

I managed wrestling for 3 years at FHS. It's something I just kinda fell into as something to do in the winter, but I got really good at it very fast. None of my family or friends wrestled, so this was completely new to me, but I became obsessed with it. Now if you ask the wrestlers through the years, they may say I wasn't the nicest manager. Although possibly true, I just wanted what was best for them, and I loved them all like brothers.

I had a different look on wrestling than most people. I didn't actually do the sport, and I didn't even fully understand all of the rules. But I worked behind the scenes at tournaments with all of the mats and tables. The tables that always had 3 sharpened pencils and a stuffed animal that was me. There were some times that I was upfront. I was that little blonde girl yelling at everyone to get ready to go. There were days when I wanted to quit, like, a lot of them, but there were also days that I loved what I was doing. However, that's life, ain't it? It's not always sunshine. It takes hard work and dedication, especially through the days you feel down and defeated.

The main lesson I have learned from wrestling is that - do not give up. Things will get difficult. Boys may be hangry and moody. There may be a billion things to do: prepare the med kits, pack the extra gear bags, catch up on recording stats in trackwrestling, verifying the information on matboss is correct, preparing for the next home meet, washing uniforms and mats, etc. But you do what you can learn from each wrestler and situation.

I tried to quit my senior year. I was a hypocrite to myself. Clearly that quitting did not last long because I had a good friend come to me and tell me to not give up, to be a good example as a leader, and to finish the season strong. That is exactly what I did: I finished strong and now I try to convince wrestlers who try to quit, to come back and finish what they started. I did a lot of sports throughout my life - from competitive jump rope to soccer I learned my worth and my value from wrestling. I gained respect from wrestlers and coaches and they listened to me. They knew that I wanted what was best for them, and helped them as much as I could.

My top moment in wrestling - there have been so many amazing - indescribable situations with the FHS team and watching other teams at state or different tournaments. But when I think about the most memorable moment one always comes to mind. Big Joe Schmitz: our heavyweight. He was a year younger than me, and I watched him become a force to be reckoned with. It was the last dual of my senior season (Joe was a junior) at Appleton North. He was wrestling the number 10 ranked kid in the state named Wes King, and Joe had never defeated a ranked wrestler before. This time was different. He won a hard fought back and forth battle in overtime. His stamina and commitment really showed in this match. After the final whistle blew, there were screams throughout that whole gym. I can tell you, I was so excited that I laid on the floor. The whole team jumped up at once, screamed, and ran to the end of the mat to pile on top of him. That match wasn't only big for him as an individual wrestler, it pushed us over the edge to win the dual. It was the most exciting moment of my three years, and it gave me a huge sense of pride in supporting these guys and what they are trying to accomplish together.

Now, instead of my advice to future wrestlers, I'd like to give advice to the future managers out there. So, to the future managers of FHS Wrestling: Coach Halter really does appreciate you, no matter how much work he throws at you. The poor guy needs our help and he trusts us to deliver. The boys can be mean, but understand they are just hungry and/or tired. It's nothing personal. The days may get long and you may get cranky. That is okay. Understand that, you have the most important job on that whole team. If you were not there, they would be a mess, they would fall apart and all the little things would not get done. Your commitment and time to the team will only benefit both you and the team. Being a wrestling manager was the best part of high school for me. I felt included and needed. Enjoy it, times will get hard, but it will all be worth it in the end.

FHS Wrestling has taught me more life lessons than high school. It encouraged me to get out of bed at 5:30 in the morning to go to dunkin donuts, pick up 2 dozen donuts, and drive to every store in Fond du Lac that said they would donate to us. It taught me that family can be wherever you want it to be, even in a wrestling program! As I move on to different challenges in my life, I know that Fond du Lac Wrestling will always be a backbone of who I am. And to end this senior legacy - I would like to say, humbly, strive to be a manager better than I was. Never give up. Fight through the difficult stuff. You'll be happy you did.

