



# Why My Kids Will Wrestle...

## By Olympic Champion Cael Sanderson

*Cael Norman Sanderson is an American college wrestling coach and current( 202) head wrestling coach of Penn State University. He is considered one of the greatest American amateur wrestlers in recent history. A 2004 Olympic champion in Athens, Greece, he went undefeated in four years of college wrestling at Iowa State University (159–0), winning four consecutive NCAA titles (1999–2002). He is the only wrestler in NCAA Division I history to go undefeated in official matches with more than 100 wins. Sports Illustrated named his college career as the second most impressive college sports feat behind the setting of four world records by Jesse Owens in a single hour at the 1935 Big Ten track and field conference championship meet. credit: bjee.com*

*Sanderson wrote a great article on his blog back in 2012, entitled ‘Why My Kids Will Wrestle‘:*

### Why My Kids Will Wrestle...

- 1. Foundation sport.** Wrestling is the perfect foundation for all other sports. Wrestling is balance, agility, hand –eye coordination, flexibility, positioning, strength, speed, explosiveness, footwork, hustle, mental focus, mental toughness, core strength, concentration, competition, and endurance. Wrestling will make our youth better at all other sports.
- 2. Fun.** Wrestling is a game. It is the most basic and instinctual game. Toddlers wrestle. The sport of wrestling is the ultimate competition where two individual take their individual strengths and match them up against each other. Wrestling is a battle of wits, technique, speed, agility, flexibility, and toughness. No two wrestlers are alike. Fun stuff!!
- 3. Exercise.** Wrestling is one the world’s most premier physical fitness sports. Wrestling develops strength and endurance. Poor health is a major issue in our society today and wrestling will help develop a love of exercise and physical fitness in our youth.
- 4. Self-confidence.** Very little is accomplished without self-confidence. Wrestling teaches self-confidence like nothing else I know outside of religion and knowing that you are a child of God. Insecure people have the most difficult time learning from others and make progress even more difficult than it already is. Wrestling teaches hard work, self-improvement, sense of accomplishment, camaraderie of team, 1 on 1 aspect, and self-defense to name a few. These promote self-worth, respect and confidence.
- 5. Self-defense.** Although wrestling is not commonly considered a “martial art,” it is the #1 base discipline in the world of MMA. Wrestlers know how to defend themselves and neutralize threats quickly. Wrestling is controlling an opponent. If you want your kids to know how to defend themselves, put them in wrestling.
- 6. Humility.** Nothing teaches humility better than a 1-on-1 sport. Winning and losing in a 1-on-1 setting brings humility. There is nowhere to hide and no one to blame but yourself. All wrestlers will lose at some point and doing so in these conditions teaches humility. Hard work and discipline are two keys to success in wrestling and both teach humility.  
“...I learned a lot about taking responsibility for my actions when I wrestled for 4 years...All professional athletes ought to spend a year wrestling. It teaches you something, You get pinned; you can’t blame the coach. You can’t blame your teammates. The guy you are looking for is staring back at you in the mirror” –former Phillies pitcher Mitch Williams
- 7. Respect.** The challenges of being a wrestler teach you to respect yourself. After you learn to respect yourself you will learn to respect others. You learn to respect your team mates as well as your opponents. You learn to listen to and respect your coach. After you learn to respect others you are able to learn from them, a life lesson.

**8. Self-discipline.** Wrestling is discipline. Repetition of drills, hard work, weight management, and continually doing the best thing instead of the easiest thing is discipline. Wrestling requires postponing instant “wants” to gain something more valuable long term. It takes discipline and focus to reach goals.

**9. Roadmap to success.** Wrestling is the perfect example of what it takes to be successful in life. Goal setting, hard work, determination, focus, love of challenges, love of competition, confidence, being coachable, mental toughness, discipline, creativity, team work and accountability.

**10. Toughness.** Wrestling is a physical, contact sport. You learn that sometimes you just get poked in the eye. Physical and mental toughness go hand in hand. You learn that a little pain or struggle is part of the process of doing great things.