

History of States with Sanctioned Girls State High School Championships

Presently there are six states that have an official state championship recognized and run by their state scholastic governing body:

ALASKA	CALIFORNIA	HAWAII	TENNESSEE	TEXAS	WASHINGTON
2014	2011	1998	2015	1999	2007

While there are states with unofficial state tournaments and in season tournaments for girls only, a majority of high school girls only have the availability to wrestle against boys on their high school teams.

Both Hawaii and Texas have state laws that do not allow girls to wrestle against boys.

Nationwide there are numerous age group tournaments held by state organizations (high school programs, USA Wrestling state governing bodies, and the AAU are three of the organizations that are providing opportunities for girls only competition.

USA Wrestling (USAW) is the national governing body for wrestling and provides many opportunities for girls to compete in age group competition throughout the year. National championship tournaments for girls:

- USAW National Folkstyle - all age groups- March
- USAW Body Bar - Cadet and Junior age groups - May
- USAW ASICS/Vaughan Cadet and Junior National Championships Fargo -July

College Programs started in the late 1990's with University of Minnesota Morris. The first Women's College National Wrestling Championship was held in 2004 at Missouri Valley College. In 2008 the college coaches created the Women's Collegiate Wrestling Association (WCWA) and that organization continues to be the governing body for over 34 intercollegiate programs.

Canada started girls high school competition in 1989, but had girls only wrestle girls right from the beginning. Growth, acceptance and retention was strong with this model.

OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED STATE TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

Each state uses slightly different weights to fit the demographics of their athletes. NFHS does not specify specific weights for girls.

ALASKA - sanctioned 2014

State meet held every December

8 Weight Classes - 106 113 120 132 145 160 182 220

2016 Format - Scramble bracket where they used round robins on the first day to seed brackets on the second day. No wrestle backs for a true third. Third and fourth were wrestled by the losers of the semis.

Girls must qualify in their respective conference or receive selection by the Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA).

Girls State Championship is held with the 123A (smaller schools) Boys State Championship

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Sanctioning process began in 2007 with the Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA). Alaska has many small rural schools. Some are so small it takes every student to make a girls volleyball or mixed six (coed) team. The introduction of wrestling put the participation of volleyball at risk and raised questions as to how to add another championship sport. Many schools have overcome this by allowing both boys and girls to do both sports at the same time, or allowing athletes to start wrestling at the completion of their volleyball season.

Girls can wrestle boys during the regular season but must participate in their respective girls conference qualifying event in order to compete in the girls state tournament. Girls wrestling is still considered an emerging sport so there are no team awards at this time. At the beginning of sanctioning in 2014 there were approximately 150 girls statewide participating in wrestling. In 2016 that number had grown to 235 girls participating.

In 2006, Michaela Hutchison became the first girl in the nation to win a state title competing against boys. She won Alaska's 103 lb weight class with a narrow 1-0 victory.

California- Sanctioned in 2011

*State meet held last weekend in February
14 weights
24 person bracket
Girls State tournament is separate from the boys
Girls qualify through 7 state sections*

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2001- 2010 - State Championships were run by the California Girls Wrestling Association (CGWA). They were a small group of very dedicated coaches that were determined to demonstrate to the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) that California had enough female athletes to warrant a CIF championship. There was even a regional tournament format to demonstrate to CIF that a regional configuration was in place to qualify an athlete to the unofficial state tournament during the 2004 – 2005 years.

2006 – 2010 – CIF ran a North and South regional tournament. The first year these regional tournaments placed out to 8 athletes in every weight, demonstrating in 2006 that a 16 woman bracket would have been filled at a state meet format.

*Note: Jackie Davis 108 lbs (New York Beat the Streets Girls Head Coach) and Katherine Fulp-Allen 114lbs (5X USA Women’s National Team Member/Wrestle Like a Girl Board Member) won the first CIF sponsored Nor-Cal Championships in 2006.

2006 – 2010 – CGWA continued to run the unofficial California Girls State Championships.

2011 – present – CIF sanctioned and runs an official girl’s state tournament. Over 4000 girls are wrestling in California in 2015 - 16.

