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# The Division I NCAA Wrestling Championships

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**CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, ST. PAUL: ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA  
DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY AND HEALTH SCIENCES**

The Division I NCAA Wrestling Championships including the potential combination of the Dual  
and Individual Championship Tournaments

**A GRADUATE PROJECT  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Arts Degree in Sport Management**

**by  
Ryan DeGeeter  
St. Paul, Minnesota  
February 2016**



## **Dedications**

I would like to dedicate this capstone to my parents who took me to countless sporting events and instilled in me a love of all sports. I would also like to dedicate this capstone to my younger brother, Jared, for without him my love for the sport of wrestling would not be what it is today. He motivates me and helps me more than he knows.

## Abstract

The effects of the International Olympic Committee's decision to remove wrestling from the Olympic rotation are undeniable. In addition to exposing the then fragile state of wrestling, on a worldwide level, the "coming together" and rebuilding has led to many new positive changes, as well as possibilities for more changes at the collegiate level, NCAA, in the United States. The NCAA Division I Individual Wrestling Championships is already quite successful, and this capstone looks into the potential of the NCAA using the popularity of the individual championships to "piggyback" the dual portion of the NCAA Championships. The thesis of this capstone will be the effects of wrestling's near removal from the Olympic rotation, as well as the positive implications of combining the individual and dual events of the Division I NCAA Wrestling Championship Tournament. The marketing plan, including purpose to improve the sport at the NCAA level and beyond, will set the foundation for a well received and well attended event by fans of all experience levels with the sport. The event will also include knowledgeable staff, including officials, location workers, announcers, and security, that have experience managing and working a tournament of this caliber. Also included are analysis of potential risks, such as spills and injuries sustained by fans and athletes alike, as well as an analysis of ethical stances displayed by the tournament and the International Olympic Committee's decision to remove Olympic wrestling in 2009.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

The past three years have been a whirlwind of emotion with both feelings of gripping defeat, as well as immense success, for the sport of wrestling. Wrestling, at the hands of the International Federation of Associated Wrestling Styles (FILA), now United World Wrestling, has been forced to reimagine their product to counteract the drastic and potentially devastating decisions and actions of a few, in regards to Olympic wrestling's future. On February 13, 2013, the International Olympic Committee made the decision to remove wrestling from the 26 sport Olympic rotation after the conclusion of the 2016 games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The International Olympic Committee made this decision in hopes of adding a new sport that may add more excitement, fan attention, and above all, more money to the Olympic Games. Revenue for the 2016 Olympic Games is expected to reach a potential 4 billion dollars through a combination of broadcasting, marketing, sponsorship, and licensing rights for the games alone (Totalsportek2, 2015).

“The shocking and eye-opening revelation of wrestling's fragile state, as it stood, had a trickle-down effect from Olympic wrestling all the way down through the kid's wrestling clubs all across the United States and world” (Caruso, 2012, para. 6). For Division I collegiate wrestling, the number of institutions offering wrestling has dwindled over the past 30-plus years. In the 1981-1982 season, there was 146 Division I wrestling teams in the United States (NWCA, 2016). Since then, the number of teams has steadily declined to its current state of 79 Division I teams (NWCA, 2016). This loss of 67 teams is a drastic decline in opportunities for prospective student-athletes in a relatively short amount of time. Interestingly, the number of participants at the high school level has remained relatively consistent over this time with an increase of approximately 2200 new high school programs across the United States (“Total”, 2016).

Collegiate wrestling in the United States has always found itself in a power struggle with the other sports of institutions across the country to remain viable and relevant to its fans.

Wrestling, being a traditionally nonrevenue sport for collegiate institutions, has cost more money to run than what is gained financially, from its initial existence. Because of this, wrestling more often than other sports, finds itself on the chopping block when a sport is to be removed from a college's offered sports. The International Olympic Committee's decisions on February 13, 2013, made the fight that collegiate wrestling have every year, in regards to maintaining its legitimacy and eligibility in collegiate athletic programs across the United States, a losing fight for certain if something was not done to correct it. As of today, the decision of the International Olympic Committee can be viewed as much of a blessing as a curse (Caruso, 2012).

International wrestling, and the sport of wrestling for that matter, had its flaws and weaknesses exposed through these events. Now it is up to the wrestling community and United World Wrestling, the governing body of international wrestling, to stand together and fix what needs to be fixed in order to flourish, grow, and become as great of a sport as wrestling has ever been.

On September 8, 2013, after deliberation and presentations from hopeful sports along with wrestling, wrestling was reinstated in the Olympic rotation of sports through the 2020 games. The reinstatement was a good sign for the sport, but the fight was, and is still not over if the decision is going to remain beyond these 2020 games. The decision of the International Olympic Committee created a stir for the sport, bringing it to the forefront of national and international news. This attention helped to drive new and exciting additions to the sport in the form of rule changes, including a potential new uniform for competitions, as well as new events.

The removal of wrestling from the Olympic Games would have resulted in a loss of interest from prospective athletes as Olympic wrestling is the pinnacle of the sport. Without wrestling's

inclusion in the Olympic Games, athletes would have nothing to work for beyond the college level. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has looked into new ways to generate fan buzz, and national attention for the NCAA wrestling championships, particularly for the Division I National Dual Championship Tournament (Caruso, 2012). Wrestling has always had a very solid base of passionate fans, but it is the building of new fans that must also take place in order for the sport to grow. Crowning a team champion, in the form of the NCAA Dual Championship, has taken on a few different layouts over the past several seasons. “The NCAA, [and wrestling in general], has always done a good job of making changes when need be, whether successful or not” (Baughman, 2013, para. 2). International wrestling also seized this opportunity to make the changes that needed to be made in order to secure wrestling’s place in the Olympic Games.

The mission statement of the NCAA, and therefore NCAA wrestling, is as follows:

The Association - through its member institutions, conferences and national office staff - shares a belief in and commitment to:

- The collegiate model of athletics in which students participate as an avocation, balancing their academic, social and athletics experiences.
- The highest levels of integrity and sportsmanship.
- The pursuit of excellence in both academics and athletics.
- The supporting role that intercollegiate athletics plays in the higher education mission and in enhancing the sense of community and strengthening the identity of member institutions.
- An inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds.

- Respect for institutional autonomy and philosophical differences.

(“NCAA Core Values”, 2015, para. 1)

If the NCAA is truly in “pursuit of excellence in both academics and athletics” it is in their best interest that the tournaments, both individual and dual, showcase the outright best talent, and not just the best of the teams that choose to come (“NCAA Core Values”, 2015, para. 1). This may require the NCAA and various universities to potentially travel great distances, but at least now it is for one culminating event and not for two championship events. A model where students are only away from the classroom for one event, albeit a day or two longer, means that student-athletes spend more time in the classroom. Not to be lost through sport is the collegiate institutions’ and NCAA’s main focus of a great education. The proposition of a combined NCAA wrestling championship event, both dual (team event) and individual, will provide student-athletes with the least amount of days out of the classroom, greater fan interest, a true dual team champion, and one event for fans to go to rather than the previous standard of two separate events.

## **Chapter Two: Event Introduction**

Every March, the NCAA hosts the NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships at varying locations throughout the United States. In 2015, this event took place at the Scottrade Center in Saint Louis, Missouri (“DI Wrestling”, 2015). The locations may be different from year to year, but the magnitude, drama, and implications are always present and magnificent. Collegiate wrestling fans, and wrestling fans alike, see this event as the epitome of the collegiate season and Folkstyle wrestling all the same (See Appendix A for additional information on Folkstyle wrestling). The individual championship portion of the NCAA tournament, athletes individually competing to be the best at their given weight, always produces sell-out, or near sell-out crowds of dedicated fans. With these sellouts comes publicity, acknowledgement, marketing value, and perhaps most importantly, financial success. Since the 2014 season, the entire Division I NCAA Tournament has been available for viewers, both online and on television, by the ESPN family of networks (Caruso, 2012). As of now, the dual championships, team competitions, have not seen this same level of success.

