

Women's Freestyle



This article was written by a Soviet journalist in 2002.



Free-style wrestling or Olympic wrestling (with regard to women it's sometimes called just as "women wrestling", "female wrestling", "college wrestling" - form of combative sports where each participant attempts to throw his/her opponent down and to pin him/her to the mat using an established set of techniques. This position is called "pin". The both, arms and legs are involved

in free-style wrestling - it's the principal distinction from Greco-Roman (classic) wrestling where only arms are involved. In free-style wrestling scores are counted for each successfully accomplished

technique and in no pin situation a victory (or draw) is announced according to the score rate.



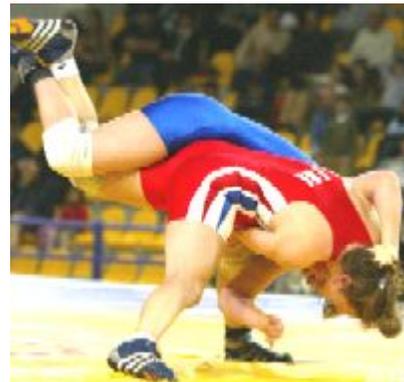
Although some female wrestling competitions are organized according Greco-Roman rules this form hasn't been spread among women (because it supposes strong shoulder and belly muscles as well as high strength of arms) and, after all, has been deprived of the Olympic status as a male only sport. The modification of freestyle wrestling - "folkstyle wrestling" is wide spread in American high schools and colleges. In this form a control and domination during a match affects the final decision as well as the regular factors.



In contrast to oriental martial arts, the ritual (non-martial) wrestling formed the basis of free-style wrestling. That's why a conventional position (pin) rather than submission is the indication of the victory in this competition.

(Russian linguist Dal gave the following clear definition of wrestling: "Single combat without

weapon, beating and blows"). In our opinion, free-style wrestling is the most noble and non-commercial form of athletic physical contest. The following techniques are forbidden in this sport: blows, pain locks, chokes, scissors, pulling clothing. There are two main positions of wrestlers during contest: standing and "par terre" (from French - on the ground). All participants must wear leotard and supple wrestling shoes with no heels. Female wrestlers must have special protective

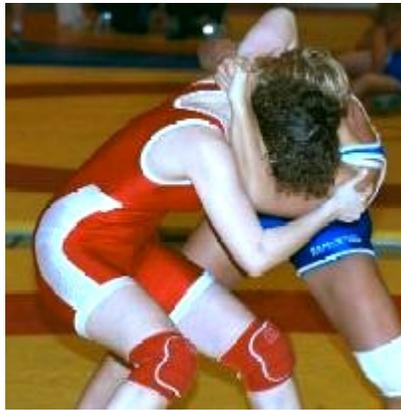


underwear, unwired bra is recommended. Hair must be tied back with an elastic or ribbon, with no metal attachments. In some federations it is obligatory for female wrestlers of all age categories to wear ear protectors.

The only freestyle wrestling hold that is prohibited for women because it is considered to be too dangerous is the "full nelson" (thrusting the both arms through opponent's armpits and pressing by tied hands on his/her neck or on the back of the head). Women are allowed to use "half nelson" (thrusting just one arm through an armpit). This hold is often used for overturning of an opponent from hands and knees to the back over a head and it requires some strength and superior determination.



Usually women wrestle more actively than men, in women wrestling there are fewer stops due to passivity, less starts again in "par terre" but pins happens more often. Female free-style wrestling competitions are more spectacular and emotional.

