



USA WRESTLING

2018-2024

Strategic Plan

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Letter from President and CEO

USA Wrestling's strategic plan for 2018-2024 is a look into the future of this national governing body. This plan is focused on what USA Wrestling can do to help strengthen this sport and our organization as we move forward together toward a greater and sustainable future. The plan is the first major revision of our strategic priorities since the development of our long-range plan over a decade ago.

In the 2016-17 fiscal year, USA Wrestling, the national governing body for wrestling, came off one of its most successful seasons ever. The performance of the U.S. World Teams at all age-groups set a record for medals at 32, covering all three Olympic disciplines. The USA became the Senior World Team Champions in men's freestyle, its first World Team title in 22 years and only the third in history. The USA Senior Women's World Team placed a strong second in the world. The USA Junior World men's freestyle team won the World Team title and the USA Cadet World men's freestyle team was second. Event participation was up on the national level. Membership was the second highest ever. The financial situation of USA Wrestling was very strong. Sponsorship and private donations had increased. The governance and leadership of the organization was well managed.

That said, USA Wrestling understands it cannot remain stagnant and must continually improve and adapt to remain relevant and viable. This includes specific areas of concern and new possibilities which have been identified moving forward. It also includes unforeseen challenges which could develop in the future. For instance, the wrestling community was unprepared in 2013, when the IOC recommended removing wrestling from the Olympic program. USA Wrestling acted quickly, and helped lead an international coalition which ultimately retained wrestling's position in the Olympic Games. Because of situations we can identify now, and problems and opportunities that could arise moving forward, USA Wrestling is committed to investing time and resources into Strategic Planning.

USA Wrestling's future success begins with good strategy that describes how we want to achieve our mission and fulfill the vision. Each goal has relevant objectives, supported by tasks and metrics, set forth in executable terms. The development and execution of this plan will remain a fluid process with adjustments guided by feedback and evaluation by our board of directors with attention to the following questions: How is the plan deployed throughout the organization? What metrics are used to ensure that we accomplish strategic objectives in a timely, sustainable and cost effective manner? Are objectives tracked by departments? What are the milestones?

On behalf of USA Wrestling, we wish to express our appreciation to our facilitators from the United States Olympic Committee for partnering with our Executive Committee and Long Range Planning Committee in the development of this plan. We are grateful for the outstanding work and collaboration of Denise Parker – Vice President of NGB Services, Avery Wilson – Strategy & Business Consulting, Michelle Hurtado – Strategy & Business Consulting, and Davis Tutt – NGB Services.

We all have reason to be proud of USA Wrestling and the ideals by which we operate. We hope that you are as excited as we are to get started on this road ahead.



Rich Bender
Executive Director
USA Wrestling



Bruce Baumgartner
President
USA Wrestling

Mission

USA Wrestling, guided by the Olympic Spirit, provides quality opportunities for its members to achieve their full human and athletic potential.

Vision

USA Wrestling will strive to be the world's best sports organization

Values

We commit to the following guiding principles to direct our decisions and behaviors:

Responsibility. Fulfilling all functions, tasks, duties and assignments with trust credibility on behalf of USA Wrestling by honoring promise and pledges.

Integrity. Being true to self and the mission of USA Wrestling, while discerning right from wrong and acting on it.

Dedication. Dedication to carrying out the mission and goals of USA Wrestling with the highest degree of sacrifice and discipline.

Honesty. Being truthful and upright with people of issues in furthering the mission of USA Wrestling.

Accountability. Providing answers and reasons to others for actions and behaviors intended to support the mission of USA Wrestling.

Respect. Recognizing the absolute dignity in every human being, with a sense of compassion, caring and concern for the well-being of other people.



Organizational Pillars

USA Wrestling continues to build organizational strength around four key business pillars:

Sustained Competitive Excellence

Grow the Base

Build the Brand

Network the Community



Emerging Trends

USA Wrestling is committed to continuing to advance its mission and elevate the sport of wrestling domestically and internationally. To this end, the Long Range Planning Committee of the board convened in June 2018 to refresh USA Wrestling's strategy to take advantage of new opportunities and adjust to new realities.

There are emerging trends that warrant attention and action.

