
Youth "Open" Tournament Information

What to Expect

This page contains information about the ins-and-outs of "open" youth tournaments. For many parents, this was a rite of passage as they went to their first tournament without any context or idea of what to expect. This is to help you understand what is going on and what to expect. Tournaments are usually on weekends. Most open tournament details are posted in advance on the internet. Three popular sites where you can find such information are RiverFallsWrestling.org, Wisconsin wrestling online and the guillotine. Spectators and family are highly encouraged to come, so why not invite the family to watch and go out afterwards. As the year progresses we will send notices home - of tournament dates that our club will attend.

If you have never attended a tournament or come into one without proper expectations - just one word - *overwhelming*. It may appear to be chaotic; however have faith, most tournaments are well organized and there is a method to the apparent madness.

You will spend most of your time sitting on a bleacher. If you need it - bring something soft to sit on or something to support your back. Bring along water and food for yourself too. Most tournaments have concessions; some may even have clothing, headgear and shoes for sale.

REGISTRATION PROCESS

1. Registration is often early morning (7 - 9 AM). DO NOT worry about eating before you arrive to register. There will usually be time to get breakfast after weigh-ins.
2. Save yourself some headache by downloading the tournament flyer online and filling it out in advance. Often these flyers list the tournament rules, start times, weigh-in times, styles, concessions, costs, etc. In addition, it should indicate whether a "USA Card" is required.
3. Bring along food. Most tournaments have concessions; but to save money have a sack lunch along. Also, bring your own water and sport drink. Note that some schools do not allow coolers in the gym.
4. Once you fill out the paper work, pay the entry fee (usually between \$3 and \$10 for wrestlers) wrestlers proceed to weigh-in area.

WEIGH-INS

1. Bring along your wrestling equipment: headgear, shoes, singlet, sweats or anything to be comfortable. There may not be a specific place to change clothing at the tournament (other than the restroom). Many kids simply wear their singlet under their warm ups, shorts and t-shirt. Wrestlers usually must wear their singlet while at the scale. Fingernails will be checked and may require clipping (for the safety of others) before proceeding.
2. When you are not wrestling stay warm with warm-ups or sweatpants and sweatshirt. Label all your clothing, except your singlet.
3. Parents - bring along something for you to do. There is a waiting period after registration and before the tournament begins.
4. Wrestlers should keep videos and games at home; focus on the wrestling itself. This is a great time to have breakfast, either on site or locally.
5. Wrestlers will most likely have their weight written on their hand or arm. After weigh-ins, the tournament organizers group the wrestlers based on weight, age and possibly experience. This is known as "bracketing."

WAITING TO WRESTLE - WARM-UP

1. Support your River Falls Wildcats team and stick together - remember you are representing River Falls Wrestling and our community. Act like a champion. Follow the code of conduct.
2. We will warm up together as a team, even when there are two or more gyms.
3. When you are not wrestling, watch and support your teammates. It is a good way to learn.
4. You are representing River Falls. Be respectful, follow directions and be a good sport. Clean up after yourself.
5. Bracketing - Once the host club completes the grouping of wrestlers, they may post bracket cards or sheets along a wall. It will inform parents, coaches and wrestlers the following: GROUP/CHART/MAT number.
6. If run by mat assignments, the wrestlers will always be on the same mat; they will likely stay together.
7. Be patient. Sometimes the bracketing process may take over an hour to finish.

WRESTLING THE TOURNAMENT

1. Most tournaments use a four-person "round robin" format. This means that your child will wrestle at least 3 times. It depends on the number of wrestlers that show up in the same age, experience or weight category.
2. There are three rounds for most tournaments. There are other formats where four or more rounds are used.
3. Each youth wrestler will compete in each three periods for 1 minute. Older kids may get 1.5 or 2-minute rounds.
4. Each round involves all ages/weights wrestling before the next round begins. It may take up to 90 minutes per round. Sometimes things take longer / sometimes rounds go quick. Pay attention.
5. Most, not all, tournaments are finished before 3:00 PM.
6. A "bullpen" or a "staging area" is used to organize the wrestlers into their group/chart. This may be located outside the gym. Wrestlers, when called, should go to this designated area. Coaches usually are with the youngest wrestlers in the bullpen. Older wrestlers usually can handle the wait until they get to the mat.
7. AFTER EACH MATCH, the wrestler is to go to the coach at mat side for final tips and a "pep talk".
8. If you pinned your opponent you will likely receive a pin, sometimes the host club will hand out pins.
9. You will see many parents crouching up close to the mat in order to "mat-side" coach. Please be responsive and sensitive – if a coach is available, let them coach. Your presence may undermine, distract and confuse your child from the direction and objective feedback - coming from the coach.
10. Spectators should note that a maximum number of persons on the mat might be limited to two. Either one coach and one video recorder or coaches only. Each tournament is different. State & National tournaments are far stricter.

AWARDS / AFTERWARDS / POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT / INJURY

1. Tournaments usually give out some type of award to all wrestlers in the form of a medal or trophy.
2. After your last round stay with your group and proceed to the awards area.
3. Parents may take photos/video at anytime throughout the tournament. Wrestling is finished once the awards are distributed.
4. Often after the tournament, families sometimes stop as a group to eat; this is not a required activity. It builds camaraderie and is fun for the kids; as they grow older, they will likely remember this more than the wrestling.
5. Tournaments should have first aid handy. Nosebleeds do happen. Do not be alarmed. Also, do not overreact at tears that may flow. This is a personal sport and kids need to learn how to handle it when it is not going their way. The coaches are there to coach and will be truthful with your child and support him/her. Your job is to be the supportive parent giving the young athlete a hug or a pat on the back. Be aware of your behavior.