**Pittsford Junior Panthers Wrestling**

**Wrestler/Parent Handbook 2021-2022**

Coaching Goals and Philosophy

* Teach the basics of wrestling technique in an environment that is safe and low-risk physically and emotionally
* Guide ongoing improvement in skills, ability, and strategy
* Develop sportsmanship, teamwork, and responsibility
* Offer opportunities for competition. Winning isn’t everything, but we do want to put ourselves in a position to win both as individuals and as a team.
* Encourage lifelong learning
* Help grow the local wrestling community
* Pittsford Junior Panthers Wrestling is part of “One Team” which includes youth through varsity wrestlers, coaches, families, and supporters
* **The ultimate goal is to have all of this year’s wrestlers come back next year!**

Expectations of Wrestlers

Wrestling is an individual sport, but each wrestler depends on his/her teammates to get better. Wrestlers are expected to be good teammates at all times. This means:

* Being prepared to wrestle
  + Being responsible for all equipment and gear
  + Staying on top of schoolwork
  + Eating right and trying to stay healthy (though NOT at a certain weight)
* Paying attention and following instructions from coaches (“Take a knee”)
* Being a good partner
  + During practice, giving gentle resistance while allowing your partner to complete a move
  + During live wrestling, trying new moves with your partner’s safety partner in mind
* Being a good teammate
  + Watching and cheering on your teammates during competitions
  + Being respectful, helpful, and friendly inside and outside the practice room
  + Sticking up for teammates when needed
  + Being a role model for younger, less experienced, or smaller wrestlers
* Being part of a culture which encourages improvement in others
* Being a good sport whether winning or not

Expectations of Parents

* Make sure your child arrives at practice and competitions on time (better yet, 10-15 minutes early)
* Help your child develop responsibility for his/her equipment
* During practice, please
  + Limit interaction with your child to maximize the coaches’ effectiveness.
  + Refrain from cheering or coaching in order to maintain a positive atmosphere for all wrestlers.
* During competition, please
  + Focus on encouragement and cheering rather than coaching from the sidelines
  + Trust the coaches to be familiar with your child and his/her skills
  + Model positive encouragement and sportsmanship. Remember that it can be stressful watching your child compete, regardless of how the match is going.
* Bring any concerns – yours or your child’s – to the coaches promptly

Equipment

* Required:
  + Shorts and T-shirt
  + Clean, indoor-only shoes (to keep the mats free from outdoor dirt and germs)
* Highly recommended:
  + Headgear (to protect the ears against repeated pressure)
  + Wrestling shoes (more flexible than sneakers, but still provide a little more traction and ankle support)
  + Mouthguard (to protect the teeth and tongue; required for wrestlers with braces)
  + Water bottle
* Optional:
  + Singlet (for competition; form-fitting and hard to accidentally grasp, allows the body to be seen clearly by referees, can identify you as part of a team)
  + Leggings
  + Jump rope (to develop foot speed)

Practice

* Monday and Wednesday, 6:00 – 7:30, in the wrestling room at Pittsford Sutherland High School. (If there is no school, there is no practice.)
  + There is a “Bonus Practice” on Friday from 6-7:30 to work on conditioning, agility, and/or specific skills an individual wrestler would like to work on.
* We understand that you and your children have multiple commitments and may not be able to make all practices. However, for the greatest safety and fullest experience of the wrestlers, we strongly encourage attendance at all practices. Please notify the coaching staff if you need to miss a practice.
* Practice schedule
  + Before practice - wrestlers can work on technique with coaches, play non-contact/non-impact games, jump rope, or sit with family
  + 6:00 sharp – warm-ups, including aerobic, plyometric, strength, and flexibility activities
  + After warm-ups, the team will split into groups, based on experience, for technique instruction (review of old moves, learning new moves)
  + Live wrestling (mini-competitions)
  + Game, if time permits
* Throughout practice, we will emphasize safety, good technique, and good sportsmanship and teamwork.
* We expect practice to be loud, with kids counting aloud during warmups and giving their assent when asked if they are ready. This is one of the few places where kids are encouraged to shout, and we want them to take advantage of that. Note that the coaches may also need to be loud in order to get the kids’ attention (plus, it can be hard to hear through headgear).
* Parents are welcome to watch practice.
  + Parents, especially those with wrestling experience, are encouraged to help. Please let Coach Lynn know ahead of time.
  + You must complete sexual abuse awareness training and are expected to be available to all wrestlers, not just your own child.
* *Please note: until further notice, all youth wrestlers must be accompanied by an adult when going to the bathroom or locker room at the practice facility.*

