

BRITISH WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

A strategic Plan to cover the Sport of Wrestling across the whole UK

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1. Foreword

This document provides an overview of the strategic intent across the BWA. The document lists areas of delivery which will positively affect wrestling across the UK. It has been written within the spirit of new government strategy as described in '**Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation**' (Dec 2015) as well as the new Sport England strategy arising out of the government's initiative: '**Towards an Active Future**' 2016 -2021.

The British Wrestling Association (BWA) is a Company Limited by Guarantee, incorporated in 2008, with financial support primarily from Sport England.

The BWA exists to foster the development of all styles of the sport of wrestling that are practised in the United Kingdom and that are recommended by the international federation, United World Wrestling. The focus is primarily on Olympic Freestyle Wrestling.

The Home Nations and England Regions are affiliated to the BWA, with representatives democratically elected by regional memberships that are represented on the Nations and Regions Committee which ensures they can be central to the decision making process at a UK-wide level.

The BWA is dedicated to putting in place secure structures and foundations on which to influence the sport's core market. The keys to achieving this growth are communication, cooperation and an agreed vision of the way forward.

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2. The Four-Way Purpose of the BWA.

The four-way purpose is: -

- 2.1. **The Management structure** created to represent the interests of the individual members, clubs and/or other organisations affiliated to the Association in specified geographic regions of the United Kingdom (Member Nations and Regions) with the understanding that the Nations may have differing priorities as negotiated with their local Sports Councils.
- 2.2. **The Organisation recognised by United World Wrestling** as the National Governing Body for the sport of Wrestling across the four Home Nations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- 2.3. **The Organisation recognised by Sport England** as the National Governing Body for Wrestling in England. Sport England looks to the Board of British Wrestling for financial and organisational probity in the delivery of England participation and talent outcomes agreed on a four-yearly Olympic cycle. The BWA is the body that nominates athletes to Commonwealth Games England for the Commonwealth Games.
- 2.4. **The Organisation recognised by UK Sport and the British Olympic Association** to provide talented athletes for Olympic participation. The BWA selects talented wrestlers from across the UK to wrestle for GBR in international competition, including European and World Championships

3. British/English Nature of the BWA

The rationale for the combination of the UK NGB and England NGB is that a significant number of roles and activities required to manage Wrestling across the UK are substantially the same as those required to manage wrestling in England. The public funding stakeholders of UK Sport and Sport England also require the funding synergies that result from a combined governance structure. Separate bodies would also incur tax complications in selling services to each other. Where a particular focus on English-only issues is required, e.g. in a Commonwealth Year, an England Committee is in place to set direction and work with the Executive Management Team to deliver.

4. Principles underpinning the need for close working of the Home Nations and the BWA

The Home Nations and BWA are bound together by a Memorandum of Association, dating from 2001 ([link](#)). The headline reasons for working together are given below:-

4.1. "What's:-"

Deliver clear structures for progression of athletes through a single structure to representation of GBR at the pinnacle (e.g. talent pathway, athlete awards, selection criteria)

Deliver benefits of scale and efficiency (important with public funding,) and reduce confusion by doing things once wherever possible, (e.g. Central Policies, a single insurance approach, coaching qualifications, Referees and Officials pathway &etc.)

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4.2. "How's:-"

Work together to create the best environment for development as the wrestling community in the UK is very small. Further, working well together is a growing requirement of the Home Country Sports Councils

Share policy/strategy/planning documents and budgets/awards figures agreed with Home Nations Sports Councils between the BWA and Home Nations to better understand and learn from each other

5. British Wrestling Association Mission, Objectives and Values

5.1. Mission

To promote and develop the sport of wrestling so that everyone within it achieves their full potential on and off the mat.

5.2. Objectives

1. To develop a sustainable structure
2. To increase awareness, participation and standards
3. To promote a safe and inclusive wrestling community

5.3. Values

Respect
Fairness
Community
Transparency
Realism
Discipline
Celebrate Success
Recognition
Honesty
Communication
Valuing

6. British Wrestling's Strategic Intent

The BWA describes its Strategic Intent through the device of six '**Strategic Priority Workstreams:**'

Governance
Community
Participation
Performance
Profile/Image
Funding

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6.1. Governance

- Following a period of instability the positions on the Board have been all but filled according to the current Articles. The membership of the Board is inclusive and has more than matched the recommendations and targets for inclusivity as described by Sport England and UK Sport.
- There is a perceived need to modernise the constitution, both to reflect the conditions which currently obtain in terms of individual member affiliation and to develop more of a federal appeal so that each of the member Home Nations is represented, as of right, on the Board. It is envisaged that this modernisation, encapsulated in new Articles, will be complete as we move into the new funding quadrennial.
- The Nolan Principles will be closely adhered to and the BWA aspires to have governance of the highest order so that these high principles can cascade down to member organisations in the Home Nations and England Regions, and further to the affiliated clubs.
- The BWA is recognised as the custodian of the Olympic styles of wrestling across the UK and aspires to be the champion of other traditional forms of wrestling indigenous to the nations and regions of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

