

The Genesis of a NCWA Program

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CHAPTER 1: STARTING A PROGRAM ON CAMPUS

The first step in starting a National Collegiate Wrestling Association (NCWA) program at a University, College, or Trade School is to have the DESIRE to wrestle at the collegiate level. Sounds simple! While the desire to compete collegiately may be simple, most people lack the determination and leadership skills to actually DO what they say they will do. This book should serve as a guide to help those with initiative to follow a step-by-step process to take a vision to a reality that will affect the lives of countless individuals, both men and women, in the future. Once you have determined that “Yes, I am a person with the desire, the determination, and the initiative”, the rest is just a matter of time. You will succeed if you follow the steps laid out by those that have done this before you.

As the founder of a wrestling program on campus, your team will need to be officially recognized by your academic institution as a student organization. The time period for official recognition will vary with each school and the requirements will also vary. Most institutions will require you to write a charter and/or constitution governing your organization and for you to choose student leaders known as officers. These officers are usually a President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Having a dedicated group of leaders in the beginning will make all of the following steps that much easier. Most likely as the founder of the program you have already reached out to other wrestlers with interest in continuing their career in college. If you haven’t, you will want to have an interest meeting that is announced campus-wide via flyers and by using the various social media outlets now available. Having a list of interested students (both men and women) will show your administration that there is indeed a need to be filled. Follow the requirements of your academic institution as far as what paperwork and steps need to be completed in order to be officially recognized. Most programs in the NCWA originate within the scope of the Sports Club and Recreation Departments, so this is whom you should contact to assist in the endeavor. On some occasions you will need to present a budget and statement of goals to the Administration for funding once you are recognized.

I would warn you that taking the approach of trying to reinstate a program taken away by Title IX through the athletic department is most likely not the way to go. Talk of reinstatement (even with outside alumni support) may be taken by the Administration and Athletic Departments as confrontational and may keep you from starting any sort of program. Once a NCWA program is established on campus, you have a much better chance of this eventually happening, but that result is still unlikely given the regulations placed on School Administrations by the Office of Civil Rights through Title IX.

CHAPTER 2: REGISTERING YOUR TEAM WITH THE NCWA

After your academic institution has officially recognized your team, you will be able to register with the NCWA. The paperwork for this step can be found at www.ncwa.net. You will then click on the “JOIN” link, which will provide all of the

necessary forms for your team to become official with the league. These forms are found on the right-hand side of the page at “NCWA Membership Forms.” Click on that link and you will find the following:

- Team Membership Application
- NCWA Mission Statement
- Wrestling Plan
- Weight Control Plan

Files can also be sent to you directly by contacting National Executive Director, Jim Giunta by e-mail jim@ncwa.net or by phone (214) 378-8700 ext 107.

The benefits of being a member of the NCWA include:

- Million dollar liability coverage for each athlete registered with the association
- Liability coverage for all registered coaches
- A series of National Championship events
- Access to coaches at all levels

CHAPTER 3: IMPORTANCE OF ADULT LEADERSHIP

Running a team as a student leader is difficult but not impossible. It will require organizational and time management skills as well as a ton of patience. Balancing the tasks necessary to run a successful organization with academics can become daunting, especially when things do not go well in one or the other. Having the presence of adult leadership within the team is a MUST if you want your team to take the jump from a “club” or “student organization” to a nationally-recognized program within the NCWA. This can be in the form of a head coach or a faculty advisor, but the more adult leadership you have the better off the team will be. Having an adult coach outside of the school will immediately allow you access to a Sphere of Influence (SOI) not previously available to you or your team. This SOI is important when it comes to making travel arrangements, scheduling, making team rules, running practices, contacting alumni, and fundraising. I would suggest having an adult coach (not a student) already on board prior to going to the school for recognition as an organization.

