



**WEST OTTAWA**

**PANTHER WRESTLING**

**2022-2023**

**TEAM HANDBOOK**

Updated October 2022

**[www.westottawawrestling.com](http://www.westottawawrestling.com)**

This handbook is dedicated to all the hardworking coaches,  
athletes, and parents and that have devoted themselves to the  
West Ottawa wrestling family over the years.

In addition, a special dedication goes out to David "Krunch"  
Kruszynski; the basis of which the Panther wrestling ethos could  
not exist without.



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October 2021

Greetings Panthers,

Twenty years ago, I ended my complete career as a Panther at the 2002 MHSAA State Finals at the Palace of Auburn Hills. Since then, I have traveled the world seeking techniques and philosophies to ensure the next generation leaves with a placing medal. I again welcome you all to the 2021-2022 West Ottawa Panthers Wrestling Season. This is my seventh year at the program's reigns, and I look forward to moving past the challenge COVID gave us last year. Like many in this program, I look to avenge the loss we all suffered and ascend this program even further. But at the end of the day, I want to thank West Ottawa for the privilege of coaching the Panthers.

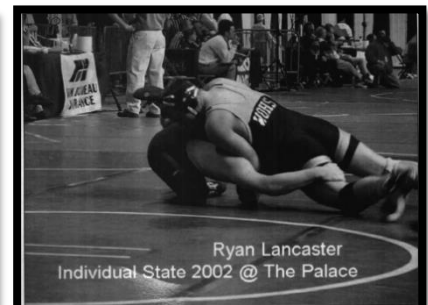
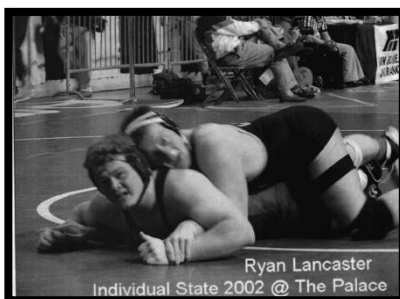
This season will be one of the most grueling experiences you have gone through thus far but rest assured that the benefits outweigh all the hardships. The world can be a cold and unforgiving place. West Ottawa wrestlers are trained not to shy away from difficulty but rather embrace it. In our team handbook, you will find the initial guide to get you started on the way to success.

Remember, it hurts to win. Let's bring on the pain!

Yours in Wrestling,

*Ryan Lancaster*

Coach Lancaster  
West Ottawa Varsity Head Coach  
Class of 2002



# MANTRA: PANTHERSTYLE

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Within wide-ranging individual goals, wrestlers shall advance our shared mission through aspiration, discipline, and willpower. Our program recognizes these merits to be essential in Panthers' mental and physical development and their roles as West Ottawa wrestlers, students, and, more importantly, as citizens of this world. A graduate of this program will obtain the proper tools to traverse through the hardships of life. The gaining of perspective is the unavoidable result of the journey, made up of blood, sweat, and tears. Entering for the love of wrestling, one will leave with the groundwork and gratitude for life.*

## CORE VALUES (H.I.C.S.)

- Hard Work
- Integrity
- Commitment
- Sacrifice



The "Panther Style" values strive to realize these levels in all areas of life. It is a core philosophy that prepares student-athletes for their lives during and after their time at West Ottawa High School. The "Panther Style" mantra means striving to make the world a better place.

## SEASON GOALS

### Pre-Season Goals

- Attain academic excellence in the classroom
- Build strength in the weight room
- Increase flexibility through stretching
- Develop essential conditioning on the track
- Develop drilling skills in the wrestling room
- Begin development of mental toughness



**In-Season Goals\*:**

- Maintain academic excellence
- Maintain and increase strength in the weight room
- Win Team Districts, Team Regionals, and qualify for the State tournament
- Capture OK Red Conference Title
- Undefeated dual meet season in OK Red
- Take at least six athletes to individual states
- Increase home meet attendance
- Represent Holland, Michigan and West Ottawa High School with pride
- Team grade point average above 3.25 (Team Academic All-State)

Practice attendance is mandatory to be on this team.