Over the past several NCAA seasons, the format and location of the NCAA Division I Dual Championships has bounced around and changed from year to year (Caruso, 2012). Up until the conclusion of the 2009 season, the NCAA Division I Dual Team Champion was crowned at the National Duals in a grand event with all NCAA division levels competing in the UNI-Dome on the campus of the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The major limitation with this event, albeit a great location for all levels of NCAA wrestling to compete under one roof, was that this venue did not always provide the best location for all teams throughout the United States. Obviously the University of Northern Iowa and fans from the area loved this location, but schools like Penn State, the current four-time defending team champion

(as of 2014), were not so pleased on this location being that it is halfway across the country. Since the abandonment of this location as the site of the National Duals, the NCAA dual champion has been crowned based on a winner of eight mini-tournaments scattered at more convenient locations throughout the United States. The victors of these mini-tournaments then meet at the location of the perceived number one ranked team for the culminating championship duals (Caruso, 2012).

This current model of producing a dual team champion is more thorough and just, but does not produce the type of fan excitement that a singular event would produce (Brizner, 2015, p. 4). Additionally, this current model of determining the dual team champion takes three weekends, one for each round. If the NCAA were to piggyback on the success of the individual championship's event, for their dual championship, the general fan will have a much better chance of accessing both and not having to make the choice of one over the other. Many states have a combined event like this model for their high school state wrestling championship tournaments. The state of Minnesota uses this format for their high school wrestling championship tournaments ("Welcome", 2015). An event such as this will allow fans, as well as media, to go to one location and one event to see all that Division I wrestling has to offer.

Regardless of the location of the event, there have always been teams that have had to travel great distances to participate. A venue that is centralized in location minimizes travel times for both the East and West coast teams. St. Louis, Missouri offered a centralized location for a combined dual and individual Division I wrestling championships. The Scottrade Center, and neighboring Union Station for the Fan Fest portion, will be the best home to this event. Of the past fifteen Division I Wrestling Championships, St. Louis, Missouri and the Scottrade Center have been host to seven events ("NCAA", 2013). The potential seating capacity (19,150 seats)

along with history of success at this venue made it an easy selection for continued usage for such an event. The proximity to not only neighboring University of Missouri, but also several other Division I programs within a five hour radius, made this location an easy and logical choice.

The Scottrade Center is located in the heart of downtown St. Louis. Scottrade Center is one of the country's finest sports and entertainment complexes, with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, as well as an "unprecedented commitment to quality and service" ("Scottrade", 2015, para. 1). Scottrade Center has been open since October 1994, and has been the current home to the NHL's St. Louis Blues since January of 1995. "Scottrade Center is a contemporary, 12-story glass and concrete structure located in the heart of downtown St. Louis" ("Scottrade", 2015, para. 2). Scottrade Center features a variety of events including concerts, ice shows, family shows, and various sporting events beyond Blues games. "Scottrade Center plays host to approximately 175 events per year, bringing nearly 2 million guests to downtown St. Louis annually and ranking it among the top arenas in the country" ("Scottrade", 2015, para. 2). The Scottrade Center seats nearly 20,000 fans, and offers two different levels of suites, one along the second tier of seating and the other along the top level of the arena. The top level is referred to as the penthouse level. The capacity makes the Scottrade Center a great place to hold the NCAA Wrestling Championships.

The premium seating will be reserved for those that are leasing the suites for all Scottrade Center events. This seating will also provide private seating for special guests. Events such as this attract many former wrestling greats, and thus a seating environment is needed where they can enjoy the event without being bombarded with picture and autograph requests. With these seating options, event spectators will have various seating locations to choose from.

In addition to all the seating and dining amenities, the Scottrade Center also offers a center-hung Daktronics ProStar scoreboard, and 360-degree ribbon board. This scoreboard and ribbon board will provide wrestling fans with unparalleled up-close access to featured matches, as well as current team and individual scores throughout the tournament. The ribbon measures a circumference of 1,063 feet, making it the largest in any NHL arena, and thus a great tool to engage fans of all ages. In addition, there are also eight screens atop the scoreboard with each of those screens being about 12-feet wide and six-feet six-inches high with a 20-millimeter pixel spacing. There are also four bottom screens measuring 15 feet wide and 2.5 feet high. A large Daktronics message board that is located on the building's exterior façade facing Interstate 64 (U.S. 40) will also provide added attention to the event. For passing traffic, this will provide added publicity and exposure to the event inside. This exterior signage may provide added revenue to the fan fair portion of the event as well.

The total figure, to host the NCAA Division I Wrestling Championship in St. Louis, Missouri at the Scottrade Center over a five-day span is an estimated \$5,777,500. (See Appendix B for additional information on the cost to host the event at the Scottrade Center in St. Louis, Missouri). This total is based on some solid, nonnegotiable figures, as well as some estimates such as food needed/consumed as well as total to rent Scottrade Center. The cost for renting Scottrade Center is based on prices to rent similar facilities in the United States, specifically AT&T Ballpark in San Francisco, California (Gallagher, 2010). Food costs and food needed were based on a total of 22,000 persons present at each daily session, the capacity of Scottrade Center, as well as an estimate of an average of \$10 per person/day at these sessions ("Scottrade," 2015).

Amassing a total of 32.24 percent of the total expenses was the price of paying all employees required throughout the duration of this five-day event. As of 2015, Scottrade Center accounts for 3,725 jobs for the St. Louis area. Estimating an average of \$10/hour as well as 10 hours each day for five days that is a grand total of \$1,862,500 in total employee expenditures (“Scottrade,” 2015).

The second largest expense total was the price to rent the Scottrade Center, a total of \$300,000 per day, for a total of \$1,500,000 for five total days. This total accounts for 25.96 percent of the total amount. This price, although very steep, will be quickly offset by the mass of fan revenue generated from refreshment sales and ticket sales.

The final large percentage of expenses will be spent on refreshments needed for this event. Fans want refreshments while they enjoy the festivities. This total was based on an average 22,000-person crowd along with a 25 percent increase of sale price per item at the Scottrade Center refreshment booths (Sacks, 2011). The refreshment total cost over five days would be \$1,375,000 or 23.8 percent of the total amount. These three amounts together make up a total of 82 percent of the total \$5,777,500 expense amount.

The expenses seem steep before the exploration of revenue sources. An event such as this will produce a large amount of revenue to offset these costs rather quickly. The Scottrade Center being in the heart of downtown St. Louis offers lots of exposure by passing cars, trains, and pedestrians as well. The Midwest of the United States has traditionally provided the largest concentration of wrestling fans. Along with this, the central location in the United States of St. Louis, Missouri worked well to minimize travel time for fans and athletes alike. The history of success at this venue, central location, and ease of access all increase the likelihood of a successful tournament.

### **Chapter Three: Marketing Plan**

The plan of combining the NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships Individual and Duals Tournaments will provide fans with one location and one week of the most elite level, and superb wrestling that the NCAA has to offer. The combined championship events will come with some additional costs. Nevertheless, the NCAA needs to make changes to stay relevant, and keep the sport of wrestling growing and thriving from year to year. The opportunities to build excitement, exposure, and revenue for a nonrevenue sport within the NCAA are rare, and therefore of the utmost importance. These opportunities need not be wasted or underestimated. The NCAA should learn from past mistakes and continue to grow, as it has much to offer. It is imperative that wrestling be publicized and made available in such a way for all to learn about, see, and most of all enjoy.

#### **Purpose**

The improvements suggested by the International Olympic Committee to the Olympic wrestling product impacted much more than just the Olympic level of the sport. The eye opening perspective on the sport provided the United World Wrestling organization a compelling reason to seek improvements for the sport. This decision, in turn, gave wrestling the opportunity to improve the sport on all competitive levels. The Olympics, and therefore Olympic level wrestling, only takes place every four years. Because of this, it is imperative that the sport seeks improvements at a level of competition, and at an event, that sees more exposure and regularity to the general public. The changes and improvements made to the NCAA level will provide great exposure to the sport and potentially draw in new fans for future NCAA wrestling events, as well as all other wrestling events alike.

