



PA Athletic
Director
Information
Session and
Q and A on
Girls Wrestling

Pennsylvania Girls HS Wrestling: Presentation Outline

- ▶ Background on the PA Girls HS Wrestling Task Force and SanctionPA
- ▶ Current Data on Girls HS Wrestling across the US and PA
- ▶ Why Form a Girls Team
- ▶ PIAA Sanctioning and Team Formation Requirements
- ▶ Q and A

SanctionPA

- ▶ PA Girls HS Wrestling Task Force
 - ▶ Comprised of various groups and stakeholders across wrestling in PA
 - ▶ ADs, coaches, parents, wrestlers, PWCA, NWCA, PAUSAW, WLAG, etc.



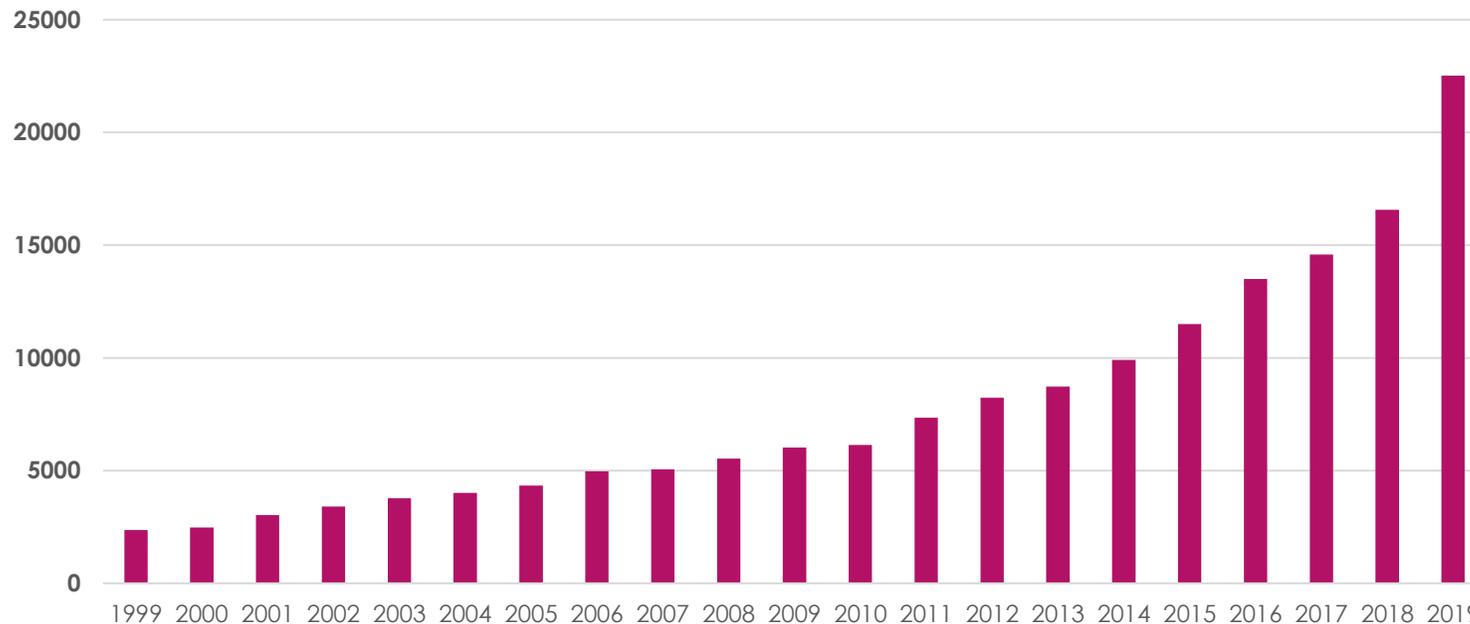
SanctionPA

- ▶ Goals of SanctionPA
 - ▶ Educate coaches and administrators on girls wrestling
 - ▶ Work with individual schools to form official girls teams
 - ▶ Provide resources to schools and coaches to develop girls teams
 - ▶ Work with the PIAA Wrestling Steering committee and state office on sanctioning efforts
 - ▶ Help coordinate competition opportunities until sanctioning is achieved
 - ▶ Provide opportunities for girls to be able to reap the amazing benefits of the sport of wrestling
 - ▶ To get girls wrestling as an official PIAA Sport and have a PIAA State Championship

