

Wrestling Community Comment Mike Goldsby, February 28, 2013

I was very disappointed to learn that the Olympic Committee is recommending that Wrestling be dropped as a core sport from the Olympics.

If approved by the full International Olympics Committee, wrestling will have to compete with seven other non-core sports - baseball/softball, squash, karate, sport climbing, wakeboarding, wushu and roller sports. One of their reasons is money and they need to drop some sports to add others. Another reason is gender equality, even though women do wrestle in the Olympics. Their recommendations will be considered and would take effect in 2020.

Wrestling has been a part of the Olympics since 708 BC. They even call it Greco Roman wrestling. You don't get any more Olympic than that. They don't have Greco Roman Curling or Greco Roman dressage. Wrestling is right up there with the discus and the javelin.

If you haven't been a wrestler or been related to a wrestler, it might be hard to understand. If you have wrestled, it is hard to explain. It can be life changing. I participated in several sports in Junior High in Oregon and I wasn't very good at any of them. I had a chance to wrestle in 9th grade and I weighed a whopping 120 pounds. Practices were hard, brutal even and I expanded my vision of my limits. I could do a lot more than I thought I could.

We had our first tournament. I wrestled 5 times and got pinned 5 times. I resigned to that but Coach Barker saw it differently. He encouraged me to excel and definitely raised my self confidence. I begin to win, not always but often. I stopped being easy to pin. I became a good wrestler but it helped me be a better person. That Coach's encouragement happened at just the right time in my life.

Much later, both my son and my daughter wrestled, each the full four years in Ferndale High School. Each worked very hard, pushed their limits and reached their personal goals. Both were team Captains their Senior year. I had nephews who wrestled as well. Every one of them said their coaches were very important people in their lives. Coach Tom Weber got wrestling going and kept it going. Ferndale no longer has a wrestling program. It certainly garners less public support than basketball.

I am not trying to compete with other sports. But wrestling is intense. Baseball goes on for hours but wrestling can be over in less than a minute. In football, you can share responsibility for mistakes. In wrestling, you have nobody else to blame. Wrestling is visceral and immediate.

There are opportunities to support Olympic wrestling, freestyle and Greco Roman. But every other threatened core sport is appealing the recommendation as well. So we will see how that turns out.

I said how important an adult can be in the life of a young person. For me, one such person was Coach Barker. But you surely have such people in your past.

We all need to remember that a caring adult can make a huge positive difference in the development of a young life.. You can support this, by supporting the Bowling For Kids Sake this weekend. This event benefits the Mentor Program for the North Coast Big Brothers Big Sisters. They use your donations locally to find and screen potential mentors for local youth.

You may know someone in your life who participates in this. Give them a donation. It is tax deductible and goes to a very worthy cause. Teams have a friendly competition to see who can raise the most money. Teams then dress up in costumes and go bowl a couple rounds as their reward. The theme this year is 1980s, to observe the 30 year anniversary of Big Brothers.

Go to their website North Coast Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowling for Kids Sake. You can donate securely online to your favorite team. You can make a difference in the life of a young person.

This is Mike Goldsby for Community Comment.