The decision of the International Olympic Committee provided wrestling with a platform that it had yet to see previously. The NCAA always is in pursuit of new ways to create fan buzz and attention. It seems that with every new NCAA season comes a new tweak or change to previously established rules. Some view this tendency for change as a negative, while others as a positive. In either perspective, the NCAA is in pursuit of excellence and improvement. As stated previously, the mission statement of the NCAA, and therefore NCAA wrestling, is as follows:

The Association - through its member institutions, conferences and national office staff - shares a belief in and commitment to:

- The collegiate model of athletics in which students participate as an avocation, balancing their academic, social and athletics experiences.
- The highest levels of integrity and sportsmanship.
- The pursuit of excellence in both academics and athletics.
- The supporting role that intercollegiate athletics plays in the higher education mission and in enhancing the sense of community and strengthening the identity of member institutions.
- An inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds.
- Respect for institutional autonomy and philosophical differences.”

(“NCAA Core Values”, 2015, para. 1)

The proposed event is a NCAA event, and therefore it must also follow the NCAA Core Values and mission statement. The athletes in this proposed event are students first and athletes second. Therefore, all participants must be in good academic standing in accordance to the NCAA’s mission statement in order to compete.

## **Product**

The format and location of the NCAA Division I Dual Championship has not seen much consistency since the 2009 season when the tournament left its longest standing format. During this time all divisions including Division I, Division II, Division III, and NAIA all competed in the UNI-Dome on the campus of the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The tournament was held at this location for many years, and provided a consistent location for fans to plan to attend from year to year. The major limitation with this event was that the best teams did not always attend, and Iowa is not always a feasible location to attend for all wrestling fans across the United States. The disbandment from this location has led to changes in how a team is labeled National Dual/Team Champion. As of now, there is still not a suitable location or format to determine this champion. It is because of this that the combination of the dual and individual aspects of the NCAA Wrestling Championships will hopefully give a constant, as well as, completely legitimate and fair crowned champion from year to year. The individual NCAA Wrestling Championships is already well publicized, attended, and formatted. It will be well suited to have the dual/team championship event also a part of this already established and great event.

## **Project Market**

The use of a SWOT Analysis, a technique designed to organize Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, provides a clear view of the proposed event (See appendix A). With this SWOT Analysis, one can see the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that will be present in an event such as a NCAA wrestling championship event. This plan will allow for collegiate wrestling to thrive under one culminating year-end event much like what other sports see under the collegiate umbrella.

For Strengths, this event will be built off the success of the established individual NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships. This is the highest level of NCAA competition and the prospect of viewing future Olympic wrestlers is very high. A weakness to this model will be the time and resources need to host and view this event over a week's time. The opportunity for Kids Camps, autograph signings, and Olympic exhibition matches would help to draw in fans.

### **Position**

The uniqueness of this event lies in that it is the culmination of the NCAA Division I Wrestling season. Athletes must qualify in order to participate and thus these are Division I wrestling's best. The teams must also qualify for the dual portion of the event, also adding to the uniqueness of the tournament. Nowhere else will fans be able to confidently witness NCAA Division I wrestling's best teams and individuals in a tournament together.

Marketing this event to the already established dedicated wrestling fan will not be a difficult task. NCAA wrestling has searched for seven years now for a format to legitimize the crowning of a Division I wrestling dual/team champion (Caruso, 2012). Ever since the abandonment of the format used at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls, Iowa, the format and location has changed from year to year. The hardest part for fans to digest will be the length of such an event, a combined Division I individual and dual wrestling championships tournament. The current individual championship tournament lasts from Thursday morning through Saturday night. If the dual tournament were added to this, the tournament will logistically require from Tuesday morning through Saturday night to complete. Information for such an event will be readily available through the official NCAA website, [ncaa.com](http://ncaa.com), as well as various collegiate wrestling related websites such as [intermatwrestle.com](http://intermatwrestle.com), [flowrestling.com](http://flowrestling.com), [nwcaonline.com](http://nwcaonline.com), and [trackwrestling.com](http://trackwrestling.com). The participating universities in this event will also provide ticket

purchasing opportunities, allowing for fans to sit near other fans of the same university. The Division I Individual Wrestling Championship is already covered live on the ESPN family of networks, and as such this will also be a great platform to publicize the combined championship tournament.

### **Pick Players**

The initial target audience for this event included that of new wrestling fans. Upon further examination and investigation, the best and most logical target audience will be that of the established and knowledgeable wrestling fan. To expect a fan to spend nearly a week at the event, the fan would have to have a great love and passion for the sport. Understandably, this is a long and time-consuming event. One very logical way around this will be for fans to have the opportunity to purchase tickets for individual sessions, or individual days, without having to commit to the entire week's festivities. Additionally, an event like this with a Fan Fest area allows for fans, and athletes, to decompress and get away from the high stress and high intensity that wrestling yields.

A study by Cooper (2013) at the annual All-Star Classic, an All-Star formatted wrestling dual comprised of the nation's best NCAA wrestlers, concluded that the fan's most favorable response to "Why do you attend?" was for the "individual matchups" ( $M = 5.73$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ). "Individual matchup" refers to fans hoping to see Wrestler A against Wrestler B. Given the unpredictability of sport, basing a given day's attendance on hoping to see a specific matchup is quite risky. If fans choose to attend to see individual matchups, fans have to be knowledgeable as to who the wrestlers are, and the storylines that have the potential of unfolding. A new, unknowing, fan would be oblivious to these issues. In addition, Cooper (2013) found the second

most favorable outcome to be to “support the sport” and show loyalty to the sport they love ( $M = 5.35$ ;  $SD = 1.07$ ). A new fan would also fall short to this outcome.

### **Package**

The sport of wrestling and wrestling fans alike are not immune to the prospect of change to the sport they love. Wrestling at all levels seems to make tweaks and changes in order to grow and adapt to the changing times. After wrestling’s scare at the Olympic level, there are now many changes beginning to unfold to help not only wrestling at the Olympic level, but all levels below it. Even if wrestling has been susceptible to adjustment, a drastic and sudden change to the NCAA Wrestling Championship landscape may be unneeded. A plan of implementation for this combined dual and individual championship tournament would best include a slow rollout process. A plan, which initially showcased a briefed dual championship, may be the best plan of action. Potentially adding one day of wrestling action before the current individual championships tournament might ease fans into this model. Showcasing a semifinal round of dual meet action along with the finals will allow fans to slowly become accustomed to this new format. The addition of one day will also keep fans from getting burnt out even if they are NCAA wrestling’s biggest fans. One more day away from family, off of work, along with additional costs for hotel rooms, tickets, food, etc. would not be much extra to expect for fans.

### **Price**

For any event it is quick to think of ticket sales to be the biggest source of revenue. The calculations found for the NCAA Division I Wrestling Championship show totals that far surpass that of the ticket sales total (See Appendix D for additional information on revenue calculations). Ticket sales seem to fall behind three other revenue streams with two such amounts far surpassing the rest. The revenue of ticket sales was based on the 22,000 fan capacity of Scottrade

Center. An average ticket price of \$200 for all 5 days was used based on the 2015 NCAA Wrestling Championships, amounting to \$4,400,000 total (“Scotttrade”, 2015). The average ticket price for a single session was \$28 at the 2015 NCAA Wrestling Championships (“Scotttrade”, 2015).

In the current format of the NCAA Division I Individual Wrestling Championships, all sessions can be purchased separately or for a reduced price, while all-session passes may also be purchased. Prices for the first five sessions of the individual portion, and first three sessions of the dual portion, will all be priced equally. Prices for session four of the dual portion and session six of the individual portion will both be priced at a premium because these will be the sessions where champions are crowned and thus Championship Sessions.

The calculated greatest amount of revenue for this event was sponsorships and media support. Media accounted for both television and Internet support and access for the event. Revenue estimates for these statistics, media and sponsorship, were found within one article from the NCAA’s official revenue site (“Revenue”, 2013). The estimates for total revenue gained were based on previous statistics for each NCAA Championship event over the 2013 NCAA seasons. Coverage from ESPN for all sessions throughout the entirety of the individual tournament has greatly helped publicize and make available the event. Additionally, ESPN3 provided individual coverage of every mat through the entire tournament. The added exposure and attention to this tournament through this growing television coverage created greater sponsorship and media demand. Numbers can only grow based on past season’s statistics.