CHAPTER 4: RECRUITING ON CAMPUS TO BUILD NUMBERS

Recruiting on campus can follow two different philosophies: Quantity or Quality. It is my contention that the larger the Quantity, the more likely to get Quality. Not everyone is as dedicated to the sport of wrestling, attending practices, or fundraising as that of the founder of a program. The sooner you realize that, the less anxiety you will have. Your goal should be to have a CORE group of wrestlers/leaders in place after Season 1 of the program. If you are able to recruit and retain enough dedicated wrestlers that reflect your goals and attitude towards the team and the sport, you will see success

much earlier than if you concentrate on getting pure numbers out to each practice or wrestling event. Although, like I previously stated, in order to get those core members, you will most likely have to bring in large numbers at first. As with all new things, people will flock to your organization and promise to stay involved, compete, etc... DO NOT get down on yourself when those people fail to live up to their promises. As you will find in the “real world” as we college graduates refer to as having a job, the people that do exactly what they say they will do is few and far between. Once you find that core group, it is a good idea to have occasional meetings to reinforce duties and keep those people motivated.

Ways to recruit on campus include posting flyers in the recreation center, on flyer boards around campus, and by using social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Host an informational meeting each semester to generate new interest. NEW members will reinvigorate some of the members that may feel lackluster about the group. Another way to get your name out around campus are to have a table during the beginning weeks of school in the Student Union with handouts stating your purpose and information about the group. Once recognized on campus as an organization, host community service events or fundraising events with an already established student organization to get much needed recognition for your group. Just keep in mind that the way you lead will be the way your team is reflected on campus and in the wrestling community.

CHAPTER 5: COLLABORATING WITH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

It is paramount to work with your school administration. When first starting, you will not be able to move forward without the help of a Sports Club Director or someone with similar rank in the administration. You will undoubtedly be excited about the advent of your new team, but I stress that you will need to LISTEN to what he or she is telling you in terms of requirements to be an active student organization in GOOD STANDING. You want the administration to be your friend and to highlight your successes and help you if you don't succeed right away. LISTEN to what is important to the Sports Club Director. In order to get funding for your team, you will have to figure out how he or she provides funding. Sometimes funding is proportionate to how many people are on a team; sometimes it is based on a ranking system based on criteria. If the administrator sees community service as the #1 item for receiving funding, then you better become dedicated to doing some community service if you want to receive funding. In my experience, the more involved you are with the Sports Club Director and in budget committees, community service, and campus involvement, the easier it will be for you to receive much needed funding. The administration will also be very important in you securing practice times in available facilities and for getting a practice mat if one is not already available.

CHAPTER 6: SETTING UP YOUR NCWA WEBSITE

You will need to set up your team website with the NCWA in order to publish your contact information for student leadership, your coaching staff, and for publishing

your team schedule as well as articles about your program and results. You will use this website for updating rosters, records, and individual statistics during the season. Your website will be one of the first things you receive access to upon joining the NCWA. These websites are used primarily for league compliance. You may want to create your own website as many teams do in order to market your team or inform your fan base of results and schedule/roster, etc... Check out www.blueraidewrestling.com for an example of a team website. You are only limited by your imagination when it comes to publicity for your team. A Facebook page for your team (used for team communication) and a fan page are also suggested.

CHAPTER 7: REGISTERING WRESTLERS WITH THE NCWA

Once your team becomes a recognized member of the NCWA and BEFORE your wrestlers set foot on a mat, you will need to register each member with the league by signing a “Waiver of Liability Form” found at:

[http://www.ncwa.net/files/Waiver and Release of Liability Form.pdf](http://www.ncwa.net/files/Waiver_and_Release_of_Liability_Form.pdf)

and then by filling out the online registration and payment for Liability Insurance using the Registration link on the homepage at www.ncwa.net.

Wrestling without completing both steps could result in a year suspension for that wrestler as well as fines against the program.

As each wrestler is CLEARED through the NCWA “Clearinghouse”, they will then be able to compete in NCWA, NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA sponsored events. Until the wrestler is CLEARED, they are not allowed to compete. This process can take up to 48 hours to complete, so DO NOT WAIT to get your athletes registered.

