

# “Back Points”

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FS/GR Competition Observations

## Regional Training Site Update

The 6-week session of the Regional Training Sites are now complete. All of our sites were very well attended and all feedback I've received has been positive. The following training sites will continue to conduct workouts throughout the month of May and into early June: Oshkosh, Riverdale (Mondays only), Merrill, and Eau Claire. Please take advantage of these FREE training opportunities, especially if you are planning to attend Northern Plains, any of the dual teams, and the National Tournament for your age group.

## Competition Observations

It was great to see so many wrestlers taking advantage of the opportunity to compete on a state level at Greco and Freestyle State, as well as Junior Northern Plains. Of course we'd like to see even more wrestlers attend in the future. As the saying goes, spring and summer wrestlers make winter champions.

From a technical standpoint I saw a lot of good things. Our champions were thinking offensively and working hard to score on their feet and on the mat. In Greco, I noticed a more aggressive first minute compared to last year. Kids were really hustling to take the lead heading into the clinch. I feel this is the proper strategy that should be employed. In order to put yourself in a position to win, it's important to pound away at your opponent in the first minute. This doesn't mean being reckless or going for a big throw right out of the gates. But rather pummel intensely looking for a low risk/high percentage attack such as a drag, slide-by or push out. If you give up a score like this, stay tough and move on the bottom so you've got a chance to get back on your feet. If you go out of bounds, come back to center with the intent to tie the score and again have the advantage of being on top heading into the clinch.

I do feel that we need more work on defending the lift, gut defense, and shoulder position on our gut offense. In regards to defending the lift, too many kids are turning the inside hip off the whistle. This makes it much easier for the top man to execute his reverse lift. When on the bottom in the clinch, we need to sag the low back to get initially heavy and slightly lean away from the opponent. As he's locking, fight the outside hip down off the whistle, then work hard to crawl around his near leg or through the legs. This will pull the top man forward and make him have to adjust to you. A basic thing to consider is to get your head up higher than your hips. I saw a lot of wrestlers with their head down trying to look at the offensive man's hands. As soon as he locked, the bottom man was getting thrown. Another option would be to explosively stand up. In a report shared with me from USA National Greco Coach Steve Fraser, more and more wrestlers at the 2007 European Championships are using the explosive stand up as a primary escape/defense to the lift.

Par terre defense is an area that is always worth spending practice time on. I saw a lot of good motion and fighting hands on the bottom. However, we need to spend time working on defending the gut once it's locked up. It's key to smash your body weight onto the lock and make small but deliberate movement over it. But we also can't have lazy elbows. We need to keep the shoulders up and rolled toward our ears, elbows off the mat with body weight focused onto the lock and moving over the hands. When the top man is really selling out on top, look into the gut hard, fight the opposite hip down, but keep moving over the lock. Don't just fight his gut with strength; fight it with strength, motion, and especially mental toughness.

Finally, I want to stress the importance of proper shoulder position while working to execute a gut wrench. It was great to see so many of our wrestlers aggressively working to score with a gut. We just need to clean up the technique so it is effective at the national level. I saw many kids letting the shoulder slip off and pulling sideways. It's critical to maintain steady shoulder on shoulder pressure to break the opponent's arch, while driving forward, exploding the hips and bridging through with consistent leg drive.

Please take some time to review the video for all of these techniques via the RTS videos posted on the WWF webpage. Click on the link "Online Coaches Clinic" on my page to see each of the techniques discussed above.

Remember to take advantage of the extended Regional Training Sites to continue training. Also, keep checking the WWF website for updates and other training opportunities being offered to help prepare those who are attending the National Duals and/or National Tournament for their age group. As always, if you have any questions please feel free to contact me using the information above.

See you on the mats,

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