### **Promotion**

Olympic wrestling’s threat of demise without change is felt throughout wrestling at many levels. Wrestling has fought to gain legitimacy on collegiate campuses across the United States

for many years. The best way to gain notoriety, and monetary gain for the sport, is through marketing. In order to market to the goal audience, one will have to refrain from making wrestling seem too elementary. This idea will then have to be coupled with still giving fans with little knowledge of the sport an idea of what the NCAA Division I Wrestling Tournament entails.

**Advertising.** The most effective marketing model would be that of television exposure. ESPN and its family of networks have done a tremendous job of displaying the sport at the highest quality possible for over twenty years (Caruso, 2012). Every single match throughout the entirety of the tournament is made available through ESPN3. This is great for those that are following one wrestler or one team when these matches may not be otherwise available on television. Growing coverage of the sport through networks like the BigTen Network and the Big12 Network has led to more exposure, and fans being able to follow their team's athletes more closely before the NCAA Tournaments take place. Promotion of the NCAA event throughout the season will allow for fans to build up anticipation, and thus look forward to the matchups that may potentially unfold.

**Publicity.** Publicity for this event will be built through advertisements by ESPN, for their own broadcast, as well as blog and wrestling related discussion mediums. ESPN's advertisements will bolster viewership for their broadcast. Potential matchups between wrestlers and teams will also build anticipation. The availability of information and statistics before the event will provide fans with scenarios to talk about on blogs and wrestling related outlets. As the tournament unfolds, new discussions and possibilities for promotion will develop. The fan discussion of teams, wrestlers, matchups, upsets, and controversies will be a powerful marketing tool.

**Promotional activities.** A great marketing tool that will increase fan interaction and participation is that of creating a Bracketbuster type contest. This contest allows fans to pick whom they feel is going to win, and interact as to why they feel so. Fan interaction like this allows for ideas to flow and interest to grow. Fans love a contest where bragging rights and items such as memorabilia, subscriptions, and free tickets can be won. It would be foreseen that even those that have little interest or knowledge of collegiate wrestling would also participate. Well-known wrestling media websites like InterMatwrestle.com have a concept similar to this, but only in picking the overall winners and not the brackets along the way (“InterMat”, 2016). Establishing a beginner bracket, picking only the champions, as well as an expert bracket, will allow for fans of varying interest and time commitments to enjoy the contests.

**Public relations.** Another mode of marketing that is not to be overlooked is that of social media. Social media plays a huge role in the ability to follow and track athletes and teams that would otherwise not be possible. Many teams have their own dedicated Twitter account, and fans can follow their team from anywhere in the country, and thus build anticipation for future matchups. Twitter and social media allows for fans to follow one specific team or an entire tournament, if desired. The information in these social media and Twitter accounts is specialized for the given fan’s interest. These mediums will also publicize the Fan Fest and its included activities.

**Community relations.** The Fan Fest location will provide a great place to establish and build public and community interest. At past NCAA Wrestling Championship tournaments, the Fan Fest location has provided free youth clinics, USA wrestling practices, autograph sessions, exhibition matches, and preview shows for wrestling fans (“Clarity”, 2015). These events were free and open to the public without a ticket to the NCAA Wrestling Championships tournament.

This type of environment also allows for local vendors and merchants to display and sell their products. Being that these tournament tickets are expensive, this will allow for a new fan to be introduced to the NCAA Wrestling Championship tournament at no cost.

**Media relations.** Websites like Trackwrestling.com allow for fans to get an in-depth look into tournaments and duals throughout the country. This also allows for fans at the NCAA Wrestling Championship Tournament to track what matchups will take place while the event is unfolding (“Trackwrestling”, 2013). Marketing, whether intentional through commercials or inadvertent through interviews, will also be prevalent on other wrestling websites, but nowhere more so than Flowrestling.org. Flowrestling provides match analysis, interviews, and behind the scenes footage of various tournaments and duals at all levels of the sport (“Flowrestling”, 2016). Flowrestling already has created a strong partnership with NCAA Wrestling through its sole coverage of many NCAA tournaments throughout the season (“Flowrestling”, 2016). Flowrestling provides NCAA wrestling with professional exposure while also publicizing their company’s work.

**Personal selling.** Personalized communication of this event will occur to college season ticket holders. The participating universities will have special communications with season ticket holders as to all the details of the NCAA wrestling championship event. NCAA wrestling season ticket holders will be allowed special access to tickets before the general public. These special buyers will also be allowed the option to retain seats of their choosing within the facility for upcoming NCAA Wrestling Championship tournaments. This gives fans an incentive to be season ticket holders. These perks will also include coupons for local restaurants, hotels, and amenities.

**Sponsorship.** The sponsorship for the event will include AT&T, Capital One, and Coca-Cola in addition to several others. These corporations are the “Official NCAA Corporate Champions” sponsors (“Turner”, 2016, para. 1). There are also 14 other “Official NCAA Corporate Partners” that will sponsor the event (“Turner”, 2016, para. 2). In addition, ESPN will have sole broadcasting rights of the entirety of the tournaments. The creation of an official Bracketbuster tournament through Flowrestling.org will also provide exclusive rights to the contest. The NCAA Wrestling Championships will take place at the Scottrade Center and thus Scottrade will also be a valuable asset to publicize the event.

### **Place**

St Louis, Missouri will be the best location for a combined dual and individual Division I wrestling championships tournament. Scottrade Center will house the tournament and neighboring Union Station will be used for the Fan Fest portion. The seating capacity of Scottrade Center (19,150 seats with space for an additional 3,000 in suites and club level seats) is more than well equipped to hold an event of this magnitude.

The Scottrade Center is located in the heart of downtown St. Louis. Scottrade Center is also a quarter mile (five minute walk) from Union Station, the location of the Fan Fest for the event (“Google”, 2016).

The event will be held at the end of the collegiate wrestling season, in late March. Typically the Division I NCAA Individual Championship tournament runs on a Thursday morning through Saturday evening schedule. Each day is split into two wrestling sessions, one morning and one evening session, six sessions total, through the duration of the three days. With the addition of the NCAA Division I Dual Championships two days must be added to the total

length of the event. Those additional two days will be Tuesday morning through Wednesday evening, four sessions total, two per day. This equates to five total days, and ten total sessions

Tickets will be readily available through two mediums the NCAA (either online or by phone), or through one's favorite university (either online or by phone). Attempting to order tickets through Ticketmaster.com results in a link to the NCAA website for ticket purchase ("Ticketmaster", 2016). As both aspects of this event are team oriented, the dual portion being a team competition and the individual portion featuring individuals still representing their team, seating designated by team is conducive. In previous events each section designated a different school's fan base. For example, all fans of the University of Iowa sat in one section, and fans of the University of Missouri in another. The advantage to purchasing tickets through one's favorite university is thus important to many. If a desired team is not important, using the NCAA medium for tickets allow fans to sit wherever is the best available. In addition, if a university were to sellout their respective section, the NCAA medium may provide fans a way to still attend the event, albeit not in their favorite team's section.

### **Promise: Evaluation of Strategy and Tactics**

For this event, the merger of the individual and dual aspects of the NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships, the evaluation process can easily be separated into two categories, established fans and new fans. Established fans are those who have previously attended either portion of the NCAA Wrestling Championships, and new fans being those who have not attended either portion previously. The challenge of publicizing the event to interest new fans will be the biggest hurdle. For established fans they know where to look and are already involved in emails, fan clubs, events, and social media accounts that will get the word out. Even the best-planned events are only worth their while if they capture the attention of the intended

audience. “Before defining the path for publicizing your event, it is important to identify what you hope to achieve through its success” (Lobanov, 2015, para. 4). An easy way of gauging marketing success for new fans will be to find the number of fans in attendance for the first time. This will not only shed light on the marketing department’s success in publicizing the event, but also the growing interest in the sport as a whole. The new fans in attendance may be a result of a new and improved marketing campaign, or the hard work of established fans encouraging their friends to come along. When the seats are filled money, profit, and notoriety is made for the event and for wrestling in general.