Girls High School Wrestling across the United States

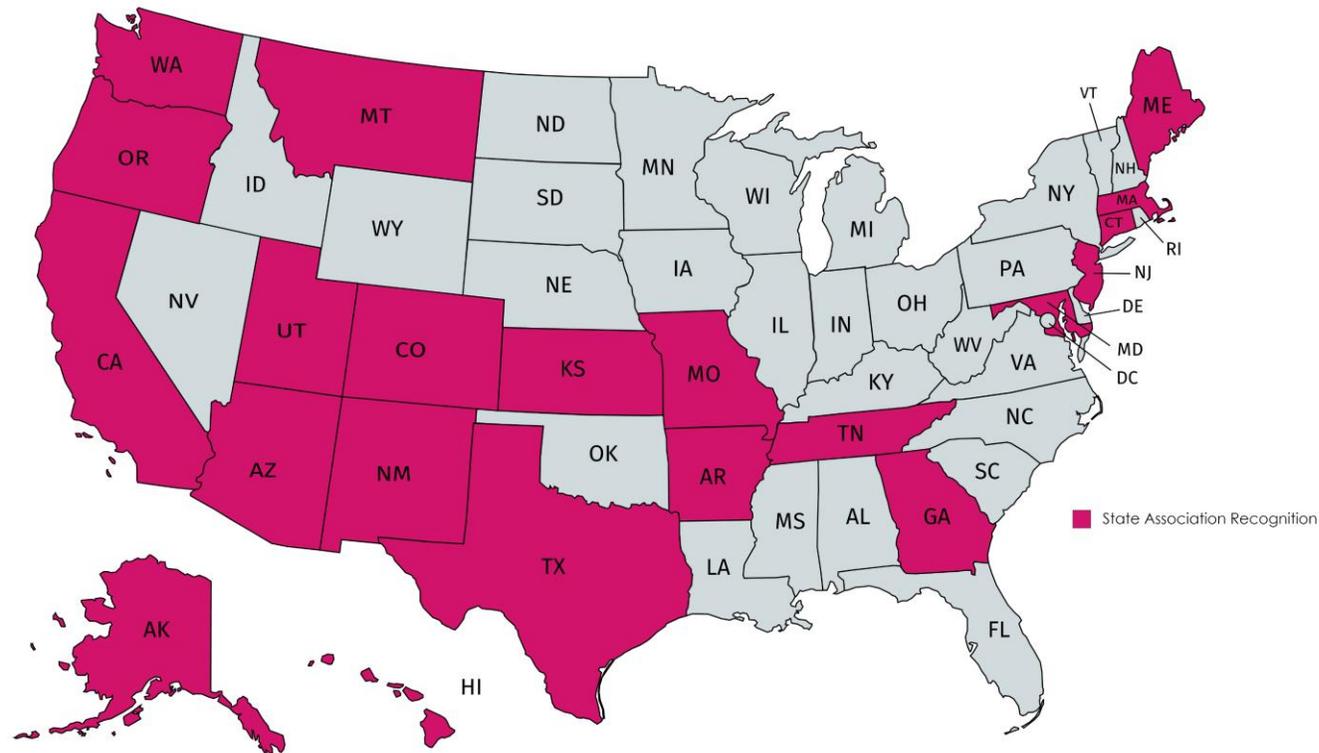
- Girls wrestling is the fastest growing sport in the country
- Participation numbers for 2020 are projected to be 28,000 (30% growth)

