

Wrestling Tips and Strategies

Bruce Gabrielson

Head Coach - [Southern Maryland Wrestling Club](#)

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GENERAL MATCH STRATEGY

1. Don't be afraid to lose, have an offensive philosophy going in, and constantly use a proper attack.
2. Make your opponent wrestle your **style**. Force the match and keep him off balance by attacking first and continuously.
3. If you have reach, speed, or balance on a man, use these to your advantage. Mix them up in your attack, the odds favor you.
4. If you are stronger, overpower him. If you are weaker, don't fight his strength but instead concentrate on perfect technique. **Technique will win over strength** nearly every time.
5. If you are in better shape, set a pace he can't stand but don't do all the work. Make him lift **your weight** every time possible.
6. **Keep a cool head** and remain poised and confident. Never allow calls by the referees or actions by your opponent or the fans upset your wrestling attitude or technique. Never make the referee mad at you.
7. **Never** stop wrestling until the whistle blows. This includes not giving up a defensive move until the referee calls the points. Remember, creating a stalemate is better than giving up a point.
8. Do not do anything in a match that you haven't worked hard to perfect in practice.
9. **Never** let your opponent know that you are tired.
10. Be a "**chain wrestler**", always performing a second move if the first doesn't work. Use holds which blend together, either as a fake to set-up, or as a follow-up.
11. A desperation move is risky and should only be tried at the end of the match when you "**must**" get points. Remember, a loss by one point is as bad as a loss by several points.

PRE-MATCH STRATEGY

1. Get yourself in perfect physical condition. Work **hard** to build up your body, eating right, and get the **proper rest. Even though major away competitions are fun, get to bed early the night before a match.**
2. Pay attention to what the coach says about your opponent and plan accordingly. Plan to use a different initial attack if your opponent has watched you.
3. Know your opponent's style and his strong and weak points, Do not allow his past record or build to destroy your confidence. Study him carefully before weigh-in and remain impersonal toward him until after the match.
4. **Specialize** in at least one **series** of moves from each position (top, bottom, standing) and learn at least one other series. Have a desperation take-down move (preferably a throw) available if you need it.
5. **Practice** these moves hundreds of times to perfect them,

6. **Know/learn** the current wrestling **rules** for the style you are competing in.
7. **Never** let your opponent know if you have been injured, sick or are under weight. It may give him the added confidence that he needs to defeat you.
8. **Never** sell yourself short or lose sight of your goals.
9. For general preparation, do **more** than what is required by the coaching staff, as well as working hard to do what is required correctly. Make a personal commitment to become the best that you are capable of becoming. Wrestle off-season if there is a program available. Go to all the open tournaments you can.

TAKEDOWN STRATEGY

1. Never force or muscle holds which aren't open, it tires you and usually isn't productive.
2. Relax when you are out of range. Being tense takes valuable energy.
3. Keep a proper body position (stance) when you are in range, especially when you are walking into a man. Don't stand straight up or with your hands near your head.
4. **Never** shoot a leg from farther out than an arms length.
5. Never shoot a takedown without first destroying your opponent's stance. **Set up all takedowns!**
6. If you tie up, control all tie-ups and fight for the **inside position**. If you can't control a tie-up, don't tie-up!
7. When moving, step with the foot in the direction you are going. **Never** cross your feet.
8. Keep moving your feet in short (about 12") steps, constantly changing your lead foot and never developing a pattern.
9. Concentrate on getting the deepest penetration possible when you shoot. Aim a few feet behind your opponent.
10. Keep your head inside and tight when you step to your opponent's outside and place your head outside and tight when stepping to the inside of his legs.
11. Never allow your head to get lower than your hips (overextended), even while you are in motion.
12. Never allow **both** of your knees to touch the mat at the same time. Always keep a trailing foot behind for support.
13. When attacking the legs, never stay on one knee any longer than necessary. Either **follow-through or withdraw IMMEDIATELY!**
14. If possible, take your opponent **to his back** on your follow-through.
15. When withdrawing, keep to the **inside** with **proper body position** and take **small steps**.
16. If you are taken down by your opponent, land with your **props wide** and **extended** outward. Your arms should be slightly forward, never down and backwards. Also, your **hips** should be **parallel** to the mat and **lower than your head**. Then hit an **offensive maneuver as quickly as possible**. **Takedowns are not awarded until control has been firmly established.**
17. When countering takedowns, stay off of your knees and use your weight to stop your opponent's motion and destroy his body position.

TOP WRESTLING STRATEGY

1. **MOVE FIRST** on the whistle or immediately after assuming the top position to **make your** opponent counter you rather than attack you.
2. Either control your opponent's **HIPS**, destroy his **PROPS** or attack his **HEAD**.

