



AAWA New Wrestling Club Guide

Introduction

Clubs are a vital part of wrestling in Alberta. They can range from grassroots focused, to high-performance clubs centered on attending high level events and creating a pathway and opportunities for athletes to wrestle at the international level, or anything in between. Ultimately, it is up to each club to decide what their mission is.

As part of the AAWA there are certain standards and criteria clubs must meet. This guide sets out to help clubs understand and give them the tools for success.

Getting Started

Before you can get a club up and running there are a few key questions you will want to answer:

- What age group will the club work with? (youth, high school, adult, or all ages)
- Is the club focused on high-performance, grassroots and introductory wrestling or both?
- Are you interested in becoming a not-for-profit and registering as an [Alberta Society](#)?
- When is the club active in the year- year-round, school year, October-March, Summer for beach wrestling?
- What is the name of the club?

A strong club starts with a strong team. You don't need to do everything yourself, find people who share your passion for the sport.

Important roles to consider when creating a club:

- Club President — overall vision, administration, and legal responsibilities
- Head Coach — NCCP trained/certified, practice planning, athlete development, and safe sport compliance
- Treasurer — budgeting, dues collection, and expense tracking (required for nonprofit registration)

Once you have the mission of the club set and a leadership group committed you can start putting the logistics in place.

Forming the Club

Depending on whether you have chosen to register as a society there are different steps in getting registered.

1. Draft a set bylaw and create and approve policies. The AAWA has policies clubs can use.
2. Affiliate with [Alberta Amateur Wrestling](#) to access sanctioned events and insurance
3. Open a dedicated club bank account and name 2 signing authorities
4. If becoming a society, start completing all the required steps as outlined by [Alberta Societies How To Guide](#)

Insurance

AAWA affiliated clubs automatically receive access to the sport insurance program. This covers general liability and sport accident for sanctioned events and registered members.

If you own any equipment you may want to consider property insurance.

Clubs are strongly encouraged to purchase Directors and Officers (D&O) insurance. This can be done through the AAWA broker.

Training Facility

Finding the right space is one of the most important early challenges for Alberta clubs. Prioritize safety, year-round accessibility, and affordability.

Ideal Facility Requirements

- Minimum 40x40 ft open floor space (a full competition mat is 9m x 9m; 8m x 8m minimum for practice)
- Adequate ceiling height — at least 3.5m (12 ft) for safe throws and takedowns
- Heated space accessible year-round
- Good ventilation and accessible washrooms and change rooms
- Nearby parking and ideally accessible by public transit

Common Venue Options

- School gymnasiums — contact the principal or school board's community use of schools office; many provinces have subsidized after-hours access programs
- Municipal recreation centres — often have existing mat storage and multi-purpose gym space; contact your municipality's recreation department
- Universities and colleges — varsity wrestling programs may sublease mat space off-hours

- MMA and martial arts gyms — increasingly common partners for wrestling clubs, especially in smaller cities

Certificate of Insurance

Many facilities will require proof of insurance, usually \$2 million minimum. The AAWA can provide affiliated clubs with a Certificate of Insurance (\$5 million). The request form can be found at [here](#) and be submitted to <mailto:info@aawa.ca>

Equipment

Safety equipment is non-negotiable. Budget constraints mean many clubs start lean, that's okay. Start with the essentials and expand as membership grows.

Item	Priority	Est. Cost
Wrestling mats	Essential	\$3,000–\$15,000+
Singlets / practice shorts	Recommended	\$40–\$100 per athlete
First aid kit & AED	Essential	\$150–\$2,000
Mat tape and boundary markers	Useful	\$30–\$80

Tip: Once a club is registered as a society they are eligible for grants programs which may help with some costs, <https://www.alberta.ca/sport-physical-activity-and-recreation-grant-programs>.

For WCL-sanctioned competitions, mats must meet United World Wrestling (UWW) specifications. For practice, any quality wrestling mat will do. Many clubs begin with used mats purchased from schools or other clubs.

Safe Sport

Safe sport is a legal and ethical requirement for all AAWA-affiliated clubs. The Alberta Universal Code of Conduct (ABSSCM) applies to all provincial sport organizations and their affiliates.

