



February 20, 2017

Be Professional * Polite * Prompt * Patient * Direct * Decisive

We have had a very interesting season with a number of strange occurrences. These started the first weekend and have continued throughout the season. The following are some of the issues that occurred and have been addressed during this 2016-17 wrestling season;

Young ladies in the men's weigh-in line disrobed to be checked, and along with that a male referee performing the skin check and weigh-in of the young lady.

A referee forgot to allow a wrestler to get the second try on the first scale and did not make weight. Then, another referee allowed the wrestler (who did not make weight) to return to the weigh-in area to make weight after all four schools have completed the weigh in.

A tournament asked for permission to conduct a three (3) weigh-in because of 24 teams at the dual meet tournament. Then had a scale at each of the 10-12 mats so the weigh-in took less than 20 minutes. This was done in an open arena with spectators entering.

A tournament conducted the Saturday skin check at mat side. This is to be done completely the same as the first day skin check.

A referee allowed the "bumper strips" to cover braces, that it is now approved. This has never been approved.

Two non-licensed individuals were contracted and refereed at OHSAA events. One individual worked at several events.

A referee stopped a match because of a suspicious skin issue that flared-up, let the wrestler cover it to continue, and then the wrestler was removed from the tournament.

An official ejected a spectator, after listening to the spectator verbally abuse him, then at one point step on the mat and shout "that's a bullshit call". The match official asked the spectator be removed, at which point the spectator refused. No one from the tournament supported the official, which was disturbing, but the fact that the head official did not support his fellow official makes this situation difficult.

POSTURE INDICATES INTENTION

Rather, the head official stood by as the tournament director (who was also the host school's head coach) convened a tournament committee to resolve the situation. The next disturbing part of this situation is that the tournament director's (head coach) tournament committee was made up of a majority of coaches. The committee's decision was to let the spectator stay in the event. This wasn't a proper tournament committee, it was a coaches' committee. Their

effort was to talk with other coach(es), but never listened to the official. There are several important aspects of this situation, all of which are not healthy;

First; no one can change a call of an official, especially an ejection of a vulgar spectator who walks on the mat.

Second; the head official should have supported his fellow official and upheld the removal of the spectator's interference and language. All officials have been in numerous meetings and clinics when the topic of sportsmanship, coaches' behavior and other topics of match control have been discussed. Allowing a spectator to remain of this nature undermines the entire officiating team, and opens the door to other problems during the day.

Third; this should not have been a matter to be taken to a tournament committee. The tournament committee is not convened to decide if they want to change an official's call; no one can change an official's call. The official made the call, and the head official must assume the leadership role of supporting the match official. Coaches and spectators do not control the wrestling event; they certainly don't get to stay if they are interfering with the event. Safety is important.

Fourth; if tournament management does not support the ejection of an unruly spectator and allows such a person to remain in the event, they are sending a very clear and negative message to everyone. Most importantly, it shows a lack of respect for the authority of all the licensed officials at the event.

If the tournament management and coaches do not respect the officials hired, and allow this type of behavior from the fans, what other rules will they allow to be altered? We all don't have to like or agree with the rules, we just have to follow them, and teach the kids the same.

Fifth; there is a conflict of interests if the head coach also wears the hat of the tournament director and also takes the role of the head official then proceeds to mishandle a few of those hats. This is a set up for problems.

Sixth; what of the ideals we are to teach student-athletes by participating in sport? Of being role models for fair play and sportsmanship? What of life-long values and qualities learned participating in extra-curricular activities?

ATTENTION ALL OFFICIALS: remember, you are an independent contractor and can choose to accept or deny any events you wish. Attacks on sports officials are already too prevalent. Every sports official from youth, scholastic, collegiate and professional all have an expectation of safety wherever they accept to officiate. If the host school and tournament administration do not expect good sportsmanship and support the match official, the officials have no expectation of safety. Why would officials accept a contract to put oneself in such an unhealthy situation knowing the host school allows spectators to walk on the mat, interrupt the match and swear at the official?

We have a shortage of officials, and there different reasons why this is happening. Family, job, retirement, burn-out, etc. are some. But certainly, this type of situation is also a contributing factor why there is a shortage of wrestling officials.

Everyone should just ... Do It Right !