

**THE OHIO HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION  
APPROVED WRESTLING OFFICIATING MECHANICS &  
PROCEDURES  
2017-18 SEASON**



**Sixth edition**

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Beau Rugg, Director of Officiating and Sport Management

August 1, 2017  
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**“The Green Book”**

**“In picking an assistant coach, the first thing I was interested in was a man’s character”**

**Woody Hayes**



## **ATTENTION**

**“This mechanics and procedures manual are accepted as standard practice for Ohio high school and junior high school levels.**

This mechanics manual is written to provide every Ohio scholastic wrestling referee consistent explanations of the why’s and how’s to approach proper procedures and mechanics while officiating. Our scholastic referees work with young men and women who range from 13 to 18 years of age. The high school and junior high wrestlers are developing their physical, mental, and psychological growth. Bone growth and muscular development are two very important developmental issues that play a very pivotal role in how our scholastic wrestling officials evaluate every wrestling match.

**For a variety of safety reasons, the Ohio High School Athletic Association through their State Rule Interpreters and the Director of Officiating Development have strict mechanics and accepted procedures that all Ohio wrestling referees must follow.**

Ohio scholastic wrestling referees are a team. All need to be part of the same team. Consistency involves every aspect of the sport.

**DO IT RIGHT ... FROM THE FIRST MATCH TO YOUR LAST OF THE SEASON**

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**“Posture Indicates Intention”**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biting .....	22
Flagrant Misconduct .....	22
Blood, Injury & Recovery Time .....	14
Mechanic Signals .....	16
Concussion Protocol .....	14
Conference .....	25
Correctable Errors .....	27
Fleeing .....	20
Mechanic Signals .....	9
Neutral Position .....	7
Assistant Referee .....	8
Potentially Dangerous .....	23
Pre-Meet Duties .....	3
Referee's Position .....	10
Assistant referee .....	12
Near Fall Mechanics .....	12
Referee's Uniform .....	3
Stalemate .....	24
Stalling .....	17
Neutral .....	18
Offensive .....	19
Defensive .....	20
Technical Violations .....	20
Warning or Penalize .....	26
Weigh-in .....	4

The sixth edition of a MECHANICS & PROCEDURE MANUAL is dedicated to the entire team of table workers, runners, head table workers for all our sectional, district and state tournaments. The Ohio State University Schottenstein Center staff who spend many hours on behalf of the Ohio wrestling community.

The Ohio State wrestling tournaments are second to none and the entire team of workers are the reason for the success.

The OWOA clinic is set for November 11, 2017 @ The Little Bear Golf Club in Lewis Center, Oh.  
8:30 AM registration, 9:00AM clinic w/ lunch provide  
Please plan to attend with your local membership

Thanks to Kent Intagliata for his continued work updating this document.

# OHIO WRESTLING OFFICIALS MECHANICS, POSITIONING & PROCEDURES MANUAL

## “THE GREEN BOOK”

### OFFICIAL’S UNIFORM

- Required Uniform:
  - The gray pin stripe shirt will be mandatory for the post season, then completely mandatory for the 2017-18 season.
    - The American flag is worn on the left shoulder with a green OHSAA logo on the left breast area of the shirt.
  - Black full length trousers, black socks, black officiating shoes and black belt if necessary.
  - Emblems and patches are not permitted on the officiating uniform. Exception: An American flag patch/emblem is optional and, if worn, shall be on the left sleeve approximately two inches below the shoulder with the star field facing to the front.
  - Jewelry shall not be worn except for a wedding band and/or a medical alert necklace or bracelet. A religious medallion which is not visible is permitted. A watch/timing device is permitted only when an official has a duty for timing during the contest, and shall be worn under the wrist band.
  - A black warm-up jacket with OWOA logo is required for all varsity officials.
  - Red & green wrist bands, colored flip disc, recommend a black **plastic whistle** with a black lanyard.
  - The whistle must be loud enough to be heard at large multi-team events. A **black plastic** pea-less whistle is recommended for use. Every official should carry an extra whistle in his/her jacket.

