



*Wrestling taught. Wrestling simplified.*

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## Handbook & User's Guide for Phase I



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## **Introducing *the FOUNDATION WRESTLING SYSTEM* instructional videos and training camps!**

Winning in wrestling as a competitor and coach revolves around four key areas...four pillars. You will learn that mental preparedness and match readiness, positioning, hand-fighting skills, and technique (CORE techniques) make up the **FOUNDATION** to successful wrestling.

What is **FOUNDATION WRESTLING**?

It is an approach to training developed by **Nick Purler** (former All-American for Oklahoma State University) in order to more effectively train his students at Purler Wrestling Academy.

To see the impressive accomplishments of the Foundation-trained Purler Wrestling Academy students, please visit our website at [www.purlerwrestling.com](http://www.purlerwrestling.com).

**Foundation Wrestling explained:**

### **Pillar 1 - Mental approach to competition**

It has often been said that wrestling is 90% mental, yet only a handful of coaches have figured out how to teach their wrestlers to perform. I diagnosed three areas or obstacles that hinder the performance of all wrestlers and share with you my strategies on how to clear these hurdles.

### **Pillar 2 - Positioning**

If you ever watch high-level NCAA or Olympic wrestling, you might notice how low scoring the matches are. This is because of their opponent's SOLID positioning. You will learn this positioning and the drills to teach it.

### **Pillar 3 - Hand fighting**

Being aggressive in wrestling means attacking your opponent's stance...not shooting. At Foundation Wrestling, we do this in five ways: PUSH / PULL / HIT / PICK / PASS

### **Pillar 4 – Technique**

The **FOUNDATION SYSTEM** to the technical side of wrestling revolves around CORE techniques in CORE areas. By CORE areas, we are speaking of positions that are common to all wrestling matches. Spend the bulk of your drill time in these areas and perfect the best two to three techniques and your wrestling results will soar. I did all the legwork to provide you with a recipe of WHAT TO DRILL, HOW TO DRILL, and HOW TO TEACH IT.

For complete details on Foundation Wrestling, or to bring a Foundation Wrestling Workshop to your town, contact us at [nick@purlerwrestling.com](mailto:nick@purlerwrestling.com) .

Dear Coaches and wrestlers,

Thank you for choosing FOUNDATION WRESTLING. It has been a work-in-progress for me since the fall of '99 when I was in search of a better way and opened Purler Wrestling Academy.

My main objective is to focus wrestlers, parents, and coaches on exactly what it takes to begin winning in wrestling and begin winning quickly. Too often, I see kids and coaches spinning their wheels because they don't have any direction or focus. Foundation Wrestling gives you that direction.

I chose the name FOUNDATION WRESTLING as a way to outline what the foundation of your wrestling success is built upon. In a sport dominated by moves, moves, and more moves, it is important to recognize that moves don't matter much if you are afraid to lose and put winning and losing a wrestling match in the same category as life and death. Moves don't matter much if you are an easy target and get scored on easily or if you can't fight back against the opponent. As far as moves are concerned, it is important to recognize that most points are scored from a few positions and a handful of moves from those common positions. Together, I hope to have provided you with a strong foundation to build upon as you begin to learn more moves, put in more off-season time, hit more camps, lift weights, etc.

I ask that you stay tuned to [www.foundationwrestling.com](http://www.foundationwrestling.com) for details on up-coming instructional DVDs to supplement the FOUNDATION WRESTLING SYSTEM, camps, clinics, etc. Also, feel free to frequently visit the official site of Purler Wrestling, Inc at [www.purlerwrestling.com](http://www.purlerwrestling.com) .

Especially familiarize yourself with our Foundation Wrestling Workshops. Those are very popular and a great way to get your coaches and wrestlers on the same page and also get the DVDs into the hands of all who participate. Pay for training, get the DVDs free.

Best wishes,

Nick Purler  
Foundation Wrestling  
Purler Wrestling, Inc.

## The Foundation Wrestling System Outline

The foundation wrestling system is an approach to wrestling and teaching wrestling...a way of UNDERSTANDING wrestling that pin points the four areas necessary to successful wrestling.

When you think about improving in wrestling, you think about moves. We often visit wrestling clinics and camps or buy and study wrestling videos in order to do this. Too often, we get too wrapped up in all the moves and never really learn how to wrestle. Wrestling is not won with moves; it is won with mental preparation (calming down and performing), positioning (shutting down your opponent), hand fighting (attacking your opponent's stance), and finally technique, with an emphasis on CORE techniques (techniques that work and are common to all matches).

Put in simplified terms, 95% of all points are scored in a handful of areas...just as 95% of your strength gains in the weight room come from just five to six lifts. With Foundation Wrestling, you will learn the necessary skills and techniques to focus on. By spending your practice time in these CORE areas of wrestling, I believe you can know all the necessary techniques to win at the national level. It isn't that difficult and it is spelled out in the Foundation Wrestling System's "technique" series.

I developed this system in order to get my kids into the medals QUICK. In my 25 plus years of wrestling, I have found that you can know all the moves in the world, but if you are scared to lose, have a fear of close matches, or are timid in competition...you can't win in wrestling! You can know all the moves in the world, but if you have poor positioning and get scored on just as easily as you score, you can't win. You can know all the moves, but if you can't MAKE points and CREATE scoring opportunities, you can't win. For this reason, technique is the fourth pillar in the Foundation Wrestling System philosophy. And all four of these pillars make for All-American wrestling potential.

### Foundation Wrestling's FOUR Pillars of Success

#### **Pillar #1 - Mental Preparation**

Three Keys:

1. Shaking your fear of losing
2. Defining Success
3. Making a decision to win

#### **Pillar #2 - Positioning**

Built upon five "power positions"

1. Stance
2. Leg attack position
3. Sprawl position
4. Top
5. Bottom

#### **Pillar #3 - Hand-fighting** (*Pressuring your opponent by attacking his wrestling stance.*)

Five ways to attack the opponent's stance:

1. Push
2. Pull
3. Hit
4. Pick
5. Pass

#### **Pillar #4 - Technique**

\* A recipe of techniques to master that will account for the majority of your point scoring in the sport of wrestling...regardless of level.

## **Pillar #1 - Mental Preparation**

1. Shaking your fear of losing
2. Defining Success
3. Winners make a decision to win

Mental preparedness:

As I get new students into Purler Wrestling Academy, I always quickly turn to the part of the application that asks: "How can I help you most?" Without exaggeration, I can tell you that 95 or more percent of the time I get the following responses to that question:

Examples:

"Help me with my confidence"

"Help me to wrestle in matches like I do in practice"

"I get too nervous when my opponent is good"

"I get too nervous when I don't know anything about my opponent"

"I don't have confidence"

"I get too tight and nervous in matches"

"I love wrestling in practice, but don't like it when I wrestle in meets"

"Instead of wrestling to win, I wrestle NOT TO LOSE."

Etc...

As you can see, these athletes are letting the pressures of wrestling destroy their chances of success.

Outlined here are a few points to focus on that will help you (the wrestler) to help yourself and how you (the coach or dad) can help train your wrestler(s) to cope with the pressures of competition. But remember, mental preparation is a skill that can't be taught in a ten minute pep talk or by reading some "how to" manuals once or twice. Just as a muscle must be "developed and trained"...so does your emotional outlook on competition. As a wrestler, you must work through some of your trouble spots and coaches must make time for discussion and teaching of the mental side of our sport during several practices each week. It is a process to get from where you are to where you need to be.

