

To whom it may concern,

In my heart I believe wrestling to be THE sport for everyone irrespective of size or gender. I understand there are many activities to choose from, but keep in mind that as a wrestler you will gain better balance, strength, quickness, endurance, and understanding of leverage - abilities that are useful in all sports. As beneficial as these physical improvements are the MOST IMPORTANT IMPROVEMENTS ARE MENTAL! As a wrestler, you will improve your composure, self-confidence and self-awareness. Once combined, the mental and physical fortitude you learn allow you to push beyond fatigue and other factors to achieve any goal. These goals are not always monumental, however, the constant achievement of small goals adds up to a successful person in any chosen endeavor. The ultimate goal of wrestling is to MAKE SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE! Success is not free, it is earned and wrestling provides the skills necessary to earn that success.

Some may wonder why I am spending the time to write a letter to any child that would choose to pick the easy way through life; the answer is, because I would like to impart some wisdom upon them AND their parents. I, and other coaches, expend A LOT of time and energy coaching children in the hopes they will become better members of society who contribute to their community and family. Most coaches, myself included, are always perplexed by kids that show an enormous amount of potential, but one day decide "I want to do something easier than this" or, "I am going to take a break from working this hard." Doing so will NOT put them on the road to success. I do understand that children try to push boundaries to see what is acceptable, however, as coaches we do not accept, condone, or acquiesce to those attempts and we continue to maintain the standard line, "This will make you better at whatever you chose to do in the future."

It is never easy to be the parent of a child that chooses do something that will hinder their future, but it is our responsibility as parents to do everything in our power to encourage successful behavior in spite of a child's desire to take the easy way. Someone that has worked hard enough to be successful in school activities, typically garners some scholarship money for continued education, understands that continued effort provides positive results, and finds a niche for themselves that will benefit them and their families. Yes, this sounds like hype, but look around at the graduates that have done well and ask yourself did they get there by choosing the easy way or did they work hard to achieve the goals they set using the skills wrestling instils.

Athletic involvement in school builds the foundation for success in life, however not everyone is capable of wrestling. Unfortunately, some physical ailments cannot be overcome in wrestling, however, I do believe all others to be capable of wrestling. Wrestling is not an easy sport for many reasons, but it is also a great sport for many of the same reasons. I will end by repeating the most important part, Success is not free, it is earned!

Thank you for your time,

Al Lewis  
US Naval Academy Graduate 1989  
Division I Wrestler  
2 Time Florida High School State Champ