### THREE IMPORTANT SAFETY ISSUES

- Please pay attention to the following:
  - Concussion protocol (OHIO HB 143); renewed every third year
  - Contagious skin conditions
  - Potentially dangerous calls; athlete’s safety

### PRE - MEET DUTIES

- Appear at event site dressed appropriately.
  - **The referee has jurisdiction over the event once he/she arrives at the site.**
  - Shirt and tie is nice if coming directly from the work place,
  - **But raggedy jeans with holes do not set the correct tone.**
- Immediately find the Athletic Director / Wrestling Coach.
  - First introduce yourself. **Example:** “Good evening, I’m the wrestling referee for tonight’s match; could you please direct me to the locker room to find the Wrestling Coach.
  - The referee should arrive a minimum of one hour prior to the start of the match. You may want to appear at the host school a little earlier, if involved w/ weigh-ins to give yourself enough time to find your locker facility, and get into uniform.
  - Begin your duties as a professional, properly dressed, with your warm up jacket on begins to send the appropriate message to everyone about your conduct and ability.
  - The referee’s responsibilities begin by conducting the random draw for dual meet events.
  - It is appropriate for the official ask the visiting coach to make the random draw selection.
  - The random draw weight class is also the beginning weight class to weigh-in.
- The wrestling referee has four necessary pieces of equipment; lanyard & whistle, red & green wristbands, a random draw kit and a colored flip disc. It may also be advisable to carry a spare whistle in your warm up jacket pocket.

## WEIGH-INS & HEALTH CHECK

- Require all participants to present any special equipment at the weigh-in.
- During the pre-meet process it is important to ask the coaches several questions.
  - Ask if there are any valid physician's notes for any athletes who have a suspicious skin condition.
  - Skin notes **must be on the NFHS approve skin form**,
  - **In the weigh-in room** when it is requested.
  - Coach may not take wrestler to the local ER then return with a note.
  - **The coach** is responsible to **check his athletes regularly**
  - **The referee** is the **last line of defense** to protect everyone from the spread of any condition.
  - Skin note must be the **original form signed by a physician**
    - Not a Xerox copy, or signed by nurse, LPN, PA
    - Not on an Rx pad, or letter from a physician
    - Not a picture copy on a tablet, I-pad, etc.
    - **It must be on the approved NFHS skin form, and be complete properly**
    - **If the note is invalid** for any reason ...
      - ❖ If the lesions appear in other places than that marked on the body diagram,
      - ❖ If the lesions are still moist, cream colored pustules ...
      - ❖ **The official has the authority to disqualify the athlete from competition.**
  - The skin form is still valid within the 10 day time limit.
  - Non-contagious notes are valid through-out the entire season.
- If an MD, DO or Dermatologist is the designated on-site physician present, his/her decision is final over a form. And there should be no argument or disagreement with the physician.
- If an MD, DO or Dermatologist stipulates the athlete may wrestle if it is covered, ask "is it is contagious?"
  - NFHS does not allow a contagious skin condition to be covered to wrestle.
  - If the physician says it may still be contagious, then the wrestler must be disqualified.
- As the inspection process begins always be aware of the skin while looking at the other aspects.
- Read the doctor's note carefully, and check the dates he/she has stipulated the wrestler may return to competition, along with the body diagram.
- Many coaches carry their notes to every match, not knowing the referee, and how each may perceive the skin problem.
- Begin the inspection of contestants,
  - Remember the inspection is to make sure the wrestlers comply with a set of health and safety standards set forth by the NFHS/OHSAA.
  - These health standards are to ensure all the contestants, including the referees, tapers, etc. all have a safe environment in which to compete.
  - Inspect the athletes before the coach / trainer does any taping.
  - Suggested pattern of inspection;
    - A. Check fingernails,
    - B. Check the contestant's length of hair,
      - Shirt collar length, eyebrows & side burns
      - Growth of the beard (beard basket),
      - Mustache,
      - Shaved heads,
      - Look around the front and side of the face & forehead,
      - And, check under the chin to look in the neck region.
    - C. Continue the skin inspection by thoroughly scanning down the length of the body.
      - Get in the same rhythm or pattern as you move through the line-ups.
    - D. Raise the wrestler's arms to examine the sides of the body, under the armpits, and the underside of the arms.