- Declining participation among high school boys
- Disparities in some demographics of the U.S. population compared to the wrestling community
- Opportunity to expand female wrestling, especially on high schools and college campuses
- Harness modern marketing and communication techniques and technology to benefit wrestling
- “Big Data”: Using of data and analytics in more purposeful and sophisticated ways to drive better business decisions
- Decline in U.S. competitiveness in Greco-Roman wrestling and changing rules in the style that are better for both athletes and fans
- Rise of improved athlete development models incorporating best practices from youth physical development research
- Focus on ensuring safer sport environments to protect athletes from abuse and physical harm

Success by 2028 in Los Angeles

Additionally, the Los Angeles Games in 2028 offers a unique opportunity to rally the American wrestling community to showcase our sport and amazing athletes. As context for the 2018-2024 Strategic Plan, long range success by 2028 is envisioned as:

Healthy Growth, Especially with Youth and Women

- Paris and Los Angeles Games legacy strategy has lasting results; Olympic athletes are stars on and off the mat, resulting in:
 - Sustained sport participation among males and females
 - A large, passionate fan following
- NCAA/collegiate programming
 - Women's wrestling is a varsity sport at all collegiate levels
 - Leveraging the 2028 Olympics to get programs established at USC and UCLA and in Southern California
 - Strong coordination with RTCs (regional training centers) to build mutual benefit with colleges

Equipped for Excellence and Setting the Standard

- Member retention rate (year over year) averages 60%
- Most diverse and inclusive NGB
- 500K total members, at least 100K are female
- \$30 million per year budget with sufficient cash reserves
- High functioning board of directors
- NGB leader in SafeSport
- Regular, national broadcast/media exposure
- Leaders in the international movement
- Leaders in the Olympic movement for athlete services
 - Stipends
 - Training support
- Endowments ensure competitive success, e.g. funding for athletes, coaches and programming

Peak Performance

- Strategically host more key international events/competitions/camps (ie. World Cups, Continental Championships, Qualifiers, World Championships)
- 40 medals across all styles and ages
- Increase the number of Greco-Roman World medals at all ages

Wrestling Community is Connected, Engaged, and Enthusiastic

- Robust, successful and organized alumni program
- High fan engagement, at events and through variety of platforms
- Numerous partnerships ensure wrestling is wildly popular and thriving in the United States at all levels and all ages



Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats

Strengths (Internal)

- Fiscal Stability
- Olympic and International Relationships
- Influence in international decisions
- Leadership and management (national office and grassroots)
- Board and staff committed to SafeSport
- Scholastic base with market leadership in membership
- History and association as an Olympic sport

Weaknesses (Internal)

- Participation dropping in high schools with turnover to other sports
- “New blood” and diversity on board (status quo thinking)
- Lack of flexibility, new ideas and age of leadership
- Health Issues (weight, skin, concussions, blood, ears)
- Communicating the value and benefits of membership
- Inconsistency in USA Wrestling communications with state associations
- Lack of awareness of the current USA Wrestling SafeSport processes and procedures



Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats

Opportunities (External)

- Strengthen relationships with the USOC and UWW
- Leverage association with Olympic brand; “Touch the Rings”
- Continued expansion of women’s wrestling
- Build-up to the Games (particularly LA28), and afterglow with membership and donors
- SafeSport education with athletes, coaches and parents,
- Share stories and “outside of sport” bios and “human athlete potential”
- Develop technology and educate viewers on using digital media and “Shot Tracker”
- Fan experience and audience engagement

Threats (External)

- Overzealous SafeSport reaction may push away membership
- Negative impact of overall NGB SafeSport violations
- Loss of volunteers; protection and support of volunteers, refs, etc
- Decline in high school participation
- NCAA changes in direction and relationship with RTCs
- NCAA schools dropping wrestling from their athletic programs
- Perception that wrestling is not seen as a mainstream sport
- Misunderstanding of health-related issues (concussion, weight, etc.)
- Competition from other organizations (NuWay, AAU, etc.)
- Competition with other sports
- Competition with non-sport activities (ESport, etc.)



Strategic Priorities Overview

To effectively advance its mission, vision and business pillars, and position the organization for future success, USA Wrestling has identified five key strategic goals to achieve by 2024:

ATHLETE SUPPORT & WELL-BEING. Increase opportunities for athletes to achieve their highest potential in a safe environment, through coaching support, training, competition, financial support and other activities.

COLLABORATION & STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS. Unify the sport through building and strengthening relationships, bringing partners and other organizations together for the greater good of the sport with all groups.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE & ENGAGEMENT. Grow and retain members and fans with opportunities to learn, compete, and support the sport and USA Wrestling.

FEMALE PARTICIPATION. Positively influence further development of female wrestling to increase athlete recruitment, retention, and talent development.

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE. To effectively lead the sport and better serve a diverse community, invest in people, technology, and communications to develop them as core competencies.



Athlete Support & Well Being

Increase opportunities for athletes to achieve their highest potential in a safe environment.