- Practice generally should not exceed 3 hours, but we will taper immensely as the season goes on. Be sure to pay attention to our schedule so you can plan accordingly. Missed practices will result in compulsory discipline and possible dismissal. Please see the ATTENDANCE section for more details.
- Technique emphasis will be on takedowns, escapes, and pinning combinations. Panthers will be unrelenting on our feet, vicious on top, and gone on the bottom. To accomplish our goals, we must be strong, hyper-conditioned, resilient, and determined. Above all, we will want it more since we have paid higher dues.
- Unannounced days off will be awarded for great team efforts and rarely to avoid extraordinary team fatigue.

**Off-Season Goals\*\*:**

- INCREASE academic performance
- Increase strength in the weight room
- Compete on travel teams, WAAAM, MYWAY, and MUSAW events
- Qualify five wrestlers in compete in Fargo/Super 32
- Attend at least one summer camp/clinic

\*\*We will constantly reinforce the incredible advances made possible by wrestling throughout the year. We want athletes to become involved in Freestyle/Greco-Roman/WAAAM wrestling in the spring and summer and help develop the middle school and youth wrestling team (as they will be our future).

\*\* All wrestlers not involved in a spring sport should join the lifting program at West Ottawa.

\*\* Pay attention to coaches and social media to list all available opportunities during and after the season.

# EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- T-shirts, shorts, and socks
- Wrestling shoes (plan to spend \$30 to at least \$70 for a good pair. Fit for comfort)
- Headgear is provided (wrestlers are allowed to provide their own)
- We also suggest a practice singlet, tights, or rash guard if you own them.
- As a rule, avoid baggy clothes, long sleeves, or sweats. **Practice is practice time, not weight management.**

# EQUIPMENT ISSUED

- Any equipment issued will be the financial responsibility of the wrestler.
  - Headgear - \$25
  - Singlet(s) - \$100
  - Warm-up Top- \$100
  - Team Shorts - \$35
  - Sweater Vest- \$45
  - Team Bag- \$55
- Each wrestler will sign a document ensuring they are responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged gear.
- At the end of the season, all wrestlers may purchase their gear. Talk to a coach for more information.

# ATTENDANCE

Each member of the team is expected to be at all practices and matches, and tournaments. This includes all home meets, fund-raisers, banquets, etc. Calendars and schedules are distributed ahead of time so that doctor/dentist/hair appointments, etc., can be planned around wrestling. Remember, coaches have to plan these activities around practice and events as well. **(Plan for these events.)**

- Mandatory practices begin in November.
- Regarding winter break practices and holiday events: If you are in town, you are expected to be there.
- Excused if emailed in by a parent: illness, injury, family crisis/emergency
- Parents must notify coaches of an absence before the beginning of practice by email. If your coach does not receive an email regarding an absence before practice, the absence is unexcused.
- For every unexcused absence, you will sit out a competition. All competitions are mandatory.
- Three unexcused absences = immediate dismissal from the team.

- If you are injured, you must still attend all practices and games dressed like your team. We ask that you see the trainers if you are injured.
- If you are sick, please stay home.
- Please arrive to practice before the practice starts time dressed in practice clothes, jewelry out, hair up, and ready to go. Tardiness will not be tolerated. The team will condition each late athlete.
- When West Ottawa is closed due to inclement weather (i.e., snow days), the only teams that may do any workout or practice are varsity teams in season. In addition, these workouts/practices will be voluntary. Sub-varsity (JV, Middle School, Youth, etc.) will not practice unless otherwise noted.

Our sport cannot function properly if everyone is not at practice or match. If you don't weigh in, you will not wrestle. This can result in a forfeit of six points for the other team. Because of the amount of practice time, it takes to learn our technical system, your position on the wrestling team may be affected for the remainder of the season if you are not at practice.