### **Shaking your fear of losing**

Losing is part of winning and losing does not make you a loser. Losing is a fact of life and all successful athletes, businessman, coaches, etc. have recognized this fact and see failure as "a bump in the road" and nothing more. The reason many of you reading this do not perform in matches and get extremely nervous is because you are afraid to lose. That is the bottom line and you must admit it if you want to fix it. I have seen million dollar athletes choke on TV so it should be easy for us to recognize that a 15 year old boy (or younger) can and will choke and fail to perform in the heat of battle at times. Even we adults choke from time to time either in job interviews, public speaking, job presentations, etc. It is something that all of us must work through and deal with prior to "show time".

When you are afraid to lose, it consumes you and consumes your thoughts. When you are scared to lose, you will tighten up and not be able to compete. I train the wrestlers of Purler Wrestling Academy to accept the fact that they will lose matches. Great boxing coaches teach their athletes to expect to get hit and accept this as part of the sport. If you are afraid to get hit, you can't box. That is the bottom line. This way, WHEN it does happen...the boxer is not shocked and doesn't go down easily. You may have seen boxers go down easy when it looked as though they were hardly even hit. Then you have also seen the top competitors take huge blows to the head and keep going. They don't care if they get hit...they expect to get hit and ACCEPT this as part of competition. Same goes for losing. You have to let it go.

How? You do this by focusing on HOW you win and HOW you lose, not IF you win or IF you lose. Your goal is to be the most "determined" wrestler on the mat and put forth a smart, aggressive, super-competitive performance and let the winning take care of itself. If you can do that, all of your success will not solely depend upon whether or not you get your hand raised. The fact is that you can lose and still be proud of yourself, more on this later.

So, when I say that you need to accept the fact that everyone loses in life, my intention is that you will no longer be fearful and paralyzed by your fear of failing. Remember, losing isn't what hurts you ... being AFRAID AND ASHAMED of losing does. I find that some kids are not just afraid of losing, but are more ashamed to lose. Believe me, when you lose, no one really cares but you. The whole gym isn't staring at you. Don't be ashamed to lose. **Shake it off.**

Side note:

In many cases, the wrestler is afraid to lose because his dad and/or coach gets angry at him when he does. The wrestler is performing poorly not because he is a wimp or quitter or "doesn't want it bad enough", but rather because his dad or coach is ruining his head before he even steps on the mat. In these cases, I am unable to help most kids; as the adult involved is interfering with the wrestler's ability to be successful. As parents, we shouldn't be more critical of our kids than we are of ourselves. Most of us could do better in our own jobs, health, etc than we do too. We are all human.

Understand that there are no Olympic wrestling champions that have NEVER been beaten, no great hitters that have never struck out, and no great boxers that have never been knocked down. In a way you just have to get over it.

As previously stated, getting over your fear of failure is a learned behavior and a skill that must be DEVELOPED. The fear will NEVER go away, but you only have to deal with it and cope with it...accept it and move forward. There is a great saying that says, "**feel the fear and move forward**". Coping with this fear will open many doors in life and is indeed a skill that will serve you well in life.

### **Getting to work: At home**

You can cope with your fears of losing while on the school bus on the way to school or while watching TV, etc. I want you to spend time thinking about losing and winning. If thoughts of losing cause you to panic, you have to deal with it OUTSIDE of the wrestling room. You can't cope with fears of losing DURING a match or immediately before you step on the mat...it is too late then. I've worked with a few kids that don't want anything to do with me when I confront

them about their panic attacks. The bottom line is that problems don't fix themselves and success is no accident. Once you begin to recognize that you have a problem and are paralyzed by your fear of losing, then you need to spend some time thinking about it and learning to accept that losing is part of winning...then move on.

### **Getting to work: Practice in practice**

As scary as it may seem, when coach says to get a new partner for a match...you need to grab someone that you can't beat. Then, tell yourself this:

***“There is no guarantee that I will win this match. Someday, I will beat him...but I may not be ready yet. If it doesn't happen for me today, then fine...I can live with that. As long as I fight, compete, wrestle smart, and don't blow it I will be happy with the loss. What I can guarantee is that I will wrestle smart and that I will not lay down for him.” At least now you are focused on what you can do instead of what you can't do and you are on your way to 'closing the gap' on this opponent and on your way to one day beating him.***

What you have done is coped with the pressure BEFORE the panic steps in. This is called “centering yourself” and all successful people in all walks of life “center themselves” before show time by setting a goal or game plan. What you have also done is practiced getting mentally ready in practice...just as you practice your single leg or your positioning...you must practice dealing with the fear of losing while in practice. And, just as your single leg gets better the more you practice it, so will your mental game.

### **Side note: Facts about performing... Pressure on / Pressure off**

I have found that less than 10% of the athletes I work with perform better by putting pressure ON themselves. These athletes like to think about the importance of the match and how they MUST win. They put themselves into the “pressure-cooker” before the match. The other 90% (you included, I'm sure) perform best when they take pressure OFF before the competition. I recently read about an Olympic champion who took this approach. He is known for his faith and simply says that he does his best to prepare for the match, enters the match to wrestle smart and tries his best to score points, and leaves the rest up to God. He does NOT focus on the results or outcome. He is focusing on HOW he competes and has decided that he will accept whatever outcome happens. Pressure OFF.

I know of another wrestler that was an undefeated NCAA Champion for the University of Oklahoma who was in a position to win the NCAAs as a sophomore and junior...but did neither. After his senior, undefeated season, I bumped into him and congratulated him on his national title. After some discussion, he told me that the MAIN reason he was able to wrestle well and wrestle relaxed is because he sought help from a sports psychologist and their game plan for him was simple. Throughout the week and prior to matches, he would tell himself that this was only a game and that in the LONG TERM of his life, it was unimportant...just as if you lose a game of checkers...it is unimportant. He also came to the realization that once he was done with wrestling, he had a long and very happy life to look forward to from the time he finished college at age 23 up until retirement. He had a career, a family, and other things to look forward to and EVEN if he lost a match or fell short of his goals, he still had important things to look forward to accomplishing. The bottom line is that you cannot wrap your entire identity up into a game like wrestling.

If you take Pressure OFF, you will begin to win matches. That is a fact.

***“Do not allow the PRESSURES of competition to be greater than the PLEASURES of competition”***

**Coaches and dads:** When preparing your practices, plan to speak about some of what you have read in this manual and teach the kids to take pressure off. Help them to develop the mental side of their game. Use newspaper articles that you read in the sports section, steal quotes and ideas from ESPN, and borrow ideas and examples from the wrestling literature, websites, and stories about great accomplished wrestlers. Just as a good classroom teacher will constantly be on the lookout for teaching material “outside” the classroom, the wrestling coach should do the same. The most important part of the practice will be your “lesson”. Kids are not born knowing a single-leg and they certainly aren’t born knowing how to deal with the pressures of an individual sport like wrestling. Your help with them will not only prepare them for wrestling, but will prepare them for job interviews, public speaking, and any other pressure situations that they encounter in their lives.

This leads us to the second hurdle you must cross on your way to developing yourself mentally for the sport of wrestling.