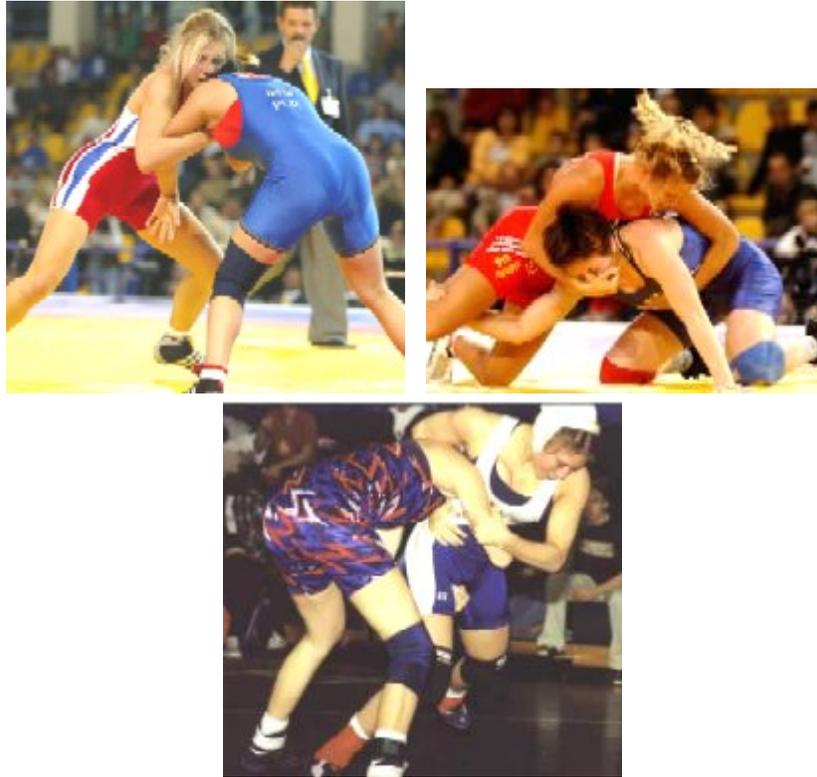


A prior prejudice to female wrestler appearance turns out to be groundless ("what a robust and a crude woman with a square jaw, some kind of female version of Alexander Karelin"). Contrary to expectations, the bulk of female free-style wrestlers are quite feminine and attractive. Moderately well-fed and typically female type of body predominates (quite wide thighs, noticeable waist and formed breasts). In this author's opinion, freestyle wrestlers are the most feminine and attractive. If you consider all female combative athletes, there are the most feminine bodies and faces among free-style wrestlers (well, some kickboxers might compare with them). Since wrestlers' bodies are not covered by loose uniform (like kimono), female body dynamics, it's relief and all curves are well visible for spectators during wrestling matches which looks quite impressive.



Female free-style wrestling is widespread among American high school and college students. It's completely amateur sport, which just

enthusiasts participate in. Competitions are quite different from shows and wrestlers don't get any real profit (unlike professional boxing, for instance). The indisputable pioneer of women freestyle wrestling is University of Minnesota-Morris.

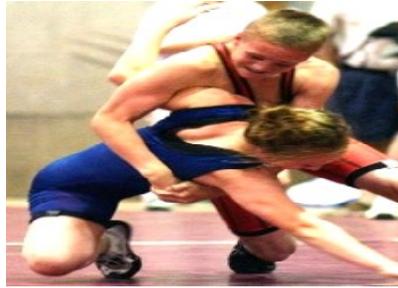
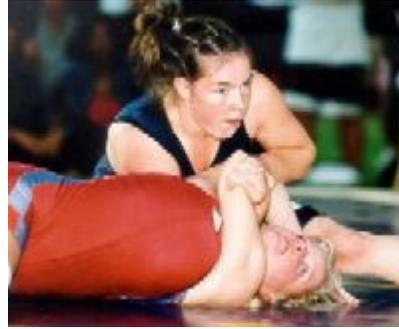


Mixed bouts are not uncommon in university wrestling (see the picture and the section "mixed competition and training"). Due to shortage of girls in some free-style wrestling teams, they sometimes have to train and even to compete along with boys (who are not always happy about that). These circumstances cause some tensions, mostly from parents who are not in the practice rooms to see the team spirit come to life. There have been some attempts to legally ban mix competitions fearing serious traumas of the girls and inevitable legal expenses but the American court system considered such a demand discriminating.



Some free-style wrestling techniques are designed for strong clutches some parts of a body, that's why women with considerable hypodermic fat layers don't participate in the sport. This is one of reasons why there are very few heavyweights in female free-style wrestling (unlike judo) - women heavier than 75-80kg usually have noticeable fat wrinkles which being squeezed during contest might cause serious health problems.

Amateur wrestlers not belonging to any federation and not participating in any official competitions, not often use free-style wrestling rules. When women wrestle independently they usually use submission wrestling rules because it doesn't require using developed skills, complex technique and sophisticated score calculations. Besides, women prefer a defeat declaration to any conventional positions (like the "pin"). Nonetheless, free-style wrestling, as the most authoritative and traditional wrestling form, more and more attract amateur female wrestlers. Women competitions when wrestlers try to pin an opponent rather than to force her to capitulate are not unusual at all.



Freestyle wrestling becomes popular among girls not only in universities and high schools but also baby girls wrestle and they wrestle successfully. At the age of small children girls are not second to boys and often defeat them. While some mature women keep away of combative sports like wrestling because they worry about female vulnerable internal organs or they don't have appropriate complexity, young girls don't have such problems and wrestle to their heart's content.

Female free-style began its tenure in the Olympics with the 2004 Summer Games in Athens. The team from Japan won the first Gold Medal.

