

[NCAA Data Updated 2025-26]

[House v. NCAA Framework]

[High School Action Plan]

THE WRESTLER'S BLUEPRINT FOR CAREER & SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESS

A tactical guide to navigating the new NCAA scholarship math and leveraging early professional experience.



Athletic talent is a massive advantage, but it is not a complete financial strategy

THE OUTDATED PLAYBOOK

Mat Wins

Full Ride

Success



THE REALITY CHECK

For **90%+** of high school wrestlers, athletic money is a **discount**, not a **full paycheck**.

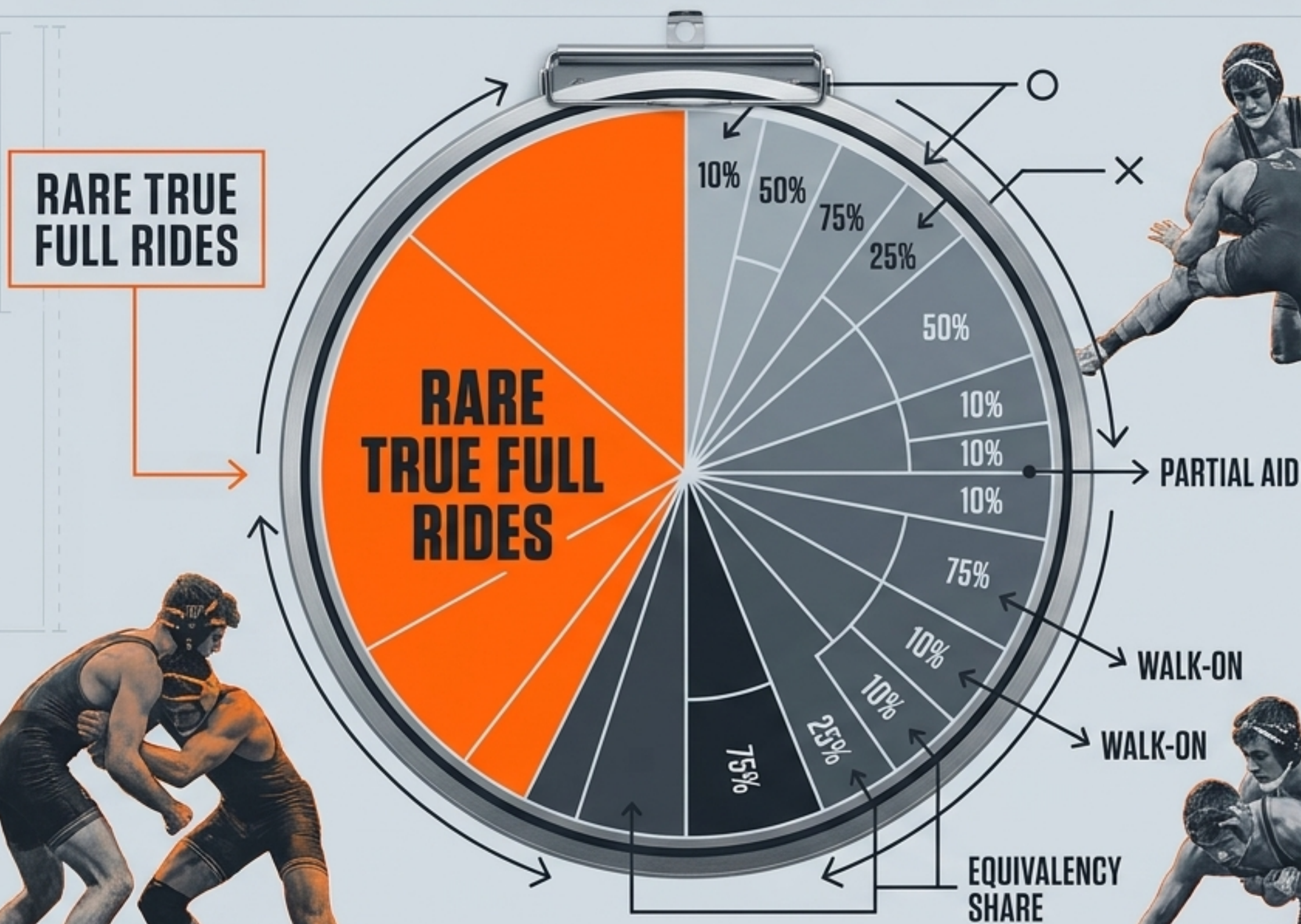


Only ~3% of high school wrestlers advance to any NCAA level.
Under 1% reach Division I.

