

# One

# Courageous Girl

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**USA Wrestling High School Development Committee  
Co-Chairs Joan Fulp and Andrea Yamamoto**

# The One Courageous Girl

By Andrea Yamamoto

## Don't be surprised, be prepared

**Coaching Guide:** Welcome her into the wrestling community. Have a meeting to discuss competitive boundaries/options such as girls only competition or mixed competition. Hold a parent meeting to find common ground. Discuss uniform options. Recruit another girl to be her training partner. Find other coaches that also have girls wrestling in your area.

## Boys Perspective

**Coaching Guide:** Lead by example. The boys will follow the coach's welcome, enthusiasm and positive support for the female wrestler.

# The Wrestling/Competition/Boys Dilemma

**Coaching Guide:** Girls competition may be scarce in your local area, region or state. Discuss with her parents what the goals should be this season and where competition against boys fits into those goals.

**Coaching Guide:** A girl's parents do not want her to compete against boys. Be open to encouraging her participation on the team so she has the potential to fall in love with the sport, learn and develop skills and take her place in our wrestling family. Work with your administration to support her traveling to the one or two competitions in your state or a neighboring state that is holding girls only competition.

# Locker Rooms

**Coaching Guide:** Have a safe and appropriate practice for weighing in your one courageous girl for duals or tournaments. Girls should not be weighed in using boys locker rooms with or without boys in the locker room. Consider open gym weigh-ins in singlets for all athletes.

**Coaching Guide** Holding team meetings in the boys' locker room often excludes female team members from team announcements, information sharing, and coaches motivational talks.

## Not Really One Of The Guys

**Coaching Guide:** The one girl on the team does not need to behave, communicate, or assimilate like a male to be valued in your wrestling program. Her female qualities are not a weakness, they are where she draws her strength every day to be the only girl on a boys team. Help her to maintain her female strength through wrestling.

## Who Will Be Her Partner?

**Coaching Guide:** Initially, male teammates may approach partnering with the one courageous girl with hesitancy. Set the tone for practice by creating a predictable procedure for picking partners.

**Coaching Guide:** A girl that weighs 130 pounds will find her best partner in a male wrestler that weighs less than her to balance out his power and strength. As with all your athletes, examine fitness, athletic and wrestling ability in finding a good partner for your female wrestler.

## She Is Your Team of One

**Coaching Guide:** Yes, one girl can be your girls team. Understand the courage it takes to walk into a room with boys for teammates and men as coaches. How will you choose to honor that daily courage?

## A Female Friend

**Coaching Guide:** If you can't recruit another girl to be her training partner, consider getting a female manager just for her. The one courageous girl needs female support at practice and competition.

## One Turns Into Ten

**Coaching Guide:** The one courageous girl can become 10 girls next season as she inspires more students to give the sport a try. If her goal is to attract more girls to the team, discuss how you can achieve that together.

## Check in Regularly

**Coaching Guide:** As with all your athletes, do the best you can to check in with her on a weekly basis to see how she is experiencing practice, learning new skills, and the team.

## Weight

**Coaching Guide:** Girls do not lose weight like boys. Consider wrestling her at her natural weight until she has the maturity and dedication to follow through on safe weight reduction and management.

## Girls Uniforms

**Coaching Guide:** Despite the easiness, don't put girls in boys singlets. Make the effort to work with your athletic director or through fundraising to purchase women's cut singlets. Boys' singlets are the largest contributor to unnecessary exposure of female wrestlers in competition with or without a sports bra.



## The Myth of 110%

**Coaching Guide:** The one courageous girl on your team should not have to do more than her 100% in daily practice to be valued and accepted in your program.

## Practice Motivation & Awareness

**Coaching Guide:** Instead of playing the traditional boys wrestling motivational video at the beginning of practice, get online and find a great girls or women's match or interview to showcase girls wrestling and reinforce the value of girls in our sport.

It is important for girls and boys in your wrestling room to see successful male and female role models in our sport. Women are competing at the highest level of the sport. Expose your athletes to both male and female wrestlers.

## Sports Bras

**Coaching Guide:** Ideally, all girls should purchase a “high-neck” sports bra to wear under their competition singlet. They can be purchased online if one cannot be found in stores.

**Coaching Guide:** Sports bras do not solve the problem of a low cut design of a boys singlet. Even with a sports bra, many girls who wear a boys singlet run the risk of exposure. Purchase an affordable women’s cut singlet for your one female wrestler or a full team.

## Long Hair

**Coaching Guide:** Girls with long hair need to start practice with their hair in braids or ponytails. Only use elastics without metal. Adjusting hair should be combined with water breaks during practice.

**Coaching Guide:** Make sure you are up to date with current NFHS hair rules for competition. Have hair covers available to meet the guidelines for your state.

**Coaching Guide:** Girls choosing to wear a hair cover should still braid their hair. Loose hair pushed inside the cover comes loose during competition. They should experiment with the hair cover and head gear prior to competition to get the right fit.

## In Her Image

**Coaching Guide:** There are plenty of positive images and motivational messages of girls and women's wrestling online. Have your managers create a bulletin board or section dedicated to girls wrestling.

## Social Media

**Coaching Guide:** If you are posting positive messages about your team or individual wrestlers, make sure to include your one courageous girl. Visibility of girls wrestling helps to drive growth!

## All Girls Camps

**Coaching Guide:** Reach out to your coaches association or USA Wrestling to find an all girl camp for your one courageous girl. Meeting other girls will boost her enthusiasm for the sport and help her realize she's one of many.

## Higher Education

**Coaching Guide:** Make sure your one courageous girl knows about the higher education opportunities for her through the WCWA, NAIA and emerging NCAA championships.

## Team USA

**Coaching Guide:** Make sure your one courageous girl knows about the opportunities for high school girls to represent Team USA at International events through USA Wrestling

## Olympic Dreams

**Coaching Guide:** Make sure your one courageous girl knows that women's wrestling has been an Olympic sport since 2004.

# Thank You

Your leadership has and will make the difference.

We celebrate your willingness to create new possibilities for girls high school wrestling.

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