



# THE CHARGER

## Girls wrestling deserves fair treatment at tournaments



Sophilla Castillo | staff writer

Girls wrestling is a new program to WHS, and it's only existed in Kansas for a few years. Despite the local support and enthusiasm our team has enjoyed, there are some glaring differences in fairness between boys and girls at tournaments.

"Intentional or unintentional, our girls have been mistreated at every tournament besides our Kansas City tournament," head coach Tyler Douglass said. "I understand that the level of competition and the number of competitors doesn't always equal out, but if you are going to put on a girls division/tournament, it has to be the same. In my eyes, some tournaments, I have had minor grievances, and some it has been more egregious. And we haven't even experienced the worst."

At almost every meet there have been issues with the host not providing girls medals, not having a podium, or not even bothering to calculate team scoring.

This may not seem like a big issue right off the bat, but when the boys are getting medals at the same tournaments that girls are not, it is very frustrating.

"It's really unfair that girls don't get medals at meets that are the same size as guys meets. The one meet that I would've medaled at, I didn't get one. We would've also got a team plaque and we didn't

get one. I just think it's really unfair that only girls have to go through that, especially when everyone else is so supportive of girls wrestling," sophomore Payton Wurtz said.

We have a very supportive community at WHS, especially for a program in its first season, but at some meets it feels like we're an afterthought.

Coach Douglass has been working to fix issues like this. "Aside from complaining to host coaches at the tournaments where we have had issues. I have written a letter to (KSHSAA assistant executive director) Mark Lentz. I have been working to build a coalition of coaches to go to KSHSAA and have a well-defined proposal and outline repercussions if you can't adhere to the guidelines regarding hosting a girls tournament. It's unacceptable and frankly will cause girls to not want to be a part of the sport," he said.

In addition, the wrestling program has high hopes for hosting its very own tournament in the future. "I don't have any details right now. But I will say this: our team, our school, our district wants to set the standard. If I had it my way, the girls would have their own individual tournament. "No Boys Allowed." We would get really insanely cool over-the-top medals. Have a podium. T-shirt stands. Food trucks. The whole nine yards and then some. I want to get teams here, keep teams here, get more teams interested and set this as the standard," Douglass said.

Growing the popularity of girls wrestling will be good for every wrestler, and tournament hosts should do everything they can to treat everyone fairly. There's no excuse for some wrestlers to be treated as an afterthought.



**Top:** Senior Jenna "Daddy" Donaldson attempts to pin a wrestler from Hayden at home Thursday. Donaldson won the match and was the lone wrestler recognized during senior night. Photos by Payton Wurtz. **Middle:** Sophia Castillo attempts a front headlock Thursday. Castillo won the match by pin. **Bottom:** Alma Elementary third grader Austyn Hall prepares to wrestle at Thursday's home meet. More than 30 wrestlers from Wabaunsee's Kid's club got the chance to wrestle in front of the home crowd. Photo by Kendra Conrad.

## Work study teaches on-the-job skills

AJ Grutsch | editor in chief

Out of the thirty seniors in WHS High School, seven of them have taken initiative and joined a work study plan to get outside experience and make some cash on the side.

Work Study, overseen by WHS counselor Wendy Leenerts, is a program where students can miss either all the classes before or after lunch to go to work. Work Study is only available for seniors during the second semester.

For each hour a student is absent for a work study program they earn half of a credit hour. Students must also work for 5 hours a week for every class period they are missing.

Going to work can be transferred into credits for being in class because students are gaining real world experience and finding out what they want to do as a career. "Most of the students are working towards something that they want to do later in life," Leenerts said.

Kent Berkenmeier and Shaylee Heideman are two Wabaunsee students who participate in the work study program. Berkenmeier works for a ranch to make some money and gain experience in his field. Heideman works for her family's company to make money during school and gain work ethic.

Students are held accountable by occasional visits to the workplace and conversations with their boss from Leenerts herself. "I would like to see what they have actually been doing and see that they have been doing something all semester," Leenerts said.

### SPRING 2023 WORK STUDY

**Logan Clark:**  
Flint Hills Stone

**Aden Miller:**  
Miller Farms

**Bella Wade:**  
Maik Farms

**Allyson Garst:**  
Stormont Vail Hospital

**Kent Berkenmeier:**  
Hier Ranch

**Shaylee Heideman:**  
Heideman Construction

**Lexi Barnes:**  
Pep Club Locker

## 'Underground' choir provides extra music opportunity

Baylie Tharman | staff writer

Students who are unable to take choir class have found another way to let their voices be heard.

Music teacher Jamie Rogers started "The Underground Choir" last year and hopes to have more success with it this year.

Rogers has eight students who are in the choir class and five students who are in the underground choir. He started the underground choir for students that couldn't fit choir in their main schedule. "I knew there were students who weren't able to enroll in choir class, and I like to have as many singers as we can. So I tried to make an opportunity for more people to come in and sing in performances and contests."

Senior Lanson Parry is one

of the five students involved in underground choir. He's been singing since he was in preschool, and he sings at his church. Parry plans to go to Washburn and study forensic investigation but also hopes to sing in college. "I hope to keep singing and hopefully go on and do choir in college but if not I hope to help future generations of my family to find love in singing," Parry said.

Parry was unable to enroll in the first-hour choir class because of college English. "I was in a choir class my first three years of high school but I couldn't this year because of class placements. So I joined it to keep doing the thing I love and to sing with my friends in the choir class," he said.

Since there are many parts to a choir, Rogers has had to find time to practice with each part. "I normally practice with

tenors and bases on Wednesday and sopranos and altos on Thursday. We tried practicing all the parts and there just wasn't enough time."

Even though all of the singers don't practice together they will all perform at concerts and contests together. "We're prepping them so they will be able to sing the same songs as the regular choir. This will allow us to have a bigger choir in concerts, and contest."

Rogers said the arrangement isn't his first choice. "Underground choir is far from ideal. I hope that we can remove scheduling conflicts so we can eliminate the need," he said.

Rogers said that the importance of music class is worth the extra effort. "In the last 20 years there's been tons of studies of how being in music stimulates different parts of

the brain. It's like a weights class for the brain. You're reading, doing science, math and a physical activity all at the same time. Brain studies have shown being in a music class helps students improve in reading, math, and science."

The underground choir has improved the choir class in many ways. "It definitely improves because there's more people. It's more voices which allows the people who are enrolled in choir to sing with more confidence in performances because there's more people," Rogers said.

Choir has two more concerts, and league at Rock Creek on Tuesday March 7. Even though the group doesn't have many performances left, Rogers is still willing to take new members.

### THE CHARGER

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