Your Guide to Establishing an I.A.W.A.-Affiliated Wrestling Club

Are you interested in starting a wrestling club in your local community?

The **Irish Amateur Wrestling Association (I.A.W.A.)** welcomes individuals and groups who wish to establish new wrestling clubs and contribute to the growth of wrestling throughout Ireland.

Starting a club can be an exciting and rewarding experience. Whether you are an experienced wrestler, a qualified coach or a group of enthusiasts looking to introduce wrestling to your community, the I.A.W.A. can provide guidance and support to help you get started.

Establishing a successful club requires planning, commitment and an understanding of the responsibilities involved in providing a safe, welcoming and well-organised sporting environment.

The following guide outlines the key steps involved in establishing and affiliating a wrestling club in Ireland.

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1. Getting Started

Most wrestling clubs begin with an individual or small group of people who share an interest in wrestling and want to create opportunities for others to participate.

You do not need a large membership base or a purpose-built training facility to get started.

A small group of eight to ten interested participants can provide a good foundation from which to develop a club.

Before establishing your club, consider:

- Is there sufficient interest in wrestling in your local community?
- Do you have access to suitably qualified wrestling coaches?
- Is there a suitable and safe training facility available?
- What age groups and ability levels will your club cater for?
- Can you establish a committee to oversee the club's management?
- How will you fund the club's initial and ongoing operating costs?

The I.A.W.A. encourages prospective clubs to contact us at an early stage to discuss affiliation requirements and available support.

2. Finding a Suitable Training Facility

A wrestling club can operate successfully from a variety of locations, including community centres, school sports halls, leisure centres, existing martial arts facilities and dedicated wrestling gyms.

Your facility should provide a safe and suitable environment for the activities being delivered.

Important considerations include:

- Suitable wrestling mats and appropriate safety areas.
- Adequate space for the number of participants.
- Safe access, exits, lighting and ventilation.
- Access to toilets, changing facilities and drinking water.
- Appropriate first aid facilities and emergency procedures.
- Safe storage and regular inspection of equipment.
- Accessibility for participants with disabilities or additional needs.

As your club grows, you may wish to develop a permanent facility with dedicated wrestling mats, changing rooms, showers and strength and conditioning equipment.

Clubs considering facility development may be eligible to apply for relevant sporting grants through local authorities, Sport Ireland-supported initiatives or other funding programmes.

Important: Clubs must ensure that their facilities, equipment and activities meet applicable safety requirements and that appropriate insurance arrangements are in place.

3. Establishing a Club Committee

A well-organised committee is essential to the successful operation and long-term development of a wrestling club.

One of the first steps should be to hold an inaugural general meeting, agree on a club name and establish a committee.

Typical committee positions include:

- **Chairperson:** Provides leadership and oversees the club's management.
- **Secretary:** Manages club administration, correspondence and records.
- **Treasurer:** Oversees club finances, budgets and financial reporting.
- **Head Coach:** Responsible for the delivery and coordination of wrestling activities.
- **Assistant Coach:** Supports the Head Coach and helps maintain appropriate coaching supervision.
- **Club Children's Officer:** Promotes the welfare and safeguarding of children and young people.
- **Garda Vetting Validator:** Facilitates identity validation and relevant Garda Vetting procedures in accordance with I.A.W.A. requirements.

In smaller clubs, some administrative roles may be combined where appropriate. However, safeguarding responsibilities, vetting requirements and any necessary independence between roles must be maintained.

4. Adopting a Club Constitution

Every I.A.W.A.-affiliated club should have a written constitution outlining how the club is governed and managed.

A club constitution helps establish transparency, accountability and fair decision-making.

It should address:

- The name, objectives and purpose of the club.
- Membership eligibility, rights and responsibilities.
- Committee positions, elections and terms of office.
- Procedures for meetings and Annual General Meetings.
- Financial management and accountability.
- Complaints, disciplinary procedures and appeals.
- Equality, inclusion and codes of conduct.
- Procedures for amending the constitution or dissolving the club.

A constitution may also be required when applying for grants or other financial support.

The I.A.W.A. can provide guidance and sample documentation to assist clubs in developing their governance structures.

5. Coaching Qualifications and Standards

Qualified and competent coaches are central to providing a safe, enjoyable and progressive wrestling experience.

I.A.W.A.-affiliated clubs are required to identify a Head Coach and an Assistant Coach and meet the Association's applicable coaching requirements.

The I.A.W.A. provides recognised coaching education and development opportunities, including introductory and Level 1 coaching programmes.

Coaches should:

- Hold appropriate qualifications for the activities they deliver.
- Maintain valid I.A.W.A. membership.
- Complete relevant safeguarding training when working with children.
- Complete Garda Vetting where required.
- Follow I.A.W.A. coaching standards, codes of conduct and safety procedures.
- Participate in ongoing coaching education and professional development.

The I.A.W.A. is committed to supporting the development of coaches and promoting consistent coaching standards across affiliated clubs.

6. Safeguarding and Garda Vetting

Safeguarding is a fundamental responsibility of every club working with children and young people.

All affiliated clubs providing activities for participants under 18 must comply with applicable child safeguarding legislation, Sport Ireland guidance and I.A.W.A. safeguarding policies.

Clubs must ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place, including:

- Appointment of a Club Children's Officer with appropriate safeguarding training.
- Appointment of a trained and vetted Garda Vetting Validator in accordance with I.A.W.A. requirements.
- Garda Vetting for relevant coaches, volunteers and other personnel undertaking roles requiring vetting.
- Appropriate safeguarding training for coaches and club officials.
- A Child Safeguarding Statement and associated risk assessment where legally required.
- Clear reporting procedures for child protection and welfare concerns.
- Appropriate supervision, codes of conduct and safe recruitment procedures.