3. Learn how to ride from **both** sides.
4. Stay behind your opponent's arm pits, unless you are attacking his head.
5. Make your opponent carry your weight as often as possible.
6. **Ride on your toes** in order to have maximum **mobility** and produce maximum pressure.
7. Remember that you have four props of your own that you must **protect** in order to maintain a good base.
8. Keep a **wide base** and do not fall to your side or drop your head. Keep your **hips parallel** to the mat as often as possible.
9. **BREAK YOUR OPPONENT DOWN!** The closer he gets to the mat, the greater will be your leverage for pinning combinations.
10. Grab an ankle pick at the **shoe laces** and get it off **the mat** as quickly as possible. Lift up first then drive forward.
11. When you chop a man down, cut the arm where it bends and move your outside knee forward in order to prevent your head from dropping. Keep your knee in his butt.
12. After your opponent is broken down, **WORK FOR THE PIN IMMEDIATELY**, a man on the defense can not be on the offense at the same time.
13. If you get three points ahead, work nothing but pinning combinations.
14. Nearly always, **get perpendicular** to pin your opponent.
15. Using a half nelson to apply pressure on your opponent's head, place your palm on the head, not the neck.
16. Keep **chest on chest** (or back low on chest) with your **head up** and **knees off of the mat** while pinning.
17. **Vary your style and technique**, do not keep using the same attack unless consistently successful against your immediate opponent.
18. If your opponent is in the process of reversing and you feel that you are equal or better than him on takedowns, back off and give him "**one but not two.**"
19. If you are behind late in the match and feel that you can not turn your opponent over but can take him down, let him go and work for a takedown (providing the score is close).
20. **Learn to use your legs.** Keep your **hips on top** and parallel to the mat. Keep your weight low on his back with your elbows below his armpits in a cross body ride. Never force legs on your opponent.

DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

1. **Be ready** to move at **all** times. Watch the referee.
2. **Adapt** your referees position to the move which you intend to do.
3. Move first and **keep the top man countering you**. Don't get tied up or lose the offense.
4. Specialize in a **series** of moves, You should also have a second series which you know well and go to in emergencies.
5. Always keep a good base or return to it quickly if you lose it. Listed below are important ingredients of a good base:
 - a. keep your props wide
 - b. keep your arms slightly bent
 - c. keep your head above your hips
 - d. keep your center of gravity over your base

- e. keep your hips and shoulders parallel to the mat.
6. **Protect your props.** When one of your props is being attacked, either remove it completely or get all your weight on it as quickly as possible.
7. Destroy the top man's props! One of the most effective ways of doing this is to get **HAND CONTROL**.
8. Know the **five directions** you can go and try to use **height** to your advantage as often as possible. Remember that the lower and more spread out your base becomes, the less mobility you have.
9. When turning to face your opponent, use a **HIP-HEIST** to make your quickest turn.
10. **Never reach back** over your opponents back.
11. Don't lay on your stomach, come up to your knees by bringing one knee up to the side and pushing back over it.
12. If you can't get up off of your stomach, keep your **head up** and elbows in. Be alert for all nelsons, turn the head away from the half and pull the hand off immediately.
13. If you can't get out, get off of the mat and get a fresh start before you get broken down to tied up. Do not do this in an obvious manner or you will be penalized.
14. Practice all moves with a top man on both sides. If you still have trouble escaping from one side, learn how to change your man over by moving your weight and hips.
15. Practice with your eyes closed to learn how to "feel" weight shifts.

AFTER MATCH STRATEGY (Regardless of a WIN or LOSS!)

1. Shake your opponents hand graciously and don't throw your head gear.
2. Analyze the mechanical errors you made and make a note on where you need work.
3. Analyze your prematch and match attitude and mental mistakes.
4. Do your best to correct them at practice.

Summary of Bruce's Basic Wrestling Rules

- 1. You must go into the match with an offensive strategy*
- 2. Try to watch what works for others against your opponent, then use them.*
- 3. Force your opponent to wrestle your style by initiating first.*
- 4. Plan at least three "chain" moves in a row. The first two tend to set up your opponent for the third move.*
- 5. Learn all moves even though you might never use them. It will help you counter against them.*
- 6. Stay level headed even under extreme pressure by your opponent. Stress uses up energy very fast and keeps you from being methodical.*
- 7. Don't continually use a move that fails more than twice.*
- 8. Keep your head up on the bottom and try to stay off your knees.*
- 9. Always keep your elbows close to your body.*
- 10. Shift your body so you don't carry your opponents weight.*
- 11. Don't use moves in a match that you haven't first developed in practice.*
- 12. Shoot only if you can reach out and touch your opponent's elbows and stand with your feet apart and your hands out in front and low.*
- 13. Fake that you have lots of energy left during a break. Never let on to the referee or your opponent how tired you really are.*
- 14. Explode off the bottom on the whistle, don't just move or sit there.*
- 15. Take direct shots and shift stance continuously to prevent telegraphing.*
- 16. Don't hold on to a move that is blocked or can't be completed.*

- 17. Practice all out the same as a match, but don't practice conservatively. You can't loose at practice so try a lot of moves and technique.*
- 18. When facing an opponent who knows as many different moves as you do, stick with basic technique and traditional moves.*
- 19. Be perpendicular to your opponent and keep your head down when pinning.*
- 20. Always drive the head into your opponent on a takedown, never walk around with your butt up.*
- 21. The best time to move again is right after a successful move.*
- 22. Practicing even once a week off season puts you way ahead of those who only practice during the season.*
- 23. Wrestling has many styles, each emphasizing different techniques to accomplish the same objective. The more styles you learn, the more sophisticated and "rounded" your attack will be.*
- 24. Fight to the very end, never quit, especially if your opponent is stalling.*
- 25. Conditioning is a personal responsibility.*
- 26. You only get out of wrestling what you put in.*
- 27. Never admit you lost, only that you had a bad day and things will get better.*
- 28. Everyone draws a terrible referee occasionally and not much can be done about it.*
- 29. Don't expect sympathy when you get hurt, especially in high level matches. Sympathy makes it hurt more and prevents you from concentrating on getting the job done.*