### **Defining success**

***“I don’t care IF you win... I care HOW you win. I don’t care IF you lose... I care HOW you lose.”***

This is a cornerstone of developing your mental game and a core philosophy of the **Foundation Wrestling System** and of **Purler Wrestling Academy**. In wrestling, you either win or you lose. That’s it. But you must win and lose the RIGHT way and move forward. Like running a race...you are running to win and catch the guy in front of you. If you fall down, you get up and keep running. If you win first, then great. If you don’t, then tomorrow you resume your training and move forward you’re your running career. No dwelling on what happened...just moving forward...always moving forward. This is why so many kids quit wrestling after they get involved. Losing in wrestling really hurts and some kids can’t handle it. I’ve lost soccer games and within a matter of a few minutes (sometimes seconds!) I’d already forgotten about the loss. But, there are losses I’ve suffered in wrestling that have scarred me and that I can clearly remember more than 25 years later. Most other sports are not like wrestling! For instance, in track you can lose the race...but if your time is your best time yet, you are happy...happy even though you lost. This is because you had success even though you did not win. Too bad we don’t have this luxury in wrestling! But, if you focus on HOW you lose, you can find success in your losses. This keeps you motivated and moving forward and most importantly, keeps you happy with yourself and more importantly keeps you from riding the emotional roller coaster that so many of us get stuck on.

My explanation for defining or “re-framing” success is best done with examples.



### **Example: Losing**

Here are two examples of losing; see if you can tell which match is the “good loss” and which one is the “bad loss”.

- (A) David loses the match by one point in the state finals. It was a devastating loss and very sad to witness since David did everything he was supposed to do and deserved to win the state title. As the final minute of the match ticked away, I saw David’s will power melt and he made few attempts to escape. He got to his feet once but his opponent quickly put him back to the mat and rode him hard. Towards the end of the match, David’s head was down; he made frustrating looks at his coach and had a defeated look on his face. He not only lost the physical and technical game, but he also lost the mental game.
- (B) Steve also lost in the state finals. However, his loss was much worse...a 14-0 shutout! Steve was also ridden out the last minute of the match but his last minute looked different than David’s last minute. In Steve’s match, he got to his feet constantly and was either driven out of bounds or slammed back down to the mat. When he was driven out, he would turn and jog back to the center of the mat and get set. Not too long after the official restarted the match, Steve was back to his feet and working to get away...even though a 1-point escape would not change the outcome of this 14-0 match. Unlike David, Steve was fighting for pride and was not about to lose the mental game. After the match, his opponent (the new state champion) looked like he’d been beaten and even looked relieved to have the match over with. He had to EARN that match.

- I think you can clearly see that even though Steve’s loss was much worse, David’s loss was more humiliating. HOW you lose counts. Win like a man and lose like one. Losing doesn’t make you a loser. How you lose does. “Never lose the mental game”

Coaches: You can take a video of a wrestling match (can be youth or Olympic level) and show your kids. There are many matches where one wrestler “fights back” and taking this video into the room may be the best thing you can do for the kids. It will serve as a VISUAL AID. You can then show a match where the kid lays down and quits so your wrestler(s) now can see clear examples of EXACTLY what you expect. This is called **“showing them what right looks like”**. Instead of hearing your words, they actually SEE it and having a picture in their mind will teach what 10,000 words cannot teach.

### **Winners make a decision to win**

Once you have accepted the FACT that losing is part of winning and a realist part of competition, and have also developed a clear understanding and definition of what SUCCESS really is, now it is time to make a DECISION TO WIN.

***“People that win make a decision to win”***

I will say that 1000 times a season and it is absolute fact in my opinion. In fact, a more truthful statement has never been said in my opinion. People that lose weight, get their degree, get the job they want, get happy, start a business, quit smoking, or get anything else they want had to change mental gears and go from “*day-dreaming*” mode to “*I’m going to do it*” mode. Everyone “wants” but only a handful wake up each morning to “go get”. That is the common thread that binds all types of successful people together no matter what their game is.

## Story time:

One of my students at a national tournament in Tulsa, OK made the finals. As the match approached, I walked over to him. We had many in the finals but I wanted to see this match...but he didn't know that. Our conversation went like this:

Nick: "Cody, are you ready for this?"

Cody: "Yes!"

Nick: "Are you going to win?"

Cody: "Yes!"

Nick: "Are you sure? Let me know if you aren't sure because I have a lot of other kids coming up and I want to see someone win first place! So, if you are 100% certain you are going to win this match, then I will stay and watch. If you aren't, then tell me now so I can go see someone else."

Cody (smiling): "No, stay right here Nick. I plan on winning."

He won 6-0.

What I was doing is making him MAKE A DECISION TO WIN. When you show up to win, it is a very scary thing for the competition. I can tell just by watching the weigh-ins of a tournament who is there to win and who is just there. I can certainly tell prior to the match who is there to win. It is a body-language thing and you can't hide confidence. If you are not getting out of the sport what you think you should be getting out of it, then begin to take from the sport and quit waiting for success to come. It won't. People that win make a decision to win. There must come a time when you show up to practice and show up to matches to win.

- Now, obviously if Cody had been beaten by 15 points by this opponent in a previous match up, then our goal would have been to close the gap on him, tighten up the score. Wrestle aggressive but also smart and maybe go 0-0 first period and NOT get turned at all during the match. By doing this, we now place ourselves into a position to win the match. Remember, we don't have to beat the better opponent for an hour like we do in a soccer game, just 4 ½ minutes in a youth match or 6 minutes in a high school match. The CLOCK never stops ticking and can work for you or against you. That's why wrestling is the upset sport of the world. You must be realistic as a wrestler and realistic as a coach and understand that success is a *process*. Sometimes you have to get to first base and then work your way home. By giving the underdog a good game plan to win the match, he at least closes the gap and if he loses, it won't be by the same 15-0 blowout. By closing the gap considerably you have won in my opinion. But you won't even close the gap unless you first make a decision to do that.
- In order to "close the gap" he would have to cross ALL THREE hurdles I have explained in **Foundation Wrestling**. For starters, he would have to cope with the fear that this opponent is tough and that there was no guarantee he'd win. Secondly, he'd also have to come to the understanding that AS LONG AS he comes close to the opponent, he'd be happy with himself because of HOW he'd competed. Lastly, he would have to make a decision that this match was going to be different.

- Oddly enough, what I see happen about half the time is that our kids will be in a tight match with a better opponent that has beaten them before and the opponent will begin to panic and tighten up. The pressure is now on him! When he looks at the score he sees a tight match and looks at our wrestler, he sees a kid that isn't taking a back seat to him. Often times, we will win as the opponent will choke. Teach the kids this, as it is a FACT of competition. Choking works both ways you see. Count on it and learn to introduce some panic into the opponent's head and you will win more close matches than you probably are capable of winning. Plus, without a doubt the opponent's coach or dad will begin to scream and yell at his wrestler and sadly enough, he's often the reason why our wrestler will win. Sad but true.
- At Purler Wrestling Academy, we teach our kids that they are expected to beat kids that are better than they are. ***The best man doesn't win, the man that scores the points wins.***

There is a great saying that says: ***"When the student arrives...the teacher appears."***

What this means is that a kid in practice isn't necessarily a "student" that can be taught. Therefore, the teacher is there but never truly *appears* to the so-called student before him. A coach can't help you until you show up...really show up...or ARRIVE. Once you step into the room to become a winning wrestler, only then can your coach help you. Also, keep in mind that there is a difference between "showing up to wrestle" and "showing up to win". These two athletes have nothing in common.

### **Decision time:**

As a young wrestler, my dad had a way of getting us focused and forcing us to make a decision to win that I still remember today. I vividly remember my dad pulling into the tournament parking lot early in the morning and while turning off the car he'd say: "Okay boys, we didn't come here to lose...did we?" My brother, Tony (2X World Team Member and NCAA Champion) and I would say "NO!" He'd then open the door and say: "Ok then, let's get in there and get after it!"