**US High School Girls Wrestling Participation
1999-2019**



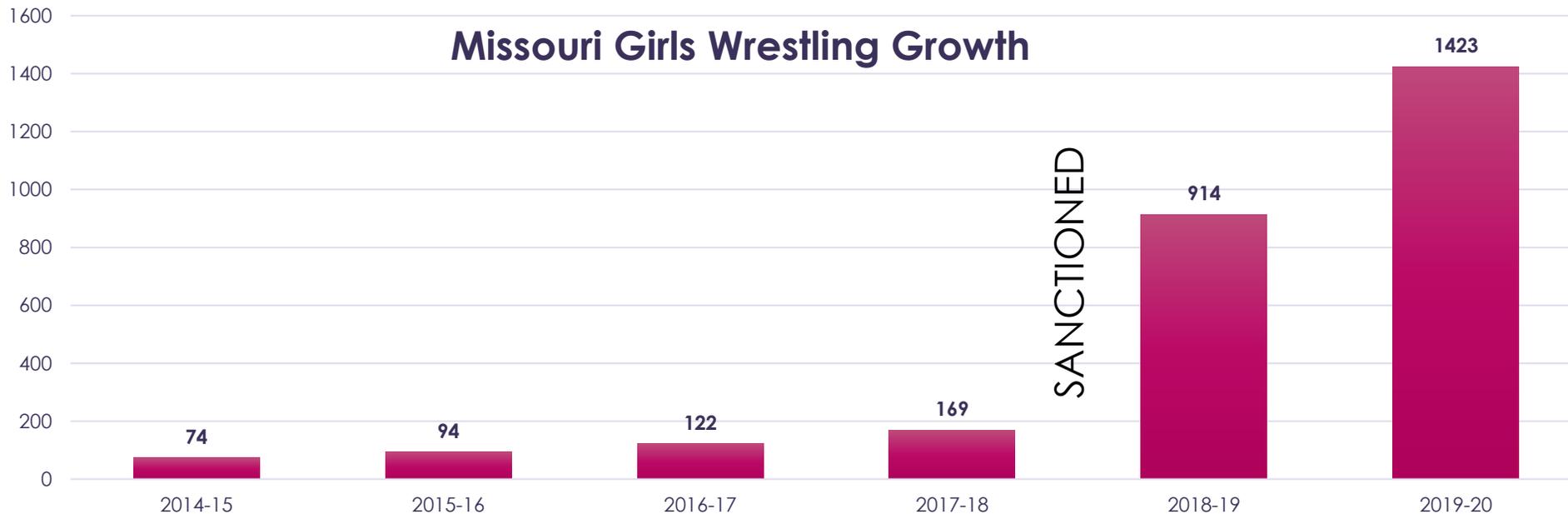
Girls High School Wrestling across the United States

- ▶ There are currently 22 state high school associations that have recognized girls wrestling on the championship level



Girls High School Wrestling across the United States

- ▶ What has happened to other states that have sanctioned:
 - ▶ Once recognized by state association, participation numbers show significant growth in a short period of time (possibly because girls would prefer to wrestle and compete against girls)
 - ▶ ALL states that have sanctioned saw participation numbers increase after sanctioning



Growth of Post-Secondary Opportunities

- ▶ Over 70 varsity college women's programs in the US
 - ▶ 5 of them are located in Pennsylvania!
 - ▶ East Stroudsburg, Gannon, Lackawanna, Lock Haven, Del Val
- ▶ Women's wrestling was given NCAA Emerging Sport Status for Division II and III
- ▶ Many scholarship opportunities
- ▶ Wrestling ranks #2 across sports for producing first-generation college students
- ▶ Women's wrestling has been in the World Championships since 1989 and in the Olympics since 2004



Current Landscape of Girls Wrestling across Pennsylvania

- ▶ High School
 - ▶ 100% increase of girls on HS teams in the past 5 years
 - ▶ 102 to 229 (NFHS)
 - ▶ Over 300 USA Wrestling membership cards
 - ▶ Over 130 PIAA member schools represented
 - ▶ All 12 PIAA districts represented
- ▶ 289 Girls on the JH Teams
- ▶ Over 370 elementary girls participated in PJW qualifiers



Why Form a Girls Team

- ▶ **Closes the gap between Elem/JH and College/Senior Level**
- ▶ **Helps our PA girls take advantage of post-secondary opportunities**
- ▶ **Increases sustainability of boys wrestling programs**
 - ▶ Boys wrestling growth has accelerated as the number of girls teams grew
 - ▶ 65 women's and 126 men's teams were added over the past decade
 - ▶ Between 2007 and 2019, NONE of the 46 institutions that dropped men's wrestling had women's wrestling



Why Form a Girls Team

- ▶ **Increases winter sport options, moves school closer to Title IX adherence**
 - ▶ Girls have 6000 less participation opportunities than boys during the winter months
 - ▶ Adding wrestling increases winter sport options for girls by 25%
- ▶ **Diversify athletic department**
- ▶ **Highly cost-effective for schools to add compared to other sports**
 - ▶ Can have the same coaches, already have practice space and equipment, can use same transportation, etc.