THE 2025–26 SCHOLARSHIP REALITY MATRIX

DIVISION	MAX LIMIT	AID STRUCTURE	THE REALISTIC EXPECTATION
NCAA D1	30 Roster Limit (Post-House Settlement)	Full or Partial	Expect partials . The 30 cap is a ceiling , but athletic budgets still dictate reality.
NCAA D2	9 Equivalency Limit	Partial	Budgets are strictly divided across large rosters.
NCAA D3	0 Athletic Scholarships	Academic/Need-Based Only	Athletic talent helps admissions, but academic merit pays the bill.
NAIA	~8–10 Equivalency	Partial	Distributed across the roster.
NJCAA	Up to 20 Equivalency	Varies by Program	Best for early development, funding varies heavily.
Women's Emerging	Up to 10 Equivalency	Partial	Expanding rapidly, but equivalency rules still apply.

DIVISION I'S 30-MAN ROSTER LIMIT DOES NOT EQUAL 30 FULL RIDES



Wrestling **remains an equivalency sport.** Coaches are given a finite budget to stretch across an entire roster.

Even if a program opts into the maximum 30 spots under the new framework, **the vast majority of athletes will receive partial aid—or walk on.**

If athletic aid is only a partial discount, how do you pay the rest of the bill?

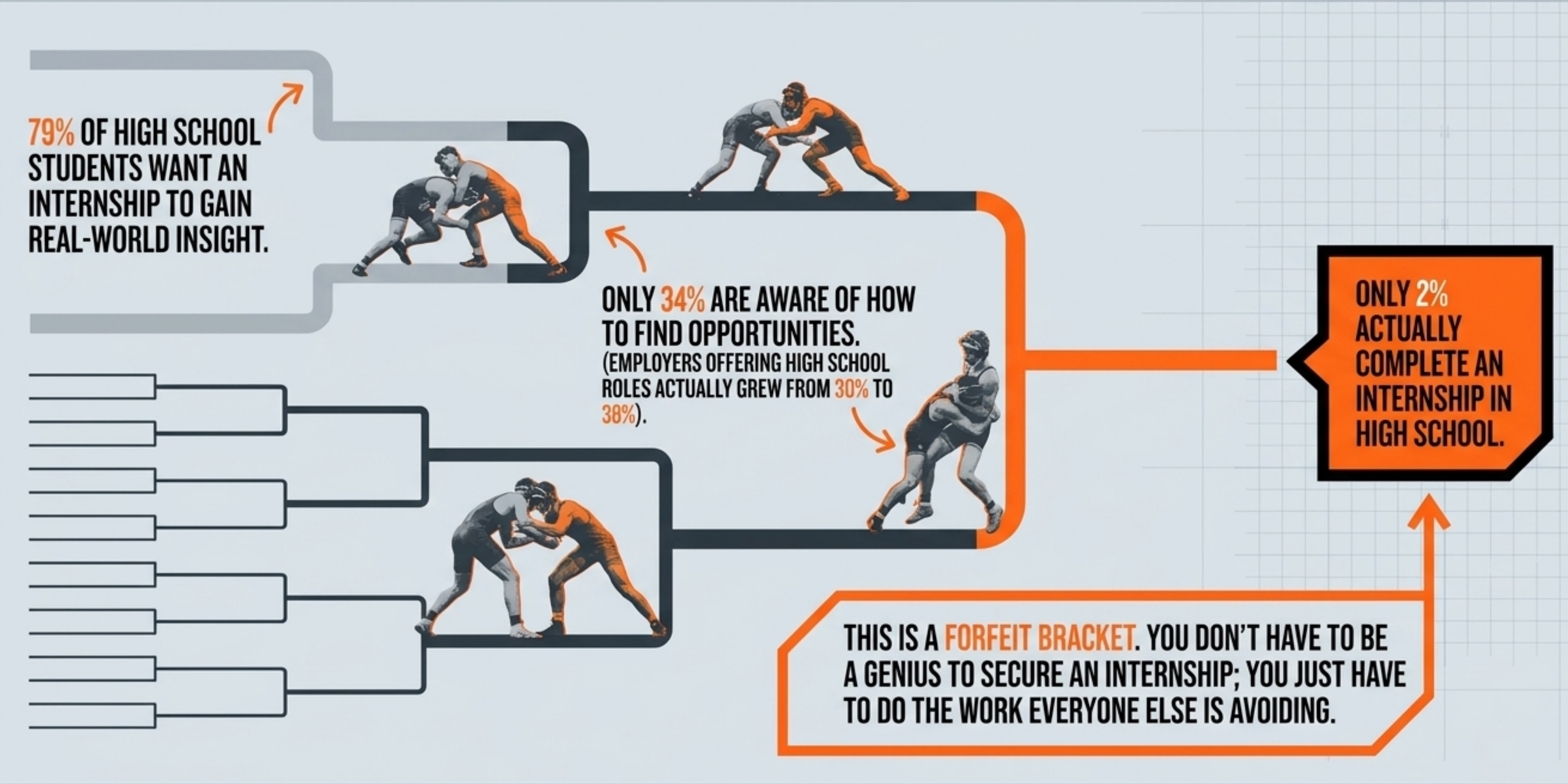
The diagram features a large rectangular frame with a grey border and an orange border. At the top, a horizontal bar with a grey cap and an orange body is shown. Inside the frame, the equation
$$\left[\begin{array}{c} \text{Tuition \& Living} \\ \text{Expenses} \end{array} \right] - \left[\begin{array}{c} \text{Partial} \\ \text{Athletic} \\ \text{Aid} \end{array} \right] = \left[\begin{array}{c} \text{The Financial} \\ \text{Gap} \end{array} \right]$$
 is displayed. The terms are enclosed in square brackets. An orange line connects the 'The Financial Gap' bracket to a box below.