CHAPTER 8: ANATOMY OF A PRACTICE

You will have to choose your practice schedule wisely based on several variables including: wrestling mats available, practice facilities, class schedule of your members, and skill/competition level of the team. Typically the top teams within the NCWA operate as Varsity-level programs with daily practices and workout times as well as conditioning prior to the start of mat practices. New teams should pace themselves in order to avoid burnout as typically the first members to join are those that haven’t wrestled in a few years and miss the sport. Ease your team into the process of practicing with 2 or 3 practices a week for approximately 1 ½ hours to start. Once you see what the skill level is of the team, you may be able to increase the intensity and amount of practices. If you have adult leadership involved, they may be able to help secure practice locations off campus and to run the practices for you, thus taking that bit of responsibility out of your hands and allowing you to concentrate on wrestling, school work, and on running the team administratively.

In terms of actual practices, it is important to set up team rules in terms of participation if you hope to compete against other NCWA teams nationally. Be consistent with rules such as “you must attend 2 practices per week to be able to compete for the team.” A typical practice may run as follows (times only used as example):

4:50 pm	Mats set up and cleaned prior to practice
5:00 pm	Practice begins with Warm-ups/Stretching
5:15 pm	Work in Pairs – Drill (Neutral)
5:20 pm	Work in Pairs – Drill (Top)
5:25 pm	Work in Pairs – Drill (Bottom)
5:30 pm	Coaches show a series of moves to drill
5:50 pm	Live Wrestling
6:20 pm	Conditioning
6:30 pm	Practice Ends

Obviously this is just an example but it may be a good guideline for a team just starting out. Two hours is probably the maximum that you will want to practice during any given session. NCWA teams usually wrestle on weekends, so Monday may be a light workout day with Tuesdays and Wednesdays seeing much of the harder workouts and Thursdays being a weight management day. Once your team starts traveling to events, you will want to get a workout the night before an event as well and possibly even prior to the event in the morning if time allows.

CHAPTER 9: CREATING A SCHEDULE

Creating a schedule can be tricky at first since most teams already have a schedule in mind at the end of the previous season. As a new team, you will want to schedule lightly and match it with your budget (if you have one). The best thing to do in the first season is to travel to established individual tournaments within a radius that doesn't require much time on the road. This will keep your team motivated and allow individuals to excel. If you schedule too many matches, you may find that the team will get burnt out and that you will have to pull out of events due to budgetary constraints. Each year, a list of events across the country is sent out by the NCWA, which can serve as a guideline for scheduling. Adult leadership usually comes with contacts amongst the coaching community and will allow for easier scheduling. It is a good idea to get familiar with the teams within your NCWA Conference and to use the Conference Board (which can be found in the NCWA's **Wrestling Plan**) as a reference for tournaments to travel to or enter. If you are feeling really good about the program, you may want to host an event, which usually would be a dual or tri-meet on campus to get some publicity for your team and to allow for a local fan base to grow. Each team within the NCWA has a schedule posted by the middle of October, which you are supposed to do as well. Your schedule can be revised and SHOULD be revised as necessary. The conference tournament will always be at the end of February or beginning of March (as is the case in 2013) and the National tournament will usually be in March prior to the NCAA-D1 tournament.

CHAPTER 10: BUDGETING

Perhaps the hardest part of running a team as a student leader is budgeting. Too often teams that are just starting lose steam because they lack a budget that matches their goals. While it is important to have things such as team singlets and warm-ups, you may want to use what is available until you have a budget to accomplish purchasing those items. If your school is willing to chip in for equipment and gear, you should take advantage of the NCWA's National and Corporate discounts through companies such as Cliff Keen (50% of catalog pricing), EZ-Flex Mats (mats for as cheap as \$6500 new), and Knockout Sportswear (package deals for singlets and warm-ups). In the meantime, you may be able to use a local high school's mat or a local MMA center to practice.

Some teams charge a membership fee for wrestlers on the team that can go towards team gear. Keep in mind that your initial team membership fee for the NCWA will be \$200 and individual wrestler registration is \$35/each. Typically the individual fees are paid by each wrestler using a personal credit or debit card. NCAA and NAIA open tournaments usually cost between \$20-\$30 per wrestler. Tournaments run through NCWA programs will have a cap on the amount spent per team and will be better competition for a new team. Concentrate on making a schedule that matches your budget and you can generally plan on \$500 per travel event per 10 wrestlers due to cost of gasoline, hotels, and entry fees. When first starting out, you should plan on sharing the cost of travel between the members of the team, but in most cases as a student organization your school will provide a budget to reimburse expenses for travel and entry fees. Once your team gets big enough to hold duals or tournaments, it becomes beneficial to host events as you won't have any inherent cost for travel. The additional fees at home include referees (\$65-\$75/dual, or \$150-200 for tournament), a trainer (depends on school), and concessions, but you will be charging an entry fee for teams and fans. Breaking even at a home event is like saving money since you won't be spending money traveling. These events will eventually turn into a money-making opportunity to further your team's goals.

