

Alumni Spotlight: Mike Moyer '83



Please provide your biographical information.

I graduated from Wilson High School in West Lawn Pennsylvania in 1979. I initially attended Shippensburg University for one semester (fall of 1979) and then transferred into West Chester University for the spring semester. Both the Health/Physical Education program and the NCAA Division I wrestling program at West Chester University had very rich traditions and I knew that both opportunities would open many doors for me. I graduated with a BS in Health/Physical Education in 1983 and an MS Ed with a concentration in Athletic Administration from James Madison University in 1985.

What made you go into Health/Physical Education?

I am from a family of educators and I always wanted to teach and coach wrestling. Many of my high school teachers/coaches and WCU professors/coaches were very inspirational. They all had invested so much into my success and career so I wanted to “pay it forward” so to speak in an effort to try to help others.

What is your official title and what are your responsibilities in your current position?

I am currently the Executive Director of the National Wrestling Coaches Association. Our mission is to increase the number of wrestlers, wrestling coaches, and wrestling programs at every level. My primary responsibilities are broken up into three primary areas:

1. I am responsible for overseeing our coaching development programs for youth, junior high, high school, and collegiate levels. The focus of these programs is to sharpen the coach's technical, tactical, and CEO skills. We also place a heavy emphasis on promoting the importance of having an educationally based coaching philosophy so coaches can help student-wrestlers realize the full educational experience of amateur wrestling.
2. I also dedicate considerable time to student-wrestler welfare initiatives including but not limited to the administration of a national wrestling weight management program that serves 230,000 student wrestlers annually, and other sport science and sport performance related efforts.
3. I collaborate with university presidents and athletic directors to establish collegiate wrestling programs. Between 1972 and 1999, we lost over 450 college wrestling teams (many other Olympic sports have suffered similar casualties). Since 2001, we have been able to re-establish 117 college wrestling teams and in recent years, we've been adding 10 – 20 new teams in all collegiate divisions annually. We also dedicate considerable time to promoting the growth of women's wrestling and today, it is one of the fastest growing high school "girls" sports with nearly 10,000 participants and we also have 24 intercollegiate wrestling teams. I also oversee several signature NWCA events including the NWCA All Star Classic and NWCA National Dual Meet Championships.

What is a typical day like at work?

The NWCA is a very dynamic place to work. We have an extraordinary staff and a very high profile Board of Directors comprised of elite wrestling coaches (at all levels), and governing bodies such as the NCAA, National Federation of State High School Associations, USA Wrestling, etc. The position requires considerable multi-tasking being that we serve a membership of 10,000 coaches and deliver educational programs to 230,000 wrestlers annually. We also have a very diverse membership so I also spend considerable time with coalition building.

What have been the biggest challenges at work?

Like most nonprofits, our biggest challenge is funding. In the nonprofit world, there is an old saying that goes like this: "without margin, there is no mission." Of our \$1.5 million budget, we raise approximately \$1 million annually through donations, grants, and sponsorships. In addition, many of the new collegiate wrestling programs we establish require \$10,000 to \$20,000 of startup funds which we must also raise. We are making great strides in developing significant recurring revenue to replace much of our dependency on donations as we move forward.

What do you enjoy most about your current position?

I definitely subscribe to the old adage that if you find a job you love, you'll never work a day in your life. That is certainly the case for me. I am so very lucky to have the privilege to do what I do every day. I'm able to collaborate with and learn from many of the best coaches in the world. I also get to interact with internationally renowned coaching development experts as well as military, political, community, sport science, and corporate leaders across America.

What skills, talents, and other traits are useful and necessary to do your job?

This position requires familiarity with budgeting, event management, donor/sponsorship cultivation, marketing/sales, coaching development, contract negotiating, and information technology. I've been very fortunate to be surrounded with industry experts in many of these professional areas who routinely advise me. Because we are a small non-profit, the most important skill/talent associated with this position would be the ability to recruit and engage leading experts in the various professional areas to assist with strategic planning and to also help draw resources to execute the strategic plan.

Do you have a favorite or funny story about work?

One day, we were having a staff meeting and someone mentioned that there was a nice article in Forbes Magazine about the NWCA. Somebody jokingly suggested that I should call Steve Forbes and thank him. Of course, I thought it was a good idea so I called him not thinking I would ever actually get to speak to him. The next thing I know, he is on the other end of the phone line. I was at a loss for words and the only thing I could think of was to invite him as our guest to the upcoming NCAA Wrestling Championships in St. Louis. To my amazement, he accepted and attended a nice fundraising event for us. Needless to say, it was a very good night of fundraising. I guess the moral of the story is never be shy about asking.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I enjoy fishing (although I don't catch many fish) and boating with my wife, Bethann and son Evan.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Admittedly, I never look too far into the future. Wherever I am, I hope I am able to help others much like my parents, mentors, teachers, and friends have helped me.

What advice would you give to a current student who aspires to follow in your footsteps and pursue a similar career path?

I would say that your professional development is a journey and not a destination. It certainly does not stop with your college degree. It is so important to always be learning by reading books, attending professional conferences, and surrounding yourself with industry experts and leaders who you aspire to be like. Secondly, by the time you graduate from college, there will most likely be countless people who have contributed to your success. It has been my experience that most of the people who have helped you along the way don't want to be paid back but instead, they would prefer if you "pay it forward" to others.

How has your WCU education contributed to your success?

There is no doubt that I couldn't do what I do every day without the knowledge, skills, and relationships that I obtained at WCU. I can provide countless examples of how distinguished WCU alumni across America have assisted me in the development and implementation of our NWCA coaching development and wrestling weight management programs. Needless to say, the WCU alumni network is vast and impressive.

What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishments (both personally and professionally)?

Personally, my greatest accomplishment would be my 27 year marriage to my beautiful bride and WCU alum, Bethann along with raising our 21 year old son, Evan.

I believe my greatest accomplishment has been the development and implementation of numerous educational programs that have helped countless student-wrestlers reach their true human potential through participation in amateur wrestling. It has been very rewarding to hear all the stories of wrestlers who have attributed both their professional and personal success to lessons learned on the wrestling mat.

What's your favorite memory from when you were a student at WCU?

I have so many fond memories of WCU but probably the best was my first day on campus. I transferred into WCU for the second semester of my freshman year. I arrived to campus with everything I owned in an army duffle bag. Other than an assurance that I was accepted by the admissions office, I didn't have any books, I was not registered for any classes, and I did not have any place to stay. I vividly remember the outpouring of support by my wrestling coaches, teammates, and WCU faculty/administrators. Thirty years later, so many of them are still by my side.