Tuition & Living Expenses — **Partial Athletic Aid** = **The Financial Gap**

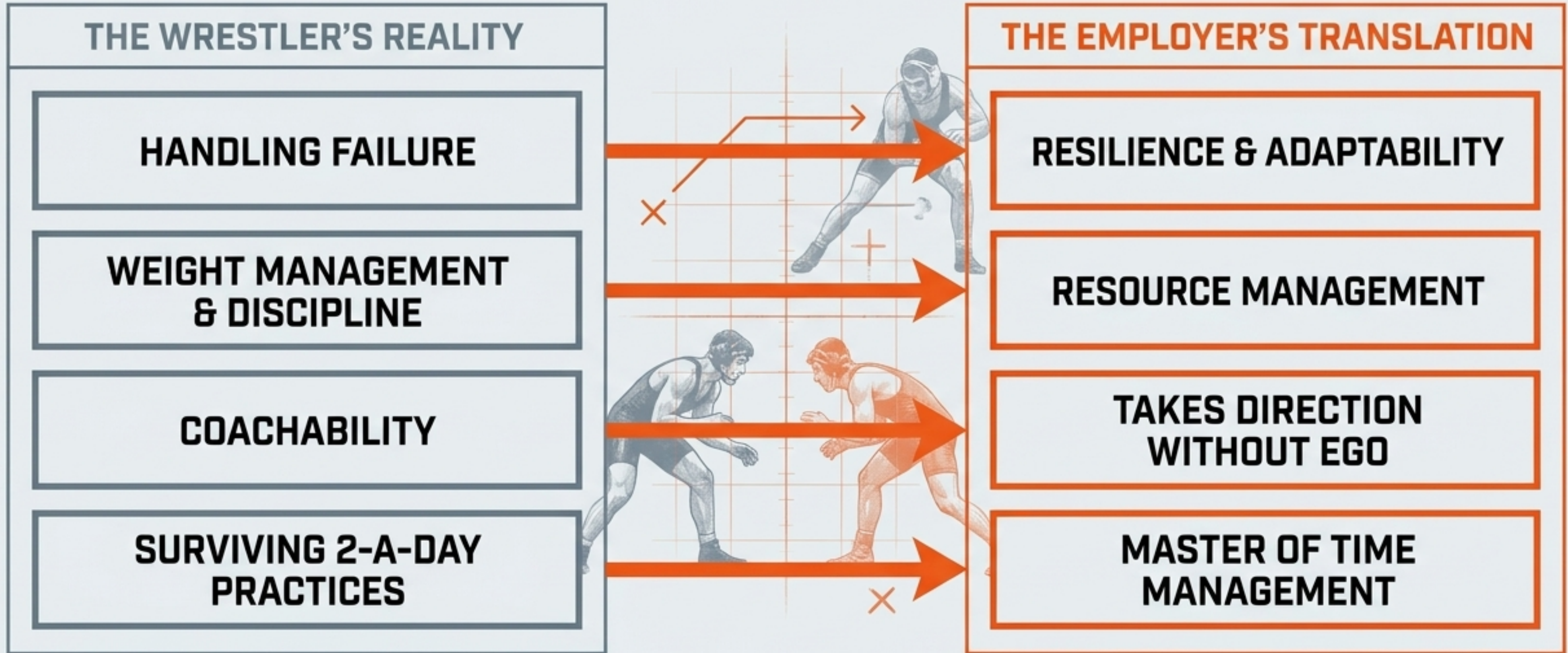
The High School Internship

College student-athletes already hold jobs to bridge this gap. High school is the time to **start building the professional leverage** that will fund your college experience and clarify your major.