Evaluating the success of marketing to the established fan may not be quite as straight forward. Fans who have attended multiple NCAA Wrestling Championship events know where to look, and are already involved enough to not have to strain to find information on the event. Many of these fans find a way to make it to the event regardless of location and date. For teams with large and established fan bases, like the University of Iowa, there is little chance that they will not be heavily represented come championship time. “[For the 2014 season] Iowa is first on the [NCAA wrestling attendance] list, averaging 8,835 fans over seven home duals” (Pilcher, 2014, para. 1). Attendance figures like this speak heavily to why their fan base is so well represented at the national championships. For established fans, interest would not be specifically in the number of fans that have returned for another championship. Rather, how many fans chose to attend this new NCAA championship tournament after attending fewer than 50 percent of their favorite team’s duals. Fans that attend so few duals would be much less likely to attend this championship tournament. A fan may be attending the NCAA championship tournament because of the new format as opposed to their attendance regardless. This will shed some light on the success of the new NCAA championship tournament format.

## **Chapter Four: Employee/Volunteer Planning**

When establishing, producing, and working an event of this magnitude there need be managers and workers who work effectively and meticulously together. When discussing managerial roles and retaining effective and valuable personnel, one cannot do so without mentioning Sandy Stevens. Sandy Stevens has been the announcer of the NCAA Division I Individual Wrestling Championships for the past 34 events dating back to the 1981 NCAA Wrestling Championships in Princeton, New Jersey (Palmer, 2015). Sandy is a great example of someone that is experienced with this event, and an asset for the newly formatted NCAA Wrestling Championship tournament. The actions and duties of the managers of this tournament have a far more important job than just leading the new format of the NCAA Wrestling Championships. The workers of this event have the massive duty of managing and running the tournament that has implications on the sport beyond the NCAA and wrestling in the United States (Baughman, 2013).

For the best results, the combination of the Individual NCAA Championships with the Dual NCAA Championships will be treated as two separate events. There will be two separate head managers in place. Each head manager will have his or her own piece to run. Having a manager of each event will allow for each leader to be on the same authority level, and allow them to focus more attention on their one aspect of the combined format. The managerial hierarchy will include many workers on the same level to encourage teamwork and discourage micromanaging for each event. The managers will have to use a performance management gauge of effectiveness, because of the nature of running a fast paced nonstop event such as this tournament (Noe, 2008).

For task-oriented skills, managers will need to focus on completing the job right the first time, as the event is live. Managers need to focus more on accomplishing the goals rather than

who is specifically doing the jobs. The end result of having a successful tournament needs to be in focus at all times. Fortunately for the Division I NCAA Wrestling Championship Tournament, there is potential to include staff members with previous experience. Managers and workers in roles such as announcers, table workers, ticket takers, technicians, and referees will provide a good base to help those that are new to this realm. The major issue that could be foreseen would stem from the hurdles that come from hosting the event at a new venue. In the current model, each year the venue and host city changes yearly and so there may be some issues that arise from the new host site itself. The manager must make sure that mats remain in use at all times, wrestlers know an adequate amount beforehand where they need to be, table workers are knowledgeable of the sport and proficient as to what they need do, and that coaches and athletes have enough space to warm up and cool down before and after matches. For the fans, managers will need to have staff in place to facilitate fan needs including entering the facility in a timely fashion, merchandise and concessions be in proximity for efficient browsing, accessible and clean facilities, and courteous staff throughout. The individual model of the NCAA Championship Tournament will be much the same as previous years and the dual portion will be much like the model that previously was in place during the years of hosting the dual NCAA Wrestling Championships in the UNI-Dome at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa (“Off-season”, 2012).

The relationship-oriented skills for the managers will focus around two things, the fans and retaining trained staff members for future years. If managers do a good job of building relationships and catering to fans, there is a much greater likelihood that these fans will choose to attend again. It will be hard in the fast paced, nonstop stirring to take a breath and make sure that employees are satisfied and content, but nevertheless it is something that needs to be done. This

is exactly why managers need to have a large quantity of staff in place to just facilitate the fans and keep the staff comfortable as well. This will mean having staff in place to get table workers, announcers, referees, and others water, food, and supplies when needed. The most important task the managers have to be aware of, besides the fans, is retaining these staff members that have years of experience already. Staff that already has experience in this type of setting is staff that does not need to be trained. These experienced staff members thus save time, money, and energy in the future. The managers of this tournament must also be aware that this tournament may have a large impact on the sport's future both domestically and abroad. These managers and workers need to be well prepared and ready long before the event takes place.

The unclear future of wrestling, both internationally and domestically has brought about an importance for quality and reliable wrestling events. These events, including this NCAA Wrestling Championship tournament, therefore demand well-trained and prepared workers. The current state of the NCAA Division I Tournaments allows a potential for greater publicity and greater gain from these two tournaments combined. The combining of the two events will create one event that allows fans to come to one location, and not have to choose year after year what event they want to attend, dual or individual wrestling championships. Obviously, the length of these combined events will be greater than the length of each one individually, but with great managing and great workers, this event will be a huge success. The history of this event has shown a tendency for workers to repeat their roles from year to year. Hopefully, even with the change of format, the managers and workers will want to continue their roles for years to come.

## **Chapter Five: Risk Management Plan**

### **General Facility Information**

St Louis, Missouri is the best-proposed location for a combined dual and individual Division I wrestling championships. This decision is the best based on history, geographic location, and proximity to neighboring successful wrestling universities. The Scottrade Center and neighboring Union Station will both be utilized for this event. Many venues are home to multiple teams. The Scottrade Center, however, is the home facility to only one team, the St. Louis Blues of the NHL. Unfortunately, the timing of when the event will take place does not bode well in terms of scheduling conflicts with the St. Louis Blues home games. The tournament will take place in late March at the conclusion of the NCAA Division I Wrestling season. This timeframe falls during the heart of the National League Hockey season (“2015-2016”, 2016). Communication between the NCAA and NHL may need to occur in order to ensure that the St. Louis Blues have away games during this time. The Scottrade Center covers 665,000 square feet and is located right along the current MetroLink Public Transportation System in close proximity to a MetroLink Public Transportation stop (“Scottrade”, 2015). This transportation will provide a great way for fans to safely enter and exit the vicinity of the venues. In addition, the Scottrade Center provides approximately 6,500 parking spots, including a 1,270-car garage, providing fans yet another way to get to and from the arena. Both methods of transportation provide very beneficial factors in hosting an event at this facility.

The Scottrade Center is only one of the two required facilities for this event. The neighboring Union Station will provide a great location for fans to mingle, purchase merchandise, as well as potentially meet the current and former athletes in attendance. The Union Station provides a “stunning Grand Hall” which is “perfect for festivals, concerts, and other special events” (“About”, 2016, para. 1). This location additionally offers 539 hotel rooms

for fans to reside within walking distance of the tournament facilities. Union Station is also less than a quarter mile away from the Scottrade Center MetroLink public transportation station.

### **Maintenance and Overall Assessment of Facility**

To host mega sporting events, the Scottrade Center needs to be well maintained both on the interior and exterior. There will be congestion outside the facility due to both fans on foot, as well as car traffic on nearby roads. On the South side of the facility, the building is bordered by Clark Street within approximately fifty feet, as well as 14<sup>th</sup> Street to the East within the same distance. Undoubtedly there will be refreshment spills and accidents throughout the duration of the tournaments. Quite obviously these things will occur due to the large amount of people moving throughout the facility before, during, and after the event. These mishaps require that the custodial staff on hand be both equipped, and capable, of taking care of these mishaps in an appropriate and timely matter. Because these tournaments are part of an NCAA event, alcohol will not be sold within either facility. Regardless, the staff needs to be prepared for fans in attendance that are in a less than favorable mindset. Spills will occur without fail given the sheer number of attendants.