CHAPTER 11: ACCOUNTABILITY AS A LEADER/COACH

Having accountability as a student leader or a coach is necessary for your team to take the next step in becoming a program. When you schedule an event, sign a contract with that team (most teams within the NCWA require them) and then live up to that contract even if it means bringing 3 wrestlers instead of 10. Showing up shows other teams that you are serious about being a program. Most coaches will work with you to help build your program if they see that you will follow through with what you say you will do.

The same thing goes for accountability with your own team. Maintaining a steady practice schedule and being there for practices is paramount for the team to trust you as a leader. Ultimately the team will follow good or bad leadership. As a student leader, you are expected to make decisions but do so in a manner that is inclusive for all team members to get the most out of each wrestler. If someone breaks team rules or is not a good influence it may be best to cut ties with that person.

CHAPTER 12: UPDATING RECORDS AND KEEPING TRACK OF INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENTS

After a wrestler is cleared within the NCWA's compliance website, you will be able to use your team login to manage records and statistics. It is imperative that individual records be posted correctly and in a timely manner (within 5 days of the event) so that team rankings and seeding for tournaments is easier to handle for coaches. In order to qualify for Conference tournaments, a wrestler must have had at least 2 scratch weigh-ins. If a wrestler is listed as 0-0, there is no way to know if that wrestler has wrestled or not. The NCWA uses a ranking system that rewards wrestlers for wins, pins, tech falls, and forfeits and uses a negative value for losses. While this is not an all-knowing system, it does help in seeding purposes for major tournaments when there is no head-to-head record of competition available.

To update individual wrestler's records and statistics go to www.ncwa.net, click on "Login" in the upper right hand corner, then click on "NCWA Team Login" under the NCWA Membership Links. This will allow you to select your team and enter your password to access your schedule/contact information/roster. Click on the "Roster" link on the left side of your site and your Team Roster should be shown. There will be either a Green 'C' or a Red 'P' next to each wrestler's name (Cleared and Pending, respectively). You will only be able to update the records of Cleared wrestlers. Next, click on the number next to the name. This will bring up an individual page for that wrestler where you can enter the Wins, Losses, # of Pins, # of Tech Falls, Takedowns, Reversals, Escapes, 2-pt Nearfalls, 3-pt Nearfalls, Fastest Pins, and Tournament Placement. A point value will appear after you submit the records based on Wins/Losses, type of win, and tournament placement. A guide for tournament placements is shown on that page as well. Rankings for each weight can be found on the 'Rankings' link on the NCWA homepage. The statistics kept here are vital for keeping team records for year-end awards if you choose to give them and for overall records over the years. Of course this means that in order to be precise, you will need to keep score of matches for every wrestler, which may require a team manager.

CHAPTER 13: FUNDRAISING TO BUILD A PROGRAM

Fundraising is probably the most important aspect of building a lasting program. Budgets from the school will change over time, and as you build a bigger program with quality wrestlers, the desire and need to be challenged by tougher tournaments and competition will in turn cost more money due to increased travel costs. This section is by no means an end-all to what types of fundraising you can do to support or supplement your team, but the list below are just examples of successful fundraisers used by NCWA teams in the past:

1. **Wrestling Clinics** – as a wrestling organization, the easiest way to fundraise is to use your own skills. Host a local clinic for youth wanting to learn the sport of wrestling. Not only will you earn some much needed capital, but you

will gain a following amongst the youngest in your community who will look at you as an alternative in the future for college wrestling.