THE 2% VACANCY: STEP ONTO THE MAT WHILE EVERYONE ELSE STAYS IN THE STANDS

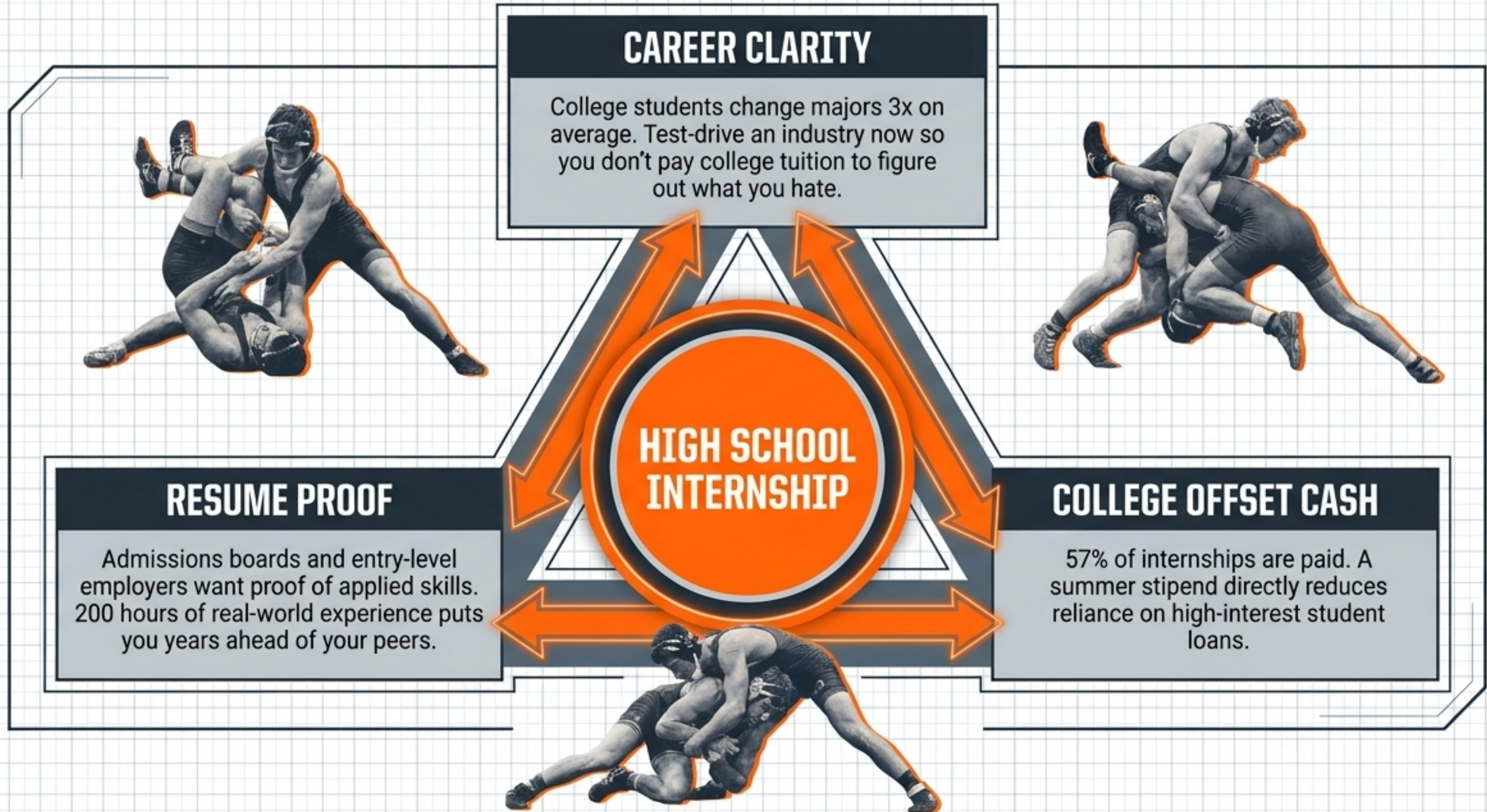


THE DISCIPLINE FORGED IN THE WRESTLING ROOM IS EXACTLY WHAT EMPLOYERS ARE HUNTING FOR



NCAA research shows 31% of college athletes manage coursework, athletics, and an internship simultaneously. A 20-hour summer high school internship is entirely within a wrestler's capacity.

