



Abington Bulldogs Youth Wrestling Club

PARENT HANDBOOK

2023 – 2024

Welcome

Abington Bulldogs Youth Wrestling Club (ABYWC) is a member of the Inter-County Wrestling League (ICWL). ABYWC is open to athletes in kindergarten through 8th grade and provides training and competition opportunities.

There are several incredible benefits of wrestling, not only that can positively affect children but also as they grow into an adult. Below are just a few reasons why kids should wrestle:

- **Anyone can do it** - You are grouped by age and weight, so it doesn't matter if you are small, short, tall or big. Every size and shape have a style that can be successful.
- **Everyone gets to participate** - Unlike some team sports, there is no riding the bench. No politics or favorites. Every wrestler has a chance to participate and compete.
- **Personal accountability** - When you win, it's because you did it. No one else takes credit; no one else to blame.
- **How to handle adversity** - In every match someone will win, and someone will lose. Losing in a team sport is disappointing but it's different when it's only you. In wrestling, you learn how to lose gracefully and more importantly, how to quickly put it behind you and work hard to improve for the next match. You approach defeat as part of the learning process.
- **How to perform** – At a meet or tournament, a wrestler may have 2-5 matches or even more depending on the format. They can easily get 25+ matches in a season. They must mentally prepare for a match, learn how to stay calm under pressure, and deal with the feelings of anxiousness and nervousness repeatedly. This repetition makes it second nature and prepares them for life. They know how to approach a speech or a big meeting or an interview because they've learned how to step up when it's their time to perform.
- **Persistence** - Some kids find success early, but many will lose more than they win early on. In fact, many of the greatest wrestlers started out losing their first few seasons. It can take a couple of years, if not more, before it finally clicks. But when it does, it's one of the greatest moments to observe. The lights come on, their confidence starts growing and they start beating opponents who they've lost to several times. This is when they truly become a wrestler.
- **Building confidence** - Confidence is built through accomplishing hard things. Praise is fine, but only lasts for so long. When you master a skill, score with a move you've been practicing or win a match over a tough opponent, it's because of the work you put in.
- **Incredible conditioning** - Wrestling uses every part of your body and is one of the toughest sports to train and compete in. Kids build core strength and great cardio. Wrestling improves body awareness, balance and coordination.
- **Competitiveness** - If you are competitive by nature, you will love wrestling. Competing and winning against another individual is fun and a great sense of accomplishment.
- **Fun** - It's fun to win, it's fun to compete and it's fun learning and executing new moves. And while it's an individual sport, there's also a special bond that wrestlers have.

Practice Expectations

- There are 2 90-minute practices a week. Practice typically consists of 15 minutes of warm-up stretching and calisthenics, 60 minutes of drills and technique instruction and 15 minutes of cool-down exercises or a fun game. As the season progresses, more live wrestling will be added.
- Equipment - please bring wrestling shoes and a water bottle. Headgear is optional. Wrestlers should practice in shorts and t-shirt. To keep the mats clean, please do not wear your wrestling shoes off the mats. Wear sneakers and change shoes in the hallway outside the wrestling room before practice.
- Restroom – please have your wrestler use the restroom prior to practice to cut down on the number of bathroom breaks occurring during practices. Wrestlers should not wear their wrestling shoes into the bathroom.
- Hygiene – please make sure your wrestler is showering immediately after practices and that their nails are trimmed. It is recommended to use an anti-fungal soap like Defense.

Meets

- Meets are held on Saturdays from late December through February and run from approximately 8am-12pm. The ICWL is currently finalizing the schedule and dates, times and locations will be added to the team Snap account and distributed via email.
- Your wrestler will participate in 2-4 matches per meet. Matches are based on age, weight and years of experience. Wrestlers must wear the Abington Bulldogs singlet. Singlets will be distributed before the first match and are loaned to your wrestler for the season. They must be returned at the end of the season.
- By Wednesday prior to each meet, you must let the coaches know if your wrestler is unable to attend so they can prepare the matches for the meet. Our coaches work hard to make pairings with other the teams and it's a major disruption on the morning of meets to make changes to the pairings.
- Before you leave home on Saturday:
 - Please have your wrestler eat a healthy breakfast prior to leaving the house.
 - Have your wrestler dressed in their Bulldogs singlet, with sweatpants / sweatshirt over top & street shoes. They can change into their wrestling shoes upon arrival & their headgear is only needed when on the mat, so keep it close.
 - Bring a water bottle for between matches.
- Arrive:
 - Please arrive an hour before the scheduled match time to check-in with coaches. No-shows and being late requires the coaches to make last minute changes, which delays the beginning of the meet.
 - Once all teams have checked in, the coaches will be given the mat assignments for our team. Your wrestler will have a series of numbers written on their hand (ex: 130, 245, 318, etc.). The numbers correspond to the mat & match assignment; for example, 130 = mat 1, match #30.
 - Wrestlers will then warm up together as a team.
- Before your first match:
 - Typically, a meet has 3-4 mats. Coaches will be available on each mat to instruct your wrestler during their match but it is your responsibility to get your wrestler to the correct mat.
 - Parents are asked to stay behind the coaches or on the sides of the mat and we ask that instructions come from only the coaches.
 - You should be near your mat assignment at least 4 matches prior. If you are match # 130, there is a display that shows what match is next, and the 2 upcoming (usually a wooden "tree"). If #126 or higher is displayed, your wrestler should have their sweats off, headgear on, and talking with one of the coaches, getting loose for their match.
- Match:
 - A match consists of (3) 1-minute periods. Please have your wrestler ready to go in just their singlet, wrestling shoes & headgear.
 - Your wrestler will be assigned an ankle wrap (green or red) that corresponds with the referee's wristbands. Your wrestler will enter the center circle, put on the ankle wrap and shake hands with their opponent. The referee will then signal the start of the match.

