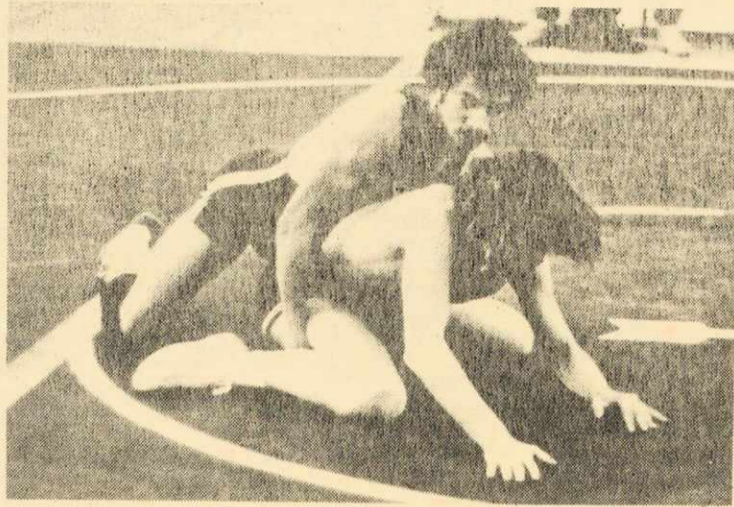


Fastest Growing Sport in Canada

Some three thousand spectators jam into Lakehead University to watch the All-Ontario High School Wrestling Championships, the largest indoor athletic event in Canada comprising some five hundred division winners. Six wrestling mats dot the gym floor as some 400 elementary school children prepare to compete. British Columbia anticipates over 500 wrestlers to compete in the Canadian Junior and Senior Championships in 1975. In the recent British Empire Games, Canadian wrestlers dominated the event capturing the majority of gold medals. What is it that has contributed to this phenomenal growth? There are several factors which have led to its growing popularity.

The realization by many schools of physical education (including several in the Maritimes) of the importance of wrestling has prompted its inclusion in the curriculum as a compulsory course. What rationale has spirited this move? The recognition that wrestling is one of the most basic activities as evidenced by the number of preschool and elementary children that partake in the activity without any external motivation. As well wrestling involves utilization of the total muscle mass thus enhancing the physical maturation of young people. It is a pure sport involving an individuals physical capacity as defined by strength, flexibility, speed and balance. Mental and physical discipline are important aspects of a good wrestling program. There is no opportunity for the competitor to blame his equipment or his teammates for a poor performance. He alone must learn to shoulder the responsibility. In so many of our team games we are able to rationalize or cover up a poor effort. Also in the realm of social development it provides boys with the opportunity to vent their aggressiveness in a socially accepted way.

Close to fourteen thousand people rose to their feet and gave a ten minute standing ovation at the Ohio State High School Wrestling Championships. They were applauding the tremendous performance of a 115 lb. boy who had just won his third straight state championship. Thus this 115 lb. athlete who could not play basketball or football was provided the opportunity through wrestling to achieve. How many boys in the Halifax-Dartmouth area are robbed of this opportunity? Why shouldn't a 110 lb. boy endowed with tremendous athletic ability not be provided the opportunity to realize his potential. Wrestling provides competition for all boys from 95 lbs. to super heavy-weight. truly this has to be one of the



major reasons for wrestling's growth in the rest of Canada.

At a time when budgets are thin and many schools are facing a financial crisis wrestling is an ideal sport

to include in the program. It does not require elaborate equipment or an extensive facility. All it requires is the willingness to compete.

Amateur wrestling has

suffered as a result of the image portrayed by professional wrestling. Comparing amateur to professional wrestling is similar to comparing hockey to figure skating. They are both performed on ice but that's where the similarity ends. Amateur wrestling does not involve the theatrics and acrobatics exemplified by professional wrestling. Instead it requires the serious dedication of all amateur athletes in the pursuit of excellence.



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