

## Motivation and Commitment: Pre-Season Training

I always encourage my athletes to rise to the occasion so they will have a peak performance in their biggest contests.

Many outstanding coaches join us throughout the year for the camps we host at our Home Training Center in, State College, PA. We have well-established camps on Thanksgiving weekend and during the year. In addition we have our Winter Break Training Camp which will be conducted at the Ramada Inn in State College, PA. Dedicated wrestlers and coaches travel from throughout the nation to attend these camps. You do not have to be from Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, or other wrestling hot beds to succeed in our sport. It simply requires a commitment to excellence and sustained motivation for many years, perhaps a decade or more to reach the top of the mountain.

I put much thought into the overall design of my camp complex and have inscribed "Commitment to Excellence" on the wall padding. Although I considered having "Intensity - Discipline - Perseverance" — all parts of what a commitment to excellence entails, I instead decided to paint the words "Commitment to Excellence" because they encapsulate what it takes to be successful in school, wrestling, and life.

On a general note, wrestling is an extremely demanding sport that does not always seem to offer many rewards. Our sport is a grueling battle during both training and competition. You often leave a wrestling practice exhausted, both physically and mentally. This is how you are supposed to feel if you are going to be fully prepared for the heat of battle. So you may ask yourself — why go through all this?

Not only is wrestling physically demanding, but you must also spend many hours learning and drilling a wide array of techniques. Whether you are a beginner or an elite high school or college athlete, you must continuously work hard to develop and perfect a repertoire of techniques that will make you a champion.

In addition to the daily grind of training and the endless hours of drilling that are required to master the sport, you must also eat healthy foods throughout the year and typically follow a strict diet during the season. Many athletes "cut" additional water weight prior to competition to make weight. Wrestling is an intense sport that does not always seem to offer many rewards, yet so many athletes are driven to excel. Why this paradox?

Let me start you with some pre-season training tips.

- The season will be here soon, so it is time to get focused on your goals for the upcoming season and get busy preparing to reach them. Decide what you want to achieve and make a commitment to doing everything necessary to reach your goals.
- Do not wait until November to start training regularly. Design a pre-season training plan and stick with it. It does not need to be complex. Your pre-season program should consist of at least 3 days per week in the weight room and 3 days per week of cardiovascular conditioning. You may spread this over six days of the week or you may combine strength training and conditioning into one workout. For example a 2-mile run followed by a strength training workout would kill two birds with one stone.
- Do not just put in time in the weight room. Have a plan when you walk in the door and get busy! Your cardiovascular training may consist of any combination of running, biking, swimming, and wrestling. It should combine both aerobic and anaerobic exercise. For example, some days go for a 2-4 mile run or wrestle for 10-20 minutes straight (aerobic training), and other days do an interval/sprint workout or wrestle short matches (anaerobic training). I encourage you to get on the mats whenever possible. Find a way to get some mat time this fall. If there is a will there is a way. If you are going to participate in a physically demanding sport like wrestling, you must be fully prepared for battle. Do not let another day slip by without getting ready.

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