This was so important to me and really got me to focus on WINNING. As a parent or coach, you need to let your kids know that they are there to win and as a wrestler, you MUST decide that it is time to win. Trying hard is vital but if you want to beat kids that are better than you are, and you don't want to wait until your "time comes" before you win your first state title or medal, then show up to win. Often times the underdog does not win because the opponent chokes, but rather because he showed up to win in the first place. Therefore, he is a different kid than he was before. He has now tapped into the better wrestler inside of himself instead of the timid kid that works hard in practice, likes wrestling, and dreams of winning one day.

### **Story time:**

Dan Gable has often said that a key to his success is his "horse with blinders" mentality. If you follow horse racing, you will notice that the horses have blinders on so that they can only see forward. This way they cannot get distracted from the task at hand and most importantly, they can't see or worry about the competition. Eyes forward and runnin' hard...that's what it is all about! This way, if the horse does lose, it is because the other horse ran harder...not because

he was worried about where the competition was and letting thoughts of losing ruin his chances of winning.

\*There is a difference between wrestling to win and wrestling NOT TO LOSE. If you are unafraid of losing, focused on *how* you compete, and show up to WIN (or at least close the gap), then you go from 'wrestler' to 'competitor'. Before you know it, the nerves will diminish a bit and you will enjoy the wrestling tournaments and competition. You probably won't win every match for the rest of your life...but you will go 4-0 at the state meet, or to make Varsity, or to win a youth state medal or title, etc.

## Pillar #2 - Positioning

Positioning wins...it's been said thousands of times but never taught. In **The Foundation Wrestling System**, you will not only learn the keys to positioning, but also how to break your opponent's positioning and create scoring opportunities...rather than waiting for them.

The **Foundation Wrestling System** will TEACH you positioning. Positioning is more than just stance. In fact, there are five key areas where you must maintain great position. I call these POWER POSITIONS. Once you get into your power position, you can now fight for points and effectively fend off your opponent's attacks...so great positioning actually accomplishes two things.

### **Positioning defined:**

Positioning means getting your body into a position where your opponent can't do much to you and from which you can more effectively score. If I am in on a shot and in poor position, my opponent will have many more moves that he can hit on me. If I am in a solid position (power position), I cut off many of his options. In addition, from my power position, I am much STRONGER and better able to fight my opponent and implement my techniques more effectively. It is no different than baseball. If I am in a great stance (position), then I can swing the bat faster and more forcefully. All sports have positioning.

### **Positioning explained:**

If my wrestler gets taken down ten times this weekend with a single leg, I will not show up to Monday's practice and drill his single leg defense. Instead, I am concerned with why his opponent's were in on his legs ten times to begin with! Once I help him to close the hole in his stance and fix his position, then we will be back on track.

\*For those of you that have seen NCAA wrestling or Olympic wrestling on TV, you have probably noticed how few points are scored. Their lack of scoring has nothing to do with the number of moves they know...I can tell you that these guys know every move in the book. The reason why they don't score many points is because they can't score many points. Their opponent is like a wall and there is little, if any, opportunity to score. It is all about positioning and shutting your opponent down. You must be a wall when you are on the mat. Think about this: If a basketball hoop was 3 foot in diameter, basketball would be easy. It's not! If your stance is wide open, wrestling is easy for your opponent. If your stance is closed down tight, wrestling is hard for him and just like a great basketball player, my opponent is going to have to be VERY skilled to get to my legs and better know how to fight my stance and make me move my feet and open my up a bit. Make wrestling hard for the enemy. Use a thing called a wrestling stance...and use a World Class wrestling stance like taught on our DVDs.

Coaches: Use this as an example in your room. Go ahead and spend a practice showing some NCAA matches or tight Olympic matches. This is not wasted practice time. We get way too caught up in working our kids hard. Truth is, at the high school and youth level, few matches are ever lost due to not being in good shape. Heck, even a coach that teaches wrestling from a book knows how to get his team in shape. That is the easy part. Spending time TEACHING the sport of wrestling is not time wasted. Running, conditioning, and doing pushups INSTEAD of

teaching kids the sport of wrestling is the definition of time wasted in my opinion. I encourage you to use **Foundation Wrestling** as a guideline for teaching the kids the sport of wrestling for what it actually is instead of drilling moves and getting them in shape.

**Positioning taught: This will be clearly described in the video portion of Foundation Wrestling. Five power positions to focus on:**

1. Neutral power position
  - Feet wide
  - Chest down (your opponent can't read your shirt)
  - Forehead to forehead
  - Roll your eyes
  
2. Sprawl power position
  - Feet wide
  - Chest high
  - Knees off the mat
  - (Adjust your belt buckle down if necessary)
  
3. Shot power position (when he sprawls on top of you)
  - Left hand grabs your right wrist
  - Forehead on your forearm
  - Tripod on your left elbow
  - Hop your knees (knees wide)
  - Shoe-strings on the mat
  
4. Top power position
  - Ride behind his arms (near shoulder or claw)
  - Ride with tight elbows
  - Ride his waist or spike his thigh with your right hand
  - Be ready to attack his hand control
  
5. Bottom power position
  - Head up
  - Hands wide
  - Shrug your shoulders a bit
  - Knees wide
  - Shoe strings down

*\*Do not attack hand control unless you block him out inside with your left elbow! This is vital as the hand on your elbow is the one that can beat you. This will be spelled out on video for you to observe.*

*\*Bottom wrestling. The ONLY stand up you do on the whistle is a KNEE SLIDE stand up so that you slide your right knee off of the referee position line. This creates distance between you and the opponent so he is unable to control your hips with his tight waist. On the video, you will see just how important positioning is from bottom. Teach your wrestlers that the only way the top man can ride you or turn you is if he gets your arms (unless he is a leg rider). So, if you keep your arms free, you are impossible to ride! You will later see how this serves as a strong set up for your stand up...which we call a post-tension knee slide stand up.*

*\*Don't waste time teaching and learning how to counter his waist-ankle on top. If he hits the ankle on the whistle, a fast knee-slide should handle this. If he gets to your ankle first, let him have it! He has to let go within five seconds or he's stalling. Once he lets go, there is your set up as there is no pressure on you and you can hit your post-tension stand up.*

### Pillar #3 – Hand fighting

Being aggressive means attacking your opponent's wrestling stance...not shooting. In baseball, we teach our kids to be patient and wait for a good pitch while in wrestling, we too often yell at our wrestlers to "SHOOOOT, SHOOOOT, and SHOOOOT"! Successful coaches teach their athletes to keep busy hands on their opponent...to stay after his wrestling stance. I am fond of telling my kids to (in a controlled fashion) make their opponent move his feet. Stay after him by being aggressive and not standing and staring at him. While hand-fighting, we are both moving our feet. This is called "motion" in wrestling. I did not incorporate a "motion" section as part of Foundation Wrestling since you HAVE to move your feet if you are attacking your opponent. Good hand-fighting drills teach you motion.

At **FOUNDATION WRESTLING** and **Purler Wrestling Academy**, we do this the following five ways:

1. Push
2. Pull
3. Hit
4. Pick
5. Pass

**Push / Pull / Hit** (to be taught and used together)

You are to PUSH and PULL from an inside tie, head-tie (left handed head tie that is), a Russian 2 on 1, and occasionally an under hook.

Pushing is backing him up and must be done in order to get him to pressure back...which adds power to your pull or hit. Pulling is trying to pull his head, hands, arms, or shoulders to the mat. Hitting means chopping his hands or arms and snapping his head. Don't charge him when you push...just pressure. And, push with your head not just your hands. It doesn't take much.

