**TIPS FOR PARENTS ON SURVIVING WRESTLING SEASON**

**Number 1:**  Don’t laugh the first time you see your son/daughter in a singlet!

**Number 2:**  Don’t make plans from October through March.  You will either be - at a tournament, driving someone somewhere, washing smelly, sweat-soaked clothes, volunteering or selling something!

**Number 3:**  Bring lots of snacks and water not only for yourself but for your wrestler!  Wrestlers are known for being hungry, all the time and a few wrestlers can devour a package of cookies in nanoseconds.

**Number 4**:  Don’t ask me why a fungus is called a “worm” but stock up on Tinactin – and make sure your wrestler realizes that jumping in a pool does not count as a shower.  Don’t be upset when you see the ringworm, all wrestlers get it at one time or another, despite the scouring and sanitizing of the mats.  It’s just a fact of wrestling…

**Number 5:**  When you are out in public with your son/daughter, whose face is covered with bruises and or mat burn, don’t bother trying to explain to strangers that you didn’t put them there. Smile proudly and say he/she is a wrestler.

**Number 6**:  I’m not sure who is in charge of weigh-ins, but your wrestler will always have to wrestle someone who is a foot talker and about 15 pounds heavier – growls – and has facial hair.  It’s a fact!  Weigh in for your Tot/Bantam wrestler is on Thursday evenings at the club; we will weigh them after practice and send the roster to the tournament directors. This is for Alabama wrestling and is called a satellite weigh in; all other age groups will weight in the morning of tournament. For other tournaments, we’ll keep you informed, but typically it will be the day before the tournament begins.

**Number 7:** If your son/daughter is in a headlock, his/her face is turning purple and he/she is screaming the words, “**I can’t breathe**”, don’t run out on the mat. **If they can state those words, they can breathe just fine.** The referee will notice eventually and restart at the center of the mat.

**Number 8:**  Sit with other club wrestling parents – it helps to join hands when you want to run on the mat for an injury….or to attack an official…they will hold you back!  Seriously, veteran parents can provide you some insight into scoring and further rules.

**Number 9:** Bring a stadium seat for the bleachers!  Or avoid bleacher butt by keeping one pillow in the wrestling bag for every butt that's going to be in those bleachers for the meet.  Grandparents especially appreciate your thoughtfulness on behalf of their butt!

**Number 10:**  Put your wrestlers name on all of their wrestling equipment. There's so much floating around, don't risk losing it.  Shoes and headgear are found beneath the bleachers all the time.  And the reply to coach’s - “Whose is this?”  Is always, “Not mine!”

**Number 11:**  Remember – the majority of wrestling coaches are screamers – don’t take the coach’s screaming and jumping around personally, on behalf of your wrestler – your kid is used to the screaming from practice, anyway, and probably has him tuned out anyway!

**Number 12**:  Keep a pair of nail clippers in your wrestling bag. Wrestling referees have a “thing” about wrestlers with long fingernails!!

**Number 13:**  Don’t bother the coaches during a match (as mentioned above, they’re a little high strung!)  They have and will ensure your wrestler has representation.

**Number 14:**  Tournaments – be prepared – they run from sunup to sundown!  Don’t expect to see the light of day!  Bring a cushion to sit on, a book to read, a picnic lunch, a cooler and a crock pot of stew!  Plan for 2.5 to 3 hours at a normal tournament, if it runs on time.

**Number 15:**  Your wrestler’s matches may or may not occur on the 1st match they wrestle. While the coaches will take note of the bout numbers and mat assignments for each mat, they cannot keep track of where your wrestler may be playing with friends, eating, etc… Please keep your wrestler close and ensure they move near their mat assignments within 6-8 matches. Matches can go quickly and before you know it, you will be looking for your wrestler and hearing their name called. This is not a good thing as it means they may forfeit if they don’t arrive soon.

**Number 15:**  Headgear is not required at Alabama wrestling tournaments, but is required at most national tournaments. If they are going to wear headgear, don’t wait until it is at their first tournament.

**Number 16:**  They may not win a match their first season, but you will win their hearts if you encourage them to keep improving. As we say with our high school kids, set a few goals if it doesn’t look like they may win many matches. I had my son set a goal of getting to the 2nd period his first season. .

**Number 17:** Wrestlers will be respectful to their opponent and the coaches by shaking hands after a bout, win or lose. **Absolutely no throwing fits!** This isn’t just our rule; the referee may reprimand the wrestler if it is a show of bad sportsmanship. Parents will not yell or cuss at coaches or officials during a tournament (or any other time). Remember, this is all about the kids and we are all responsible for setting a good example.

**Number 18:** Remember that first sport you participated in? Not only is this their first sport, but being a youth wrestler, they likely don’t take stock in when they need to go to the restroom. Please make certain they go prior to their match, preferably after warm ups.

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**Number 19:** Wrestling is considered an individual sport, but includes many of the benefits of team sports. Wrestling differs from most team sports in that during competition, athletes must rely entirely on their own individual abilities for success. Those that dedicate the time and effort will eventually achieve at a level directly proportionate to the investment they have made - even if their teammates prepare and perform at a different level.

**Number 20:**  Finally, as a parent, you will never understand how your gentle, sweet child, could possibly love to wrestle…to be stretched and twisted in ways nature never intended…but he/she does!  So be happy when he/she wins, supportive when he/she loses, and always have your camera/camcorder batteries charged!

Have a great wrestling season!!

