

# 20 Myths About Youth Wrestling

BY MATT KRUMRIE | MARCH 29, 2018, 12:05 P.M. (ET)

Wrestling is a unique sport. It's tough, but rewarding. It challenges, but inspires.

But those not familiar, or new to the sport of wrestling, may not understand what is a myth, and what is reality. And these myths can dissuade parents from encouraging kids to join wrestling, and/or keep kids who may want to wrestle from joining the sport.

What are some of those wrestling myths, and what is true?

We break it down here, analyzing 20 myths about youth wrestling:

- 1. Wrestling is an expensive sport.** Wrestling is one of the most inexpensive sports, with basic costs including shoes, headgear, and uniforms. There are small fees to join clubs, and registration for most events is under \$15. No paying for ice time here.
- 2. Wrestling promotes violence.** Above anything else, wrestlers learn discipline and respect. Matches are started and ended with a handshake, which builds mutual respect between competitors.
- 3. Early success guarantees future stardom.** Couldn't be further from the truth. A 9-year-old who wins a state or national championship is not guaranteed anything. Kids develop at different paces; many times the best wrestlers lose more than win in their younger years. Understand this: Numerous high school state champions, collegiate All-Americans, and national champions never won a match their first year, and didn't win many matches until later in their wrestling career.
- 4. Wrestling is dangerous.** Statistics show that wrestling is one of the safest sports for young athletes. There is one official in charge of two kids and their safety. Not many other sports have that kind of coverage.
- 5. Wrestlers all cut weight.** Wrestling has systems in place that prevent kids from excessive weight cutting. Many coaches encourage kids to wrestle at a more natural weight, which helps kids focus on development over weight management.
- 6. All wrestlers develop cauliflower ear.** Headgear is required during practice and matches to prevent the symptoms associated with cauliflower ear.
- 7. Wrestlers often get skin infections.** Skin inspections are mandatory prior to competition for all USA Wrestling events. With a disciplined ritual that includes showering and cleaning equipment immediately after practice/competition, these infections can be avoided.
- 8. My son/daughter are too tall or too short to wrestle.** "That's the best thing about this sport," says Steve Richardson, Kids Director for Michigan USA Wrestling, and Director of the Michigan Matcat Wrestling Club in South Lyon, MI. "A wrestler can be successful with any body type." As wrestlers develop, they can use their physical makeup to their advantage, whether short or tall.
- 9. Wrestlers must wear singlets.** Most youth wrestling leagues have approved the use of a two-piece singlet, compression shirts and even shorts and T-shirts. There is a trend in wrestling that is moving away from the traditional singlet.
- 10. My daughter will have to wrestle with boys.** There are several leagues and tournaments for girls only. In fact, women's wrestling is the fastest growing collegiate sport.
- 11. Wrestling has to be done year-round.** Wrestling has proven to help kids in all other sports. It teaches unrivaled discipline, hard work and dedication to help in all other sports. Best of all? Many wrestling coaches also encourage young athletes to participate in multiple sports, to avoid burnout or overuse injuries.
- 12. My son/daughter may be too "emotional" for wrestling.** "Wrestling teaches us to face some of our biggest fears," Richardson says. "Nearly every kid who has ever wrestled has increased confidence, self-determination, and sense of accomplishment."
- 13. My son/daughter may be starting in the sport too late.** Early level youth wrestling is fun. But only older kids truly understand the mechanics and dedication needed to become successful. Many successful wrestlers do not start until closer to high school.

**14. My wrestler will be overmatched against a more experienced wrestler in their first matches.** Most youth wrestling leagues offer “novice” divisions where kids will only compete against other wrestlers new to the sport. Over time, they will gradually move up based on experience/skill.

**15. Wrestling isn't a team sport.** The concept of team sports is to generate teamwork, respect, and mutual acceptance, Richardson says. No other sport defines these traits like wrestling. “These young athletes practice, sweat, win, lose, and sometimes bleed with each other,” he says. “The bonds in this sport among teammates is unrivaled.”

**16. Kids need to know a ton of moves at an early age.** Kids need to focus on learning the [seven basic skills](#): stance, motion, level change, penetration, lifting, back step, back arch. Kids should also spend time learning skills such as tumbling, gymnastics, and flexibility. “These are foundations to becoming a better athlete,” said Scott Kluever, State Coach with the Wisconsin Wrestling Federation, and a middle school wrestling coach in Kaukauna, WI.

**17. Kids need to wrestle in competitions every weekend.** Wrestlers learn far more from a structured hour and half practice than they will in wrestling maybe nine minutes of competition. “Competitions are a great place to test your skills after hours of practice,” Kluever says. “I used the philosophy of three practices for every one match.”

**18. Kids have to be tough to be wrestlers.** Wrestling is for everyone! Wrestling is a sport that includes all sizes, races, and genders. “Coaches need to teach passion for the sport. That is the key to being a wrestler,” Kluever says.

**19. Wrestling coaches wear singlets in practice:** Don't believe what you see on TV and in the movies. Coaches do not wear singlets during practice. They wear shorts and T-shirts or compression shorts/shirts.

**20. Wrestling families are crazy!** “Correct, no argument here,” says Richardson. They are also close-knit and develop special bonds that support, encourage, and grow over the years together.

What other myths do you hear about wrestling? Share in the comments below, and share this article with wrestling and non-wrestling families, and encourage them to learn about the sport, and join a club or team soon!