Safety

* COVID (as per Pittsford Central School District guidelines):
  + Wrestlers must wear a mask during the entire practice
  + Coaches need to be vaccinated or be tested weekly
  + Any spectators must wear a mask
  + Sign-in sheet at the start of practice in case contact tracing is needed
  + Anyone who is ill should not be at practice or competitions
  + Only students in PCSD can participate
* Injuries – while injury can occur in any sport, the coaches will make every effort to reduce the risk by
  + Matching practice partners as closely as possible by experience and weight
  + Emphasizing good technique, good form, and control – sloppiness or frustration can hurt you or your partner
    - Some moves can be uncomfortable even when done correctly, but no moves are designed to hurt either wrestler
  + Discouraging the use of potentially unsafe moves
  + Expecting attention and consideration from each wrestler
    - Any wrestler who puts his/her opponent at risk through improper technique or heightened emotion will be corrected immediately. Any wrestler who seems to be deliberately trying to hurt a teammate will be asked to sit out or to leave practice.
* Weight
  + Weight classes help level the playing field and limit injuries
  + Weight loss (“cutting,” “making weight”) is actively discouraged
  + Good nutrition and regular physical activity outside of practice are always encouraged
* Skin conditions
  + Because wrestling is a skin-to-skin sport, all wrestlers must take precautions to limit the spread of infection:
    - “Practice is not over until you have showered” – shower as soon after practice as possible
    - Anyone with an exposed rash should not be on the mat; all wounds must be completely and securely covered (anyone with a skin infection will not be allowed to practice until cleared by his/her physician)
    - Keep nails short
    - Don’t share equipment
    - Wear clean clothes to each practice
    - Keep equipment clean, including bags and towels
    - Don’t wear the shoes you wrestle in outside of practice, and keep street shoes off the mat (including those of parents and siblings)
  + Mats are cleaned daily
* Other issues
  + Wrestlers are in sight of multiple adults at all points in time, and all practices are open
  + Each of the coaches/parents on the mats is required to complete sexual abuse awareness training
  + Yelling
    - Coaches and parents should raise their voices only as needed to be heard
    - Anyone yelling AT a wrestler in a non-constructive, non-instructive way will be asked to leave
* We strive to maintain a culture of physical and mental safety.
* The head coach has training in concussion-related issues (both by requirement and by professional experience)

Competition

* Encouraged, but NOT REQUIRED – at the discretion of the wrestler, parent(s), and coaching staff
* Can be a reward for the practice time put in
* Can allow you to see where you stand among similar wrestlers
* If at an appropriate level, all competition results in a wrestler either winning and/or learning
* Dual Meets – common at the high school and collegiate levels; our team participates in these as part of the Greater Rochester Youth Wrestling League (GRYWL)
  + Typically occur on weeknights (sometimes on a practice night, sometimes not) from January to March; usually take about 1 ½ - 2 hours. We host some and travel to others.
  + There can be multiple dual meets on the same night (tri-meet or quad-meet)
  + Team vs. Team with one wrestler (the “starter”) for each set weight class
    - Typically a wrestler with multiple years of experience
    - If a non-starter defeats the starter in a “wrestle-off,” the NS becomes the starter. See below for more details.
  + Use youth weight classes (by lbs): 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100, 110, 125, Heavyweight (up to 160 lbs). Mat-side weigh-ins prior to each meet.
  + Officiated by Section V referees
  + Team scoring based on results of individual matches
    - Decision (win by 0-7 points): 3 team points
    - Major decision (win by 8-14 points): 4 team points
    - Technical fall (win by 15 points/ahead by 15 points at any point in the match): 5 team points
    - Fall/pin: 6 team points
    - Forfeit or disqualification: 6 points
    - Only wrestlers who live within the Pittsford School District can score points for the team.
  + Wrestlers who are not the starter are encouraged to participate in “exhibition” matches
    - No team points scored
    - Matches arranged by the coaches with attention to age, weight, and skill
    - Ideally, these matches outnumber the scoring matches
* Tournaments – we plan to go to 3-4 as a team
  + Usually occur on weekends (typically Sundays to accommodate other sports)
  + Can be long – expect to spend 4-8 hours, or more, day at the tournament – with lots of hurry-up-and-wait
  + Individual competitions with wrestlers separated by age, weight, and (sometimes) skill level
  + See below for more details

Greater Rochester Youth Wrestling League (GRYWL; [www.GRWYL.com](http://www.GRWYL.com))

* Formed in 2015 by coaches from Penfield and Fairport to promote wrestling in the area and to help town-based teams develop feeder programs for the high schools. Coach Lynn is a board member.
* Open to town-based youth teams of children in grades K-6; now has 17+ member teams
* Provides youth wrestlers match experience in dual meets
  + ~8 dual meets per team
  + 4 divisions, with division and league champions