2. **Host an AAU, USA or High School Tournament** – charge per entrant or team (\$10-\$20 each wrestler) and charge an entry fee for parents. Of course this will require having a place to host the event.
3. **Sell Merchandise** – come up with shirt ideas and try to get a local t-shirt company to sponsor the shirts for you in return for advertisement on campus. Typically you can sell wrestling shirts for \$15 a shirt.
4. **Letter Campaigns** – a letter written exclusively about your team and funding needs to your Sphere of Influence and that of your team can be very effective. Tell your friends, family, and community members what your goals are as a team and how their donation would help you achieve them.
5. **Car Washes** – simple and old school, but they work. Make sure to advertise as free but emphasize how you are taking donations. Putting \$5 on a sign will drive business away but FREE will get people to give freely.
6. **Discount Cards** – ask businesses in your community to give discounts for items to put on a card to sell by your wrestlers (usually \$10 each). Local fast food chains such as Papa John's and Sonic have specific cards they allow you to sell for community fundraisers.
7. **Decals/Banners** – you can sell window decals and make banners for your team and in turn sell them to your fans. Not only will it make you money, but it is great for marketing as well. If your team has interest in running a fundraiser like this visit www.MTcustomsigns.com and start a fundraiser today!
8. **Golf Tournament** – this takes a lot of work for the first one, but charging \$75 per player or \$300 per foursome is typical and you can get a corporate sponsor to give money for the whole event and hole sponsors to give \$75-150 for each hole. You can get businesses in the community to donate items for awards after the event and give trophies/monetary prizes to the top-3 teams.
9. **Bowling Tournament** – basically anything having to do with a sport will work for a fundraiser. Charge \$25 per bowler or \$100 per team.
10. **Poker Tournaments** – cash prizes are not allowed, but similar to golf or bowling outings, locally donated prizes will suffice for those wanting to support your team.
11. **Work Beer Tents/Concession Stands** – many local events (concerts, professional sports teams, your own football team, air shows) sell beer or concessions using volunteer groups. Take advantage of these events.
12. **Sponsorship Drives** – canvas the local business community to donate money to the program. Make sure to have some type of business presentation of why money is needed, how you will spend it, and how the sponsorship will benefit the company.
13. **Weight Class Sponsorships** – you can approach local businesses to sponsor weight class finals for Conference tournaments or larger individual tournaments.
14. **Summer Camps** – several NCWA programs, such as West Chester University of Pennsylvania and Georgia Southern, host 3 to 5 day summer

camps on campus which can totally fund that program for the entire year. Guest instructors can be brought in to help promote the event. It is not unheard of to charge \$300-\$500 for a camp such as this.

15. **Sell Fireworks** – okay this one isn't something normally done for a fundraiser, but if you can score something like this it can become a huge monetary event each year. For one or two weeks time, your team can make anywhere between \$1,500 - \$10,000

CHAPTER 14: CONTACTING ALUMNI AND WHAT THEY CAN DO FOR YOUR TEAM

If your team is one that previously had a NCAA or NAIA program on its campus, it will be very important to at least reach out to the alumni who wrestled on those teams. Keep in mind that most likely these alumni will still be angry that their program was eliminated (usually through Title IX) and may be unwilling to speak to you at first. Let them know in a way as professional as possible that you are attempting to bring the program back in the only form available to you and would appreciate any support that they could offer whether by monetary donations, through part-time coaching, or by making contact with influential people that could help you in the present and future. If you can, try to connect their good memories of the program with your vision of what the future could hold within the NCWA. Invite alumni to home events or local away events and give them new t-shirts. Most alumni will donate if you give them something without asking for something in return...it beckons their nostalgia of the program that once was. Once they see the "new" team in action they will probably be hooked and help you build the program. Having alumni around the program will legitimize what you are doing with your current team and for any recruits in the future.

CHAPTER 15: USING THE NCWA NETWORK TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

No matter where your program is located within the country, there is someone near you that has gone through everything you have in the NCWA process. Do not hesitate to reach out to other NCWA coaches in the area and utilize the Conference Board as much as possible. They are here to help you and will do everything possible to make sure your program becomes a success. The more teams generated locally helps other teams reduce their travel costs and time, which is a great benefit for the schools and the wrestlers.