- SELDOM do you head tie with your right hand, which is your attack hand or lead-leg hand. Most of us are right handed and we lead our right leg. If you watch wrestling, you'll notice that about 100% of the takedowns or shots or scoring is done with this hand. We call it the "attack hand". If I am right handed and lead my right leg, I shoot my single leg with my right hand, my high-crotch with my right hand, my fireman's carry, arm drag, head lock, low-single, ankle pick, etc with my right hand. Knowing this, I make sure that my boys' head tie only with their LEFT hands. This way, they can stay forehead-to-forehead (as instructed on the video) and have their right hand (ATTACK HAND) open for scoring.
- The only time we head tie with our right hand and go ear-to-ear is for our PA (see secondary attacks portion of video). Otherwise, we do not **pick**.

To pick means to take his straight arms off of you and use them to score...or at least get him to move his feet and corrupt his stance.

*I teach this by steps:* right hand pick his right wrist / step left / rainbow (pick) his hand and step right foot across / drop level



## Pass

We pick straight arms and pass bent arms. Most often, this is getting him off of his head tie. The worst thing you can do is to grab his elbow with your left hand and his head with your attack hand, go ear-to-ear and dance with him. You need to pass his arm off of your head so you can score as he moves his feet and tries to fix his positioning...or at least get him off your head so you can get back to work.

*I teach this by steps: circle / pass / head butt / crowd*

By push / pull / hit / pick / pass I am describing how to break your opponent's wrestling stance. Simply put, if all of your takedowns come from your opponent being in a bad stance (poor positioning) or taking bad shots, then there will come a time when you will hit a wall and your success will come to a standstill. Once you get into the high caliber opponents...ones that ALWAYS maintain great positioning, wrestle smart, and are patient the whole match, you are not going to be able to put a lot of points on the board unless YOU get them out of their stance or pressure them into making mistakes. There comes a time when YOU must set up your opponent by breaking his stance and scoring... 'cause he isn't going to do it for you.

- Being aggressive means attacking your opponent's wrestling stance, not shooting. We call this "wearing and tearing". It is done in a very controlled fashion and your goal is to break his position only slightly. Otherwise, you can't do so without getting out of position yourself. It does not take much to set up a great opponent as long as you are skilled with your attacks and can get to it before he corrects his stance. The best kids will correct their position quickly. However, as they get wore down, they will not correct their position as quickly as they did in the beginning of the match. This is why you must stay after it. At **Purler Wrestling Academy**, we call this "wearing-and-tearing".
- You simply will not score every time you break your opponent's stance or get him to move his feet. I tell our boys that they must be willing to "work for free" as you don't get points when you are winning. Be patient and stay after your opponent and eventually, things will go your way. In soccer, if my team takes twelve shots on goal and none go in, and your team hasn't even had the ball anywhere near my goalie, then the score is tied 0-0. But, even with the score tied at 0-0 I know that I am still winning the game! In wrestling...unlike in any other sport, once I get the first takedown, MANY will follow if I stay after him and "wear-and-tear" on him.
- Don't be a spaz. You should not PUSH / PULL / HIT / PICK / PASS 100 mph and say "Nick told me to wrestle this way!" A boxer has a jab, we don't! A wrestler's jab is a slight PUSH or a HIT, etc. Just as a boxer won't throw 1600 jabs a minute and fight like a spaz, neither should you. Some will move faster than others, some will hit harder than others and be more aggressive, some more patient, etc...but NONE of us can stand there and stare at our opponent and hope he falls down for us.

## Two main objectives for hand-fighting:

### 1. DON'T BE COMFORTABLE TO WRESTLE AGAINST!

If you are comfortable to be on the mat with...then you aren't doing it right.

### 2. Don't STAND and STARE at your opponent.

Understand that the PUSH/PULL/HIT technique amounts to about 90% of attacking your opponents' stance. When I tell my wrestlers during a match "don't stare at him", this is what I mean. Only if the opponent straight arms us do we pick. Only if he grabs our head, do we pass.

- Some kids will move more and move their opponent's more than others. Many of the top wrestlers in the World don't constantly pressure their opponent. But, standing in a poor stance and rubbing foreheads together or tapping the opponents' forehead is what we can NOT do.

### **Two rules for attacking his stance:**

1. Hands move / feet move
2. Break his stance and IMPROVE your stance

I do not plant my feet and hit (snap) his head or he can dive at my legs. I don't pick his wrist and stand, as this doesn't give me much of an angle. Hands move / feet move.

By improving my stance, I am in an improved POSITION to hit my attack. It does me no good to pick his wrist and stand there. However, if I lower my level, I can attack. Remember, the top kids don't give you much time to score after you set him up (break his stance) so you better be ready

## Pillar 4 -Technique

(CORE techniques from CORE areas of wrestling. Know this before you learn anything else as this is the FOUNDATION of wrestling technique)

**I. Neutral position / takedowns:** At **Foundation Wrestling**, we divide takedowns into three groups: Leg attacks / secondary attacks / front headlock offense

### Leg attacks

#### **1. Double leg takedown**

Set ups

- a. Pick
- b. Pass

Finishes

- a. Corner double

#### **2. High crotch**

Set ups

- a. Inside tie
- b. Right-hand club

#### **3. Finishes**

- a. Corner double
- b. Crack down to: head hunt / elbow trap / run the leg

#### **4. Single leg**

Set ups

- a. Inside tie
- b. Hit and pull the head (with your left hand)

Finishes

- a. High-level knee sweep
- b. High-level knee shove
- c. Low-level snake and spin (get to power position first)
- d. Low-level split (lift him)

### Secondary attacks

#### **1. PA (Pennsylvania / from opponent's collar tie)**

#### **2. Football grip position**

- a. Pull down to go-behind
- b. Dresser dump

- Other examples of Secondary attacks would be techniques such as a duck under, inside trip, Russian 2 on 1 techniques, drags, etc. The ones that I have taught at **Foundation Wrestling** are the highest percentage of techniques to

score with that I have found for most high school and youth kids to use. The main reason is because a PA is hit off of our opponent's head tie, which is very common. Our football grip position is a great way to neutralize the opponent and control him...then to score from easily. As your team perfects these CORE techniques, then you can lay some other secondary attacks on top of these.

- A PA is difficult for some to teach and some to learn. Therefore, show those kids the Collar Jerk from Phase II. When I update the DVDs in the future, I will swap those to techniques and put the Collar Jerk on Phase I and PA on Phase II.

### **Front headlock offense**

1. Go behind (the best move in wrestling)
2. Down block go behind
3. Shuck (roll out)

### **Front headlock defense**

1. Circle out (fight the hand on your chin)

## **II. Top position: Riding and scoring**

Spend most of your time riding behind his arms (claw or near shoulder ride) that will neutralize much of his offense off of bottom AND give you many wrist control opportunities as he attacks hand-control. I am not against "chopping" the arm, just get control first and ride him first. Also, be certain that if you begin to lose him you better get back behind those arms!

### **1. Turns from a cross wrist**

- a. Two on one tilt
- b. Easton roll
- c. Rolling tilt

### **2. Turns from a chicken wing**

- a. Clarion tilt
- b. Stack
- c. Clarion lift (he bellies down)

## **III. Bottom position: Picking bottom with confidence**

### **1. Stand ups**

- a. Post-tension knee slide - works in all situations  
*\* Scoring as the opportunity presents itself*
- b. Knee spin (put him behind you) - to counter his spiral ride

## Keys to learning and teaching the art of the stand up:

- We set up our opponent for a leg-attack, but somehow fail to set him up for our stand up. The word EXPLODE is written all over wrestling room walls and it is a term commonly used to describe how to get off bottom. I agree that when you decide to go, you GO...just as you would in a leg-attack situation. However, WHEN you decide to explode determines whether or not you actually get out or not.
- If you give up your arms on bottom, you can't get away and may get turned. Except for a cradle, it is IMPOSSIBLE for the top man to turn me if he doesn't get my arms. If I stand up at the wrong time, he can get my arms easily. As he attacks my arms...I defend! As he switches to some other attack (chicken wing, head lever, chop, etc)...THIS IS WHEN I EXPLODE with a knee-slide stand up since there is NO pressure on me and he is set up for my stand up.
- It is tough to chop the arms of the top opponents. This is why I force my boys at **Purler Wrestling Academy** to ride legs and would encourage you to do the same. We spend much of our off-season training on leg riding and I feel we have some of the best leg-riders in the nation.

