



Campaign to Sanction High School Girls Wrestling in Ohio Launches

(Columbus, Ohio) (June 3, 2020) – The OH Girls High School Wrestling Task Force announces the launch of #SanctionOH, a grassroots effort to work towards getting high school girls wrestling approved as a sanctioned sport in Ohio. The SanctionOH campaign includes advocacy efforts, educational resources, promotional materials and collaboration with schools.

For the past five years, girls wrestling has been the fastest growing high school sport in the country. Ohio is working to support the growth of girls' wrestling across the state, recognizing that currently all four OHSAA district areas have girls wrestling within their area school. While there are 23 state high school associations sanctioning a girls' wrestling state championship, Ohio does not yet have an official state tournament and has not sanctioned girls wrestling as a sport.

The OHSAA is currently working on establishing sanctioning guidelines for girls' wrestling. The #SanctionOH campaign is working to provide educational information and resources to help grow opportunities for girls wrestling and help to promote the addition of schoolgirls' wrestling programs.

Activities of the SanctionOH campaign include:

- Educate wrestling coaches and school administrators on girls wrestling;
- Work with individual schools to form official high school girls wrestling teams;
- Provide resources to schools and coaches to develop girls teams;
- Work with OHSAA Coaches committee and state office on sanctioning efforts and the creation of a OHSAA State Championship; and
- Help coordinate competition opportunities for girls until sanctioning is achieved;

Quotes:

"We have a strong wrestling community in Ohio that is rallying around girls' wrestling so we can increase opportunities for girls and women. Girls wrestling is the fastest growing high school sport in the nation and our state is seeing the same increase in popularity. Now is the time to embrace girls wrestling in Ohio." - - **Vanessa Oswalt, Chair of the Ohio Girls High School Wrestling Task Force**

“As Vice President of the State Coaches Association I speak for our board when I say we are excited to see the growth of girls wrestling in the state of Ohio. We know that hosting the first state tournament was an important step but only a first step in working to sanction girls wrestling in Ohio. We are eager to continue working with OHSAA, Wrestle Like A Girl and the many other stakeholders to join the 24 other states around the country who have sanctioned girls wrestling as a standalone sport.” - - **Shawn Andrews, Vice President of the Ohio High School Wrestling Coaches Association**

“This is a great opportunity for young women in Ohio to be able to wrestle against their own gender. It’s time we get to the forefront of the national movement. The time is now to make a push, with sustained effort, to sanction girls wrestling in Ohio.” - - **Jeff Martin, Communication Lead for the Ohio Girls High School Wrestling Task Force**

“Officially recognizing the sport by schools and the state athletic association makes a huge impact on the growth of girls wrestling in that state. Data shows that girls would prefer to wrestle and compete against girls. In those states that recently added an official state-association sanctioned girls state championship have seen growth as high as 400% following sanctioning, and every sanctioned state saw a marked increase in their female wrestling participation numbers.” - - **Sally Roberts, Founder and CEO, Wrestle Like A Girl**

About The Ohio Girls High School Wrestling Task Force

The Ohio Girls High School Wrestling Task Force is composed of wrestling leaders in the state of Ohio. Additionally, the task force is supported by local and national organizations, including Wrestle Like a Girl, USA Wrestling, National Wrestling Coaches Association, National Wrestling Hall of Fame, National High School Coaches Association, and the National Wrestling Coaches Association. Learn more about the SanctionOH campaign at www.sanctionoh.com or Vanessa Oswalt, sanctionoh@gmail.com

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