An Introduction to the Sport of Wrestling:

A guide for parents and youth interested in the basics of this wonderful sport.

From
The Lenape Junior Wrestling Program
www.Lenapejrwrestling.com
The Benefits of Wrestling:

- **Anybody can wrestle** - regardless of body type, height or weight, there is a place for you in wrestling. In some sports only certain body types are able to succeed. Not so in wrestling as long as you are (mentally) tough and have a desire to win and do your best.

- **Wrestling teams rarely cut their athletes for lack of skill or talent.**

- **Wrestling promotes personal growth and development** by reinforcing positive personality traits and characteristics. In particular, it embraces and teaches an array of life lessons that may not be as strongly promoted in other sports.

- **Wrestling increases self confidence.** When you wrestle you can’t rely on anyone but yourself. You have to be accountable for your successes and failures. Without confidence and a positive attitude, there will be no success. This confidence and positive attitude is gained on and off the wrestling mats.

- **Wrestling instills discipline.** The intensity of wrestling practices requires discipline, often sacrificing time spent playing with friends or other activities. Sometimes doing things that aren’t that “fun” such as practicing can pay off in reaching goals.

- **Wrestling builds mental toughness.** It takes a tremendous amount of toughness to pick yourself up off the mat after losing a match or being pinned, shaking your opponents hand, and walking off the mat in front of dozens of spectators.

- **Wrestling builds mental acuity.** Wrestling requires 75% mental acuity and 25% physical strength. Much like the game of chess opponents must out think each other using offensive and defensive strategies and moves. Remembering moves learned and applying them at the appropriate times during a match requires razor sharp decision-making skills. These quick thinking skills can be useful off the mat in many other situations.

- **Wrestling promotes sportsmanship.** Opponents are always required to shake hands before and after the match. It is common to see opponents become friends after the match. Matches often end with embraces and sometimes the loser will even raise the winner’s hand!

- **Wrestling promotes competitiveness.** Even the mildest mannered noncompetitive child can find their competitive side in the sport. To succeed in competition, you need to train harder than your opponent. You need to want it more. Children often discover their inner competitive spirit as they become increasingly engaged in the sport.
The Match

The sport of wrestling is comprised of a match. A match is defined as a competition between two individual wrestlers who are of as nearly equal weight (and age -- at the youth level) as possible. A match is comprised of three timed periods. At our youth level, the periods are 1 minute each, equaling a total 3 minute match. For older kids in high school, matches are 6 minutes long (3 - 2 minute periods), and at the college level, matches are 7 minutes in length (3 minute first period, and 2 minute 2nd and 3rd periods). These match total times do not include overtime which will be discussed later.

The ultimate objective in a wrestling match is for one wrestler to establish a fall or pin. A fall occurs when any part of both shoulders or scapula of either wrestler is in contact with the mat for two seconds.

**Pinned:**

![Pinned](image1)

**Almost Pinned:**

![Almost Pinned](image2)

Once a wrestler establishes a fall, the referee will blow the whistle and slap the mat to signify a pin. After this occurs, the match will stop and the wrestlers will shake hands. The winning wrestler’s hand will then be raised by the referee signifying the winner of the match. A fall is a win for the pinning wrestler regardless of score.

If the ultimate objective (a fall or pin) of the match is not established by either wrestler, then the wrestler with the most points awarded by the end of the match (or the conclusion of the third period) will be declared the winner.

Competitions for Lenape Junior Wrestling typically take place in the form of tournaments. The tournaments for our youth wrestlers are usually comprised of two to three matches with wrestlers of equal weight, age, experience, and skill - we use computer software (Matchman) to ensure that wrestlers are evenly matched based on these factors. Before each match in a tournament, wrestlers will report to assigned mats according to their bouts.
simply the group of matches each wrestler will wrestle during the course of the tournament with each match distinguished by a bout number. At tournaments these numbers are typically posted mat-side with the names of the wrestler announced over a microphone as the matches come up during the course of the event. The bout sheets are usually posted on the walls in or outside of the event gymnasium for parents, coaches, and wrestlers to see.

When wrestlers’ bout numbers are posted mat-side, contestants will be expected to report to the appropriate mat posting their number a few minutes before their match begins. An announcer will typically give notice when your child’s name or bout number is coming up. Contestants will typically report with enough time to warm up and prepare for their match. While wrestlers wait for their designated matches, they will have time to talk to their coach and parents and discuss strategies and practice moves. Once their match is ready to begin, the wrestlers will report to the scoring table and state their names. A Lenape Junior Wrestling coach will accompany your child to the scoring table at this time to assist and verify that their match is about to begin. The designated referee for that mat will also come to the table to verify that the correct wrestlers are present and that names of the wrestlers match the bout sheets at the scorer's table. This minimizes the possibility that two wrestlers in different weight classes accidentally wrestle each other.