## BEHAVIOR

- Because we are a team of individuals, we need rules to keep organization and discipline to function as a team.
- **90% of what you do (as far as right or wrong) should be governed by basic common sense.**
- If you wonder if something is right or wrong, do NOT do it. If you still feel compelled, ask someone (presumed responsible) for their opinion.
- You represent West Ottawa Wrestling on and off the mat. Do NOT do it in public if you have something you need to get out of your system. ANY negative behavior that gets back to any coaches by the newspaper, word of mouth, or otherwise spells problems. YOU will be held responsible for YOUR actions.
- In general, we all need to unwind and enjoy school as well, especially wrestlers. YOU are the hardest working and most disciplined student-athletes at this school. You will earn your breaks.
- Be discrete and moderate.
- **School Suspensions:** If a student-athlete is suspended from school, they will also be suspended from participation with their team for the duration of the suspension.

## DISCIPLINE

- Pre-season breaches of the policy will be dealt with accordingly.
- Third offense may lead to dismissal.
- The coaching staff believes "kicking someone off the team" to be the last resort, and there are many more character-building tasks available for those who need it.
- The coaching staff reserves the right to dismiss any team member for breaching team policy.



# ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

Wrestlers must meet all MHSAA and West Ottawa requirements. Coaches will enforce all rules regulating eligibility as set down by the MHSAA and West Ottawa High School.

**Previous Semester:** wrestlers must have passed at least five (5) classes, each worth .50 credit, during the last semester of enrollment to participate. If you did not, you are ineligible to compete for 60 school days. (1st-semester first-year students are exempt from this).

**Current Semester:** In-season athletes who do not pass five (5) classes at the end of each eligibility checking period are immediately ineligible until they are given the minimum five (5) classes.

\*If you are academically ineligible and desire to be a member of the team after the new grades are posted, you must:

- Attend ALL practices, meets, and team functions until you become eligible.
- Abide by ALL team rules and policies.

# TEAM MEMBERSHIP

- Anyone at West Ottawa High School that desires to be a wrestler can be under these conditions.
  - Must be academically eligible
  - Must abide by all team rules
  - Have no unexcused absences
  - Work Hard
- **Poor wrestling ability is not a criterion;** attitude and hard work are more important. We want to get you ready for "life," as well as a match.
- In general, the coaching staff does not believe in cutting. Wrestlers cut themselves when they become non-wrestlers. Anyone who loves the sport enough to come every day and abide by the rules is a valuable addition. The more workout partners we have, the more challenging our room will be. This will help us all in the long run.
- Unexcused absences and tardiness will be dealt with accordingly. Continued offenses may result in dismissal.
- Only an elite breed of person can develop the desire and dedication that makes this program work.

# FACILITIES

- A coach should be in the room at all times.
- No food or drinks besides (water bottles) are allowed in the wrestling room—no street shoes on the mats.
- Only bring what you need for the workout. (Wrestlers should store all other items in their assigned locker.)
- **The wrestling room is a technology-free zone. Do not bring cellphones, earbuds, or any electronic device.**
- Before practices, assigned groups should sweep and mop mats daily. This must be completed 10 minutes before practice starts.
- wrestlers must neatly arrange the room at the end of each practice. (Equipment stored, mats cleaned, etc.)
- Wrestlers must wear clean clothes for each practice. (Preferably wear things that can be bleached) Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
- Wrestlers should stay out of the coach's office. This is not your personal area.
- ANY cleanup completed by the coaches or managers will be dealt with accordingly.
- In general, this room is our home. Let's keep it one of the best training facilities in the state.

# SHOWERS

- In order to help protect against skin infections, **all team members will be required to shower after practice.**
- The soap suggested for use is Defense Soap as well as Head & Shoulders anti-dandruff shampoo.
- As a general rule, we prefer anti-fungal soaps versus just anti-bacterial soaps.

# TRAINING ROOM

- Be sure to be taped before practice. This is not to be done during practice.
- Do not use supplies in the medical kit. This is only to be used at competitions.

# INJURY & SICKNESS

- **OUT OF SEASON:** See coach, but essentially, you should seek your own care.
- **IN SEASON:** Unless it is an emergency, which needs immediate treatment, see the coach. The coach can then refer you to the training staff to evaluate your circumstances or advise you to see your physician.