STRATEGIC INTENT

- The work of the Board will include the formulation of all policies which are required to provide opportunities for everyone to participate in wrestling in a safe environment and to establish pathways which guide them to fulfilment of their maximum potential. Such policies will be reviewed in a regular and timely manner.
- The Board will oversee the delivery of its Mission and Objectives by a workforce which has, at its heart, a very small number of contracted employees, but recognises the enormous contribution in all areas and at all levels by a committed volunteer force. It is anticipated that an operational team of contracted and volunteer workers will be formed to deliver the operational outcomes agreed by the Board

6.2. Community

- The BWA starts from the premise that wrestling in the UK is a small, tightly knit community. The clear focus should be on maintaining the current interest and retention of existing members, both individuals and clubs. Good management and communication is at the heart of this focus. We have to manage our resources well and keep our members well-informed about the opportunities which exist within the sport.
- Understanding of the wishes and aspirations of the membership, including those who influence the members, such as parents, will inform policy and programmes and lead to a realistic and responsible allocation of scarce resources.
- The nature of the sport of wrestling brings into consideration some groups in the general population which can be hard to reach. The BWA has an opportunity to reach out to migrant organisations (especially those from Eastern Europe and the Middle East) as well as encouraging the formation of clubs within our minority religious communities, particularly where the cultural backgrounds value wrestling as a mainstream sport.

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6.3. Participation

- There are close links with the Community section here. The BWA has to encourage the members to stay within the community by helping those with a resilient habit to stay that way.
- At the heart of participation are the clubs. The sustainability of the club structure is of the highest priority. To this end the BWA-led enabling structures that need to be in place should be straightforward to access and (e.g. the coach and officials pathways,) should always be within reach particularly in terms of financial cost and time. The availability of training, for example in Safeguarding must be available. Advice on facilities and equipment has to be offered to those who ask. With support from Sport England it is hoped to develop expertise to support the clubs in funding applications.
- If the sport is to develop levels of participation, then the formation of new clubs is important, particularly in geographical areas currently without representation. The facilitation of such development should be seen as a partnership between the BWA and its member nations and regions. It is known that wrestling groups

operate outside the sphere of the BWA and its member nations and regions. There is an aspiration to facilitate changes of behaviour such as by clarifying the BWA's offer and benefits of affiliation in order to bring such groups into the mainstream.

- The development of "Wrestling-Lite" offers such as tag wrestling have the potential to offer easier access to wrestling to bring school-age children and those in higher/further education into the sport thence sign-posting those wishing to develop their sport to nearby clubs.

6.4. Performance

- Recent impressive performances by wrestlers in the European Junior Championships and World Junior Championship reveal the power of individual excellence matched with individual drive and ambition. Such achievements must be available to all those who display talent.
- There should be a clear performance pathway that is fit for purpose and meets the needs of our top players, coaches and officials. The recent (September 2016) initiative to re-boot the talent and performance pathway must be followed through. Alignment of Home Nation Programmes to enable a seamless British pathway should be a goal.
- This should include greater education about and awareness of the Awards System for wrestlers and coaches; exploring the possibility of regional grading days rather than sole dependence on club coaches; make communication between wrestlers and coaches, both regional and club, more meaningful and accessible; develop the database of Talent Squad athletes which would include the session reports; secure the conditions for the engagement of a British Talent/Performance Lead.
- The performance pathway should be expanded to include a realistic British component. This would start with the recognition of Under 23 wrestlers and evolve to include the full senior age group.
- The current performance peak for British wrestlers is the Commonwealth Games. The BWA must optimise the opportunities for all British athletes through the lobbying of Home Nation sports' councils to contribute to the costs of the Commonwealth squads and participation in CGF discussions on qualification routes to future Commonwealth Games.

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6.5. Profile/Image

- Good communications are at the heart of building a positive profile and image for the sport. There should be a structured communication strategy in place which ensures that the sport is understood and appreciated by the largest possible audience; it has to include the 'Wow!' factor.
- Partnerships with organisations such as UFC should be piloted to take advantage of both promotional and funding opportunities

STRATEGIC INTENT

- There needs to be a fuller understanding by the BWA, as the authority on the sport of wrestling, of our customers and our audience. Messages and communications should be more directed at existing members (and parents), potential members (and parents), coaches, officials, volunteers within the clubs, volunteers within the sport in general and the various aspects of the media.
- The BWA should investigate the best platforms for use in order to spread the message.

6.6. Money/Funding

This element, of course, underpins all that the BWA does. Not least this aspect of the business will be the key to the sustainability of the BWA itself.

There will be a number of elements:-

- To create an overview of funding sources and related requirements for obtaining funding, as well as forecasting how these will develop and be maintained, at a minimum, at the current level;
- To gain a fuller understanding of public and private funding options (e.g. commercial sponsorships etc.) not previously used but to which access might be gained;
- To understand what assets the BWA controls which might generate additional future income;
- To understand the 'risk landscape' and areas where adverse financial impacts could arise in order to prevent/minimize these and address future potential shortfalls;
- To develop the key asset and facility which is the British Wrestling Academy at Salford in order to determine additional future income streams; at least a self-sufficient Academy.

Such examination and understanding will lead the BWA to more efficiencies and less reliance on public investment.