Based on previous years' attendance numbers of the NCAA Wrestling Championships, the Scottrade Center will easily be at capacity. "The NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships [as of 2014] have had four consecutive sell outs" ("Curators", 2014, para. 2). A sellout attendance provides obstacles that would otherwise not be present. Due to the number in attendance, the time it will take to exit the facility will be substantial. Additionally, this event will be held over multiple days, with multiple sessions each day, multiplying these wait times to leave the facility. Suggestions for possible risks and their possible remedies to this problem and

others are highlighted within the Evaluation of Risk Survey (See Appendix E for additional information on the Survey Evaluation of Risk).

### **Suggestions to Lessen Risk/Liability**

The prospect of a fan falling over the guardrail at a sporting event is quite terrifying. Unfortunately, there have been several fans that have fallen over protective boundaries and then endured a long fall on to lower levels of the facility. The most recent example being on August 29, 2015, when a 60 year-old fan fell 50 feet from the upper deck of Yankee Stadium to the lower deck below (Feinsand, 2015). Fortunately, none of these falls have occurred within the Scottrade Center, but nevertheless the risk needs to be assessed. Facilities with multiple levels all have some sort of protective barrier to keep fans from falling over, but sometimes this protection is not enough when fan excitement is present. Around the barrier of the upper deck at Scottrade Center there is an approximant two and half foot tall cement retaining wall. Above this retaining wall sits a six to eight inch sheet of Plexiglas so that fans can see through it if seated in the front row. For a fan that is six-foot tall, this barrier would not make it far past their waist if at all. In the excitement of this event, a fan could very easily have a mishap given this barrier height. It would not take much, especially for an intoxicated attendant, or one that reaches over the barrier for any reason to lose their balance and fall. A recommendation would be to place a larger piece of Plexiglas, totaling four feet from the ground with the cement portion, to keep fans safer in the upper bowl. A four-foot tall wall would go well above the chest height of many fans. The Plexiglas will also still allow for fans to see the event unobstructed while seated.

For this NCAA event, alcohol will not be sold within the facility. Nonetheless, spectators may try to either bring it in, or consume it prior to entering the facilities. In preparation for either scenario, an updated and informed security staff will be in force. A strong security presence

within facility parking areas will occur as well. As fans enter the facility, security will enforce a strict search for these substances, as well as all other unapproved contraband. For a parking lot of 1000 cars there will be a minimum 20 security guards patrolling the area before and after the event with potentially fewer during the event.

A substantial risk for fans is that of lost or misplaced possessions. With a capacity crowd of approximately 22,000 expected for this event, the potential for something to get misplaced is at a higher probability. For this NCAA Wrestling Championship tournament there will be well-publicized and presented lost and found areas. Two lost and found areas will be placed at the North and South sides of the Scottrade Center, while one lost and found area will also be located in Union Station near the entrance/exit of the facility. A greater awareness of where these lost and found locations reside will be an absolute must.

A lost child or family member is also a risk in all the commotion and excitement. The frequency of a lost child is less than that of a lost possession, but still this vulnerability must be planned for in case of it happening. There would be nothing more frightening to a parent than losing a child, and not knowing where or whom to turn to. The lost and found locations will also be designated as lost family/child meeting points.

The NCAA Wrestling Championship tournament will have a floor plan similar to that of a basketball event. Fans in the front row of the lower bowl will be on the same level as the playing surface. A greater security presence near the playing surface will be required for this event. An additional option to help keep fans off the playing surface would be to have a raised lower seating area. This seating arrangement would have the lowest row of fan seating five or more feet above the playing surface. This option will produce similar risks to fans in the front

row of the upper bowls. Fans would be at risk of toppling over and through guardrails during the event.

The location of the event must not only provide fans with a great facility to view the event itself, but also adequate hotel accommodations, space for fanfare, public transportation, restaurants, and entertainment beyond the event itself. St Louis, Missouri and the greater area accomplishes all of this and more. The area around the facility includes numerous hotels and restaurants within walking distance, as well as easy public transportation to the airport just over twelve miles away. The location of St Louis is central to the United States, and integrated in the largest concentration of established college wrestling fans. Gaining new fans is imperative to continuing in the growth of the sport, but the established fans are what keep the sport alive and growing for years to come.

## **Chapter Six: Ethical Analysis**

The focus of this analysis is primarily based upon the proposed changes to the NCAA championship tournament. The issue of focus is the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) decision-making process on February 13, 2013, when the Committee came to the decision to remove wrestling from the Olympic Games for a variety of reasons. The International Olympic Committee's decision was based primarily on the grounds that wrestling provided very little perceived monetary gain for the Olympic Games. In addition, the International Olympic Committee felt the increasingly complicated rules and regulations made following the competition difficult for the general fan. Since the ramifications of this decision have played out, United World Wrestling, the international governing body of wrestling, has since simplified and made the rules and presentation of the sport much more fan-friendly of all wrestling experience levels. The ethical analysis of this event is as follows:

### **Teleology**

“The teleological approach to decision making advocates the position that decisions can be judged good or bad based on their outcomes or consequences alone” (Cruise, 1995, para. 17). To this point, decisions are made in a matter to reduce pain for the affected and theoretically increase pleasure. For this situation, given the International Olympic Committee's perceived position, the International Olympic Committee thought their decision to be good albeit in the end not. The International Olympic Committee's goal is to improve the Olympic Games, and they will do everything they can to accomplish that goal. Their intention was to improve their product by eliminating what was in their eyes, a weak event. Wrestling just happened to be the perceived weakest link to the Olympic Games rotation by the International Olympic Committee. An additional goal of the International Olympic Committee was to then implement a new more exciting, revenue generating, and fan friendly event, in wrestling's place. However, the

International Olympic Committee did not expect the substantial backlash that ultimately resulted in the president of the International Olympic Committee terminating his position within the governing body. Their focus was on the end goal, the resulting product, and not the impact and effects their decision would bring.

### **Deontology**

“Deontological ethics or deontology is the normative ethical position that judges the morality of an action based on the action's adherence to a rule or rules” (Merriam-Webster's dictionary *Deontology*, 2016). Deontology is a fairly basic ethical practice in comparison to other ideas and practices. This ethical theory relies on an action or decision's alignment to a rule or set of rules. The theory states that if there is a set of rules, then that is the way it has to be.

Unfortunately for wrestling, the scale the International Olympic Committee used to judge the importance and successfulness of all the Olympic sports was viewership and revenue. Wrestling was calculated to be in need in both of those areas, and by the International Olympic Committee's discretion was therefore in need of removal to improve the overall Olympic product. This event's relation to this ethical practice comes down to any potential rules that may be in place. Additionally, the International Olympic Committee felt that the Olympic sports require a certain amount of viewership or monetary gain to keep its place within the allotted 26 spots. As of now there are no such criteria that a sport must meet to remain eligible.

Nevertheless, the International Olympic Committee had some sort of reasoning to justify their decision and further actions.

### **Existentialism**

“The existentialist perspective stands outside the traditional approaches to ethical conduct. It suggests that ethical behavior is not a function of the consequences it creates

(teleology) nor of the rules which we ought to follow (deontology), but rather a function of an individual's free will to choose and accept complete responsibility for all behavior” (Cruise, 1995, para. 33). The existentialist theory holds those responsible for their actions accountable. If the decision or choice was made, then the decision-maker must suffer the consequences, either positive or negative. The International Olympic Committee’s president was held accountable for his actions, and was ultimately forced into relinquishing his seat because of the backlash he received. International Olympic Committee President Jaques Rogge felt that wrestling “responded well” to the International Olympic Committee’s decision in February of 2013, and also felt there to be no “shortcomings in the system” as it pertains to potential removal of Olympic sports from the current rotation (SNTV, 2013, p. 1). President Jaques Rogge also felt that regardless of what sport was looked to for removal, there would have been criticism from one group or another (SNTV, 2013).

These three theories are applicable, in some way to any issue. In thinking about these three theories there looks to be room for even more growth for the International Olympic Committee, the Olympic Games, and the NCAA. The potential plan for improvement focuses on the NCAA Division I Wrestling Tournament, both dual and individual aspects. The theory that appears to be most applicable is the existential theory in that every decision has a consequence, and every consequence provides potential to learn from. These ethical theories provide description, basis, and rationale for the different issues one will face, not only in a managerial position, but everyday life regardless of role. These theories help make the decision-making process, and the consequences received, slightly easier.