- If you seek your own care, we are bound by that doctor's recommendations. (i.e., We could lose an athlete for the season due to a minor cauliflower ear)

## LOCKER ROOM

- Keep everything locked up
- Keep the locker room spotless (No tape, trash, etc.) Noncompliance will be dealt with accordingly.
- Keep showers and bathroom clean.
- You are required to shower after every practice. **Refusal to do so will result in disciplinary action.**

## WEIGHT ROOM

- A coach should be in attendance.
- Keep room spotless (Be sure to rack ALL weights when finished)
- Treat all equipment with care. To cut down on infection, please wipe it down after you are done.
- NEVER lift without a partner.
- You must lift with a shirt on. This will cut down significantly on cross-contamination.
- In general, treat all people with respect. Treat all equipment, ADAM, scales, weights, etc., as if it were yours. Leave things better than when you used them.

## AWARDS

- **Conference Championship:** Varsity team members who win a conference championship will also receive a white WO to signify their conference championship.
- **Scholar-Athlete Award:** Presented to student-athletes who achieve a 3.5-grade point average or higher during their competition season.
- **Tri-Sport Award:** Presented to student-athletes who participate and complete a sport during the fall, winter, and spring season during the same school year. A certificate will be awarded to student-athletes who participate in all three seasons. A certificate and medal will be awarded to student-athletes who earn a varsity letter in all three seasons.
- **Sportsmanship Award:** It is sponsored by the West Ottawa Athletic Boosters. Presented to one member of each team who best exemplifies good sportsmanship and serves as a role model for teammates and the community's youth.
- **Most Improved Wrestler:** Wrestler that has throughout the season developed their ability and potential.
- **Most Valuable Wrestler:** Wrestler that had the most significant impact on the team during the season.
- **Panther Award:** Wrestler that embodied the program and all of its philosophy.
- **Invictus Award:** Wrestler that had to overcome greater odds this season.
- **Off-Season Champion:** Wrestler that earns the most points during the off-season.

- **Panther Tough Award:** Wrestler that receives the poker chips from the season.
- **Coaches Awards:** These are awarded to athletes that have dedicated themselves to the team that season. Named after our State Champions (K. Nadolsky, R. Renes, J. Tietema, S. Nadolsky, and M. McClure)

## VARSITY LETTER CRITERIA

### REQUIREMENTS USED TO LETTER ALL WRESTLERS:

A Varsity Wrestling letter will be awarded to any wrestler who meets one of the qualifications outlined below and finishes the year in good standing with the coaches, the team, the Athletic Director, and the School Administration.

- 60 POINTS NEEDED TO LETTER (20 OF THE 60 MUST BE VARSITY POINTS.)
  - Wrestle in varsity match (Varsity Points) 2 points
  - Varsity Victory by Decision (Varsity Points) 3 points
  - Varsity Victory by Pin (Varsity Points) 6 points
  - Varsity Victory by Technical Fall (Varsity Points) 5 points
  - Varsity Victory by Major Decision (Varsity Points) 4 points
  - Make Weight for Competition (Varsity Points for Varsity only) 1 point
  - Perfect Attendance (Varsity Points) 10 points
  - Attending Optional Practices (Varsity Points) 2 points each
  - WEIGHT SIGN IN AND OUT EACH DAY 10 POINTS
  - Junior Varsity Victory 1 point
  - Junior Varsity Win by Pin or Tech Fall 2 points
- A Senior Wrestler who has been a member of the program for 2 seasons and has not met varsity letter requirements.
- Due to injury, illness, or other circumstances, an athlete who would have lettered may receive a letter in the coach's estimation.
- Athletes that compete at the individual or team regional tournament.

## WEIGHT CLASSES

The current MHSAA Weigh Classes are:

### BOYS

106 113 120 126 132 138 144 150 157 165 175 190 215 285 (see the coaching staff for details...)

### GIRLS

100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135 140 145 155 170 190 235 (see the coaching staff for details...)

