

What have you done for wrestling lately? I alluded to the condition of wrestling in my last article and not surprisingly had a few comments, concerns and yes even a criticism or two. My intent was not to be negative about the sport as it is, I was hopeful that it would make people aware of the needs the sport has and encourage folks to jump on board and become more involved and to be open minded about the future.

I know that many youth programs of all sports face the same concerns and issues as wrestling does.

I also would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment that our coaches, parents and fans put into wrestling. It is encouraging to see all the individuals that step forward to offer their help and experience at the many tournaments around the state. It is the hope of the WWF board that we can continue to expand on our numbers of officials and pairers in the future. I continually invite and encourage our parents and youth to consider becoming involved at any level possible to help with events and programs. I would like every graduating senior to consider some form of involvement in the near future, be it refereeing, coaching in a school program or assisting in a neighboring youth program. In conversations with high school coaches they have stated that they are very willing and anxious to allow that type of help. It could be as easy as asking a parent or club leader if they know of any opportunities or contacting the local athletic director and getting help in licensing as an official. The WWCA is working on developing a mentoring program for new officials of all ages, I believe this would be a monumental step to increase the numbers of officials in the state.

In 2008 USA Wrestling had approximately 2,700 licensed mat officials and pairers nation wide, those numbers have been very consistent through the years. The concern with those numbers are the increased opportunities for competition, we are expanding on events and are relying on the same number of officials to assist at these events. This spring the WWF will be hosting a combined freestyle

and greco state tournament, we are doing this with the hopes that it will free up a weekend and possibly reduce some of the costs for families. With this schedule we will be expecting a commitment and putting pressure on the officials we currently have to be on the mat and behind the computers for a long weekend. If you were interested and had the time, ask an official or pairer if there is a need and an opportunity to get involved. I had asked a parent years back if they thought they were contributing to the sport and they immediately said yes, by allowing their child to be a member and compete in our events. I asked that same individual if he ever considered how the events happen, he never gave that a thought. That individual is now a licensed pairer and is excited to be part of what the WWF is doing and willing to assist at all or any event. That parent did not realize that help was needed nor did he feel welcome in the system, he is now a great spokesman and asset to the WWF. Next time you're at a tournament or your local club practice, step forward and offer your services and willingness to help.

The Wisconsin Wrestling Federation has much to offer all age levels and we are continually looking to enhance our programs and make more opportunities available to all members , young and old, your participation is important and very much appreciated.

Thank you from the entire board of directors , hoping for a wonderful tournament season to all.

Yours in Wrestling , Dave Black