

South Jersey Wrestling Association (SJWA) Presents:
2006 NJ Open Wrestling Championships
February 18th-19th, 2006
Wildwoods Convention Center, Wildwood NJ
*****NJ Residents Only Grades K-8th*****

Background: For many years the SJWA State Championship tournament series has been regarded as one of the toughest and best run tournaments in NJ. Often known as the South Jersey States, the SJWA State Championship has drawn wrestlers from every part of NJ, and represented a second state championship opportunity for NJ wrestlers in addition to the USAWNJ Kids State Championship tournament series.

The SJWA State Championship has always been run with a unique format that results in incredibly tough competition in both the preliminary and finals phase.

Qualifier Phase - only 2 qualifier tournaments are run as compared to USAW States. The qualifier brackets are typically large and packed with talent! The top 4 placewinners of each qualifier advance to the finals phase to form 8 man brackets. The qualifiers are single elimination up to the semi-finals which makes them difficult to advance through. There are rarely, if ever, easy advancements!

Finals Phase - only 8 kids make it to the Finals at the SJWA State Championship, but they are usually the same class of wrestlers that end up placing top 8 in the USAW State Championship Tournament later in the season. The most unique aspect of the SJWA State Championship Final has always been its unique format: TRUE double elimination with wrestlebacks to 1st place! This format guarantees that the best wrestler on finals day is the winner of the event, plain and simple. You can literally lose in the first round, wrestle back through the consolation bracket, beat the loser of the first "final", beat the winner of the first final match, and then beat the same opponent a second time to win the championship! When the brackets are created for the 8 man finals, there is no seeding. Placement in the bracket is strictly based on where you placed in the two qualifier tournaments - i.e. winner of qualifier #1 faces 4th place from qualifier #2, etc.

A New Opportunity: Despite our best efforts to change the perception of this event to a true, alternative state championship tournament, for many NJ wrestlers this has always been thought of as the South Jersey States - an excellent tournament but not on par with a true state championship. Last year we even moved a qualifier tournament to northern NJ in Kenilworth to make it more accessible to North Jersey wrestlers. The plan worked, to a point, but it is time to make some radical changes to elevate this tournament to the next level!

In the spring of 2004 the SJWA took a big gamble by creating a brand new National Open tournament (The War at the South Jersey Shore) and running it at the fantastic Wildwood Convention Center. This ambitious project, with 5 youth divisions and a High School division drew over 900 wrestlers from 10 states in its first year, and expanded to over 1200 wrestler from 14 states in the 2005 edition. In 2 years it has become a true national event right in our own NJ "backyard". All who have battled at the War agree that the competition is awesome and the venue simply blows people away! Building on the success of the War, the SJWA has expanded its Wildwood tournament offerings to include a National Middle School Dual tournament in 2005, which will expand in 2006 to include new elementary and HS divisions.

It is time to reinvent the SJWA State Championship tournament by modifying the format and bringing it to a larger, brighter future in Wildwood in 2006 and beyond.

Announcing the 2006 NJ Open Wrestling Championship: The concept behind the NJ Open Championship is simple. We will combine the SJWA State Championship Qualifiers and Finals into a SINGLE event held over one weekend in Wildwood. **This event is open to NJ residents ONLY, Grades K-8th!** Our unique format for the SJWA 8 man Finals, with true double elimination wrestlebacks to 1st place will be preserved, making this perhaps the toughest weekend of wrestling available in NJ. There will be no doubt that the winner of the NJ Open is a true state champion when the wrestling completes on Sunday! The 2006 NJ Open Championship will be held on February 18th and 19th 2006 in Wildwood at the Convention Center, which happens to be the weekend right after our 2006 National Challenge Duals event at the same venue. Mid February will be an exciting time for wrestling in NJ in 2006.

How it Works: The 2006 NJ Open will be very simple to understand. ANY K-8th NJ wrestler can enter the tournament. Divisions and weight classes are listed on the SJWA website (www.sjwrestling.com) along with a registration form. A new "Tot" division (Madison format) has also been added to keep the "little ones" occupied during the open! Weigh-ins will take place on Friday night February 17th in Wildwood and walk-ins will be accepted as well. We want this to be a truly "OPEN" tournament. Instead of multiple qualifier and advancement fees there will be a single 30.00 entry fee for the NJ Open for Bantam – Intermediate, and \$20.00 for Tots.

The NJ Open will run in two phases - a preliminary tournament that pares each division down to 8 wrestlers, and a finals phase that exactly matches the present day 8 man wrestle back to 1st SJWA State Championship format. It is in effect a SINGLE entry fee for TWO tournaments in one weekend!

Once registration and weigh-ins are complete, we will do bracketing for the preliminary phase of the NJ Open. **The preliminary phase will seed wrestlers who placed in the 2005 SJWA State Championship tournament (1st-4th) and also use placement at the 2005 USAWNJ Kids State Championship (1st-8th) as a secondary seeding criteria.** For all others there will be a blind draw, with separation by town/team/club. We anticipate mostly 16 and 32 man brackets for the preliminary phase and it will be wrestled as a full tournament with double elimination down to 8 finalists. On Saturday night we will re-bracket the 8 finalists from each group into our existing 8 man full wrestleback finals format. On Sunday the 8 finalists will go at it again in the final phase. The top 6 place finishers will receive awards, and a new NJ Open State Champion will be crowned and presented with a truly special "State Champion" award.

This format readily accommodates one (or even two) "bad matches" or "bad calls"! There will be no excuses at the NJ Open. It is possible to lose a match in the preliminary phase, still qualify for the final 8 championship phase, lose another match in the final phase, and still beat an undefeated wrestler TWICE to win the title. Every match counts as a step towards the title, and anyone can come out on top if they put together two great days of wrestling!

The SJWA is truly excited to bring another premiere event to NJ wrestlers in Wildwood in 2006. Don't miss your chance to be part of this groundbreaking event! See you all in Wildwood in February, and hopefully again on April 13th-15th 2006 for the third annual War at the Shore National Championships.

Additional Bonus: The SJWA and USA Wrestling NJ (USAWNJ) have also increased their cooperation on events for the 2005-2006 Season. The SJWA will be sponsoring a new NJ "Triple Crown" prize. It's very simple – if you compete and win your bracket at the 2006 NJ Open, 2006 USAWNJ Kids State Championship, and the 2006 War at the Shore – you'll be given extra recognition for this incredible accomplishment. Anyone who can lock down winning performances at 2 NJ State championship tournaments and a premier national event in the same season deserves a special award for an outstanding accomplishment. Details will be available on the SJWA website at www.sjwrestling.com soon.

The SJWA has also worked out a National "Triple Crown" for 2006, with several other major national tournament organizers. This series will include the 2006 War at the Shore, the 2006 Ohio Tournament of Champions, and a brand new national caliber event to be run in April by the folks that bring you the Lock Haven Fall national tournament each year! This triple crown, sponsored by all three organizing bodies, will present a true lifetime keepsake award commemorating the accomplishment of any wrestler who wins all three national events this year. Again, details will be posted on the SJWA website at www.sjwrestling.com soon.

It's going to be a great 2006 season of wrestling in NJ. Best of luck for a safe and successful season for all NJ wrestlers!

The South Jersey Wrestling Association