

The Training Log: a Road Map to Success

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As a wrestler, a training log can be your road map to success. It can make you confident in your training and prepare you for your competition. “The whole idea is to somehow get an edge. Sometimes it takes just a little extra something to get that edge, but you have to have it”. Don Shula, Former NFL Coach

It’s similar to a personal diary in that the athlete must be consistent, specific; include daily self-assessment of training, attitude, nutritional intake and rest. And record every thing they do that contributes to their game plan for success.

For years sports psychologists have been telling wrestlers to write down their goals. The training log tells us how to obtain these goals. There should be several ingredients within the training log. The wrestler and coach should record wrestling workouts, conditioning, nutritional aspects, and the rest one needs to meet the rigors of strenuous training, and probably one of the most important is to record your attitude.

One of the main purposes of a training log is to evaluate a wrestlers overall performance. When wrestlers begin to evaluate their performance, they will take big strides in focusing on what they need to do to improve their technique. The training log moves wrestlers to the point of analysis. It deepens their commitment to the sport and moves their training forward.

Workouts, diet, rest should be accurately and consistently recorded in the training log. The wrestler should be looking for personal gains and weaknesses. The log not only tells where you are but in what direction you’re headed.

A good training log tells a wrestler and their coach many things like what they’ve done, where they’ve been, where they are, how they felt, how they progressed. What specific factors affected their performance?

According to USAW Wrestling Coach, Mike Hagerty; it is like the old adage, if you have seven hours to cut down a tree, you should spend the first six sharpening the saw. “I have had many wrestlers tell me that they simply don’t have the time to keep up with their log. These wrestlers are the ones that usually need it the most. It truthfully shouldn’t take more than 15-20 minutes per day to maintain your training log. It also keeps in line with the idea of the athlete striving to become his own best coach. When the athlete begins to accept more responsibility in his training, he usually begins to experience more and more success. The training log is one powerful tool which will assist wrestlers in becoming their own best coach.”

The training log is like any other tool if you don’t use it properly it’s not going to help. You have to be committed and accountable for your own training log.

Kerry McCoy, Olympian, World Cup Champion, US Open National Champion and NCAA Champion states, “ Training Logs have and always will be very important to me. I believe that using logs allow you to keep track of things that you normally may forget. I was always very strict and disciplined when it came to my training, but in the earlier years I relied on my coached to tell me what to do. As I got older and became more self-reliant it was important for me to have a way to train the way I needed to. This is when I began keeping logs with out really even knowing what I was doing.

I started to write down daily, weekly, monthly, yearly goals. On every step of the way I would keep track

of what I was doing and how often. Every few days I would look back and see how I was progressing. Sometimes I would look back and see that I had not worked on something for a while and I would put that into my next few workouts. At the time I did not realize that these were the beginnings to training logs. Through time I got more organized and more focused on using my logs not only to review what I was working on or learning, but to also plan for peak performance.

I began setting time periods for training. Depending on when my competition was. I would count back the days and plan my training accordingly. Including rest periods, days off, light days and hard days. It was the best way to keep track and stick to a plan. I would keep track of my wrestling, conditioning, lifting and recovery. So when I looked back I knew what I had already done and I could look ahead to see what was coming up. This made it easy to make adjustment if unforeseen things popped up and also help with the confidence of knowing that I was doing what I needed to be doing”.

Olympic, World Champion and now National Coach for USA Wrestling, Kevin Jackson says “The training log is important for the wrestler because it monitors the body and monitors every aspect of training and identifies the things to be aware of. The training log can monitor the wrestler’s rest and technique. It adds a little bit extra to your training, it gives you the edge that you’re looking for”.

A Coach may use a master log or plan to monitor and evaluate the whole teams performance it may not be as sophisticated as one’s individual log but could serve the same purpose, it can tell the coach what the team has done, where they have been, where they are, how they felt how their progress is going. The coach can look back on his team log from month to month and year-to-year to prepare his team to peak at the right times.

Personal progression is what athletes strive for everyday. A training log must contain realistic goals. A training log should be designed to fit a wrestler’s needs. Both positive and negatives should be recorded. Some of the items that may be included in a training log: 1) What I achieved today. How many matches did I wrestle in practice today? What skills did I drill? What new technique did I learn, and how long did the workout last? 2) What other auxiliary training did I do to enhance my wrestling? Sprints? Run? Weight Train? Callisthenic? Etc.? 3) Conditions, did I have good workout partners, was the workout room hot, cold? 4) Are you logging honest information? Are you logging every day? 5) What are you working towards? Technique? Conditioning? Situation? 6) How much did you do? And how hard did you go? 7) It is very important that you express how you felt during the wrestling session. Energized? Tired? Weak? Strong? Started Strong but Faded in the end? Is something outside of the wrestling room affecting your attitude?

Other parts of training log should consist of diet. What I had for breakfast a snack before the workout? How I felt during the workout with what I had to eat?

Tim Vanni, 2 X Olympian, 10 X World Team member, kept his diet log taped on his fridge in his apartment in Phoenix, AZ. while training with the Sunkist Kids. Tim started this procedure about a year in advance. He would write down every time he opened the door. He monitored his water intake or fluids as well as meals and snacks. By doing this, Tim made the 105.5 weight class at the Olympics.

One of the last, but very important parts of training log is to write down your rest. How many hours of sleep did you get? Was it a restless sleep, did you toss and turn? Did you get in a power nap during the day?

The bottom line is that a training logs purpose is to evaluate your overall performance. This is accomplished by consistent, specific, daily self-assessments of training, attitude, nutrition and rest. It is your rode map to success.