

I am the Wrestling Coach at McPherson High School in Kansas. I have a young lady, Addie Lanning, who wrestles for our high school team. I have coached five girls in my career, only two of them were truly "wrestlers". Addie is one of those two.

As a coaching tool I asked her to document what it is like to be a girl who is out for high school wrestling. I asked for this so I could provide this documentation to each girl for years to come who decided to go out for high school wrestling. This was important to me because I am seeing more and more young girls wrestling in our club. This I see that in the future, I am going to have more girls wrestling for my high school team. As an adult male coach, it is tough to connect with many girls in the sport of wrestling. It is easy for me to coach young male wrestlers, because I just fall back on my experiences when I was in their situation. I can't do this with the girl wrestlers for obvious reasons...I wasn't a girl wrestler!

Addie agreed to document her thoughts, and what she provided to me was amazing. After reading it, I thought that I was too good not to share. I don't know if this is something that USA Wrestler would have an interest in printing, but I asked her if she cared if I submitted it to the magazine. She said that she thought it would be great, because it would have been nice to see this perspective prior to wrestling in high school. As you read it keep in mind that she is talking to future girls who are planning on wrestling in high school

I am a subscriber to USA Wrestler Magazine. And read each issue. Maybe other girls or high school coaches would benefit from reading it.

Some background information on Addie: She is a sophomore this season with a career high school record of 18-27. She recently took 3rd place in the 2012 Women's OKC Folkstyle Nationals earning her second All-American Award. She plans to wrestle in college, with many schools already showing interest in her.

Attached is the document she provided and a picture of the two of us.

Thanks, Doug.

Doug Kretzer

McPherson High School Wrestling Coach

Overcoming the adversities of being a female wrestler...

Wanting to prove that women's wrestling is not a joke, that we are as tough as any other wrestler. If you are a girl that wrestles, you have got to want to prove to yourself that you can't settle for not being the best because you just aren't as big or as strong as a boy.

High School Wrestling, my freshman year was when I decided if I was going to continue with my career. It was a rude awakening from Middle School Wrestling or Kids Club. During the first week there was a practice that Coach Kretzer was in charge of conditioning. I was dying halfway through the session of torture, Coach saw me starting to slow down, and that's when he yelled "Addie, you signed up for this!" I remember that moment more than any other in my career so far, because he was the first person to push me and not settle for less from me because I was a girl and that was a changing moment for me, and I think of it every time I think I've settled for less.

High school is the toughest season; it is also the toughest place to fit into. At this age boys are way different than girls. Being independent is important characteristic. Being a girl...naturally we are used to having a partner or friend go with us everywhere we go. Being usually the only girl on the team, or even at the tournament is tough sometimes while the boys on the team are jumping around tackling each other, doing the weird things they do, I often have nothing to do but sit and watch because that's just not what girls do. Being relaxed is how I often prefer being, before I get ready to wrestle.

Pressure...dealing with pressure has been the hardest thing for me to deal with. When I got to high school the pressure to do good almost tripled. Often teachers come up to me to tell me that they are coming to our next home dual just to watch me. It is nice to hear those things, and it makes me feel great, but at the same time you don't want to let them down. That's where the pressure comes from. How I've learned to deal with it is, if I know that I wrestled a good match and left it all out there on the mat, then those teachers, friends, and family will still be proud of me and won't think less of me than before I walked out on the mat.

Still acting like a girl. I have no problem with being a girly girl off the mat. People think that girl wrestlers are going to resemble a man. They're wrong; I am one of the girliest girls in my class. Just because I am in a boy dominated sport doesn't stop me from wearing makeup and skirts. Having an older brother has helped me get used to being around boys and to even have a little bit of that boyish side...cause, well boys often say and do some strange things that you just have to get used to, like farting.

There will always be people that disapprove of a female wrestler; just laughing at the people that don't want to see me succeed in this sport is the best way to get over it.

Going out and dominating the next person you wrestle is the best way to prove them wrong and make a place for myself.

High school wrestling is the start of my season, the hardest but just the start. It prepares me for the girl's season and it makes it seem so easy. There are tough girls out there but no match will compare to a six minute match with a boy, or an intense practice in the wrestling room with the team!

Addie Lanning

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