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WRESTLING

## THE NATURE OF WRESTLING, COMMUNICATION, AND MASKING TRUE INTENT

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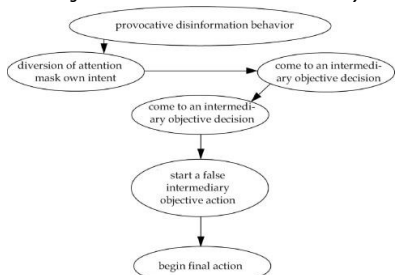
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Taking into consideration the characteristics of modern wrestling, it is scientific and reasonable, and justifiable from a mechanics perspective, to compare modern wrestling characteristics and styles amongst various nations. *Wrestlers regard the human body as an object, and always study center of gravity, balance maintenance, and various defensive strategies in different situations.* The wrestler compares his own balance stability (which obviously becomes more stable as the center of gravity is lowered) with that of his opponent's. The changes in the opponent's balance stability are studied throughout the match. A wrestler must carefully study how he can prepare to execute his hold while continuously maintaining balance stability. *"Stand with your legs a little more than shoulder width apart and place your body weight a little to the front."* This is the first advice given to any beginning wrestler. (It is interesting to note that all beginning handball and basketball players receive the same instructions).

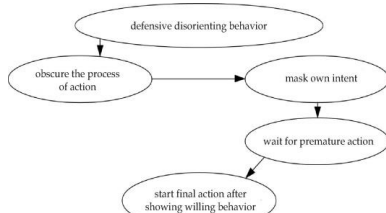
A wrestler must carefully study how he can unbalance his opponent through the execution of holds, maneuvers, and fake and real attacks. Therefore, masking true intent and providing the opponent with false information is a basic requirement of this sport. Taking an opponent to the ground who is preoccupied with countering the forces aimed at upsetting his balance is an achievable task. Wrestling is the sport where strength and technique are divided rationally, and people of every type, build, and personality can choose the style of combat best suited to them. This style can be practiced and implemented during their career, while keeping abreast of regulations.\* In freestyle wrestling, the applied fighting technique is always accompanied by speed. The more one studies the holds and techniques of wrestling, the easier it is to see that rhythm, speed, and coordination are all very important in this sport. The most prominent changes in rules occurred after the Olympics in Barcelona, which stated that judges could make an unlimited number of passivity calls, providing an advantage to one of the wrestlers vis-a-vis his opponent, by having the wrestler deemed passive continue in a kneeling position. With this ruling, the "par terre" position became very important in wrestling up until 2005, when it lost its significance due to another amendment.

In wrestling, there are fighting situations which occur suddenly, and with which the wrestler is not familiar, and are hard to manage in a short time period. The challenges, provocations, and resolution methods demanding mental and motor reactions presume a very results-oriented response from the competitor, which is basically founded on the input, output, and processing of information. In situations that are unclear and unfamiliar to the wrestler, results can only be obtained through the correct assessment of information and the development of the proper solution. Successful answers can only be the result of fortunate accidents, even in the simplest situations, if the received information (the space, time, and dynamic parameters of the movement) is not taken into account. It follows that tactical decisions and solutions to situations produced without the proper background information will necessarily be unfeasible.

*It is in the wrestler's best interests to build up and use communication with his opponent; otherwise he would be incapable of hiding his intent from the opponent.* Practice has taught us that a single wrong counter is irreversible. However, a correct, adaptive reaction can only be attained through the channeling of information and the control of its processing. It cannot be questioned whether, as a result of the mental and motor struggle fought on the level of communication, the tactical actions of wrestlers can be forever taken to higher levels. Competitors who are better prepared and who have a wider repertoire of mental and motor behavior patterns will be able to recognize the proper reactions in a higher number of cases, including more difficult situations, than their counterparts with less training and experience. The motor component of the solution to tactical problems is not limited to the execution of the mental content, but is also manifest as an instrument of communication. Movement is also a source of information. We communicate with our opponent through our movements, especially about what we intend to do or what we want to hide (or are capable of hiding). In wrestling, besides visual information, information received through contact (touch, pain) also affects our problem-solving abilities. This realization gives us the opportunity to use or misuse the ways and means of expressing movements, thus suggesting a behavior pattern to our opponent that is both believable and result-predictive, even though its content is misleading for the opponent. These movements have roles and goals that are definable. They give a false picture of our behavior, mislead the opponent, and if successful, neutralize the opponent's ability to deflect the forces and movements that aim to unbalance him. Contestants who are misled, misinformed, or disturbed in their train of thought generally abandon their own conceptual framework and give up their position, putting themselves at the mercy of their opponent who implements his tactical idea, putting himself at the mercy of the opponent whose tactical strategy runs contrary to his own interests. *Motor actions aimed at misleading, masking, or obscuring are an important element of the best wrestlers' repertoires, since without these, "open intent" actions would become obvious. However, misleading actions that have several outcomes always contain surprises or ulterior motives, consequently hiding the tactical goal.*



**MASKING TRUE INTENT IN ATTACKS** Another method of making it impossible for the opponent to take necessary action is to subdivide the various possibilities of the final outcome of the misleading intermediary objective decisions (strategy used by the Saitiev brothers) The competing wrestler, through provoking and disorienting his opponent, takes an active part in forming a situation that is beneficial for him, and controls both the resolution methods included in his own game plan and the physical patterns serving them. Thus, he adequately hinders his opponent's ability to anticipate correctly. If forced to take a defensive stance, top wrestlers are able to act accordingly. They strive to remain active in both motor and mental performance, and once again resume provocative action. Competitors forced on the defensive generally use one of two ways to break out of their defensive situation. One option is to watch, assess, draw conclusions, and when making the right decision, act quickly. The other option is to wait patiently until the opponent makes a mistake and then build upon the failure of that particular intermediary or final objective decision. With their exaggerated movements, the attacker creates a trap for their opponents in which the opponent is misled; all the while the attacker already has a counterattack ready. The mental effort applied in order to unfold the tactical responses spontaneously stemming from them, the intermediary and final objective decisions deriving from them, and the adequate motor responses related to them, have a great effect on the competitor's performance. (Everything is decided in the mind!)



This opportunity or behavior pattern must be learned to be used properly. Providing disinformation to the opponent through movements has to be learned, which means remembering and studying the necessary methods. Even young children who are learning the basics of wrestling can learn a wide variety of misleading actions. This is not a question of talent. (A small child, drunk with the happiness of victory, comes off the mat and happily tells his coach, "Mr. Tibi, I pulled the wool over his eyes!") Study, practice, and training are all necessary, and all must be conducted under real-life situations. The earlier a student is taught disinformation tactics, the sooner he will taste the success of misleading the opponent.



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