## **Chapter Seven: Personal Statement**

Employees want to work for grateful leaders who appreciate the contributions that employees make and ensure they are recognized for those contributions. To have its desired effect, the recognition and respect must be seen as sincere and genuine.

(Wiley, 2014, para. 1)

Leadership, as defined by dictionary.reference.com is “an act or instance of leading; guidance; direction; a person who guides or directs a group” (“Leadership”, 2015, para. 3). Throughout our classes here at Concordia, we witnessed in action many great examples of leadership, learned what it takes to be a great leader, what constitutes a leader over a manager, and picked up many great tools to include in our leadership arsenal for future success. The concepts learned throughout my experience at Concordia will help me in whatever career path I am lucky enough to pursue. The varied class schedule, experiences and expertise of all professors, and connections I made with all my cohort members will be valuable tools to my future success.

### **Connections to Sports Management**

As far back as I can remember I have always been both surrounded by, and a large fan of sports. This is probably not atypical of many in this program. Growing up, my parents encouraged me to be involved in as many sports as possible. I played baseball from the age of five years old through high school, wrestled from middle school through high school, as well as basketball, soccer, swimming, football, gymnastics, and track sprinkled throughout my childhood. I would never consider myself a star athlete, but I nonetheless had fun participating and competing with my friends, while my parents and younger brother, when he was not playing

himself, proudly watched. Playing baseball from a young age, I was drawn to this sport before my discovery of the personal benefits of individual sports. In middle school I was introduced to the sport of wrestling. The only reason that I went out for the middle school wrestling team was because a few of my friends wanted to, and I wanted to be with them. This was the beginning a deep love of not only competing in wrestling myself, but also coaching my younger brother. Becoming more involved in the wrestling community brought to light many of the shortcomings of traditional nonrevenue generating sports beyond just wrestling for high schools and colleges alike. Additionally, when I began wrestling so did my younger brother. I loved the sport for both the individual aspect as well as the team aspect that wrestling offered. When I ceased competition after high school, I focused all my attention on coaching my brother in various competitions until he started high school.

I very much enjoyed competing in sports growing up, but coaching athletes, whether it be my younger brother or the youth wrestling club I coach, is where I truly feel my greatest connection to sports. I love being in the driver's seat in leading an individual or team to being the best they can be. As my younger brother's wrestling coach and youth baseball coach, I have coached at a variety of tournaments and competitions from the local level all the way up through national tournaments. In reflecting on my previous coaching experiences, I see many connections to what we have discussed in our cohort classes as to what it is like and required of sports management professionals. Leaders in either coaching or management positions need to wear multiple hats in terms of differentiation in order to help those around them be the best that they can individually be. Since coaching my younger brother, he has gone on to wrestle collegiately at the University of Northern Iowa. I could not be a more proud big brother!

My enjoyment of coaching led to my pursuit of achieving a math teaching degree from the University of Northern Iowa in 2012. Teaching to me has many connections to coaching a sport. In both, differentiation and balance is key to the varying students/athletes success. I, at my core, have a love of helping others and seeing/helping them to succeed. After teaching for two years I felt that I had more to give than just as a teacher and coach for a school. Although I really do enjoy teaching and all the excitement and frustration that comes along with it, I felt very early on that being a school teacher is not something I necessarily want to do for the rest of my life. In talking to the head wrestling coach at my high school, I discussed some of my aspirations for the rest of my life. He was one of the first to encourage me to pursue higher education in the sports management realm (Crane, 2014). I did some research and found this sports management program at Concordia University to which I could not possibly be any happier.

### **Concordia Graduate Program**

The **Master of Arts in Sport Management** program is offered fully online and designed to help students achieve their academic and career goals on their schedule. The Online MSM courses mimic the on-campus atmosphere by providing students with a learning environment in which they can collaborate and interact with the professor and their peers.

(“Master”, 2015, para. 1)

When I first began research as to where I would like to pursue my sports management or similar master’s coursework, I found a few universities throughout the United States that met my needs and criteria. I wanted to find a university that offered the program completely online as I am currently a full time mathematics teacher in Davenport, Iowa. Additionally, I also needed to find an institution that offered their program at a reasonable price over a manageable amount of time. This program at Concordia offered me everything I needed. A program from a great

institution, meeting for discussion on Tuesday nights, and all coursework can be completed online and on my own time schedule allowing me to balance working full time and reaching for my future aspirations. I have yet to set foot on campus, yet still could not feel more connected to the university and personnel I have met along the way.

As I have yet to pursue or acquire a job with this master's degree, it is important for me to find connections and areas of growth within my current position as a math teacher and coach first. As a math teacher and wrestling coach I have found connections to all my classes with an emphasis on topics discussed in my management, leadership, and finance classes. Before these classes it was easy to spot a good leader when I saw one, but when tasked with explaining what makes a good leader I would falter. Now I have a much better understanding of what it takes to not only lead, but manage a group with different values, goals, and likes, all towards a common goal. Additionally, like stated before, the connections and networking I have created thus far is absolutely priceless.

Through this program I would like to potentially become an athletic director in a collegiate setting. My capstone project, "The Division I NCAA Wrestling Championships including the potential combination of the Dual and Individual Championship Tournaments", aligns very nicely with some of the future decisions I could have to make as an athletic director. As an athletic director I would need to be able to balance what is needed, and what needs to be done in order to see maximum gain by all sports programs I oversee. With wrestling being the focus of my capstone, I shined much light on some shortcomings of not only wrestling, but many other nonrevenue generating sports that are in desperate need of attention at many collegiate institutions. Additionally, the actions taken by the former international wrestling governing body,

in how they took for granted their place in the Olympic rotation, helps keep my own assets and aspirations in check as nothing should be taken for granted.

My ultimate goal through the completion of this program is to work for a professional organization, collegiate front office (beyond an athletic director), or facility. I have made many connections and had several networking opportunities with those in similar professions through the duration of this program. Growing up in the Midwest and living through all the snowstorms and cold weather that comes along with it, I am more than ready to pursue opportunities in the North/South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida area. This area has a plethora of different professional and collegiate sports teams that I will be looking to work within. As stated previously, I am very interested and intrigued by the behind the scenes work that needs to take place in order for an organization, facility, team, etc. to work. I very much enjoy working with others on a common goal and seeing what a group can accomplish when we all work together. My whole life I have been both surrounded and enthralled in the product of all the hard work that people in my desired future position of work do on a daily basis. It is not until I began my study at Concordia that I truly understood all that is needed and done behind the scenes in order for the sports and magnificent events that I love to take place. Throughout my two-years of study at Concordia I never once doubted my decision to further my education and pursue future aspirations through Concordia's great masters program in Sports Management. The connections I made and networking opportunities I have accrued are not to be overlooked or underestimated. All the hard work and assignments I completed in pursuit of this degree from Concordia University worked to build my understanding and knowledge of the sports management world. No assignment was meaningless or Tuesday meeting unimportant or uninformative. I would not trade any of the things I have learned or experienced over this time for the world.

