
PFWA FAQ

Passion First Wrestling Academy

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What is Passion First Wrestling Academy?

PFWA is a year round youth wrestling program for beginners.

What is the coach to athlete ratio?

Current enrollment limit is 24 wrestlers. Additional inquiries into the program will be placed on a waiting list until spots become available.

The program is designed to have at least 6 active coaches for a 4:1 athlete to coach ratio. There will be a minimum of three coaches at each practice to ensure an 8:1 athlete to coach ratio.

What if my child needs to take a break from the program for xyz reason?

Athletes may freeze their enrollment at any time.

Wrestlers will rejoin the program at their current shirt level. Any athlete that returns within six months will be allowed to bypass any waiting lists at that time.

How do you decide on who is going to test out each month?

We don't. It is the shared responsibility of the athlete, the coach, and the parent to prepare for each achievement level. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the athlete to show that they are ready to advance by their performance at practice.

Please refrain from inquiring about an athlete's testing status. We will be thorough with our ongoing evaluations and will adjust accordingly in order to help along each athlete. However, we will not just give shirts away for good attendance. These achievements have to be earned!

How do we pay for the program?

You may pay online monthly or subscribe for automatic payments through our website via PayPal or a credit card.

I can't pay online through the website. Is there another way?

Of course! Just email us at wrestlingwithcharacter@gmail.com to discuss

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PFWA FAQ continued

“My son/daughter want to wrestle in xyz tournament this year. Is that okay with you? It is just one or two...”

We are firm in our philosophy that competition can wait. In fact, we even named this program around that belief. The Passion First program was developed to support part of Wrestling With Character’s mission “to grow participation by retaining more young athletes in the sport of wrestling...”

We want to create a passion inside of our kids that comes from having a positive experience with the sport. Many kids get “thrown into the fire” way too soon when it comes to youth wrestling and have a bad experience before they even get a chance to really figure out what is going on. We want to take a different approach by giving kids a platform to learn some basic wrestling skills and experience the sport for what it is at its core - before adding on the extra stress and pressure of a kids wrestling tournament.

For some reason, kids wrestling in the United States is one of the only examples of introducing competition into the early stages of learning a martial art. You never see or hear of a karate or tae-kwon-do beginner entering into competitions as soon as they sign-up for classes. Often times, they must achieve a certain belt or rank before this can happen. Even in wrestling-rich nations such as the Soviet Union and Iran, many wrestlers tell stories about years and years of training before they began competing formally. In the United States however, first year wrestlers are usually expected to begin competing right away - many times after only a few practices. In a sport as grueling and personal as wrestling, negative experiences are often traumatic and irreversible.

In our opinion, this approach continues to drive too many kids out of the sport way too early. That leaves us with A) only the small percentage of young kids who will automatically embrace the sport right away and B) the kids with overzealous parents who will pressure and manipulate their children into continuing with the sport. Many of these kids will form resentments and eventually end up quitting once they become old enough to assert their independence. Others will just flat burn out when the years of travel, weight cuts, and anxiety finally take their toll.

For those reasons and more we do not condone and strongly urge against PFWA members entering into outside wrestling competitions. We intentionally integrate plenty of live wrestling, mini-tournaments, situational competitions, etc. throughout our practice to ensure that kids are getting experience to compete and scrap against each other.

Our kids will be battle tested by the time they graduate with their black shirt. They will have already experienced that first cross face, fat lip, bloody nose, and mat burn. By experiencing these challenges first at practice, they will be more likely to adapt successfully to the physicality of formal competition.

We are not saying that our way is the right way or the best way. We encourage all families to research their options to find a club whose philosophies match their own. We will always operate according to our club mission, philosophy and guiding principles.

We do support and encourage takedown tournaments for Green shirt athletes that would like to begin competition.