Why Form a Girls Team

- ▶ **Allows girls to wrestle girls**
- ▶ **Decreases safety and liability concerns in a combat sport**
 - ▶ Wrestling is currently the ONLY combat sport not separated by sex
- ▶ **Addresses the issue of boys from Diocese schools wrestling girls and provides girls from those schools the opportunity to compete**
- ▶ **Increases local, state, and national level positive attention to school as well as boys wrestling program**
 - ▶ <https://www.instagram.com/p/B7XB8giB4Dn/?igshid=13m2bhm9nedo8>



Media



Morning Call 2019-20 all-area wrestling: This season's top moments

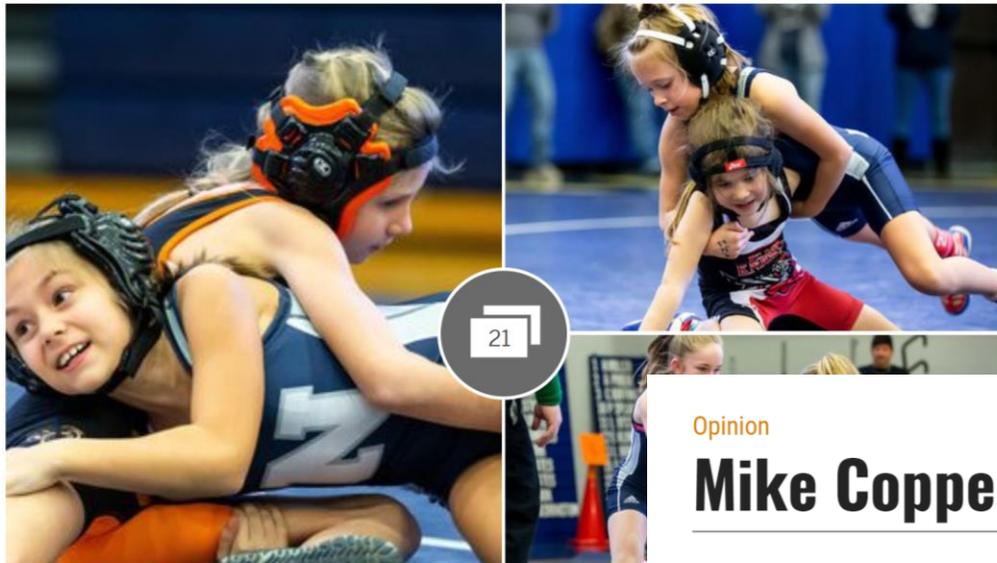
- 1. Parkland vs. Easton girls wrestling scene:** It was Senior Night for the Red Rovers on Jan. 15 at the 25th Street Gym, but a bunch of newcomers stole the stage. Four girls matches before the varsity event brought some of the loudest scenes of the season. It was special for both coaches to share the stage with them. Varsity wrestlers from both teams were among those cheering the most. A video of one of the matches had more than 33,200 views. Awesome! Girls wrestling in the Lehigh Valley is here to stay.

Media

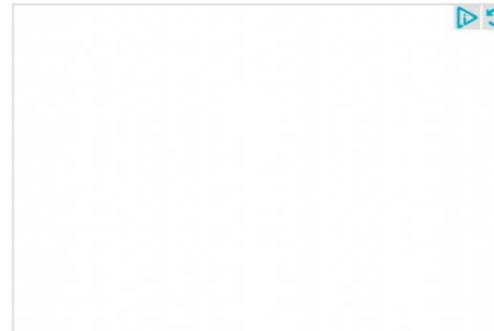
Pennsylvania High School Wrestling

As McCaskey makes Pennsylvania girls' wrestling history, it's now a matter of when, not if, other programs follow

Posted Mar 18, 2020



Advertisement



Opinion

Mike Copper: Movement to pin girls wrestling as PIAA sport

Media

- ▶ 22 local and national articles
- ▶ 3 news media videos
- ▶ 1 national podcast
- ▶ Numerous likes, shares, etc. across social media platforms and across media outlets, including national media outlets