THE TRUE RETURN ON INVESTMENT OF EARLY PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE



TACTICAL PLAY 1: THE INSIDE GAME

CAREER & GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

Ask specifically about programs that allow student-athletes flexibility.

CTE (CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION) PROGRAMS

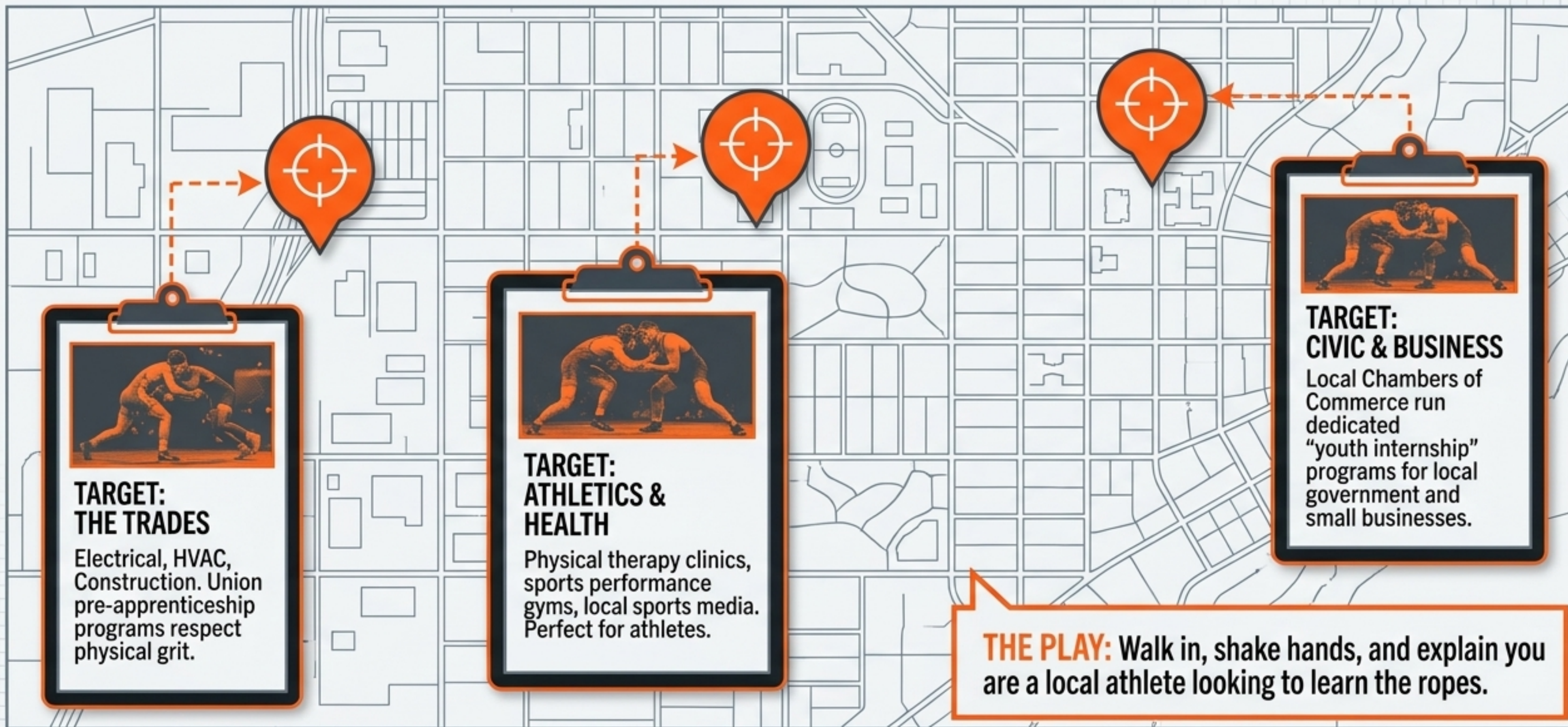
Many districts track local employer partners seeking interns.