**Green Vs. Red:**

Depending upon the color of the wrestlers **singlets**, a nylon anklet band (either green or red) may be assigned to either wrestler at the beginning of the match. A wrestling singlet is the appropriate wrestling attire each wrestler must wear in order to compete. Since Lenape Junior Wrestling singlets are red, our wrestlers typically wear the red nylon anklet or sometimes no anklet because the red uniform color provides sufficient color representation.

The assigning of green or red color helps the referee distinguish wrestlers and their scores during the match, especially during fast moving high scoring action. The referee also wears a red wrist band on the left arm and a green wrist band on the right to signal to the scorer the number of points during the match. Points awarded to the red contestant would be specified by the number of fingers raised by the referees left arm with the red band and those for green by the right arm worn with the green band. If the green and red colors were not assigned to the wrestlers, then two wrestlers wearing red uniforms, for example, might be confused by the referee and points might be accidentally awarded to the wrong wrestler.

**1st Period:**

All matches begin with the first period. Each wrestler will stand in the center circle of the wrestling mat. In the center of the circle are parallel lines, one red and the other green. The wrestler representing red will place one foot on the red line and the opposing wrestler
representing green will do the same as they face each other. This starting position is called the **neutral position**. Neutral position simply means that both wrestlers are in the same or equal position. Neutral position always takes place with both wrestlers in standing position facing each other. Before the match begins, the wrestlers will shake hands. The Lenape Jr. Wrestling coaches will be mat-side (in the corner) coaching and offering advice to the wrestler. It’s important for that the wrestlers are aware of where their coaches are and listen to the advice coaches provide during the match. Wrestlers should not step on the mat to begin a match until a Lenape Jr. Wrestling coach is present. In some cases a referee or a mat-side official will summon a coach if one is not present when the match is set to begin. Once a coach is present, the wrestlers will shake hands and the referee will blow the whistle to signify the start of the 1st period of the match.

Each wrestler will attempt to gain control over the other wrestler using a series of moves. Each wrestler should try to stay within the large circle -- the established boundary area of the mat. Both wrestlers should be active and move forward or sideways to gain position. Wrestlers should avoid moving backwards because a referee may assume that a wrestler is stalling or not attempting to wrestle. If a wrestler continues to move backwards, a verbal warning will be given by the referee to the offending wrestler and penalty points may be awarded to the opposing wrestler if the offending wrestler does not listen to the official’s warnings. If both wrestlers step beyond the boundary lines, the match is temporarily stopped and the wrestlers are brought back to the center of the mat in the relative position (offensive, defensive, or neutral) they were in before they went out of bounds. For example, if they were in neutral position when they went out of bounds, they will be brought back to the center of the mat and the match will restart in neutral position after the referee blows the whistle.

**Scoring:**

How a match is scored is the most important and often least understood aspect of wrestling. We will explain it here in simple terms. Let’s go back to the start of the first period and discuss how scoring occurs from the neutral position. Both wrestlers are standing in a neutral position facing each other. The most common way to score points from a standing position is for one wrestler to score a **takedown**. A takedown occurs when, from a neutral position, a wrestler **gains control over the opponent** down on the mat or when the knees, hips, or legs of the defensive wrestler are controlled by the majority of the offensive wrestler’s weight.
Once wrestler A establishes a takedown and control over wrestler B, wrestler A will be awarded 2 points. If, once taken down, wrestler B manages to get up and away from the control of wrestler A, wrestler B is awarded 1 point for an escape. An escape occurs when the defensive wrestler gains a neutral position and the offensive wrestler is no longer in an offensive position and has lost control.

Below: both wrestlers are now in neutral position. Neither wrestler is in control of the other. The wrestler previously being controlled is awarded a 1 pt escape for getting out of defensive position and into neutral position.
**Scenario 1:** Wrestler A and wrestler B start the 1st period match in neutral position. Wrestler A shoots and takes down wrestler B and establishes control over wrestler B. Wrestler B manages to escape from wrestler A and both wrestlers go back to neutral position. Wrestler B shoots and takes down wrestler A and establishes control over wrestler A. Wrestler B maintains control of wrestler A scoring no additional points through the remainder of the 1st period. What is each wrestler’s score going into the start of the second period? **Wrestler A 2** (for a takedown) and **Wrestler B 3** (for an escape and a takedown).

In many instances a wrestler that is being controlled is able score more points in a single move than just an escape from their opponent. Sometimes a wrestler is able to score a **reversal** and maneuver around their opponent in such a way that they establish control over their opponent. When a wrestler successfully scores a reversal, they are awarded 2 pts.

