



How Safe Is Wrestling?

As both a former wrestler and coach, I get a lot of questions from concerned parents regarding the safety of the sport. The best description of the sport came from a three year-old named Jack who was coming to try a class out. He noticed a couple of kids wrestling and commented: 'the boys are pushing each other around but not fighting.' Wrestling is just that. It involves pushing, pulling, shoving, bumping, tripping and throwing. It's a physical sport performed on a soft wrestling mat, and it has a very strict set of rules intended to protect the safety of each participant.



I've had some parents comment that they are uncomfortable watching their children wrestle. It's usually at that point that I explain some of the basic rules to help keep the athletes safe. Research into sports injuries, at least at the high school level, is revealing that wrestling is among the safer contact sports. Some parents are familiar with the sport of wrestling. If they themselves did not wrestle, they may have learned about it through a friend or relative who was involved in

it growing up. These parents typically have a more relaxed attitude about the sport. There are many however who are entering the wrestling community with no knowledge whatsoever and are understandably concerned about the safety of their child.

Folkstyle (also called "Collegiate", "Scholastic", or "Schoolboy" Wrestling) is what I refer to as "The American Martial Art". The rules are different from the international styles such as freestyle and Greco-Roman, and is practiced in the United States. Each state's public school system (and most independent school systems) in this country offers a wrestling program.

Christopher Haug, ATC, is one of the best-known high school athletic trainers on Long Island. He has 20 years of experience in the field of Athletic Training, and competed in sports at both the high school and college level. He has come to understand sports injuries very well through both professional and personal experience.

When I asked him about the safety of high school (Folkstyle) wrestling, he mentioned that there are of course risks inherent to any contact sport. Wrestling can include the twisting of joints and ligaments, and athletes are sometimes put into uncomfortable positions. Wrestlers need to pay particular attention to the shoulders and neck because they carry a lot of weight in a match. I asked Chris how this sport compares to other sports in terms of the nature of common injuries:

"There are other sports, like gymnastics and cheerleading, that have particular risk because you cannot supervise how someone is going to land once they commit to a move in the air. In addition, sports like football and hockey involve dangerous impact because athletes are approaching one another from opposite directions, so the impact is doubled. Padding has actually increased aggressively because it gives athletes a false sense of confidence and 'indestructibility'."



Potentially Dangerous

"Similarly, sports like Field Hockey and Lacrosse involve concussions from opponents hitting one another, but also from impact by a hard ball travelling at intense speeds. This is also the biggest risk when playing baseball. In a wrestling match, the official stays close to the athletes and the action can be stopped before a situation escalates, so these types of injuries are not common. In my experience, I have seen more injuries from some of these other sports than I have in wrestling. The bottom line though lies with the coaches and the officials. It is their job to insure the safety of the athletes and keep the probability of injury to a minimum."

The following are not allowed in Folkstyle Wrestling:

- Striking of any kind
- Joint locks or choking of any kind
- Intentional twisting of limbs
- Pinching
- Slamming the opponent to the mat with excessive force
- Hair pulling. Hair is supposed to be kept a short length (above the eyes, earlobes, and collar), and wrestlers are offered the option of wearing a hairnet under their headgear. In addition, fingernails must be kept short.

Lastly, there is the "Potentially Dangerous Call". A referee has the right to stop a match and reset the wrestlers if they see that either one of the two is approaching a dangerous situation.



Unlike a playing field where there are 10 or more players whose activity is being supervised by a couple (or just one) official, each wrestling match between two athletes is refereed by one official.

It is always a good idea to learn about the program that your child is involved in. After speaking with the coaches, you may get a sense as to how much they prioritize safety and their philosophy of coaching. Proper rest,

diet and warm-up clearly help prevent injuries. For young athletes, keeping it fun, and using competition to teach important rules about safety and sportsmanship, is essential to a successful experience!

Contact Us

Grappin' Gorillas
PO Box 7773
Greenwich, Connecticut | 06830
Tel. 917-273-1931

www.grapplinggorillas.com

Follow Us



Unsubscribe

This email is intended for god@grapplinggorillas.com.
[Update your preferences](#) or
[Unsubscribe](#)