WORK-BASED LEARNING (WBL) COORDINATORS.

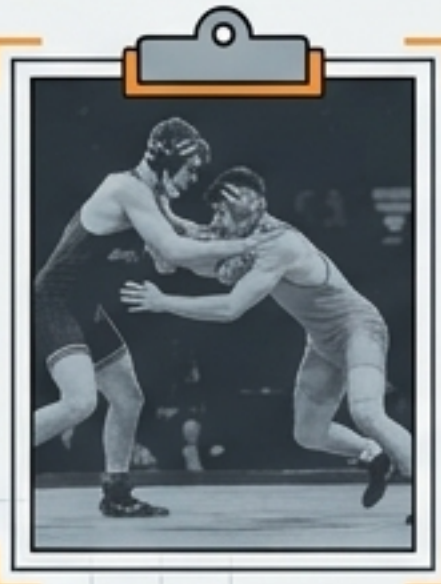
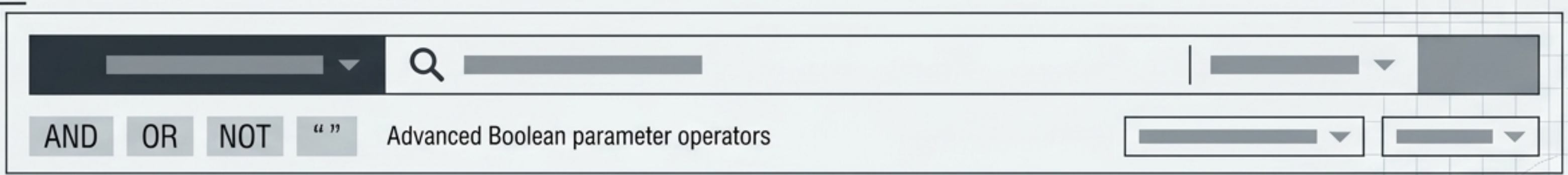
Some states (e.g., Louisiana) offer high school credit for completed internships.

ACTION STEP: SCHEDULE A 10-MINUTE MEETING WITH YOUR COUNSELOR THIS WEEK.

TACTICAL PLAY 2: THE LOCAL BRACKET



TACTICAL PLAY 3: THE DIGITAL MAT



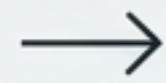
Platform 1: StandOutSearch. The largest free database specifically built and filtered for high school internships.



Platform 2: LinkedIn. Create a profile, set status to student, filter jobs by “entry-level/internship” in your zip code.



Platform 3: Indeed / ZipRecruiter. Use exact Boolean search terms: **[‘high school internship’ + your city]** or **[‘student athlete internship’]**.



Platform 4: Handshake. Usually for college, but many high schools are gaining dual-enrollment access.



TACTICAL PLAY 4: THE WRESTLING NETWORK



THE ASK

Do you know anyone who would let a high school wrestler intern for 6–10 weeks to build career experience?

THE COLD OUTREACH FRAMEWORK: HOW TO DESIGN YOUR OWN OPPORTUNITY

Hi [Name],
I'm a varsity wrestler at [High School] and I'm looking to build real-world experience this summer.