# CHALLENGE MATCHES

- Coaches reserve the right to move wrestlers around in the lineup.  
Despite popular thought, wrestling is a team sport.
- All spots are up for grabs and can be won by anyone. Challenge matches will be held often to move up the ladder.
- The first challenge matches will determine the ranking of each weight class. (This will be a tournament-style day.)
- The varsity position at each weight will be awarded to the individual in the finals of that weight who wins the best two (2) out of three (3) matches. (All other matches leading up to the finals on this day will be "head to head" matches.)
- Challenge match dates will be announced in advance. All wrestlers are expected to compete in challenge matches.
- These matches will be a best of one (1) match unless it is for the varsity position. Matches will start with the lowest-seeded/ranked wrestler. Wrestlers may only challenge the person ahead of them on the ladder.
- The winning wrestler will advance to the next wrestler ahead of them until the weight class is complete.
- To take a Varsity position, the lower-ranking member must win two (2) matches in a row. (This will be a best of three (3) series with the Varsity man having a one (1)-match advantage.)
- If you have any questions, please ask the coach in advance.

# MATCH & MEET CONDUCT

## DUAL MEETS

- On the Mat:
  - Do not talk to the official unless addressed first or injured.
  - Do not talk to your opponent.
  - During any break in the action, you must look over to the coach for instruction.
  - Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated; it embarrasses you, your team, and your school.
- Between Your Matches:
  - Do not leave the bench area without the coach's permission.
  - Support your teammate's efforts.
  - Do not address or harass the officials.
  - Following your match, do not lie down. Grab your warm-ups, sit down, and start yelling encouragement.
- Following Your Matches:
  - After you are done wrestling for the day, you must immediately run ten (10) sprints the long length of the gym, with push-ups and burnouts afterward.

# TOURNAMENTS

- On the Mat:
  - Same as above. (Be sure you have a coach and a manager to take stats in your corner.)
- Between Your Matches:
  - Support your teammate's efforts.
  - Stick together. We are a family.
  - If eliminated, do not leave. Stay in your uniform.
  - Listen closely for your matches.
  - If there is a substantial break, change out of your wrestling shoes and into some comfortable shoes. (We must save our legs for matches.)
- Following Your Matches:
  - After you are done wrestling for the day, you must immediately run ten (10) sprints the long length of the gym, with push-ups and burnouts afterward.

# PARENTS

- Parents are expected to support their athletes and the program through fundraising and encouragement.
- We ask all parents to sit in one section at home and away matches and cheer our team on together in a way that shows class and sportsmanship.
- Please remember that your coaches are there to defend and protect your wrestler; the coaches will deal with officials and opposing coaches.
- If you want to bring your wrestler home after a meet/tournament, that is fine. Just make sure to sign out with Coach Lancaster first.
- If you have an issue with the coaching staff, please let us know. However, we ask that you give it a 24-hour grace period to let "cooling heads prevail."

# GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Academics are the most critical part of being a student-athlete. (Work hard in the class as well as on the mats.)
- All wrestlers must be to practice on time and ready to go. (This includes taping.)
- Avoid excessive clothing during wrestling practice. (You may put them on for conditioning or after practice.)
- Never leave practice without a coach's permission.
- ALL skin irritations must be reported to the coaching staff immediately.
- Team members must shower immediately after practice, preferably with an anti-fungal soap. We want to cut down on all skin infections.
- The locker room should be spotless at the end of each day. (Clean up your mess, tape, etc.) Failure to comply will be dealt with accordingly.
- Take care of the wrestling room (during school and practices.) This is our home.
- Wrestlers must wear clean workout gear for each practice. (Preferably wear things that can be bleached.)
- Hazing of any wrestlers will not be tolerated.
- Upperclassmen should take underclassmen under their wing and prepare them to lead future Panther championship teams. We will work extremely hard together; we must encourage each other to keep our family together.
- All wrestlers must wear their "Sunday's Best" on the day of all dual meets (preferably a tie and khakis). A well-dressed student-athlete commands the respect of all, especially wrestling officials.
- Tournament attire should be neat and clean.
- Wrestlers must look to the corner for instructions during any break in the action.
- No West Ottawa wrestler will throw a temper tantrum after a match or during a match. We will NOT come off the mat or lay on the ground. We will put on warm-ups, catch our breath and cheer our team on (We will not give anyone the satisfaction of being in better shape than us).
- Do not talk to the official unless spoken to first.
- Do not harass the official from the sidelines (We will only yell encouragement to our team).
- Take care of our managers. They are not your personal servants.
- Show respect to all (Coaches, parents, officials, etc.).
- Set your goals high. If we work hard, there is nothing we cannot accomplish