New York Wrestling Association for Youth (NYWAY)

* Supports youth wrestling throughout the state
* Offers insurance for wrestlers
* Sponsors tournaments, including the state championship

How to Get Involved

* Watch practices
* Attend dual meets for the youth and high schools teams
* Join the Booster Committee
* Become involved with the Wrestlers in Business Network [www.wrestlersinbusiness.org/wny](http://www.wrestlersinbusiness.org/wny)
* Organize social activities for the team

Housekeeping

* All wrestlers competing in GRWYL events or NYWAY tournaments must have a NYWAY card ($17), which covers insurance outside of our facility. Register your child at www.nyway.org.
* If you do not wish your child to appear in any photos on social media or promotional materials, please let us know.
* Email: [pittsford.junior.wrestling@gmail.com](mailto:justinforestlynn@gmail.com)
* Website: [www.pittsfordwrestling.com](http://www.pittsfordwrestling.com)
* Facebook: Pittsford Junior Panthers Wrestling

Coaching Staff

Head coach

Justin Lynn – (302) 559-7446; Pittsford.junior.wrestling@gmail.com

* Wrestled from kindergarten through college
* Scholar All-American @ RIT
* Assistant Coach Penfield Youth Wrestling (2015-2016)
* Head Coach Pittsford Youth Wrestling (2016-present)
* Pittsford Little League manager (2018-present)
* Employed as pediatrician @ Golisano Children's Hospital

Coaches:

Steve Sawall

* Volunteer Assistant Coach & Youth Instructor
* Started wrestling @ 8 y/o
* Wrestled High School @ Mynderse Academy
* Member St. Johns University Judo Club and Remix Combat Sambo Club during college
* Director of operations for USA Olympian Ken Chertow's Gold Metal training camps
* Private wrestling instructor
* Currently employed @ Paychex

Adam Buckholtz

Gabi Gerby

Chris Rutledge

* Wrestled in High School and College
* All American Academic Team @ SUNY Brockport
* Assistant Coach Pittsford Youth Wrestling (2018-present)
* Managing partner Niagara Frontier Anesthesia (United Memorial Medical Center and Wyoming County Hospital)

FAQs

**Can girls wrestle?**

Absolutely! One of USA Wrestling’s three gold medals in the most recent Olympics (2020) was won by Tamyra Mensah-Stock.

**Will my child need to lose weight for wrestling?**

No. Your child may lose weight from increased physical activity, but losing weight intentionally to make a certain weight class is not expected and is actively discouraged in this age group. Even in high school and college, weight classes and the practice of “cutting weight” are now closely watched and highly regulated.

In competitions, which are divided by age and weight, your child will wrestle someone within 1-2 years of their age and within 5 pounds of their weight.

Your child will not be asked to wrestle at a lower weight class. If a wrestler wishes to try a lower weight class, this must be closely considered and evaluated by coaches and parents.

**What about cauliflower ear?**

Cauliflower ear can develop in wrestlers over time as a result of repeated trauma (rubbing or hits) to the ears. It is largely preventable by using well-fitting headgear, which is required at all competitions. Please ask the coaches any questions you may have about appropriateness and fit of your child’s headgear.

**What about concussions?**

Concussions can occur in any sport. Wrestling is a contact sport, but it is not a collision sport. Technique is taught according to safety and is regulated by coaches and referees. This technique not only focuses on the one doing the move, but also on proper landing.

Extras: Wrestle-offs for Starting Positions on GRYWL Dual Meet Team

“Starters” are those who score points for the team for the dual meet competition. They will be determined by the coaching staff at the end of the first half of the season, in early-mid December. Any other wrestler who is interested in competition can have an exhibition match (assuming availability of an appropriate wrestler on the other team). A wrestler who wants to start at a weight class must be able to beat the current starter in a refereed competition, such as a wrestle-off or a tournament match. Wrestle-offs are direct competitions between wrestlers that occur during a practice.

Wrestle-off rules:

* Each wrestler competing for a starting spot must be at or below the competition weight, with weigh-ins at the start of practice.
* Wrestlers can be coached, as long as each wrestler has a coach.
* A wrestler’s parent cannot referee his/her child’s match.
* The first wrestle-off may take place the final week of December, the winners of these matches will be the starters for the first match.
* A wrestler can challenge for a spot once per week or once per dual meet interval. (For example, if Wrestler A defeats wrestler B in a wrestle-off, A is the starter and B cannot request another wrestle-off to take the starter position until after the next dual meet.)
  + If Wrestlers A and B compete at a tournament, whoever wins that match will be the new starter. (Only direct competition counts; tournament placement is not a factor.)