Why Form a Girls Team

- ▶ **Supports district's mission**
 - ▶ Increase perception of school as an inclusive campus that leads by example
- ▶ **Increases strength of wrestling program, Athletic Department, and school community**
 - ▶ Bring new donors, volunteers, community supports to the School, Athletic Department, and Boys Wrestling program
 - ▶ Expansion of fan base for the Boys Wrestling program as well as other school sports
 - ▶ Increase number of individual State Champions and make a team State Championship title possible
 - ▶ A place in the history books for the School Board, Athletic Director, Superintendent, Principal, Men's Wrestling program coaching staff, and supporting staff

PA State Sanctioning

The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) current rules require a minimum of 100 schools to have officially recognized girls wrestling programs before considering a proposal to add girls wrestling sanctioning



Q and A: What counts as a team?

- ▶ Follow PIAA eligibility guidelines
- ▶ School-affiliated
- ▶ School board approved
- ▶ Can be a school-affiliated club or varsity sport
- ▶ NO MINIMUM NUMBER OF GIRLS

Q and A: How much will it cost to add a team?

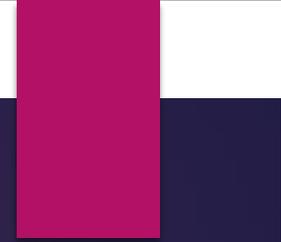
- ▶ **Schools can use the same practice space, same mats, same coaches, and even attend some of the same events**
- ▶ You already have a mat and practice space, so there is no additional cost in these areas just because a girls team is created
- ▶ While a school can create a new coaching staff, the staff can also be the same as the boys team, thereby eliminating any additional coaching stipend expenditures
- ▶ Singlets for the girls – If you already have had girls wrestling for your boys team, this won't even be an additional cost to what the school is currently paying because you are already outfitting them
- ▶ Travel for competition and events – there are ways to minimize additional travel costs specifically for the girls team (e.g., follow boys schedule), therefore significantly limiting any additional cost for travel

Q and A: Do I need a female coach on staff?

- ▶ Not required but can add one
- ▶ The majority of female high school wrestlers across the US are coached by male coaches
- ▶ Can look at keeping coaching staff the same, can add assistant position, can add volunteer position, or can add entirely new staff
- ▶ If interested in adding a female coach, sources of coaches could include:
 - ▶ Wrestling parents
 - ▶ Significant other of current wrestling coaches
 - ▶ Local females that wrestled and have graduated
 - ▶ Female coaches of other sports in the school
 - ▶ Female in school with wrestling knowledge
 - ▶ Female at local college or RTC or with a combat sport background (e.g., jiu jitsu)

Q and A: Is there a concern for male coaching a female in a contact sport like wrestling?

- ▶ Follow same policies that are currently in place when coaching the boys – never in wrestling room alone with one athlete, never in car alone with one athlete, etc.
- ▶ Each coach may have their own personal preference on wrestling athletes, whether male or female
- ▶ Best practices:
 - ▶ Always ask an athlete first before demonstrating a move
 - ▶ Can also verbally describe move as athlete executes it, show move on another coach, have two other athletes demonstrate it, etc.
 - ▶ For weigh-ins, every athlete should be appropriately attired as per PIAA rules



Q and A:

How can I be sure I will have girls come out?

What if we haven't had any girls show interest?

- ▶ If you build it, they will come
- ▶ Girls prefer to wrestle other girls. When given the opportunity, they come out for the sport
- ▶ States that have added girls wrestling have seen a 400% growth in participation
- ▶ Provides an opportunity for girls of all sizes to try wrestling
- ▶ Research has dictated that for many girls who try wrestling, it is the first sport they participate in
- ▶ Recruit

Q and A

- ▶ Our school has a very talented girl that wrestles varsity. What team will she wrestle on?
 - ▶ Can keep her on boys team
- ▶ Who will our school wrestle?
 - ▶ Need minimum of 11 competition points, maximum of 22 (same as boys) but NOT required until sanctioned, so it is okay for a school to not achieve 11 right away
 - ▶ Can wrestle other girls teams, boys teams, enter PIAA events, enter NFHS events
 - ▶ Task Force is creating competition schedule

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