



November 20, 2016

Appear at an event site dressed appropriately to distinguish yourself with a little class. Shirt and tie is nice if you're coming directly from your work place, but jeans with holes do not set the correct tone. Immediately find the Athletic Director / Wrestling Coach. If the school is a new event site, don't hesitate to ask the first person you encounter to find the Athletic Director / Wrestling Coach. This should be done by first introducing yourself to whomever you encounter. Example: "Good evening. I'm the wrestling official for tonight's match; could you please direct me to find the Athletic Director or Wrestling Coach?" It is strongly recommended the official should arrive a minimum of one hour prior to the start of the match. The official's responsibilities begin with the weigh-in of the contestants. You may want to appear at the host school a little earlier to give yourself enough time to find your locker facility, and get into uniform. Beginning your official's duties as a professional, properly dressed, wearing your warm up jacket begins to send the appropriate message to everyone about your conduct and ability.

The wrestling official has four necessary pieces of equipment; lanyard & whistle, red & green wristbands, a random draw kit and a colored flip disc. It is also advisable to carry a spare whistle in your warm up jacket pocket.

#### WEIGH-INS & HEALTH CHECK

The pre-meet process begins by conducting the random weight class selection. No cameras should be allowed in the scale room. This should be performed with a random draw kit that may consist of numbered cards, weight class pills, numbered balls, etc. It is recommended the official ask the visiting coach to make the selection. The weigh-in must be a same gender weigh-in, and begins at the weight class selected during the random draw. All contestants must wear a legal undergarment during weigh-in. Male athletes must wear shorts that completely cover the groin and buttocks, while female athletes must wear the same short apparel along with a sport bra or t-shirt. It is important to ask the coaches several questions. While in the locker room to work the weigh-ins, first ask if they have any valid physician's notes for any contestants who have a suspicious skin condition. When the coach or wrestler reaches to hand you any physician notes, ask him to show you the skin problems on the contestants when you move down the weight classes as you inspect the wrestlers. When he points out the skin situation, make an assessment as to whether (in your opinion) it may still be an active lesion, or some other contagious condition. Read the doctor's note carefully, and check the dates he/she has stipulated the wrestler may return to competition. Many coaches carry their notes to every match, not knowing the official, and how each may perceive the skin problem. Remember; all physicians' notes must be on the approved form and must be in the scale room. A note for a none contagious condition is good for the entire season.

As you begin the inspection of contestants, it is advisable to get yourself in the same rhythm or pattern as you move through the line-ups. Remember the inspection is to make sure the wrestlers comply with a set of health and safety standards set forth by the National Federation. These health standards are to ensure all the contestants, including the officials, tapers, etc. all have a safe environment in which to compete. Remember to inspect the athletes before the coach / trainer does any taping. All taping must be removed to inspect the athletes.

Suggested pattern of inspection;

- A. Check all fingernails, if there is a sharp edge on the nails, ask the athletes to clip his/her nail.
- B. As you're working the fingernails, look at the contestant's face to inspect the length of hair at eyebrows and shirt collar, growth of the beard, mustache, contestants who shave their heads and the very important skin examination. The hair growth cannot be abrasive. If, in the official's opinion, the hair stubble is abrasive

he may ask the wrestler to either shave his head or wear an approved hair cap. Look around the front and side of the face, and check under the chin to look in the neck region.

C. Now, continue the skin inspection by thoroughly scanning down the length of the body. Raise the wrestler's arms to examine the sides of the body, under the armpits, and the underside of the arms. With the front inspection complete, spin the contestant around to begin the rear side inspection. Start at the top, begin with the hair, and check the length in the back. Be satisfied it would not hang over a normal shirt collar.

D. Continue the skin inspection by looking carefully around the back of the neck, down across the shoulders through the lower back. Complete the inspection with a close look at the back of the knees.

When you find any part of the contestant inspection process that does not satisfactorily meet with your approval, you should promptly ask the wrestler to "clip the nails, get a shave, trim the hair length, or clean up the mustache." A suggestion is to have the person recording the actual weights place a capital M(mustache), N(nails), S(shave), or T(trim hair) next to the name / weight class of any wrestler who does not completely meet the health inspection.

NOTE: Remember, a participant may have long hair, and choose to wear an approved hair cap. The hair cap is considered a piece of special equipment, and is not allowed to be abrasive. The individual official at the start of each event must approve it during weigh-ins. The wrestler may also need to wear a hair cap if his clean-shaven head has stubble growth that may be considered abrasive. The hair cap must be attached to the head gear.

### Professional \* Direct \* Polite \* Decisive \* Prompt

When a contestant has a suspicious skin condition, it is important to meet the situation without hesitation. The referee needs to be professional, decisive, direct and prompt. Don't try to be a nice guy; be the referee. Some coaches and the wrestlers will begin to make a variety of statements dismissing the skin problem. "Oh, that's a mat burn", "it's a pimple that I just squeezed", "that wasn't there yesterday", "the referees last weekend didn't say anything about it", and the list continues.