Extras: Tournaments

Tournaments are individual competitions with occasional opportunities for team scoring (though dual meet tournaments also exist). There are multiple tournaments each weekend, usually starting in January. Each tournament can run from a few hours to the entire day.

Wrestlers are matched up in “brackets” by age, weight, and, occasionally, experience/skill level. Some tournaments use set weight classes (e.g., 65 lbs, 90 lbs), while others use the Madison System (all wrestlers in a bracket weigh within 10% of each other). Wrestlers can wrestle “up” in multiple age groups (e.g., a 65-lb child can wrestle in the 70-lb weight class).

* Brackets:
  + Round-robin (most common at youth tournaments): wrestlers competes against all other wrestlers in their bracket
  + Standard (think March Madness): usually double elimination (two losses and competition is over)

Types of tournaments:

* Top 100 Tournaments: These are tournaments that drive state rankings for youth and usually draw the toughest competition.  These are advised primarily for more experienced wrestlers.
* Other Tournaments: Many of the local schools have tournaments that are not Top 100 and may not have as wide a draw, but can still have a good level of competition.
* NYWAY States/State Qualifiers: The timing of the state tournament determines the end of our season.  In order to qualify for States, a wrestler needs to place in the top 4 in his/her region (we are in the Western region).
* Novice Tournaments: These are tournaments designed specifically for less experienced wrestlers to get experience and are good for kids in their first two or three years of wrestling. Usually these tournaments are few and far between, but some local schools have held them in recent years. The Midlakes Tournament is also a good one for the kids younger than 8 – it is not a novice tournament, but a takedown tournament; takedowns are one of the first things new wrestlers learn.
* Local tournaments can be found at: <http://nyyouthwrestling.com/Tournaments.aspx>

Extras: Scoring Basics

Positions

* Neutral: both wrestlers are standing; always happens at the start of the match
* Top/control: can either start in this position or move into this position
* Bottom: can start in this position (referee’s position) or be placed in this position by the opponent

Periods/Timing

* Three 1-minute periods
* Match may end sooner if there is a fall/pin or technical fall
* Match starts in neutral position
* At the start of each period one wrestler, determined by coin flip, will have the choice of top, bottom, or neutral

Scoring:

* From neutral position:
  + Takedown (gaining clear control to top position): 2 points
* From top/control position:
  + Near fall 2 (opponent’s back is exposed at less than a 90° angle to the mat for a count of 2): 2 points
  + Near fall 3 (opponent’s back is exposed at less than a 90° angle to the mat for a count of 5): 3 points
  + Fall/pin (both of opponent’s shoulder blades are on the mat at the same time): end of match
* From bottom position:
  + Escape (return to neutral position): 1 point
  + Reversal (bottom wrestler gains control/top position): 2 points

A wrestler wins a match by scoring more points or by pinning his/her opponent.

Extras: Why Wrestling?

**Coach Lynn’s take**

Wrestlers are a different type of people. You can tell them apart from the way they hold themselves. They display a quiet, but obvious, confidence when they walk in the room knowing that they can be in charge of any situation. They are comfortable being relied upon to be “the one” to complete the task.

Wrestling is an individual sport, but with a large team component. In competition all eyes are on you with only you and your opponent responsible for who wins and who loses. You are also the one you need to answer to if you did not do your best. You are the one responsible for making the improvements. You can take pride in your wins, take pride in in the effort in your losses, take pride in learning a new move or improving an old one, and take pride in maintaining your stance through the entire match, no matter how tired you were.

Wrestling is a merit-based sport. Most spots on a wrestling team are determined by a wrestle-off where the winner of that match earns the spot. Wrestling is also a sport that rewards hard work as the harder you work the better you get. I was never the most naturally-talented one on my team, but I started on every team I was on because of the hard work I put in day in and day out. There will always be those who are more naturally talented, but there are enough spots on a team that there will always be a spot for a hard worker.

Wrestling is a sneaky team sport. On the surface it is an individual sport, but in order to get better you need your teammates to help you, to push you. Learning new moves and perfecting old ones requires a good partner to work with. I always prided myself on being a good teammate and being a coach on the mat. Some of my proudest moments in my career are helping a high-school teammate win the state championship and training with one of my college teammates during Nationals where he became an All-American.

Wrestling is a tough sport. There is not always instant gratification. It is very similar to being a doctor in that no matter what is going on, no matter what the situation a doctor is always a doctor and a wrestler is always a wrestler. The discipline required for wrestling is there on and off the mat.

Wrestling is not for everyone, but those who stick with it and “catch the wrestling bug” will be rewarded for a lifetime.

**An entrepreneur’s take**

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevecooper/2012/07/31/why-wrestlers-make-the-best-employees/#6fb706b6734a>