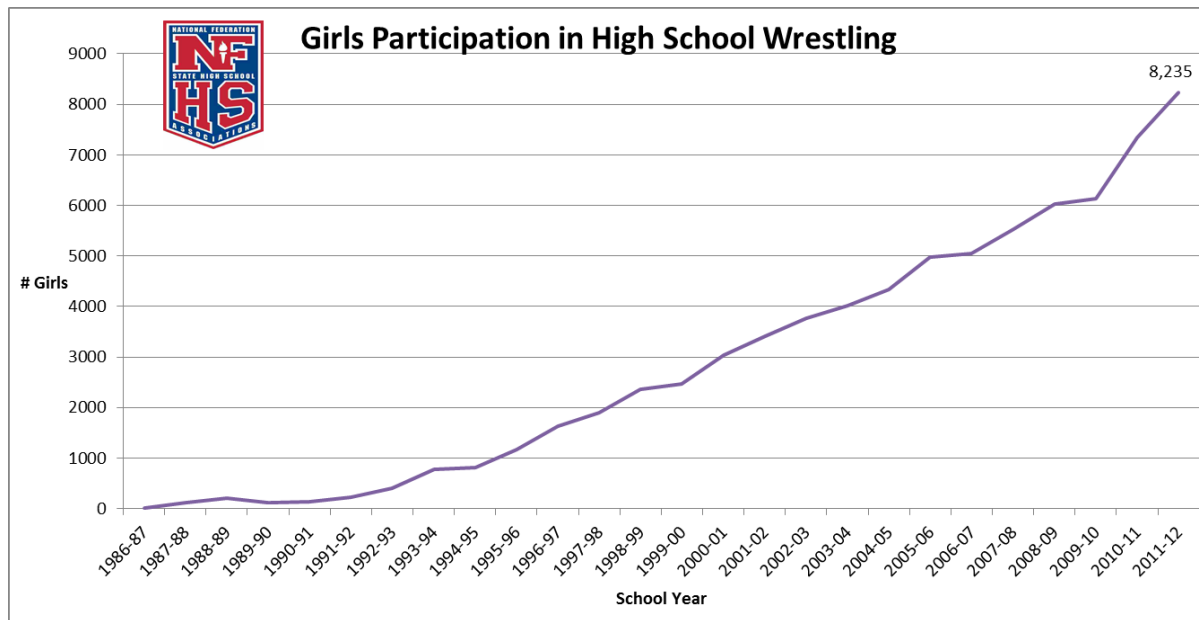


THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S WRESTLING

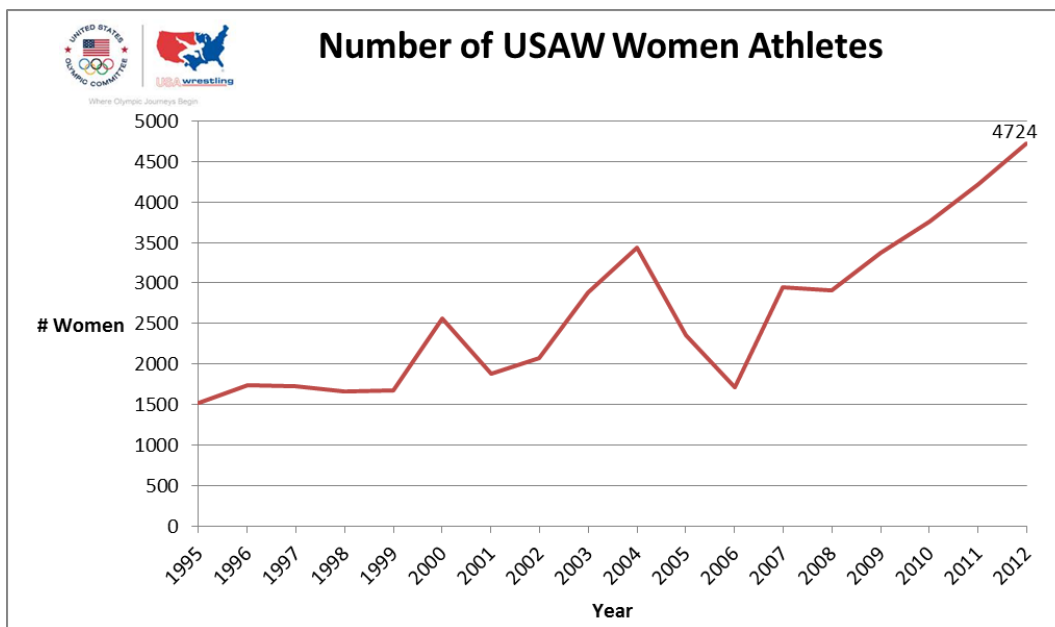
Report prepared by Dr. David Curby (USA)-FILA Scientific Department

In the overall history of wrestling, the development of women's wrestling has been dramatic. In roughly one generation, we have come from having the novelty of seeing a very few young girls competing in age-group or high school events, to women competing for Olympic medals. During this same time there have been changes in the views of the scientific and medical fields regarding women and their athletic capabilities. It was only in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games that women were allowed to run in events longer than 1,500 meters, with the addition of the 3,000 meters and the marathon. With the growth of women's sports, we are finding that there are more similarities in sports training and performance of men and women, than there are differences.

Participation data from the National Federation of High School Associations list the first girls in their survey results for the 1979-80 school year.