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## **Appendix A**

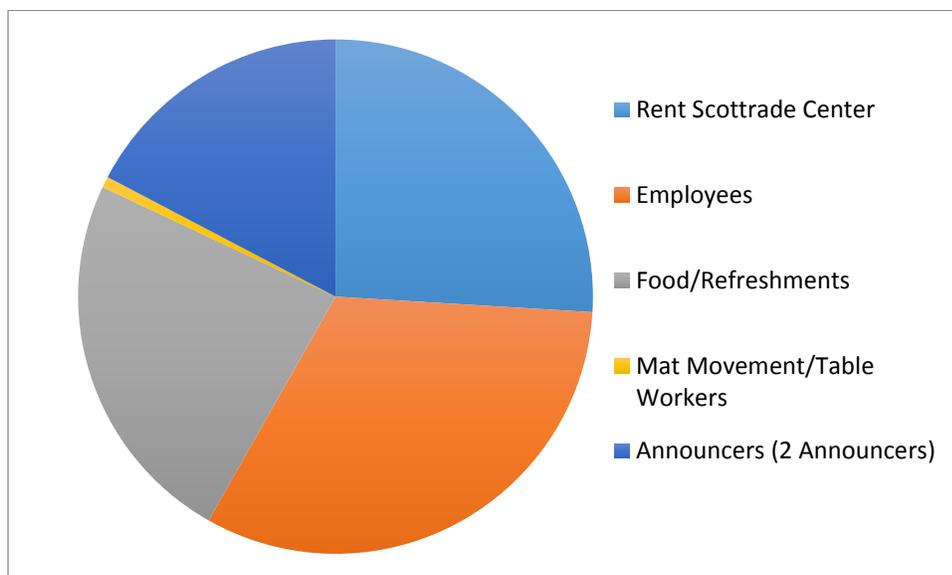
### **Folkstyle Wrestling Description**

“Folkstyle wrestling” is the style used for collegiate and high school wrestling in the United States. It is completely unique to the United States, and only differs from the Olympic styles of Freestyle and Greco-Roman, those competed during the Olympic games, by the way of some additional rules. In all three of these styles, the goal is the same, to pin or place both opponents’ shoulders simultaneously to the mat. For example of differences in rules, in Freestyle wrestling, the Olympic style most similar to Folkstyle, a wrestler make lock their hands in any position in order to attempt to touch their opponent’s back to the mat. Additionally, high profile throws of your opponent are not only allowed, but are encouraged. In Folkstyle, the style used in college and high school, throws are to be “safely executed”, must return opponent safely to the mat, and locking your hands are only allowed while both athletes are on their feet. The rules of Folkstyle are meant to keep both athletes safe, and are more structured than those of Freestyle and Greco-Roman.

## Appendix B

### NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships Expenses

<b>Expenses to Run NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships for 5 days at Scottrade Center in St. Louis, MO</b>			
	<b>Cost/ day</b>	<b>5 days</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
<b>Rent Scottrade Center</b>	300,000	\$1,500,000	<b>25.96 percent</b>
<b>Employees</b>	372,500	\$1,862,500	<b>32.24 percent</b>
<b>Food/Refreshments</b>	275,000	\$1,375,000	<b>23.80 percent</b>
<b>Mat Movement/Table Workers</b>	\$8,000	\$40,000	<b>0.69 percent</b>
<b>Announcers (2 Announcers)</b>	200,000	\$1,000,000	<b>17.31 percent</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,155,500</b>	<b>\$5,777,500</b>	<b>100.00 percent</b>



3,725 Employees at Scottrade Center ( $\$10/\text{hr} * 10 \text{ hours} * 3,725 \text{ employees} = \$372,500 * 5 \text{ days} = \$1,862,500$ )

\*Price to rent out Scottrade Center for 5 days is based on stats from (Gallagher, 2010).

## Appendix C

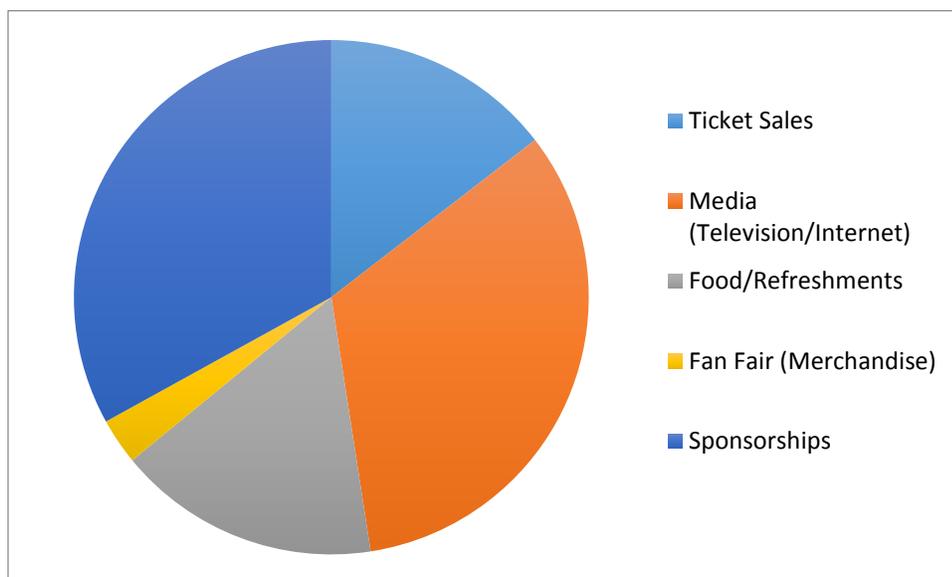
### SWOT Analysis Table for Division I NCAA Wrestling Championship Tournament

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already successful individual tournament to build on</li> <li>• NCAA Wrestling is susceptible and open to change when needed</li> <li>• Strong and loyal established fan following</li> <li>• Change is welcomed by many in order to “Save Olympic Wrestling”</li> <li>• Plenty of experienced volunteers willing to help run a successful tournament</li> <li>• Highest level of NCAA competition available for fans and athletes</li> <li>• The future Olympic wrestlers on display as incentive to attend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former wrestlers willing to make appearances and help draw fans</li> <li>• Olympic wrestling practice between sessions</li> <li>• “Kids Camp” between sessions</li> <li>• High School powerhouse or Olympic exhibition between sessions</li> <li>• Sell signed wrestling memorabilia for more revenue and incentive to attend</li> <li>• Internet and TV streaming of event provides more awareness and ease of access for those that cannot attend</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited legitimate venues and reasonable locations</li> <li>• Time and resource consuming</li> <li>• Risk of injury in “first tournament” leads to weaker product for “second tournament”</li> <li>• No constant layout to current Dual Championship model as of late</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes may result in lowered product because of time and injury risks of extended tournament</li> <li>• Combining tournaments takes away from revenue of multiple championship tournaments in multiple locations; now just one</li> <li>• Fans might get “burnt out” by length, price, location,...</li> </ul>

## Appendix D

### NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships Revenue

<b>Revenue from NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships for 5 days at Scottrade Center in St. Louis, MO</b>			
	<b>Cost/day</b>	<b>5 days</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
<b>Ticket Sales</b>	880,000	\$4,400,000	<b>14.53 percent</b>
<b>Media (Television/Internet)</b>	2,000,000	\$10,000,000	<b>33.03 percent</b>
<b>Food/Refreshments</b>	1,000,000	\$5,000,000	<b>16.51 percent</b>
<b>Fan Fair (Merchandise)</b>	\$176,000	\$880,000	<b>2.91 percent</b>
<b>Sponsorships</b>	\$2,000,000	\$10,000,000	<b>33.03 percent</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,056,000</b>	<b>\$30,280,000</b>	<b>100.00 percent</b>



Revenue of ticket sales based on 22,000-seat capacity of Scottrade Center. Average ticket price of \$200 for all 5 days based on 2015 NCAA Wrestling Championships.

Revenue of Food/Beverage sales based on 4x that of initial purchase price of food and beverage.

Revenue of Media from (“Revenue”, 2013)

Revenue of “Merchandise” based on 4x that of initial purchase price of merchandise.

Revenue for Sponsorship based on (“Revenue”, 2013)

## Appendix E

### Survey Evaluation of Risk

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood (1-5)</b>	<b>Severity (1-5)</b>	<b>Risk (L x S)</b>	<b>Action to Take</b>
Fall down stairs/bleachers	2	3	6	None
Fall over guardrail	1	5	5	Taller guardrail or Plexiglas guard
Drunk fan	3	1	3	None
Underage drinking	1	2	2	Require ID for each purchase
“Illegal” items brought in to facility	2	3	6	“Pat down” in addition to x-ray
Spill leading to fall	1	3	3	More custodial presence
Lost/Stolen possessions	1	2	2	None
First-Aid/Emergency Care	2	2	4	None
Fan altercation	1	3	3	None
Accident in parking lot	1	1	1	None
Alcohol in parking lots	2	1	2	More security in parking lots
Overuse of restrooms	1	1	1	More custodial presence
Fan entering “playing surface”	1	2	2	More security presence during event