Garda Vetting is coordinated through the I.A.W.A. for eligible affiliated club personnel.

A club must not permit individuals to undertake relevant roles requiring vetting until the necessary vetting and safeguarding requirements have been satisfied.

Clubs should contact the I.A.W.A. for current safeguarding guidance and Garda Vetting procedures.

7. Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive Club

Wrestling is a sport for people of different ages, backgrounds and abilities.

The I.A.W.A. encourages all affiliated clubs to provide inclusive, respectful and welcoming environments where everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Clubs should consider:

- Providing opportunities for beginners and experienced wrestlers.
- Encouraging participation among women and girls.
- Welcoming participants from different cultural and community backgrounds.
- Supporting individuals with disabilities through reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Offering age-appropriate training programmes.
- Promoting positive coaching, respect and good sportsmanship.
- Providing opportunities for participants to contribute to club decisions.

Every member should feel valued, respected and supported, regardless of their experience or ability.

Members' Rights

All club members should have the right to:

- Participate in a safe and respectful sporting environment.
- Be treated fairly, with dignity and without discrimination.
- Enjoy wrestling and develop at their own pace.
- Have their views and concerns listened to.
- Raise complaints through appropriate club procedures.
- Have their personal information handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection requirements.
- Participate in club decision-making in accordance with the club constitution.

8. Attracting and Developing Club Membership

Building a successful wrestling club takes time, enthusiasm and community involvement.

New clubs should focus on developing a positive reputation and creating an enjoyable experience for members.

Some effective ways to attract new participants include:

- Organising introductory wrestling sessions and open days.
- Promoting the club through social media and local community groups.
- Establishing links with schools, colleges and youth organisations.
- Encouraging existing members to introduce friends and family.
- Offering beginner-friendly training programmes.
- Organising women and girls' introductory sessions.
- Participating in community sporting events and local initiatives.

Clubs should ensure that introductory sessions are appropriately supervised and that relevant registration, consent, safeguarding and insurance requirements are satisfied before participation.

9. Club Affiliation and Individual Membership

Affiliating your club with the Irish Amateur Wrestling Association connects your organisation to the recognised national structure for wrestling in Ireland.

Affiliated clubs benefit from access to coaching education, competitions, development opportunities, safeguarding guidance and other services provided by the Association.

Club Affiliation Requirements

Clubs seeking affiliation must provide the information and documentation required by the I.A.W.A., including:

- Club name and training address.
- Club Owner or Secretary contact details.
- Details of the Head Coach and Assistant Coach.
- Details of the Club Children's Officer, including relevant safeguarding qualifications.
- Details of the club's trained and vetted Garda Vetting Validator.
- A club constitution and relevant policies.
- Confirmation of compliance with applicable I.A.W.A. membership, coaching and safeguarding requirements.

All participating members must hold the appropriate I.A.W.A. membership where required.

Clubs are responsible for ensuring that their registration details remain accurate and up to date.

10. Club Insurance

Insurance is an important consideration when establishing and operating a wrestling club.

Wrestling is a contact sport, and clubs must understand the risks associated with training, competition and other sporting activities.

The I.A.W.A. offers eligible affiliated clubs access to a group Public Liability Insurance arrangement, subject to an additional fee, eligibility requirements and policy conditions.

Optional Personal Accident Insurance may also be available to individual members for an additional fee.

Understanding Your Insurance Cover

It is important to understand the distinction between Public Liability Insurance and Personal Accident Insurance.

Public Liability Insurance

Public Liability Insurance may provide protection against certain third-party claims for bodily injury or property damage arising from insured activities, subject to policy terms, conditions and exclusions.

The I.A.W.A.'s current Public Liability policy contains a participation exclusion relating to bodily injury sustained while participating in sporting or training activities.

Personal Accident Insurance

Optional Personal Accident Insurance may provide specified benefits following certain accidental injuries, subject to the policy's limits, conditions and exclusions.

Personal Accident Insurance should not be assumed to cover all medical expenses, loss of earnings or other costs arising from an injury.

Clubs must not assume that affiliation or the purchase of Public Liability Insurance provides comprehensive cover for all injuries occurring during wrestling activities.

Clubs providing additional activities or sporting disciplines should confirm that those activities are appropriately insured.

For full details of insurance eligibility, cover, exclusions and application procedures, please contact the I.A.W.A..

11. Managing Club Finances

Clubs should establish a realistic budget to ensure they can meet their ongoing operating costs.

Typical expenses may include:

- Facility rental and utilities.
- Wrestling mats and training equipment.
- I.A.W.A. club affiliation and membership fees.
- Insurance premiums.
- Coaching education and safeguarding training.
- Competition and travel expenses.
- Equipment maintenance and replacement.

Membership subscriptions should be set at a level that allows the club to operate sustainably while keeping participation as affordable as possible.

Clubs should maintain accurate financial records and ensure that appropriate financial controls are in place.

12. Registering Your Club with the I.A.W.A.

Once your club has established its committee, coaching arrangements, safeguarding procedures and suitable training facilities, you can begin the I.A.W.A. affiliation process.

The I.A.W.A. will provide guidance on the information and documentation required for affiliation.

Ready to start your wrestling club?

Contact the Irish Amateur Wrestling Association to discuss your plans and learn more about becoming an affiliated club.

Email: irishwrestlingsecretary@gmail.com

Website: www.irishwrestling.ie

Join us in developing the next generation of Irish wrestlers!

Please note: Club affiliation is subject to I.A.W.A. approval and compliance with applicable membership, coaching, safeguarding, governance and insurance requirements.