Objectives

1) **Athlete Resources.** Expand direct and indirect resources for athletes to support training and competition ambitions. Raise awareness and access to enhanced resource offering.

2) **Safe Sport and Healthy Environments.** Articulate clear standards, business practices and reinforcement systems to ensure the physical, emotional and mental well-being of USA Wrestling members.

a) **Educate all participants to expand and improve safety.** Create, expand and widely distribute a SafeSport handbook as part of an educational strategy. Through communication, establish and enforce consistent rules, procedures and standards of expected behavior to prevent harm to athletes.

b) **Health & Wellness Best Practices and Resources.** Identify and disseminate best practices and resources that promote athlete health and wellbeing (e.g., sanitation techniques, concussion research, headgear recommendations, etc.).

c) **Culture of Safety & Well-being.** Communicate and educate athletes, coaches, parents, officials, event organizers, leaders and staff about standards and expectations, how to recognize and respond to abuse or misconduct, and reduce the risk of injury, infection or mental/emotional distress.

d) **Coaching/Training Techniques.** Adapt athlete training approaches to better comply with safe culture intents and requirements; incorporate approaches into coach education, training resources and seminars.

e) **Marketing Campaign.** Articulate the benefits of a focus on safety and well-being such that wrestlers, parents, coaches, officials, staff and volunteers embrace the value and preferentially seek to participate in USA Wrestling-sanctioned programs and events.

3) **Greco-Roman.** Assess factors affecting decline in pipeline of competitive athletes, e.g., rules/requirements to compete, financial challenges and incentives, quality coaching, access to training programs, etc. Formulate and implement strategy to regain and sustain international success. Use influence to help improve the rules for both athletes and fans

Measurement of Success

- Measure awareness and understanding of resources available and every athlete knows how to access them
- Meet or exceed every aspect of SafeSport compliance as per U.S. Center for SafeSport
- Members perceive value of SafeSport (survey metric)
- Educational resource kit launched; access/usage measured at the local level with centralized reporting system
- Host Greco-Roman planning summit with strategy developed
- Achieve 12 Greco-Roman medals across all weight classes and world championship/Olympic Games levels



Collaboration & Strategic Partnerships

Unify the sport through strengthening and building relationships, bringing partners and other organizations together for the greater good of the sport.

Objectives

- 1) **Middle/Junior and Senior High School Retention and Expansion.** Work with administrators, key influencers and others to reverse declining school-aged participation by enhancing and expanding programs to attract and sustain participation.
- 2) **Collegiate/NCAA Focus.** To foster growth and encourage sustainability of collegiate programs, rally institutions to value wrestling and support the opportunity to be a talent pipeline for Olympic disciplines.
 - a) **Value Recognition.** Promote program sustainability by articulating a mutually beneficial value proposition for varsity wrestling; leverage relationships with NCAA and other collegiate institutions to gain buy-in and commitment to long-term support.
 - b) **Program Growth.** Generate increased interest and support for existing and new collegiate wrestling programs, emphasizing the link to the Olympics.
- 3) **Resource Growth.** Increase sport interest, marketability, and donor connection to the USA Wrestling mission that expands the availability and diversity of funding and services for the organization through collaboration and engagement of key stakeholders.
 - a) **Media/Broadcast.** Leverage emerging media channels and sponsor/partner relations to expand opportunities for new and existing audiences to enjoy viewing the sport of wrestling, and generate additional revenue for USA Wrestling.
Increase exposure and build value in major media markets.
 - b) **Sponsorships.** Identify opportunities to bring new sponsors into the wrestling family as well as expand activations with existing sponsors to increase support for strategic priorities, core operations and enhanced services/benefits for members.
 - c) **Donors.** Expand the focus on private donor support by creating engagement opportunities and connecting individuals directly to the mission of USA Wrestling, through expanded projects such as Wrestlers for Life and partnerships with U.S. Wrestling Foundation and other groups.

- Achieve a positive growth rate among high school participation
- Grow total collegiate programs by 20%
- \$1.3M in sponsor revenue per year
- \$5M in donor revenue per year
- Increase total viewership of USA Wrestling events by 20%
- **Enhance relationships with all organizations conducting wrestling programs in the USA**

Measurement
of
Success



Where Olympic Journeys Begin

Customer Experience & Engagement

Grow and retain members and fans with opportunities to learn, compete, and support the sport and USA Wrestling.

Objectives

1) **Youth.** Establish a youth development pathway that encourages and supports age- and skill-appropriate participation, increases child and parent satisfaction, and fosters a long term physically active lifestyle. Incorporate the following as core elements of an athlete development pathway:

- **For younger ages** (e.g., Under 11 years of age):

- Emphasize physical literacy (basic motor coordination, agility, etc.)