### **Other secondary escapes**

1. Shoulder roll – to counter his chop

**Foundation Wrestling's Practice Plan Outline & Coach's guide**

**Dates:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Meeting / 3 minutes** \_\_\_\_\_

**II. Warm up** –(Circle a few and go 1-3 minute goes each) -\*Push / Pull / Hit /Pick / Pass \* Head position sprawls \* Tap sprawls \* Stance & motion \* Down blocks/go-behinds \* Knee slide stand ups \* Post-tension knee slide stand ups \* Snap downs \* Leg attack finishes \*Etc

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**III. Review** \_\_\_\_\_

**IV. New** \_\_\_\_\_

**V. Physical drilling** \_\_\_\_\_

**VI. Chain drilling (Drill series )** \_\_\_\_\_

**VII. Hard Wrestling – Don't be comfortable to wrestle against and don't stand and stare at him. Situations-** (Circle a few) Matches, offense vs. defense, high crotch vs. single, 15 seconds to get to a leg, 5 second to get to your feet, 30 seconds to get away, etc...takedown cut him, use secondary attacks only, start from leg attack

**VIII. Combat** – Push out of circle / make him touch the mat, both men dig double under hooks, etc.

\*\*\*\*\*

**\*To do next workout:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**\*Program changes:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Last words:** \_\_\_\_\_

Coaches,

I have provided you with a Practice Plan in hopes that it will help you to organize your practices. It is proven that our teaching efforts are most productive when we have a system for our teaching. Use this as you see fit or make an entirely new one that best fits your style. Most importantly, remember that the best teachers and coaches are managers. You have the responsibility to “put the workers to work”. Poor teachers are not so because they do not know the subject they teach...but because they are poor managers. You need have “efficient and effective” workouts. This will help.

Here is an explanation of what I have provided you:

**I. Meeting** - this is your chance to quickly let the kids know what practice will involve and WHY. Also, this is when you provide stories, expectations, or speak of one of your athletes who has exemplified the mindset your athletes are after.

Ex: I will get an article out of a wrestling paper and pull a quote of success for the kids, or speak of one of our boys that beat a kid that he'd never beaten before...etc.  
CONSTANTLY reinforce what you wish to see in your wrestlers and you will see it.  
Remember that you must reinforce the four pillars of wrestling in practices.... not just more moves and conditioning like all the rest do. (Three minutes max...don't preach or be an “explainiac”!)

**II. Warm up** - This is your chance to use your time wisely and use your warm up time as time to develop the kids positioning, hand fighting, and technique.

**III. Review** - Now you review with them what they have just learned or what you have been working on lately. This may take a quick review. Don't re-teach it as kids remember more than we give them credit for.

**IV. New** - List the new techniques you will be working on that day. **TEACH EVERYTHING IN STEPS.** See “**How to teach and drill kids**” as a reference.

**V. Physical drilling** - This is your best chance to get your team or athlete ready for competition. Each wrestler will hit for two to three minutes straight. He takes the opponent down (he gives about 50% resistance so it is realistic) and he cuts him and goes again. I have my kids cut the opponent hard. This means, you keep a straight arm or hand on the opponent's neck and let him up under pressure. If you let him loose and allow him to get up on his own will, then it is soft and we won't be able to break him. In a match, if we cut him hard and push him a bit on his way up, we can break his spirit. Teach to NEVER cross the line of good sportsmanship or to cut a much lesser opponent hard as this makes them look bad. However, if my wrestler is losing and needs 2 takedowns to win, he needs to cut this opponent and take him down and being tough on him is advantageous.

**\* Allow kids to hit any takedown they wish and to finish HARD! If they don't, then restart the watch. It will be done right or we will stay here all night. A good physical drill session of fifteen minutes or more sure beats running. In my opinion, wrestlers don't really even need running shoes.**

**VI. Chain drilling** - Ex: I will tell the kids: “#1 man, you football grip to a pull down / go-behind and chop the arms, #2 man, you fight and base out and hit post-tension knee slide standup and cut away.” They will do this for one to three minutes and switch.

- *While kids are working, fight the urge to chatter...we are all guilty of this during practice and while mat side. Just quietly walk around and encourage them and tell them how tough they look. Too often, the coaches try to get the kids to drill like spazzes and the kids get sloppy. Half of the noise should be bodies hitting the mats. When kids hear this, they get better. Also, as they are in their physical drill session or chain drilling session, don't expect everything to look perfect...it won't and doesn't need to. And, remind them that moves is a small part of wrestling and that what you are looking for is for them to develop their COMPETITIVENESS and some fast and physical hands during these sessions. Letting the kids work without feeling the need to intervene with yelling and coaching phrases is the key to great coaching. Be quiet and watch the kids work and be proud of what you are creating.*
- *Also, show them WHAT RIGHT LOOKS LIKE by demonstrating exactly what you want them to look like. Or, once you get a few boys that look impressive, have them do the demo. Fight the urge to always use the best kid. Get some up-and-comers in front of the room for this.*

**VII. Hard Wrestling** - I have a list of “types” of live wrestling to do. At least one-third should be all out live with no interruption from you. As for situation, offense vs. defense is about the number one way for you to develop your kids. In wrestling, we are on offense and defense at the same time. Here, I allow them to focus on ONE job at a time. Offense can focus on scoring and learn to stay on his opponent's wrestling stance (break his positioning) and the defenseman can work on building his positioning skills.

As for the high crotch vs. single example, this simply forces each man to use a specific attack. Go two- minute goes and then switch. Stick with it for a while.

Fifteen-second drill - Both guys live and someone has to get BOTH hands locked on the leg. Whoever does...wins the match. Have them raise their hand if they won. This way, you know as the coach who won and also it makes them feel good. At times, I will have the man that lost raise his hand as a way to motivate him to win.

The others are self-explanatory and you can add your own.



**VIII. Combat** - This is vital as it teaches kids to fight...to push and pull and hit. As they push out of the circle, make sure they push with their hips and head and not hands or the opponent can chop (hit) their hands and make them touch the mat easy. Also, they can pick and pass their opponent out of the ring. I assign points and go the first man to 50 wins. Usually, I award five to ten points to kids if they make the opponent touch the mat and only one if they push BOTH of his feet out of the circle.

The other fighting drill we do is for both men to dig double under hooks. Whoever gets their hands locked wins that match. Then, they release and start over.

**\*Side note:**

**Every practice will not include a “physical drill session” or a “chain drilling session” or a “combat session”. Use your outline as a way to offer variety and to build the four necessary skills (pillars) of wrestling.**

Good luck!  
Sincerely,

Nick Purler  
Foundation Wrestling  
Purler Wrestling, Inc.

