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DISTRICT #6

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Penn State wrestling coach, Cael Sanderson stated, "Wrestlers complete as individuals, yet the sport builds comradery like no other." Cael Sanderson's quote has resonated with me throughout my wrestling career because of the amount of friendships and connections it has brought me. The key to improving the sport of wrestling is to get more people and media involved in the best sport known to man.

Throughout my wrestling career, I have never been on a team with a full roster. I have relentlessly attempted to recruit fellow classmates to join the team, but I have had little to no success. I feel that coaches should attempt to attract younger children, even as young as age five, to join the sport of wrestling. One way to do this would be by introducing wrestling in gym class throughout elementary school. Young kids would gain a better understanding of the sport at a younger age and learn the dynamics and basics that would lead to excitement and participation in the sport. Students will then take this new found love home with them to involve and educate their parents. The amount of wrestlers will increase in elementary, junior high, and high school because more students will become familiar with the sport. The sport of wrestling will improve because there will be more competition due to the teams being able to fill every weight class. Having a full team will make team competition more fun to participate in and better for the spectators. As a wrestler, it is better to practice all week to compete in a team match compared to receiving a forfeit. Also, fans of wrestling enjoy watching competitive matches compared to watching a match with multiple forfeits. Wrestlers, coaches, and fans will benefit from getting more individuals involved in the sport of wrestling.

As a fan of wrestling, I believe another way to improve the sport of wrestling is to increase the coverage of wrestling. The sport is one of the toughest sports an individual can participate in and requires a large amount of discipline. Due to these facts wrestling deserves more recognition than it receives. For the most part, many people understand the basic rules of football and basketball, but only the true fans of wrestling understand the rules of wrestling. Wrestling should be broadcasted on the high school, collegiate, and international level to gain more spectators and more of an understanding of the sport. Fans of wrestling will have the opportunity to watch wrestling more often. More importantly, the sport will gain fans due to people watching the sport for the first time, seeing how difficult the sport is and gaining a newfound respect for wrestling. Wrestling might also gain more wrestlers because the students will see the sport more on television and their parents will become more interested in the sport due to it being viewed more. As mentioned, increasing the media saturation of wrestling will improve the sport of wrestling.

Social media holds the key to unlocking the attraction to high school and college students toward the sport of wrestling. According to a study, 94% of high school students access some form of social media everyday. College and high school wrestling can make accounts and place ads on social media for dual meets, conference championships and national championships which can be easily viewed on ESPN. The largest part of gaining new fans is to build excitement and to promote dual meets, tournaments and matches. Wrestlers, coaches, parents, and fans can utilize twitter, facebook, or many other types of social media to promote upcoming wrestling events. These fans of wrestling can then pass this information along to their followers and this information can be disseminated to an infinite number of viewers. Fans can learn from social

media where to view these matches and can then learn how to stream these matches on sites such as Cement Job or Flo Wrestling. This will help many high school and college students to become fans of the sport. The newfound fans will spread the news to their friends, and the sport will grow dramatically. Wrestling and social media go hand in hand with promoting the great sport of wrestling.

The sport of wrestling is an exciting and dynamic sport to participate in and watch for those who are already involved in it. The problem is, the majority of people do not understand the dynamics of the sport. The key to improving the sport of wrestling is getting more individuals involved. Wrestling will improve tremendously if the sport is taught in elementary school gym class, there is an increase the broadcasting of wrestling, and there is an increase exposure of wrestling on social media. Dan Gable understood the importance of the sport of wrestling when he stated, "Once you've wrestled, everything else in life is easy."