- Incorporate fun into the training environment and skill building exercises

- Focus on more than winning i.e. building confidence and character

- Create competitive opportunities based upon data-driven decisions

- **Embrace and encourage participation in other sporting activities**, especially those with complementary physical characteristics (e.g., speed, dynamic strength, stamina, etc.)

- **Ensure opportunities for entry-level at all ages**

- **Membership.** Grow membership specifically in states with lowest levels of membership.

2) **Events.** Identify opportunities to improve the experience of wrestlers, parents and spectators at events, driving increased satisfaction and positive perceptions of USA Wrestling.

3) **Fan Experience.** Increase the fan base and their support for athletes and USA Wrestling with focused marketing efforts, experiential opportunities, avenues to express their enthusiasm, and pathways to contribute financially. Develop spectator events that are exciting and shorter in length (ex. Two hours)

4) **Alumni Engagement.** Enlist alumni to increase sport awareness and advocacy, be “brand ambassadors” for USA Wrestling, and share time, talent and expertise to advancing athlete development and organizational effectiveness.

Measurement of Success

- Youth development pathway(s) in place
- Youth participation and parent satisfaction is at all-time high, determined by supporting data
- Launch mobile friendly engagement solution
- “Single sign on” is utilized and functionality is associated with high satisfaction.
- Increased engagement with alumni which results in increased donations and support
- Grow membership by 50% in the ten states with the lowest membership rates





Female Participation

Positively influence the continued growth and development of female wrestling to increase athlete recruitment, retention, and talent development

Objectives

- 1) **Program Expansion.** Invest resources and build relationships to expand the presence of female wrestling programs in schools and clubs.
 - a) **Youth (14 and under).** Increase the number of club-based programs available for females to be introduced to the sport.
 - b) **High Schools.** Increase the number of varsity and state sanctioned school programs available for females to grow competitive talent.
 - c) **Collegiate Expansion & NCAA Recognition.** Increase number of collegiate programs and develop an influencing strategy for women's wrestling to become a recognized varsity sport by the NCAA, NAIA and NJCAA.
- 2) **Female-Friendly Competitions/Events.** Identify best practices to enhance consistency in delivering a positive and productive experience for female participants.
- 3) **Female Coaches.** Expand the number and provide resource for the development of female coaches.

Measurement of Success

- Female members – From 13K to 30K
- College programs – Achieve NCAA emerging sport status and increase from 45 programs to 75. Measures: by 2024.
- State recognized High School programs – From 10 to 18
- Female coaches – 25% increase
- College head and assistant coach positions – From 35 to 50



Where Olympic Journeys Begin

Organizational Excellence

To effectively lead the sport and better serve a diverse community, invest in people, technology, and communications and develop them as core competencies.

Objectives

- 1) **Human Resources.** Evaluate both short-term and long-term talent and diversity and inclusion needs; develop and implement a talent acquisition and retention strategy to close identified gaps.
- 2) **Technology.** Optimize platforms and processes to support strategic priorities, especially the communication objectives, and facilitate more data-informed decision-making.
 - a) **Social/Digital.** Stay informed of latest trends and best-in-class technology; assess feasibility/cost-effectiveness of upgrades to existing systems and processes or new installations; set a strategy for digital/social media that maximizes information exchange and engagement of members and fans.
 - b) **Data & Analytics.** Enhance data collection, storage, extraction, connectedness across systems, and analysis capabilities to enable deeper understanding of business process drivers and impact; regularly use data-informed insights in corporate decision-making.
- 3) **Communication.** More effectively engage and inspire stakeholders.
 - a) **Stakeholder Segmentation.** Stratify the stakeholder base and identify their communication needs and preferences.
 - b) **Customized, Two-Way Communications.** Leverage the segmentation schema to develop targeted strategies that enable two-way communication between USA Wrestling and stakeholders, drives greater engagement and supports strategic initiatives.
 - c) **Content & Sport/Brand Promotion.** Develop consistent core messaging that effectively communicates the value of involvement with USA Wrestling; engage in storytelling that highlights athlete accomplishments in sport and life; and leverage the rings and Olympic association to drive interest and enthusiasm for wrestling and the LA 2028 Games.

Measurement of Success

- D&I staff position
- Total social media following of 2M: by 2024
- Organizational audit completed, and action plan developed
- Stakeholder satisfaction baseline set with resulting increase by 25%
- Brand strength measurement baseline set with resulting increase by 25%





USA
WRESTLING