- Wrestlers & their families should positively represent ABYWC during the match. Respectful encouragement - NO foul language will be tolerated.
- Your wrestler will be awarded points that are earned during the match. If a wrestler pins his opponent at any time before the end of the third period, the match is over and the winning wrestler earns a win by fall (pin). The match ends with a pin, a tech fall (winning by 15 points) or by points when all 3 periods are completed.
 - **Takedown = 2 Pts.** From the neutral position, when one wrestler takes the other wrestler down to the mat and controls him from the top, a takedown is scored.
 - **Reversal = 2 Pts.** When a wrestler is on the bottom in the referee's position and reverses his opponent to the top in the referee's position, a reversal is scored.
 - **Escape = 1 Pt.** When a wrestler is on the bottom in the referee's position and escapes to the neutral position without reversing the top man, an escape is scored.
 - **Near Fall (back points/exposure) = 2 Pts.** When the bottom wrestler has his back exposed to the mat on an angle of 45 degrees or less for a count of at least 2 seconds, but less than 5 seconds.
 - **Near Fall (back points/exposure) = 3 Pts.** When the bottom wrestler has his back exposed to the mat on an angle of 45 degrees or less for a count of 5 seconds or more.
 - **Penalty Points** can be awarded to the opponent of the wrestler in violation of certain rules and conduct.
- After the match:
 - At the end of the match, the wrestlers will shake hands with their opponent and the referee will raise the hand of the winning wrestler. The wrestlers will remove the ankle band & leave it in the center circle.
 - Wrestlers will then shake the hand of the opposing coach and return to their corner to speak with their coach.
 - Wrestlers should use Defense wipes after each match.
- Between matches:
 - There can be downtime between matches. You can remain in the stands with your family and friends, but please do not leave the facility.
 - There is typically a snack bar available with items for purchase. NO food OR drinks are permitted on the mats at any time.
 - Wrestlers are encouraged to cheer on their teammates that are competing but remember to let the coach give instructions to the wrestler on the mat.
 - As a guest of the host school, please be sure to place trash in the trash cans.
 - Remember to be mindful of your wrestler's mat assignments between matches.
- After your last match:
 - When your wrestler finishes their last match, they are done for the day and permitted to leave at any time; you can stay and cheer on other wrestlers that still have matches. You do not need to notify coaches you are leaving.
 - Before exiting the building collect your wrestler's belongings & dispose of any trash.

Volunteers at Home Meets

ABYWC is operated entirely by volunteer coaches and board members. To successfully run home meets, we need many additional volunteers before, during and after meets. Opportunities include mat setup/breakdown, working the scoring table and working the snack bar. Please consider assisting when you can.

Tournaments

- Tournaments are optional and are typically held on Sundays and run all day.
- ABYWC does not typically enter a tournament as a team but if enough wrestlers are planning to attend and a coach is available, a coach may attend but are not guaranteed.
- 1st and 2nd year wrestlers should look at Novice tournaments and more experienced wrestlers should be competing in Open tournaments.
- There is usually a registration fee of \$20-\$40 depending on the tournament.
- In a tournament, a wrestler is eliminated based on his/her win/lose record (i.e. double elimination), unless the tournament format is round robin. Round-robin formats consist of a bracket of 4 or more wrestlers, and your athlete will face each wrestler in their bracket.
- Winners may receive trophies or medals, dependent on the tournament.

Parent Code of Conduct

We all must remember that when we are at ICWL matches and tournaments that we are all representing ABYWC. All our wrestlers are expected to win and lose graciously. They should always shake hands at the end of the match. Our message to the kids is that we are proud of them win or lose, and to always give it their best effort. We would appreciate that the same message come from the parents. We will act appropriately before, during, and after matches.

Representing ABYWC does not stop at the kids and coaches. How the parents act during the matches also reflects positively or negatively on the organization. It is very tough to watch your child go out there and wrestle, especially when it's not going well for them. As parents, our instinct is to protect our children. However, this is a competition and there is another child out there that is close to the same weight, age, experience and skill level. They also have parents there. Excessive screaming will not be tolerated. We encourage parents to cheer their wrestler on, but positively and with some restraint. Any parent or wrestler that is ejected/removed from any event where you are representing ABYWC may face being banned from future events.

In the end, we are trying to make this a positive experience for all the kids. We want to be a team that is welcomed into all of the ICWL gyms. We want to be an organization known for good wrestling and good people. Thank you.