This guide should provide much of the answers to questions you will have, but if it doesn't, please feel free to contact your Conference Board first (listed in the Wrestling Plan for each calendar season) before contacting the National Headquarters. Issues dealing with compliance should be taken to the Conference Commissioner first and then onto the National Compliance Officer if necessary. The Quality Enhancement Director of the NCWA annually sends out a list of all of the coaches in the NCWA along with their contact information and guidelines on how to improve your program. If your

questions still haven't been answered, the National Executive staff is always available to help.

CHAPTER 16: RECRUITING WRESTLERS TO YOUR PROGRAM

The most effective way to recruit wrestlers to your program is to go to local high school wrestling tournaments. High school coaches love talking about wrestling and love promoting their guys as the type that would be good to wrestle collegiately. Go to tournaments and dual meets wearing your College Wrestling shirt and people will undoubtedly ask about it. Be prepared for such comments as "I didn't know that _____ had a wrestling program..." and "yeah, but isn't that just a club team." All people really need to know is that you exist and that you plan on existing when the kids wrestling at the high school meet/tournament graduate. If you show an interest in them, they will show an interest in you. For teams just starting out, you will want to target wrestlers that are already planning on attending your school, as this will eliminate the need for having informational meetings on campus to generate interest. This is not a quick response nor will it be easy at first. You will receive a lot of skepticism and a lot of objections to what you are doing, but as a student leader you must be consistent with your response and don't allow your enthusiasm for your program to wane.

The biggest high school tournament in your state each year is of course the state tournament. If you have the ability to attend it, you need to be there. Talk to wrestlers after matches, congratulate them and their parents on their successes and offer support when they fail. Wear your team gear and use any ties you have with college teammates with teams participating in the event. Word of mouth is the most effective advertisement and you shouldn't be afraid to use it. It took me close to 3 years to have an actual recruiting class. When your team is ready to heavily recruit high school wrestlers treat them like any other collegiate recruit and offer to sign them and if you have the ability to give a scholarship through fundraising, do so, but you should have a policy in place on how to offer and what qualifications the wrestler needs to have. This will be talked about more in-depth in the Foundation section (Chapter 19).

Recruits will be the way you keep a vibrant program going and will ultimately help you in every aspect including fundraising, competition level, alumni support, and administration support.

CHAPTER 17: COMPETITION LEVELS AND YOUR TEAM

The level of competition you seek will depend on the level of experience on your team. A suggested goal would be to increase the level of competition each year until you have a schedule of a typical varsity program. This won't be for everyone as some teams stay at an intermediate level for several years before deciding to move up in competition. The NCWA is dedicated to building lasting programs to provide any wrestler the opportunity to continue his or her wrestling career in college no matter what the level of desired competition.

The NCWA has a unique system in which teams can start as “Club” teams, move into an “Emerging Program” phase, ultimately becoming a NCWA Division 1 Program meeting specific criteria set forth by the Vision Forum each summer. To become a NCWA-D1 team, the following criteria must be met (which can also be found in the Wrestling Plan):

1. Meet NCWA obligations as detailed in the Wrestling Plan.
2. Register as a D-1 Team with the NCWA by October 15th of each season.
3. Have a non-student / non-competing Head Coach listed with the NCWA by October 15th of each season.
4. By November 15th of each season, a team must have a minimum of 11 registered wrestlers posted on the official NCWA website or have entered a minimum of 8 wrestlers, in at least 7 separate weight classes at the previous season’s Conference Championships.
5. Display on the NCWA official website a posted Schedule to compete in 8 separate events (8 *scratch weigh-ins*) not including the Conference Championships or the National Championships by October 15th of each season.
6. Host a minimum of 4 events over two seasons.
7. Enter a minimum of 8 wrestlers, in at least 7 separate weight classes at their Conference Championship.
8. Have entered all of their National Qualifiers from their Conference Championship into the NCWA National Championships in the previous season.
9. Have no major compliance violations during the preceding season, major as determined by the Judicial Committee.
10. Athletic Department funded programs are exempt from the above qualifying procedures and will automatically be considered a Division 1 team during their provisional season. They are expected to comply with all other Division 1 criteria in the NCWA Wrestling Plan.
11. D-1 Teams will use the NWCA Optimal Performance Calculator (OPC) for determining safe weight control procedures.
12. NCWA teams from schools sponsoring an NCAA wrestling program are always considered as Division 2 – Club Programs.
13. New member schools enter the NCWA as a “First-Year Provisional Program.” The provisional year is designed to allow new programs to become familiar with the NCWA rules.
14. Transitioning Programs may be considered Division 1 subject to the Executive Board decision (e.g.: NAIA transitioning to NCAA D-II).