## Foundation Wrestling Tips and Tactics from Nick Purler

### Kids:

#### **Spare time greatness:**

The very BEST way for you to get great in the sport of wrestling from a sheer technical stand point is to realize that you get GREAT in your spare time. Your coaches, camps, clinics, etc can make you very GOOD, but only you can make yourself GREAT. A three-time Olympic coach told me this very same advice and to this day, it is some of the best advice I've ever received. For example, if you get to your high school practice thirty minutes early and develop your bottom wrestling, within one week or so, you can SOLVE your bottom wrestling troubles. In practice that day, your coach (who has forty plus kids to deal with) may be working the team in another area and YOU DON'T GET ANY BETTER ON YOUR BOTTOM WRESTLING. It is not the coach's fault...he has an entire team to worry about.

And for those of you that play other sports, you can squeeze in thirty minutes of easy drill time before football practice two to three days a week. This will amount to about four to six hours a month or fifteen hours of extra drill time that you have gotten BEFORE wrestling season even begins. Thirty minutes may not sound like much but it adds up. Great wrestlers and successful people have figured this out. Unsuccessful wrestlers patiently and passively wait for the coach to make them good.

#### **Learn quick / Teach Quick:**

Your goal should be to get through ALL technique in the Phase I **FOUNDATION WRESTLING SERIES** in one weeks time. Break the technique up into sections and get through it. You can perfect it over the course of the next month...but learn it now so you can begin to organize some workouts for yourself and get started. Remember, you may have to cover a lot of this on your own time as your youth or high school coaches may not do so.

As for youth wrestling, ALL kids need ONE practice on their own. Go to your youth practices two times a week and arrange for another workout partner and your son to get together another night. Dads can teach and drill these boys for about forty-five minutes and put them through some hard wrestling. This may be the most productive time for you. See "How to teach and drill kids" portion of **FOUNDATION WRESTLING**. In the youth rooms, and many high school rooms, the practices are unorganized and just sort of a mess. I tell dads COACH YOUR OWN KID...**FOUNDATION WRESTLING** is the blueprint you need.

Coaches- Get the system in place fast. If you are showing more and more wrestling moves in January and February, you are missing the boat! Youth coaches get all of our youth / beginners series taught in the first 2 weeks of practice. Middle School use some of the youth (or ONLY that if kids are new) and Phase I and get this implemented. High School coaches, get Phase I taught the first week and Phase II the second week (while drilling some of Phase I each day) and then, after 2-3 weeks, ALL of your system is in place. Youth coaches should have 2 hour 15 minute practices....same for Middle School. High School coaches, go ahead and have them do some 3 hour practices with a couple of breaks. Do a Saturday mini-camp where they have a 3 hour morning session, a 1 hour pizza break, and another 3 hour afternoon session. Do this the first 2 weeks. GET THIS TAUGHT. Then, you can do as we outline on our website

[www.foundationwrestling.com](http://www.foundationwrestling.com) and divide up your drills into 3-4 index cards. On Monday, pull out card 1, on Tuesday, card 2, etc...so that the first hour of practice is DRILLING and perfecting what they know. I don't care if it's perfect the first time through. I just want to get my system in place. Phase I and II is ALL you need. If they want to learn Russian 2 on 1s and 600 other 'specialty' moves, then maybe they shouldn't quit for 8 months a year. As for now, we are using Phase I and II and that's it! And, we will drill and rotate through these index cards all year long, then take a break, then go live, then do some hand-fighting or maybe sprints late in the year, then go home. It may take 2-3 seasons but once your youth and middle schools are doing the same and feeding you kids, you are set. If you have 1<sup>st</sup> year kids on your high school team, throw them in and begin with Phase I Just as if they have wrestled for years. You can show the small stuff like 'getting off your back' during breaks, etc. Also, High School coaches, you may have to get the youth kids taught the youth system and I wouldn't count on my youth coach. They like to do things 'their' way...which probably hasn't worked very well anyway...or you wouldn't have bought this. YOU bust your butt, get it taught, and MAKE sure he drills the index cards and runs ONLY that each week. Keep in mind that the **FOUNDATION WRESTLING** series is meant for teams and individuals. So, as a coach with tons of kids, you may want to modify a bit. For example, I may not show the Clarion Lift, or both high level single leg finishes...just the CORE of our DVDs...which should be 90% of it. Remember, our competition is bouncing around, showing random-unrelated moves after moves after moves. Their kids are bored. Their rooms are loud and unorganized. They are wasting time running 45 minutes a practice. And here you are....you are hammerin'!!! So, use some common sense. Now, the dad who uses Phase I for HIS son at home, perfect / drill / and master all of it.

I have built as nice business for myself (Purler Wrestling Academy) with only Phase I and Phase II. Don't use part of our system, use a little Granby stuff, some of the things you learned at the Penn State Camp, and a little of what your team did back when...use FOUNDATION WRESTLING. Besides, wrestling is 5,000 years old (some say way older) and there aren't a lot of secrets out there. So, I can assure you that a lot of what is taught on our DVDs is also covered on the 100s of other DVDs out there and at camps across the nation. I have just 'compartmentalized' it and divided it up and packaged it in a useable, step-by-step, building-blocks format the an individual can use like a blueprint to build his wrestling career or the high school coach can use to build a 'systemized' program where the efforts of the youth and middle school teams feeds into and prepares those kids for HIS program. Organized!!! Also, use FOUNDATION WRESTLING year after year after year. I have and our results get better and better as the kids get better and better at the skills. It's really all you need...just like the weight lifting program from the University of Nebraska it's all a football player needs! And bouncing around month after month going from one program to another only keeps you from DEVELOPING your strength. Settle down. Use this system. Use it year after year. Your kids will win. I guarantee it. Stick with it. You will get better and better at implementing it year after year.

### **What is your style?**

Don't PICK your style of wrestling, but instead DIAGNOSE what your style is. You can never wrestle like someone else and there is no wrong way to wrestle. Styles of wrestling depend a lot on your body type and personality type. A very short, muscular kid will be more explosive by nature than the kid that has a cross-country runner body. Who wins depends less on body type and more on wrestling skills and who has a grasp on the four areas of successful wrestling. Too often, kids have the idea of how they want to "be like". Instead of emulating the wrestler stars

“style”, emulate his work ethic. Copy how he drills, how he acts on the mat, how he lifts weights...you get the picture.

- Far too often, we are taught by our coaches to be a brawler. This is because they have the unrealistic idea in their minds about wrestling or maybe have seen too many movies (ha! ha!). But the truth is that more often than not, those are the easiest kids to beat. A great technician will capitalize often on the breaks and mistakes in positioning that the brawler makes and will beat him easily. In my experience, only about one wrestler in seventy-five is what I'd call a brawler.
- In football, we have different positions for different athletes. Put the lineman in as wide receiver and tell me he will be any good at football. Too often, coaches try to put their wrestlers into a mold and when they don't win I hear, “You need to want it more son! You gotta have more heart than that!” It is sad. In wrestling, we don't have fifteen different positions to choose from. We are all on the mat at the same time. Each wrestler will have a different style. Watching the running back is exciting. Watching the lineman is boring. Making the lineman become running back would be silly. Some of the best wrestlers in the world are boring to watch. About one in seventy-five are brawlers and exciting. About eighty to ninety percent of the time when the boring wrestler goes against the brawler, my money is on the boring wrestler.

Key to getting the most out of your workouts! You need to be the kid in practice that no one wants to drill with. If you get to practice and twenty-five kids run up to you and want to be your practice partner who is not a compliment! Your goal is to get three hours of work into a two-hour practice. You do this and you will have to struggle to get someone that wants to go with you and accept the challenge of your pace and intensity.