## Follow us on Social Media



/wopanthers



@westottpanthers



[www.westottawawrestling.com](http://www.westottawawrestling.com)



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westottawawrestling



West Ottawa Wrestling

Make sure to use **#pantherstyle** to stay connected online to  
all the action!



# OFFICIAL WRESTLING SIGNALS HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

 <p>Unsportsmanlike Conduct and Flagrant Misconduct</p>	 <p>Stopping the Match</p>	 <p>Technical Violation and Misconduct</p>	
 <p>Out-of-Bounds</p>	 <p>Indicating No Control</p>	 <p>Awarding Points</p>	
 <p>Reversal</p>	 <p>Interlocking Hands or Grasping Clothing</p>	 <p>Near-Fall</p>	 <p>Caution for False Start</p>
 <p>Warning</p>	 <p>Illegal Hold</p>	 <p>Indication Wrestler in Control</p>	
 <p>Stalemate</p>	 <p>Time Out</p>	 <p>Neutral Position</p>	 <p>Potentially Dangerous Hold</p>

# Wrestling by Sidney Huitema

(Originally published in the *West Ottawan*, Tuesday November 22, 1966)

I have overheard boys talking in the halls with the conversation on wrestling. One boy will ask the other, "Why don't you go out for wrestling?" The other boy will answer, "I don't want to diet, or work too much, or not enough attention is given to the sport by the student body."

"The important thing is the Olympic Games is not winning, but taking part. The essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well," Baron Pierre De Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games.

With the above quote, I will try to paint out the reason why you should wrestle or support wrestling. Many times smaller boys who talk to me, try football and find that they aren't going anywhere in particular as far as varsity status is concerned. They like the sport but are being pushed around by bigger boys on the field, or on the gym floor. I will talk to this boy about wrestling. In what other sport can a boy compete someone his own size? Very often he will gain weight through a weight lifting program and possibly win that position in football or win respect by bigger boys. This is just one of the many reasons for a wrestling program. There are others also; juvenile delinquency; another is the "physical retrogression" of our youth today. One way of doing away with these problems, I'm strongly convinced, is to introduce the most neglected, but oldest and most universal sport- the sport of wrestling. Both as a spectator sport and by participation. Many persons in the secondary and junior high levels have a growing personality. Enthusiasm is the all-important key word for development of your personality.

Wrestling I feel, is ideally suited to help wake-up many sleeping person. Wrestling provides an opportunity for every boy, regardless of size or physical condition, to be in a sport and on a team. For the girls, good healthy enthusiasm and support for the school and team. Things which will develop for the person in wrestling are, balance, coordination, agility, speed and strength. In wrestling there is an opportunity for "self-expression." Here you are on a team but yet wrestle your match as an individual, no one helps you once you step on the mat.

We have in wrestling many contributions to "character." In our every day schoolwork we try to attain solid, character-building values. Athletics are often being criticized because of an emphasis on always being the winner. Why do you play a contest, isn't it to win? Would it be desirable to start a task with the idea of not finishing? Why don't you start college if you don't intend on winning a diploma? Why prepare to be a doctor if you don't plan on winning over death and illness? If you are enthusiastic about winning chances are or you won't win consistently. In wrestling we have room for all size boys, large and particularly small. In following, I am trying to paint out the formula to success, especially in wrestling but also in life. How many do you have? How many could you develop? My reasons for putting this formula in, lie in the fact that athletics really comprise the training ground for lie- after school is completed. The athletic skill may be lost because of disuse, but the attributes of character and personality remain the influence your entire life. Many of the best businessmen in our country, if backgrounds were examined, were in the hot of team and individual competition.