CHAPTER 18: THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL EVENTS

The quickest way to grow your team and inject enthusiasm into your program is to participate in National NCWA events such as the National Duals (January of each year, **January 18-19th, 2013 in Dalton, GA** this season), Nationals (March of each year, **March 14-16th, 2013 in Allen, TX** this season), and the Vision Forum (currently in early August each year in sunny Florida). National Duals is an event that is open to NCWA-D1 programs but attending such an event or helping with it will help your team realize where they need to be in order to be a player on the National stage. In order to make it as a participant to the traditional Nationals in March, your team must qualify wrestlers through the Conference tournament. Having a National Qualifier immediately puts your team on the fast track for success as the individual(s) that make(s) it come back with a sense of what they need to do individually to succeed. The National tournament is held with all NCWA-D1 and NCWA-D2 wrestlers in the same tournament and then points are split up for D1 and D2 for 2 National Team Champions. Teams that have won the D2

championship in the past have seen huge gains in their local community in terms of fan base, press coverage, and recruiting. If no one from your team makes the National tournament, it is still advantageous to be a part of the event as an event worker or just as a fan. The event will give you a vastly different perspective of the league and your team in general.

CHAPTER 19: CREATING A FOUNDATION FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

At some point in the future, your team will be ready to start giving scholarships and to have the ability to raise funds to sustain a Varsity program. In order to do so most effectively you will want to start a wrestling foundation as a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization. This will take anywhere from 6-12 months to accomplish. The first step in starting a foundation is to name an Executive Board of 5 members to serve. The one I started in 2010 consisted of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Scholarship Administrator, and a Secretary. These 5 members are responsible for the Foundation and are liable for the actions of the organization, especially to the IRS. The second step will be creating a charter and by-laws. Many local booster clubs operate in this fashion and may have by-laws that you can use as a basis to start. A list of Board members and by-laws will then be sent to the IRS along with a Form 1023 (Application for Recognition of Tax Exemption). This form is long and tedious and will most likely be sent back to you at some point with an IRS agent asking for more information on how funds will be collected and which type of forming organization yours will be.

This website is a good place to look for information on starting a Non-Profit Foundation: <http://www.irs.gov/charities/>.

Once the foundation is accepted as a legitimate 501(c)3 organization, you will want to set the groundwork for how to give scholarships, set a budget for scholarships, and develop forms on how to join the foundation (typically \$100/year membership), and how to raise funds through donations and fundraisers. The criteria my foundation uses for scholarships is based firstly on academics and secondly on wrestling acumen. Incoming freshmen qualify for a scholarship based on their GPA or ACT score and then must meet the criteria of top-4 in state to receive a tuition-based scholarship. We also offer “Leadership” Scholarships to student officers on the team, book scholarships to transfer students or state placers not meeting the academic requirements, and “All-American” Scholarships to those that placed top-8 in the NCWA the previous season.

Executive Board meetings are typically held once a month and as per your by-laws and a General Meeting open to all foundation members is held every quarter on specified dates (i.e. the first Monday of each quarter). Our foundation chose June 1 – May 31 as the fiscal year to better correspond with the wrestling season. Fundraisers for the team are run through the foundation to use the tax exempt status (which must be applied for in each state---rules on this vary per state) and then all monies collected are subject to Board approval for dispersal.