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### Traps to avoid

Avoid the trap of saying things like: “Our school does the Iowa-style or the Okie State style” or “we are team that only wrestles from the outside and work fast techniques.” Understand that Iowa and Oklahoma State RECRUIT kids that for the most part ALREADY WRESTLE THE WAY THEY DO! OSU doesn't take a 5'2” 155 pound kid and teach him to wrestle “their way”. They don't recruit kids like that. They mostly recruit quick, thin kids while Iowa may recruit a short, stocky kid that fits into their philosophy of wrestling. Most all other college programs and certainly all of us who coach high school and youth teams are putting all types of kids on the mat and about half of which are average athletes at best! Teach kids to wrestle and let their style come out. Then, as a great coach does, pull the kids to the side and teach them certain things that complement their style so they have an edge.

### More traps on coaching mat side

Just before your wrestlers steps on the mat, NEVER say things like: “**Now watch out for his single leg...he's fast!**” or “**Be careful, this kid is good on top!**” Often times we wonder why our kids are not confident and often it is our fault. If kids sense fear and doubt in us, then they won't have a chance. Watch the top NCAA coaches, they have a cocky look on their face ALWAYS!!! You can learn this.

Instead, say things like **“Get after him!”** I offer TONS of compliments during a match and act more like a cheerleader than a wrestling coach. The bottom line is that he’s either going to win or he isn’t, no need for excessive commentary on your part.

### **Story time:**

I had a great kid here in Missouri that had to wrestle one of the top youth wrestlers in the nation. This kid’s coach put his wrestler in our weight class just to beat my wrestler and was bragging all the while how his wrestler was going to beat ours. I said nothing. I told Mark about the upcoming match about a week before and told him how I EXPECTED him to win (knowing he could of course) and that I did not think his opponent was very good and was over-rated by everyone...including his coach. About five minutes before the match, Mark told me what mat he was on and I said: “Good luck Mark, go get him. You get the first takedown and he can’t beat you. That is the bottom line. I won’t be mat side and don’t want to watch. I have other kids I need to see that need me there more than you do. I told him that in about ten minutes, I was expecting him to come and find me to tell me that he’d won the match. He won 3-0 and it wasn’t even that close...from what I heard.

### **Realistic coaching**

If you have a wrestler that is NOT YET READY to beat a certain kid, then set a goal for him (an expectation for him) that you want to see him have a five point match. “We’ll beat him in January, right now...we go close”. This takes all pressure off of your wrestler and teaches him that is HOW we compete that declares our success. PS - Have your kids do this in practice too when you pair them up for matches.

### **Dealing with losses**

If your team loses, fight the urge to totally revamp your coaching. Small adjustments make you a great coach. Having a panic attack makes your kids lose confidence in you and you will be no more effective as their leader as their little sister would be. Don’t ever blow it!

### **Don’t place blame**

When your team suffers a loss, don’t ever lay the blame to anyone...especially to the newspaper. I have heard coaches say things like: *“Our kids did not fight”* or *“We don’t have any talent...that is our problem”* or *“We didn’t have any heart”*.

Better yet, YOU TAKE SOME BLAME. Say: *“I apparently did not do as good a job preparing our boys on bottom as I had thought. This will change.”* **Just say:** *“We have work to do and by time state comes, this will look like a different team than you saw here tonight. I am proud of my boys, but not nearly as proud as I will be of them two months from now.”*

### **Don’t be their buddy**

High school coaches are among the worst when it comes to being their wrestler’s buddy. This is because they or we (I used to coach high school wrestling myself before opening Purler Wrestling Academy) spend so much time with the kids. The bottom line is that you have a job to do which is preparing the kids to win wrestling matches. That is it. If you jump on a kid and

wrestle around with him while the team is supposed to be drilling, then your kidding around is going to create a circus-like environment in no time. Visit and joke around AFTER practice, never before or during. If you are a cool coach (I like to think I am!) then be cool after practice. You should have two personalities and the kids will learn this in about a day or so. They aren't dumb.

**'How to teach and drill kids'**  
***Effective and efficient coaching***

Your goal as a coach or teacher is to get three hours of work into your two hour practice. That is the bottom line.

**Here is how:**

1. Be organized. Use your Foundation Wrestling practice plan and make plenty of copies and keep them on file.
2. Don't over-teach. Show each move in steps three or four times max. Then, break out and take them through it.
3. Hammer them on the technique. I usually go pretty quick through about two to three areas (depending on how good the kids are) and then, go back to the first move and drill them hard on it for a long time. This is not a clinic so don't over do it. Remember that the kids don't need to know the move; their muscles need to know the moves.

**This is how to teach:**

I will get into the room and when it is time to learn a new trick, I will do as follows for say teaching a shuck.

Whistle the kids into the middle. No one sits on the wall and no one lies down. I get into a front headlock and show them twice what we are learning and discuss the importance of it (kids get about three to eight front headlocks EACH match, etc). Then, I go the steps for them and try to keep steps at four to five or less.

Step 1 - grab a front headlock with your right hand on his chin and your left hand on his elbow. You are on your toes.

Step 2 - I circle he circles (he's forced to or I grab his back ankle)

Step 3 - throw his head and land on him with your right side...punch the sky.

Step 4 - left hand back hands and crowd into him and score

Show it two to three more times. Say "One, two!" and team claps. I count from five down to one and when I am done, I start teaching and they better be ready.

I say: "Number one man, step one: you grab a front headlock with your right hand on his chin and left hand on his elbow...you are on your toes. Step 2...so on. "

I take number one man through this two to three times. Meanwhile, I am pin pointing the kids that need extra help. I will go to them first once I put them on the watch for drill time. I may have them hold step #2 for a while so that I can walk around the room and get ALL kids into position. Then, will continue.

Then, I tell the number two man to get into position and talk him through it.

Once he has it, I say "OK, number one man you hit your shucks for two minutes...go!"

Meantime, I walk the room. Don't forget to pay attention to your watch so you can switch men every two minutes.

Do this for two to three goes each and then on to the next move...say a go behind and front headlock defense. Once you get all this covered, then you have a hard drill session where you start with your front headlock and have them hit for one minute each.

Always drill kids on YOUR WATCH. This holds them accountable and keeps the pace of the room at a good clip. Don't chatter and try to make them drill at a frantic pace...you want a quality, physical drilling pace...you want quality. Drill this front headlock series for about fifteen or so minutes and then get a break and get into your hard wrestling session.

Lastly, let the kids get into a drilling rhythm or flow. Don't constantly interrupt if it isn't perfect. They will win more matches by developing a physical drill style and work ethic than they will by being forced to hit a move perfectly against a drill partner who is offering no resistance. This isn't a form competition.

Good luck!

Nick Purler

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Furthermore, if you are interested in a small-group training camp...you can get information on the Purler brothers' extremely popular summer drill camp...THE TAKEDOWN MACHINE. This is a takedown camp where wrestlers will literally hit 100's and 100's of reps of the Foundation Wrestling system takedowns. This camp has roughly forty kids per week and is a great camp for those searching for a small-group training environment. However, this is an intense drill camp...arrive in shape!

Warning: This camp begins to fill six months in advance.

We also have 2 day workshops and my coaches and I teach these all over the USA. This way, your team gets taught the system (Phase I, II, you decide) in a weekend and you can begin the drilling process. This is a shortcut. The info is at [www.foundationwrestling.com](http://www.foundationwrestling.com) and each wrestler gets a FREE set of our DVDs.

FOUNDATION WRESTLING 5 day camps are also posted on our site in which kids go through the Phase I AND Phase II series and receive both sets of those DVDs....free.

Thanks for choosing Foundation Wrestling and we look forward to assisting you in your wrestling and coaching careers in the future.

Sincerely,

Nick & Jackie Purler  
Purler Wrestling, Inc

"A trusted name in wrestling...a company you can count on"