Athletics, as a way of life, teaches us habits and ways of thinking, which we can use all through life. Two quotes from Scotts book, *How to be a Christian in Sports* are as follows, "Sports not only serve as a giant mainsprings for idealism and lifetime careers, but they can lead a man to god." (2) "Sports are not ends in themselves they are only a means to an end to develop a healthy body, social skills, and spirit of cooperation, and fair play. Without these, all sports are not only nonsensical but brutal."

God has given each of us a talent and a job to do. Are you utilizing the talent you have and doing to job you should be doing?

# **PANTHERSTYLE**

## **SHOW UP**



1. EASIEST TO ACCOMPLISH
2. FIRST TENET BROKEN
3. IN-SEASON AND OFF-SEASON

## **BE PREPARED**

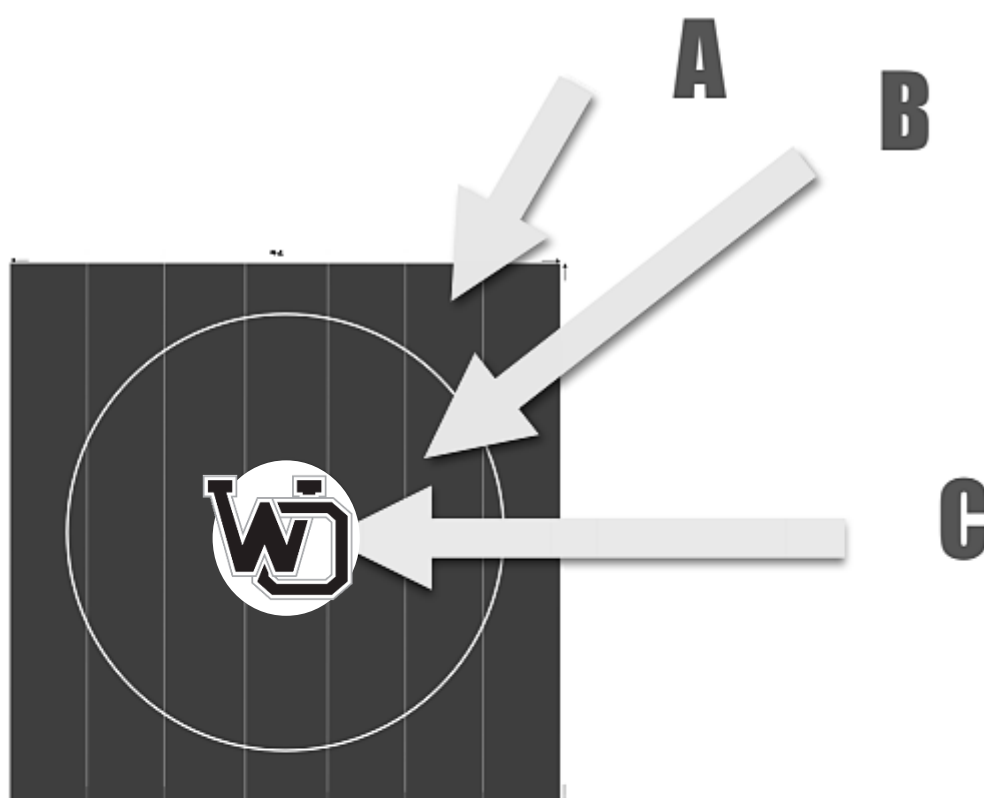


1. ON WEIGHT
  2. WELL CONDITIONED
  3. PUT IN A POSITION TO WIN
- SCORE BONUS POINTS**



1. WE NEED TEAM POINTS
2. NEVER SATISFIED
3. ON AND OFF THE MAT

# WHAT TYPE OF WRESTLER ARE YOU?



**A**

Out of the circle- fan- parent- alumni- Or, wrestler who quits before end of season.

**B**

Inside circle- wrestler who shows up to practice and is part of the team but not in starting line-up yet.

**C**

Center circle- wrestler who shows up to practice everyday and gives 100% and represents the team during most competitions.