Below: The wrestler (right) is attempting a reversal on the wrestler (left) who has control. Once the wrestler on the right turns and gets behind the opponent and establishes their weight on top of the opponent, they will have scored a reversal and be awarded 2 pts.

**Scenario 2:** Wrestler A and wrestler B start the 1st period match in neutral position. Wrestler A shoots and takes down wrestler B and establishes control over wrestler B. Wrestler B manages to escape from wrestler A and both wrestlers go back to neutral position. Wrestler B shoots and takes down wrestler A and establishes control over wrestler A. Wrestler A reverses wrestler B and maintains control -- scoring no additional points through the remainder of the 1st period. What is each wrestler’s score going into the start of the second period? **Wrestler A 4** (for a takedown and a reversal) and **Wrestler B 3** (for an escape and a takedown).
**Summary:**

Takedown - 2 pts  
Escape - 1 pt  
Reversal – 2 pts

The wrestler in control shall always attempt to turn the defensive wrestler (the wrestler being controlled) onto their back. Using various moves (such as a half nelson, cradle, arm bar, etc.) the offensive wrestler will work to establish a fall or pin over the opponent. If the offensive wrestler is successful in turning the defensive wrestler onto their back, the offensive wrestler may be awarded additional points, and if successful, establish a fall or pin.

If the wrestler in control is able to turn the opponent onto their back, the shoulders (of the defensive wrestler) must be held near or close to the mat for at least 2 seconds. The referee will count out loud and waive a hand left and right demonstrating the count. If after 2 seconds the defensive wrestler manages to get back onto their belly, the offensive wrestler will be awarded either 2 or 3 points (depending upon time held on back) for a **near fall**. A near fall occurs when an offensive wrestler has control of an opponent in a pinning situation for 2 or more seconds.

Below: the (top) wrestler is holding the (bottom) wrestler in a near fall pinning situation. The top wrestler will be awarded 2 pts for holding bottom wrestler in this position for at least 2 seconds and 3 pts for holding bottom wrestler for 5 or more seconds. If the top wrestler pins the bottom wrestler, the match will end and the top wrestler will win.

The offensive wrestler can only be awarded one set of near fall points per near fall pinning hold. If the defensive wrestler manages to maneuver off their back out of the near fall position, the offensive wrestler must either break their pinning hold or use a different pinning hold to turn and gain additional near fall points. Once the offensive wrestler manages to turn the defensive wrestler on to his back for 2 or more seconds using a new hold or the same (non-continuous hold), the offensive wrestler may be awarded additional near fall points.
2\textsuperscript{nd} Period:

If neither wrestler is able to score a fall by the end of the first period, the match will temporarily stop at the referee's whistle and the match will go into the 2\textsuperscript{nd} period. Before wrestling can begin in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} period, the referee will flip a flat disk. The disk is red on one side and green on the other. The wrestler representing the color that faces up will be given the choice of offensive (top), defensive (bottom), or neutral (both wrestlers standing) starting positions. Starting position is simply the position wrestlers start after going out of bounds and at the beginning of each period. Except for our most experienced wrestlers, our coaches will choose and communicate the starting position to the referees. Our coaches may also decide to defer starting position choice to the opponent, giving wrestler instead starting position choice at the beginning of the third period.

The (top) wrestler is in the offensive position starting position. The (bottom) wrestler is in the defensive starting position. The wrestlers will hold these positions until the the referee blows the whistle to begin.

3\textsuperscript{rd} Period:

If neither wrestler is able to score a fall by the end of the second period, the match will temporarily stop at the referee's whistle and the match will go into the 3\textsuperscript{rd} period. The wrestler who did not choose position at the beginning of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} period will have choice of starting position at the beginning of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} period.

At the conclusion of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} period, the wrestler with the highest score (if no fall occurs) will be declared the winner. A fall is a win for the pinning wrestler regardless of score. In some instances, regardless of the period, one wrestler may dominate another by accumulating a substantially higher number of points. During team matches (such as in junior high school or
high school), this is particularly important because there are additional points awarded to each

team based on the spread of points during a match. If the difference between the final score of
two wrestlers is less than 8 points, it is referred to as a win by decision. If the difference is
between 8 and 11 points, it is referred to as a win by a major decision. If the difference is
between 12 and 14 points, it is referred to as a win by a superior decision. If at all during the
match the point difference reaches 15 points, the match will be stopped and the winner will
win by technical fall. A technical fall is essentially a fall (or pin) based solely on points. Similar
to a regular fall or pin, the match is stopped and the winning or pinning wrestler is declared the

