

JANUARY 25, 2021

TO: SOUTHERN PLAINS COACHES & LEADERS
FR: RUSTY DAVIDSON
RE: NATIONAL COACHES COUNCIL

Coaches & Leaders,

It's been a while. I stayed quiet throughout late fall / early winter. So, I owe you a Happy 2021, hoping your entire holiday season was filled with love and family. While actions have been slow and deliberate, USA Wrestling's discussion and planning has not taken a break. We may need to start giving medals for "Most Zoom Calls" in a week... day... hour.

I, like many, have found myself being quiet, kinda' hanging back, just out of frustration. Anytime my enthusiasm wanes, I immediately get on the phone with Coach Hag. I did so, last week. We opined and commiserated about all the elements of life, including wrestling. Hags reminded me that, when you get down to it, Coaches are in the business of selling hope.

Seems like hope has been in short supply, over the last nine months. But, with 2020 in our rear-view mirror, we can roll out a new model. Here we go.

In terms of the business side of your National Coaches' Council, we have stayed busy. We're fortunate that our representation touches every element of wrestling. We have been active, supporting all styles and age groups, as we collectively come back to life.

USA Wrestling has seized the opportunity to use some of our down-time, in cleaning and polishing councils, committees, policies, procedures that have accumulated a little dust. Be proud that our Board and Staff having gotten, and stay, on the cutting edge of keeping Wrestling the model microcosm of society. Board and Staff have implemented significant steps in providing total opportunity to the broad diversity of our membership.

Our Council learned, in December, that we have a chance to grow and diversify, in our representation of our member coaches. We have taken the initial steps in adding TWO members to the National Coaches Council, both with specific backgrounds in Womens' Wrestling. I'm careful how I phrase that. As individual members, we all have some specifics in our backgrounds. Yet, we take enormous pride in the notion that your Coaches' Council, collectively, represents EVERY member, of EVERY age, in EVERY style, in EITHER gender, EVERY day.

College Wrestling is off to a good start, both men's and women's. With national championships scheduled and moving forward, we find good reason to hope. High School Wrestling is reasonably healthy, throughout the Southern Plains. Our eastern-most states are successfully navigating this new pathway. Colorado is kicking off, as I write. Texas is next. My beloved New Mexico starts late, but with high hopes.

One of USAW's premier events, this spring, is the National Showcase (for recruits). I put that in parentheses to call attention to the concept. Our Events Staff did their homework, in answering a need. We have so many graduating seniors... not the rare Blue-Chipper, but those athletes that sustain programs... who lost chances to be seen. Please applaud USAW's efforts to connect deserving kids with deserving college programs.

The event will be held March 26 - 28. It seems like it may either be in Omaha or Iowa City. The event is open to ANY athlete who is still in High School and EVER won a state championship. There are several qualifiers, loading brackets quickly ! Please go to themat.com to locate qualifiers convenient for your area.

Appreciate the digital providers that are doing so much to feed our fix. Besides being able to watch our nation's greatest compete, realize that they are setting a positive example. Our kids need to see Taylor and Burroughs, Mensah-Stock and Gray. They need to see guys like Seth Gross, girls like Erin Golston, maintain the "Wrestle Anyone, Anytime" pace, keeping their goals in focus.

So, there-ya' go. Thank You ! I find new optimism, just picturing you guys, while I write. Thanks, Coach Hag, for easing me back on course.

Your Coaches' Council will meet, later this week, to confirm some of our positive next steps. I will report to you, in timely fashion. I do look forward to seeing you, face to face (not mask to mask !). I appreciate you.

Rusty