



2021-2022 WELCOME LETTER

Welcome to Eastern Loudoun Wrestling Club (ELWC). Our club was formed in 1975 and is one of the largest youth clubs in the nation with boys and girls ranging from age 4-14. Along with our partner organization, Top of the Podium Wrestling Center, we have led the resurgence of wrestling in our area. Our goal is simple: To make sure your child has a positive experience in the world's oldest sport!

Last year was a challenging year due to the pandemic. Working with TOP to ensure safety, however, our members practices and competed all season without incident. This year, we expect more of a "normal" year but will, of course, monitor conditions and make adjustments as needed.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Schedule. The traditional winter season runs from early November until the end of February. Practices are held at local schools and TOP (depending on the team). Breaks are taken over the Thanksgiving and Winter Holidays, although often optional practices are offered. More information on competitions is provided below.

Coaches. Each ELWC team has its own coaches who manage the squads and communicate with families. The latter occurs through email or a site like TeamSnap. Especially in the pre-season, you will also receive communications from the club on matters affecting all teams. Our coaches are required to obtain USA Wrestling memberships that include safety training and background checks. We also have a policy prohibiting coaches from being alone with minor athletes. Parents should be sure to arrive/pick up children in a timely manner to assist in compliance with this policy. If you're interested in helping the team on or off the mats, we almost always can use more volunteers---just let the coaches know!

Hygiene. It's very important to shower as soon as possible after practices or competitions. Otherwise, athletes risk obtaining skin infections such as ringworm, staph, etc. If a wrestler cannot shower in a prompt manner, products such as DEFENSE Wipes (sold at TOP's wrestling store) can be used before leaving the facility. It's also important to wipe down gear regularly, avoid wearing wrestling shoes outside of the training area, wear clean clothes, trim fingernails, cover up cuts/scrapes that can easily become infected, etc.

If you see evidence of a skin infection, please visit a doctor before attending practice or competition. Wrestlers with ringworm, for example, are not allowed to wrestle without a doctor's note stating they have been treated for at least three days. If you're not sure, please ask a coach before participating because some conditions are contagious.

Sportsmanship and Conduct. In practice and competition, wrestlers should display good sportsmanship and exemplary behavior at all times. Foul language, rude/offensive comments, bullying, unnecessarily rough behavior, etc. will not be tolerated and is grounds for suspension or dismissal from the club. We expect wrestlers to respect coaches, referees, spectators and fellow athletes at all times.

Parental Conduct. Wrestling is an intense sport, and parents sometimes get emotional or “caught up” in the excitement. It’s critical parents abide by the same standards that we demand of athletes. Referees, coaches, and everyone else should be always be respected. Inappropriate, rude, antagonistic or confrontational behavior will not be tolerated and is grounds for removal from practices or competitions. ELWC is committed to ensuring family-friendly, positive environments for youth athletes.

In addition, families are certainly allowed to help their children become better wrestlers, but in general, this is the coaches’ responsibility. When parents are too intense, it often drives kids out of the sport. Wrestling is demanding enough, so we believe parents should be encouragers and resist the temptation to over teach and/or put too much pressure on youth athletes. Along these lines, winning and losing is not that important at the youth level. It’s more critical that wrestlers develop and enjoy the sport---this way, they will be much more likely to stick with wrestling as they get older. Please keep youth sports in perspective and remember that learning life lessons is far more important than a win-loss record.

PRACTICES

Safety. It’s essential athletes abide by common sense safety measures. This includes being aware of surrounding (e.g., other wrestlers, edge of mat) and not engaging in “horseplay” which may cause injuries.

Arrival/Dismissal. Athletes should attempt to arrive on time and be prepared (i.e., shoes on, bathroom breaks already taken) when practice begins. It’s not the end of the world if your athlete must arrive late, but he/she will miss warmup time. Please respect the practice facility and abide by any rules required by the facility.

Absentee Policy. Unless your coach informs you otherwise, it is not necessary to inform coaches in advance that a wrestler will miss practice.

Sickness. If your wrestler is ill (or beginning to show symptoms), especially in current times, please do not attend practice.

School Closings. Practices at schools are sometimes cancelled due to weather, holidays, or other events taking place at the school. Your coaches will let you know when this happens. Practices at TOP are rarely cancelled for any reason, including weather. Assume TOP events are taking place unless announced otherwise on social media.

EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS

Wrestling equipment is less expensive than many sports. The only required gear are wrestling shoes and a headgear (also mouth guards for those with braces). We strongly recommend supporting Top of the Podium by purchasing your gear at TOP’s wrestling store called “Takedowns.” TOP is a local, small business, 501(c)3 nonprofit that supports youth wrestling in our area. Just as importantly, prices are discounted to help families, and the staff is extremely knowledgeable about wrestling equipment. For

planning purposes, shoes typically range from \$50-130 and headgear from \$20-50. TOP's hours are limited, but there are always special hours in the pre-season.

Regarding uniforms, ELWC typically lends out singlets (the typical wrestling uniform) for usage with a small security deposit. Alternatively, wrestlers may have the option of purchasing and even customizing their own singlets. Our Middle School teams receive a compression shirt with their fees and usually wear fight shorts (available at TOP at cost).

COMPETITION

To Compete or Not Compete. This is an individual decision based on a wrestler's age, maturity, attitude, etc. Wrestling is an intense, physical sport, and not all kids are ready for the experience. Interestingly, this sometimes has nothing to do with ability.

In general, especially older kids (e.g., middle school), we believe most wrestlers should try competition before deciding not to compete. A common reason for not competing is the fear of losing (or pressure from parents/coaches), but hopefully these factors are not a hindrance in your child's case. The reality is many of the most important life lessons obtained from wrestling result from competing. Even if wrestlers decide not to compete, coaches will often encourage them to attend competitions to support teammates, build friendships, and enjoy the experience.

Locations/Times of Competitions. This depends on your team, but most ELWC wrestlers compete at Top of the Podium. TOP's Winter Wrestling Series (WWS) is one of the premier youth leagues in the country (for all experience levels), and TOP also holds other events (e.g., Dulles Duals) throughout the season. In most cases, wrestlers must decide early in the week if they will compete on the weekend. Coaches will provide more information on this process.

OUR MASCOT

ELWC has the best mascot in wrestling for several reasons!

- A leopard is one of the few animals in the savannah that does not retreat when wounded. It fights back rather than giving up.
- Leopards are so strong that they can climb trees while carrying their meals.
- Leopards are super quick, agile and powerful.

We hope your child will be a proud member of the Eastern Loudoun Leopards!