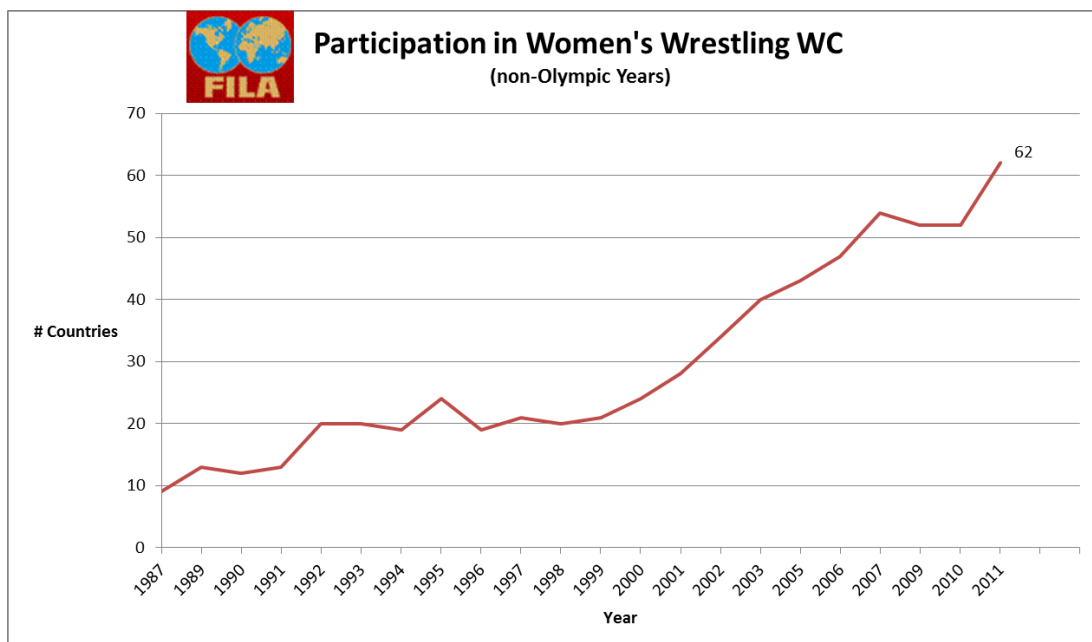


These numbers have steadily grown to over 8,000 for the 2011-12 school year and accounts for 3% of the 280,000 total participants.



Data from USA Wrestling shows a similar pattern. Membership totals, separated by gender, are available beginning in 1995, and lists 1,525 girls and women. This had grown to 4,724 in 2012. California, Washington, Kansas and Texas have the most female competitors.

Internationally, the roots of women's wrestling are in France. Following the establishment of female wrestling clubs and hosting a first national championship in 1973, female wrestling was adopted by the French Wrestling Federation in 1977. They led the lobbying to establish women's wrestling within FILA, the international governing body of wrestling, which was accomplished in 1982. The first world championships were held in 1987, with France the team champions. While the USA was represented with competitors since this first world championship, USA Wrestling did not hold their first national championships for women until 1990. The USA won the world team championship in 1999.



In 2004 at the Athens Olympics women's wrestling made its debut, and we were all proud to watch Patricia Miranda and Sara McMann win the first Olympic medals for the USA in women's wrestling.

In the USA, the development of female wrestlers is associated with boy's programs. Because of this, there is competition between the sexes, and the concerns for safety and equity, not to mention social, psychological and cultural issues. This is not always the case in other countries. I was in Beijing in 2006 at a regional sports school for students between the ages of 17-22. There was a training hall with 75 boys and coaches, and next to this gym was another with 75 girls and coaches training their freestyle.

Women's wrestling has already added greatly to the history of our sport. Saori Yosida of Japan is among the all-time icons of wrestling, having won three Olympic titles. We are seeing a great emergence of participants in countries of South American and Africa without a great heritage in international wrestling.

When looking at the number of National Olympic Committees sending participants to the last Olympic Games in London, one sees similar representation among the three styles

Freestyle - 42

Greco-Roman - 44

Women's Freestyle - 43 (with 11 countries winning medals)

The emergence of women's wrestling in South America is demonstrated by the two bronze medals earned by Renteria of Colombia. Another noteworthy achievement was Ifeoma Iheanacho of Nigeria winning a bronze medal in Women's Freestyle in 2010 in Moscow. The 2012 World Championships for Women included 2 medalists from India, signaling a welcome resurgence of wrestling in this country with such a vast population.

Freestyle wrestler Annabelle Ali of Cameroon was the nation's first woman flag bearer at the opening ceremony. Two other women wrestlers given this extraordinary honor: Maria McQueen Dunn of Guam (women's wrestling 63 kg) and Saori Yoshida of Japan (women's freestyle 55 kg).

The continued growth of women's wrestling faces some challenges. In the US, we have to find a way to create more opportunities for women to wrestle women during the scholastic years. World-wide, there are over 100 countries with women's programs, but some of the most fundamentalist Islamic countries (Iran and Saudi Arabia) do not allow international competition. In 2005, while at an international tournament in Morocco, I spoke to the women wrestlers. These Muslim women said that their society sees no conflict between sport participation and their religion. They train with the men, and they often wrestle with the men. When asked when they foresee women from Iran and Saudi Arabia in tournaments, they all answered, "Never!" I think it will be sooner.