#### Suggestions to handle possible contagious skin problems

- Don't make statements as to what you think the skin condition is. You are not a physician, but you are the last line of defense to protect everyone.
- You are the official, and part of the official's responsibility is to recognize a possible suspicious contagious skin problem for the safety of all who compete on the mat(s).
- It is the coach's responsibility to look out for the safety of his wrestlers, and the official looks out for all. If the coach cannot present proof to your satisfaction his wrestler is clean of any contagious skin fungus, virus, bacteria or staph infection, it is your job to tell the coach and wrestler he/she will not be allowed to compete in tonight's match.
- All officials should take the necessary time to familiarize themselves with the characteristics of all skin problems. Today's wrestling official should know the signs and symptoms of each; ringworm, impetigo, herpes, shingles, scabies, and staph to name the most frequently seen. It may also be necessary to sign the official weigh-in sheet depending upon the weight certification rules of individual states.

NOTE: There are a growing number of female wrestlers competing with wrestling programs at all levels. The same rules apply to all wrestlers, that is, first make weight, and second pass the health and safety check. The National Federation has adopted a rule that the same gender sex performs the weigh-in and skin check. Therefore, the male official will need to ask a female (preferably from each school) to check the female wrestler's weight (secretary, mom, etc.). Next, they will also need to check for possible skin problems. Give the ladies the necessary instructions, and trust their efforts applying the same rules to the female wrestler that you have applied to the young men. The official may check the exposed areas.

#### PRE-MATCH LOCKER ROOM TALK

After inspecting the wrestling area, and talking with the team at the table, it is important to visit each team in the locker room to set down a few ground rules. This begins by asking the coach if his team is ready

to wrestle tonight. When the coach replies “yes”, he is telling you his team is legal and ready to compete with regards to a few respects.

1. Contestants are all wearing a legal under garment.
2. Any taping is legal and will allow normal legal holds & full range of motion.
3. Uniforms and shoes are legal; shoelaces are properly secured, and laced above the ankle secured on the feet.
4. Headgear and kneepads are legal, and unadorned.

Asking the coach if his team is ready to wrestle does not minimize the official’s responsibilities of doing a good job with the pre-match instructions. This is the final time and place to impress the teams with who is in charge of the match, and that your knowledge of wrestling will be unbiasedly imparted during the evening’s contest. The pre-match instructions to the wrestlers / coaches prior to the start of the match may include, but not limited to the following;

- Ask to see any taping, wrapping, or braces that might worn by any contestants. It is the official’s responsibility to inspect and approve all special equipment; this includes headgear, facemasks, hair caps, tape jobs, braces, etc. Part of this should be done during the weigh-in.
- Ask if anyone uses an inhaler for an asthma condition.
- It is necessary to discuss proper handshake, taunting, and other unsportsmanlike matters. Basically discuss sportsmanship along with your expectations.
- Then take some time to discuss illegal holds, and potentially dangerous as far as you feel it relates to headlocks, guillotines, arm bars, etc.
- Remind the wrestlers they are to wrestle aggressively for six minutes, and work in the center of the circle. Now let the participants and coaches know your position on stalling.
- Remind all of three basic commands “Center - Action - Contact”
- Ask if there are any questions and wish the team good luck tonight, and during the state tournament trail. Remember to re-check any wrestlers who did not pass the health inspection during the weigh-in.
- The entire locker room visit and instructions to the athletes may only take 4-6 minutes. It is recommended all officials start each wrestling season doing a better than average job with the explanations to the teams. It is felt we make the end of the season easier for each other if we take the extra time at the beginning of the season. There are always a few new rules changes that need to be better explained, and there might be some questions that need to be cleared up.

Several closing thoughts to keep in mind as you continue to develop and sharpen your skills as a wrestling official; the official has jurisdiction from the moment he / she pulls into the parking lot, to the signing of the official score book at the conclusion of the last match. The official is considered the expert, and has full authority at the wrestling match. Every official must read / study the National Federation Rule Book, the Case Manual along with Ohio’s Green Book and other publications on a regular basis. Every official should become comfortable applying the rules based on criteria to support each call. It not only takes a great deal of time and effort to become a referee, but stick with it for 20, 30 years or more and you may think you get it! Wrestling continues to evolve, and the best referees adapt to the slow changes that take place within the sport, the kids and the coaching.

Use good judgment and apply sound common sense when necessary. Treat those you meet with respect, dignity and in a well-mannered tone of voice from the moment you enter the building. Act and conduct yourself the way you would like to be treated. Be confident from the beginning, and proud of the job you did as you drive away. Coaches, contestants and other spectators must not be allowed to become abusive, belligerent or treat the official in any type of disrespectful manner. Referees do not interfere with the coach coaching. The coach is not allowed to interfere with the referee fulfilling his/her duties during the contest.