CHAPTER 20: MARKETING FOR YOUR TEAM / PROGRAM

There are many ways to market your team. Some of the most effective ways are listed below:

1. **NCWA Media Guide** – having a team page in the NCWA Media Guide, which is produced annually, has been a very effective promotional item, especially for recruiting. Hand these out to everyone that may be interested in your program or use them coupled with an insert for a home event to make some money. This is one of the best long-term investments you can make for your program and it looks very professional. Call or e-mail Jim Giunta to order these guides OR purchase them from the NCWA store online.
2. **Team Posters** – promotional posters of the team schedule can be dispersed amongst the community. If you can combine this with a sponsorship drive, it will be very beneficial, as companies will look to have their ads on your poster. Individual posters for various members on the squad are effective for placing in local high schools to connect the future wrestlers of your program to a face and name. Obviously if you have some local talent, you will want to promote them at their alma mater.
3. **Team Website** – this can be used for everything from articles about tournaments to raising money through donations by linking your site to PayPal. Updated rosters with full results, pictures, biographies, and interest pieces make your website worth viewing. If you can drive people to your website, you can use it as a stream of advertising money as companies look to gain access to your viewers and fans. We have started doing interest pieces on local standouts and programs to increase the “hits” on our site. Recruits today expect to see technology and having an interesting updated website can be a great recruiting tool.
4. **Social Media** – create a fan base by getting subscribers to your Twitter account. This can be effective for relaying results from tournaments. After each match, a tweet can be sent out to all subscribers. A Facebook page has also become a must in this day and age and having someone to constantly relay information to that page can help you get noticed. Recently my team held a “First to 500 LIKES” contest against a local NAIA program in which the winner got to hold the home match in the Fall of 2013. This was very effective at driving people to all of our sites as well as legitimizing our program on the same level as the NAIA.
5. **Logos** – create a logo just for your program. Many times, the athletic department holds a trademark on the athletic logos for your institution and will not let you sell anything with that logo on it. So...make your own, promote it, put it on everything and you would be surprised at how many people identify YOUR team apart from the other athletic teams on campus.
6. **Merchandising** – Nothing promotes your program more than gear with your logo and team slogans on it. T-shirts, singlets, sweats, warm-ups, shorts, decals, posters, towels, you name it can be sold at all home events and fundraisers. Don't just sell your merchandise though...give t-shirts out to little kids and those that can increase your Sphere of Influence. Spending \$6 today can earn you a lot

more in the future, whether it be in the form of donations, alumni support, or in talent.

CHAPTER 21: BUILDING A LASTING PROGRAM

Following all of the steps listed above will help you to create a program that will last and that will have the ability to transform the lives of people that participate. The NCWA looks to build programs, but ultimately we want to build the next generation of leaders. The most effective leaders take an idea, transform it into something tangible, and then leave it in the hands of others to repeat the process. We are constantly thriving to create new programs that will be around long after you leave school. Getting the support of your school, your alumni, your local wrestling community, your fans, and your Sphere of Influence will ensure that this happens. Good luck with your new program and we at the NCWA look forward to your success.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bryan Knepper is a Professional Engineer living in Tennessee. He is married to a wonderful school teacher named Sarah and has 3 kids named Gabriel, Shelby, and Jonah. In 1997 he started the NCWA program at the University of Toledo as an inspired freshman Civil Engineering student looking to wrestle collegiately. Through many trials and tribulations, he managed to have success in creating a program there that stayed long after leaving in 2004, which included a 3x NCWA National Champion (Adam Murray). By sitting on several budget committees, he was able to secure a long-term commitment to funding for the team to ensure it would be around long after he left. In March of 2007, the NCWA's 10th year of existence, Knepper was inducted into the NCWA Hall of Fame's Founders Club at the National Tournament in Dallas, Texas. The following fall, he rejoined the NCWA as head coach of Middle Tennessee State University. The team operated as a club with 7 members at the time. After 5 seasons at MTSU, Knepper has created a lasting model for others to follow with over \$20,000 in scholarships being given to deserving wrestlers from the state of Tennessee since 2010. The team has also had 2 All-Americans and 6 Academic All-Americans. Knepper also serves as the Quality Enhancement Director for the NCWA, as the Commissioner of the Mid-Atlantic Conference, and is on several NCWA committees. The amount of alumni, parental, and community support being received by the MTSU Wrestling team has been amazing and Knepper wants to see that model be used throughout the United States to build the NCWA one program at a time. For more information on the current program under Knepper's tutelage, visit www.blueraidewrestling.com.