Mandatory Safe Sport Requirements

- ✓ Adopt the [ABSSCM](#) as your club's foundational conduct framework
- ✓ Designate a Safe Sport Officer or contact within your club
- ✓ Have a volunteer screening and disclosure policy- including that all coaches, volunteers, and officials complete criminal record checks and vulnerable sector screenings
- ✓ Ensure all coaches complete the [Responsible Coaching Movement \(RCM\)](#) requirements
- ✓ Post a Safe Sport policy and complaint process visibly at your facility and on your website

- ✓ Establish a clear process for dealing with all discipline and complaints which fall outside of the ABSSCM.

Coaching Certification

Wrestling Canada Lutte and the AAWA use the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP). All coaches working with athletes must meet the following requirements:

- ✓ Complete NCCP Wrestling — Community Sport (minimum for new coaches working with beginners)
- ✓ Complete NCCP Wrestling — Competition Introduction for coaches leading competitive athletes
- ✓ Pass a criminal record check and vulnerable sector check through your local police service
- ✓ Safe Sport- (4-year renewal)
- ✓ Making Headway- (4-year renewal)
- ✓ Understanding the Rule of Two
- ✓ Emergency Action Planning
- ✓ Make Ethical Decisions (3-year renewal)

Practices must have someone with a current Standard First Aid certification and an Emergency Action Plan posted.

More information regarding coaching standards and minimum requirements can be found in the [AAWA Coach Requirement Policy](#).

Budget & Membership Fees

Financial sustainability is critical in the Alberta amateur sport landscape. Build a realistic budget before you open registration and explore funding sources available to sport clubs. From the budget you will be able to set membership fees.

Common Club Expenses

- Facility rental — often the largest ongoing cost; budget \$50–\$200+ per session depending on location
- Equipment purchases and maintenance
- Additional insurance programs
- NCCP coaching course fees (if applicable)
- Coach Honourariums (if applicable)
- Administrative costs (website, Stripe/payment processing, accounting software)
- GST for clubs whose revenue exceeds \$30,000.

Possible Funding Sources

- [KidSport Alberta](#)— subsidizes registration fees for children from low-income families; affiliate your club to accept KidSport vouchers
- [Canadian Tire Jumpstart](#) — equipment and registration support for youth athletes in need
- Municipal recreation grants — contact your city or town's recreation department
- Local business sponsorships — approach businesses with ties to health, fitness, or youth development

Recruit Members & Promote Your Club

Your first wave of members will define your club's culture. Start local and build momentum through community connections.

Where to Recruit

- Schools — distribute flyers, speak at assemblies, connect with PE teachers and guidance counsellors
- Social media — Facebook community groups, Instagram, and TikTok are highly effective; local Facebook Buy & Sell groups often have pinned sport listings
- Municipal recreation centre bulletin boards and program guides
- Local MMA gyms and martial arts schools — many parents look for grappling-based alternatives
- Indigenous community organizations — some provinces have sport development partnerships
- Word of mouth — your strongest tool in the community

Hosting a Launch Try-It Program

A free open mat or introductory session is one of the best ways to attract new members. Offer a no-commitment trial class, have coaches demonstrate technique, and ensure the environment feels welcoming to complete beginners. Promote it through local Facebook groups, schools, and your municipal recreation centre.

Connect with the AAWA to see if there is any funding or curriculum available.

Wrestling Season Calendar

Period	Activity
August-September	Club registration opens; preseason conditioning begins
October-December	Early competitive season; local and regional tournaments
January-March	Peak competitive season; provincial championships
March-April	National qualifiers; Canada Games trials (in cycle years)
May-August	Off-season camps; international freestyle/Greco season

Immediate Next Steps Checklist

1. Write your club mission statement and define your target membership
2. Recruit at least one NCCP-certified or in-progress head coach
3. Identify 3 potential training venues and arrange site visits
4. Contact your AAWA to begin affiliation
5. Draft your club constitution, bylaws, and Safe Sport policy
6. Open a dedicated club bank account
7. Apply to KidSport and Jumpstart to support low-income athletes
8. Create social media profiles and a simple website or Google Site
9. Set a date for your first open mat or free introductory session

Starting a wrestling club is one of the most rewarding things you can do for your community. Wrestling builds character, resilience, and discipline — and Alberta's sport system provides real pathways from your local gym floor all the way to the Olympic podium. Take it one step at a time, lean on Wrestling Canada Lutte and your provincial association, and build a culture you're proud of.

Good luck — and good wrestling!