Southern Section Document on California’s Girls Wrestling protocols

<http://cifss.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2014-15-Girls-Wrestling-Preview2.pdf>

Hawaii's History- Sanctioned in 1998

State Meet Held Feb 17 - 18th 2017

14 weights

16 person bracket

*Boys and Girls State held together at Blaisdell
Center Arena*

Girls qualify through 5 leagues to the State Meet

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-Girls began turning out for wrestling in Hawaii in the nineties.

While there was some resistance, it was minimal...more background grumbling than any measurable pushback. As, the girls had no league of their own, they had to be incorporated onto the boys' teams. Teams tried to match up girls with girls, but in tournaments, the girls had to compete against boys.

-Some of the girls did quite well. Families of these young women began to push for a separate State Tournament for girls wrestling. The push became public. The Hawaii High School Athletic Association (HHSAA), under the leadership of Keith Amemiya, voted to approve a girls State Wrestling Tournament in June of 1997. Hence, the HHSAA sponsored its first state girls tournament in 1998.

- "The HHSAA had little room to wiggle." Girls had been competing for some years without undue amounts of injuries, or much in the way of overt social antagonism. And of course, there was the fear of a Title IX legal action. Further, the state needed to balance the overall gender picture of state tournament opportunities. Football had recently been added to the state tournament schedule and that completely threw off the gender balance of state tournament opportunities for girls. The HHSAA was looking for girls' sports to fix this imbalance. Over 500 girls are participating in wrestling in 2015 - 16

Texas Data- Sanctioned in 1999

*State Meet Held last week in February
10 weight classes for the girls in two divisions - 5a and 6a
16 person bracket was initiated in 2016
Boys and Girls State held together-Berry Center, Cypress, TX
There is a qualifier for girls to compete at state championships with 4 regional qualifiers in each division.*

1999- 40 of 160 teams that participated in the State Tournament had girls' teams
2001- 113 of 160 teams that participated in the State Tournament had girls' teams showing almost a 300% growth in 2 years of sanctioning.

Present growth information from the University Interscholastic League Texas site link:

<https://www.uiltexas.org/press-releases/detail/berry-center-to-host-uil-wrestling-state-championships> -"A second conference was added to boys and girls wrestling competition in 2013, doubling the number of qualifiers and matches. The 2013 Wrestling State Championships were expanded to three days and two locations. Boys and girls wrestling has been a UIL-sanctioned sport since 1999."

There are over a 4,000 girls competing in Texas high schools today.

Tennessee – Sanctioned 2015

*State Meet Held February 16 - 18th
10 weight classes for girls
8 person bracket
Boys and Girls State held together
There is a qualifier for girls to compete at state
championships through a East and West Region
Each region submits to TSSAA their method of
qualifying their top 4 girls.*

Contact - please review the enclosed **letter from Mark Reeves**, Assistant Executive Director TSSAA on the format used to create a sanctioned state wrestling tournament for girls from 2009 - 2016.
Approximately 300 girls are competing in the state of Tennessee in 2015 - 16.

Washington Data- Sanctioned in 2006

*State meet held the third week in February
14 weights
16 person bracket
Girls and Boys State held together
There are 4 WIAA Girls Regional Qualifiers. Top 4
girls advance. This is identical to the boys.
Sub Regional tournament determines who advances
to regionals.*

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Sanctioning process began with the 2003-2004 season. A Girls Invitational Tournament was held during the boys 2004 WIAA Mat Classic XVI State Championship. The girls had to be a member of their high school team, have wrestled a minimum of 4 matches and participate via application. 70 girls registered and 68 actually competed.

This format continued through the 2004-2005 season with 109 girls competing from 68 schools.

In the 2005-2006 seasons 159 girls competed from 74 schools and sanctioning became official that spring.

The process began with 6 weight classes and currently offers 14 weight classes, equal to the boys.

As of 2017 there are three 4x Girls State Wrestling Champions. Jordyn Bartelson (Puyallup HS), Sheridan McDonald (Kiona-Benton HS), Desiree Zavala (Grandview H.S.)

There are over a 1,000 girls competing in Washington today.