I admire [Company's Work] and am willing to help out in any capacity—from sweeping floors to data entry—in exchange for shadowing your team.

I'm disciplined, coachable, and available [Dates].

THE HOOK:

Identify as a local athlete immediately (signals work ethic).

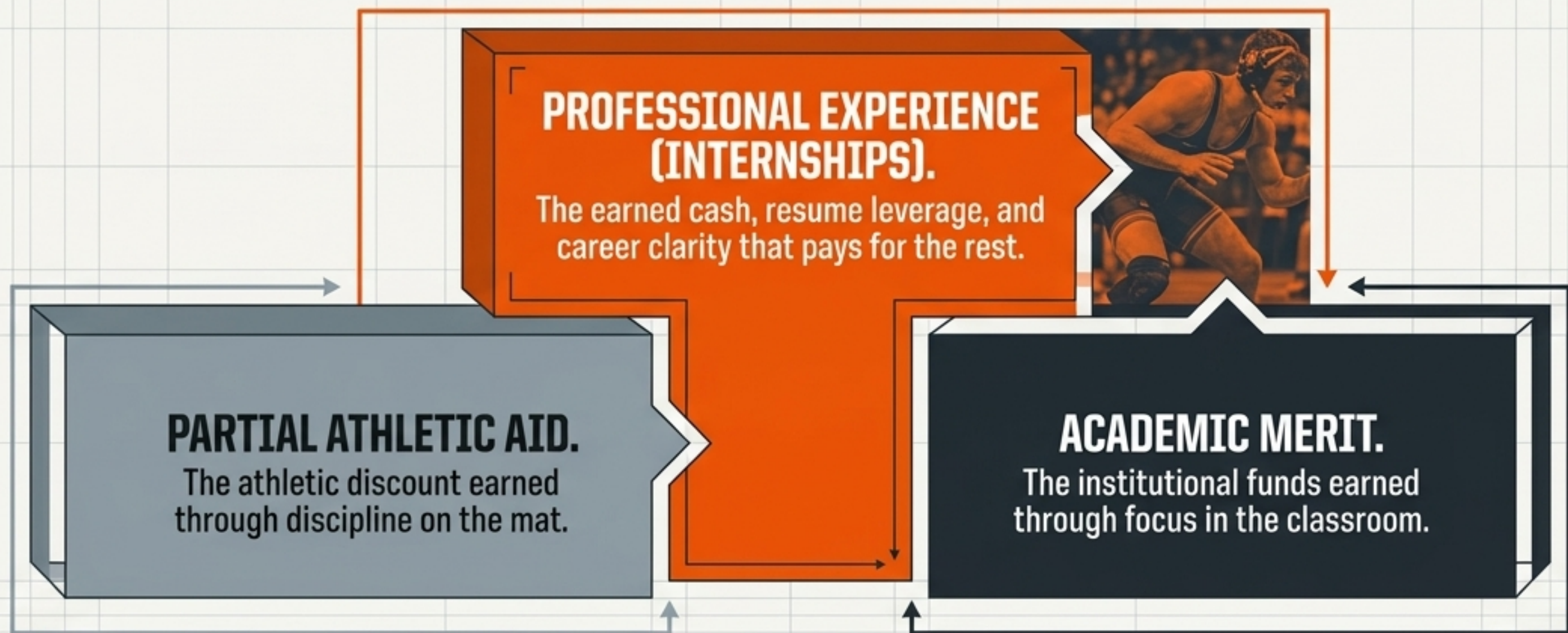
THE VALUE PROP:

Offer to do the unglamorous work (shows lack of ego).

