

## **Canada History of Girls Wrestling from Ian McDonald, President - B.C. Secondary Schools' Wrestling Association.**

British Columbia's Girls' High School Wrestling was founded by Ian McDonald in 1989. The first official B.C. High School Championship was held in 1994 after approximately 5 years of exhibition championships.

1. B.C. Secondary Schools' Championship Committee inspected the tournament format after B.C. put on three exhibition tournaments.
2. Presentation to the Sport Commissioners Annual General Meeting of B.C. School Sports to get vote approval, followed by AGM of all school sports in B.C. before sanctioning was approved. Not an easy process, but a successful process!
3. British Columbia was the first province in Canada to have an official High School championship for Girls. They were about 5-6 years ahead of other provinces in Canada.
4. First exhibition tournament numbers were about 20 girls.
5. First sanctioned championship numbers were about 15 participants in each of the 13 weights.
6. Boys and Girls tournaments have always been run together at the same time and in the same facility. Allows for coaches of both girls and boys to be present and keeps costs down.
7. For the pioneer coaches in B.C. the idea that girls should compete against boys was never an issue. They competed separately from the start of the program's existence.

**According to Ian, the development of a separate championship for Girl's Wrestling was never an issue in Canada. While boys and girls trained together they always competed separately right from the start. The result was early success in recruitment and also retention. "The fact that our province, relatively small in size (4.5 million population), could produce World-class wrestlers like Carol Hyuhn, Lyndsay Belisle, Emily Richardson, Shannon Samler, Jana Penny, Stacey Anaka, or Justine Distasio is, I think, testament to the correctness of the model."** Ian McDonald