Overtime:

If the match is tied at the conclusion of the 3rd period, the match will go into overtime.
Overtime essentially is referred to as sudden death. The first wrestler to score a point during
sudden death in overtime will be declared the winner. Sudden death is 30 seconds long or ½
the time of a regular wrestling period. If, at the conclusion of sudden death, neither wrestler
scores, a 2nd overtime of 2 thirty second periods will take place. Similar to the start of the
second period in a standard match, the 1st thirty second period will begin with a disc being
tossed and position choice being granted to one of the two wrestlers. At the end of this period
(if neither wrestler has scored a fall) the other wrestler will be granted choice at the beginning
of the next period. If neither wrestler scores a fall by the end of the second 30 second period or
the score is still tied, a final 30 second period will take place. For this final and decisive period,
the referee will give position choice to the wrestler who scored the first point in the match. If
neither scored a point, the choice will be given to the wrestler with the fewest technical
violations or penalty points. The wrestler will have choice of either top or bottom position
(neutral position is not an option). Once the position is chosen, the wrestler on the bottom (or
defensive position) will have to score an escape or reversal to win, while the wrestler in the top
(or offensive position) will have to maintain a controlling position to win. If the bottom wrestler
fails to score an escape or reversal, the top wrestler wins. If the bottom wrestler escapes or
reverses the top wrestler, the bottom wrestler will win. This final period will ultimately decide
the final outcome of the match.
Match Conclusion:

At the end of the match, once a winner has been declared, the wrestlers will again shake hands. The referee will then raise the hand of the winning wrestler. Both wrestlers will leave the center of the mat and shake the hands of the opposing coaches. They will then step off the mat and meet with their coaches who will offer feedback on their performance.
Lenape Junior Wrestling FAQs
www.Lenapejrwrestling.com

When are sign-ups?
Sign-ups are open September – November of each year. You may register online at www.Lenapejrwrestling.com. Also, be sure to subscribe to us by entering your email address on our subscription page. This way you can stay informed about our program, events, and wrestling-related activities in our area.

When do practices begin?
Practices officially begin the first Tuesday of December. The season ends the last weekend in February.

Where do practices take place?
Practices take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays (6:15 – 8:00pm) in the Lenape High School wrestling Room (Hartford Rd. side entrance).

What is the age range for participants?
The program is for all kids ages 5 - 14.

Age classifications are as follows: Tots (ages 6 and under), Bantams (ages 7 and 8), Midgets (ages 9 and 10), Juniors (ages 11 and 12) and Intermediates (ages 13 and 14).

What equipment is necessary for participation?
Wrestling shoes and headgear are mandatory. These can be purchased online, or at a sporting goods store, such as Dick’s, Sports Authority, Modell’s, etc. It’s a good idea to purchase these items prior to December because many of these stores run out of wrestling inventory by the end of December. Headgear and proper shoes will be necessary by the end of the 2nd week of practice when we begin live wrestling drills.

Should I bring a water bottle to practices for my child?
Yes, having their own water bottle will expedite water breaks during practice. There is a water fountain outside the wrestling room, but the time traveling to it takes more time out of practice.
**Do parents have to stay during practices?**

For children ages 5 and 6, we ask that parents remain in the room at all times. Children at this age sometimes lose interest during the session or become distracted. For all other children, parents may feel free to drop-off and come back. We have an excellent group of coaches who will take good care of your children.

**Do you welcome parent or sibling volunteers?**

Yes!! We welcome and encourage parents to get involved. If you have experience wrestling and are interested in helping coach, we would welcome your participation. We also encourage parents to help provide assistance with our home matches (working scoring tables, selling concessions, computer skills (to help with Matchman software in preparation for or during tournaments) or any other possible skills you might be able to offer). Siblings who wrestled or currently wrestled are certainly welcome to help and offer their skills to our kids. Parent and family involvement is critical to the success of our program.

**How often do you have competitions with other township teams?**

Team matches start the first weekend in January and take place on a Saturday or Sunday of each weekend thru the last weekend of February. Most of the matches are within the local Burlington County vicinity. Lenape typically hosts two 4 team matches at Lenape HS, so your child will have several opportunities to wrestle in front of a home team crowd!! The exact dates of the team matches will be known and communicated closer to the start of the season.

**My child has never wrestled before. Will he wrestle someone bigger and better than him?**

No. Children are matched as evenly as possible by the following: skill, weight, age, and experience. We make sure that your child wrestles only children that they are evenly matched to. We strive for our children to win 50% or better of the matches they wrestle. This way they have the opportunity to learn from their losses, enjoy their wins, and improve and grow athletically and in the sport.