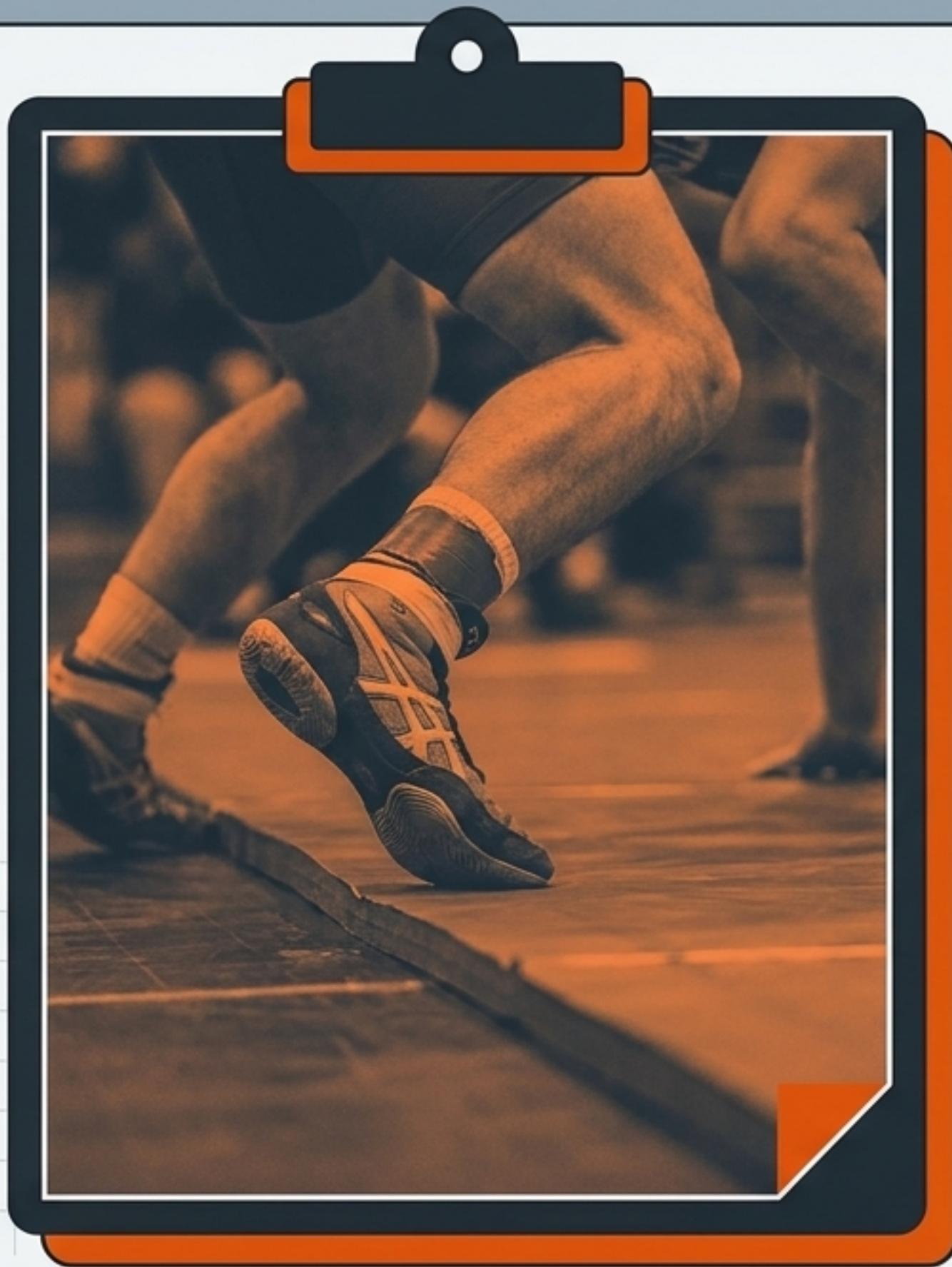
THE CLOSE:

Clear, bounded timeline around your athletic season.

SYNTHESIS: CONSTRUCTING THE 'NEW' FULL RIDE



**TRUE COLLEGE READINESS ISN'T BANKING ON A SINGLE ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP.
IT IS BUILDING A DIVERSIFIED PORTFOLIO THAT GIVES YOU TOTAL CONTROL OVER YOUR FUTURE.**



THE FINAL WHISTLE

**THE BRACKET IS WIDE OPEN.
ONLY 2% ARE DOING THE WORK.
START YOUR SEARCH TODAY.**

-  Draft a one-page resume highlighting your athletic schedule and resilience.
-  Send three cold emails to local alumni or community businesses.
-  Schedule a meeting with your school's Work-Based Learning coordinator.



Don't let your future depend on a coach's budget. Build your own leverage.