E. 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.

F. Continue the skin inspection by looking carefully around the back of the neck, down across the shoulders through the lower back, and completing 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, promptly ask the wrestler to “clip the nails, get a shave, trim the hair length, or clean up the mustache, etc.”
- It is wise to have an extra 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 must be attached to the head gear. It is not allowed to be abrasive. The individual referee at the start of each event must approve it. The wrestler may also need to wear a hair cap, which will be attached to head gear. If his clean-shaven head has stubble growth it may be considered abrasive. Along the same lines, a contestant may choose to wear a face mask if he has facial hair.

- When a contestant has a suspicious skin condition, it is important to meet the situation without hesitation, and in a professional manner. 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 referee’s last weekend didn’t say anything about it”, and the list continues. Suggestions to handle possible contagious skin problems.
  - Don’t make statements suggesting what you think the skin condition is ... You **are not a physician**.
  - You are the referee, and part of the referee’s responsibility is to recognize a possible suspicious contagious skin problem for the safety of all who compete on the mat.
  - It is the coach’s responsibility to look out for the safety of his wrestlers, and the referee looks out for all. If the coach cannot present proof his wrestler is clean of any contagious skin fungus, bacteria, virus, staph infection, etc., the referee must tell the coach and wrestler he/she will not be allowed to compete in tonight’s match.
  - All referees should take the necessary time to familiarize themselves with the characteristics of all skin problems. Today’s wrestling referee should know the signs and symptoms of each; ringworm, impetigo, shingles, scabies, herpes, MRSA and staph to name the most frequently seen.
  - Without an onsite physician, the match referee has the jurisdiction and the authority not to accept a NFHS skin form if it is not properly completed, if it is written in a letter form, written on the Rx pad, new lesions have appeared that are not depicted on the body gram on the approved form, and/or the existing condition continues to appear unsafe for competition.
  - All contestants must weigh-in with appropriate undergarment(s); this includes both men and women.
  - All contestants must also wear an appropriate undergarment during competition. For the young women this also includes a sports bra and legal t-shirt based on NFHS rule.
- Upon completion of the weigh-ins, the referee should sign the weigh-in sheet for verification, so all coaches get a copy for their records to verify certification compliance.

**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 grooming and safety check. The National Federation has adopted a rule that the same gender sex performs the weigh-in and skin check. Therefore, the referee 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. Young ladies also need to weigh in wearing appropriate undergarments. The referee may check the exposed areas. **At the present time all young ladies must wear an approved t-shirt along with appropriate under garments and uniform.**

## INSPECT THE WRESTLING AREA

- After the conclusion of weigh-ins the meet referee should walk the wrestling mat and inspect the mat and markings.
- Also inspect distance/proximity and relationship to the team benches, the scorer's table and the wrestling area.
- Make sure there is five (5) feet of fringe protection mat around the competition area.
- While on the floor, remember to discuss with the timer and both the home and visiting score keepers their duties and any necessary directions.
  - Important not to let anyone interfere with the team at the table. They must not be distracted.
  - Ask all table workers to leave any electronic devices put away. This includes, but not limited to the following; cell phones, tablets, I pads, I-pods, smart phones, and laptop computers.
  - Support the team at the table ... they can make the match much easier.
  - Workers must not be using their cell phone or texting, focus on the match.

**Note:** Not only should the table workers keep electronic devices put away, that also goes for the officials. It looks completely inappropriate for a sports official sitting at the table playing cell phone games while all around him/her a scholastic tournament is being contested. The NFHS and OHSAA expect all to pay 100% attention to the task of being an official at the event.

## PRE-MATCH LOCKER ROOM TALK

- This needs to be less than a ten minute (3-5 minutes) process. You get one chance at a first impression.
- This is the final time and place to impress the teams with who is in charge of the match, and that your knowledge of the sport of wrestling will be unbiasedly imparted during the evenings contest.
- 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 properly equipped and ready to wrestle. 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, with all eyelets laced.
    - Secured: a zipper pouch, a Velcro flap or taped around the ankle.
  4. There is no pass on first offense for laces not be secured
  5. Headgear (may cross straps w/ ear holes open) and kneepads are legal (no loose knee pads)
  6. No tape on head gear or shoes
- The pre-match instructions to the wrestlers / coaches prior to the start of the match may include, but not limited to the following;
  - Remind the wrestlers they are to wrestle aggressively for six minutes, and work in the center circle.
  - Remind all contestants of three basic commands "Center - Action - Contact"
  - Ask if there are any questions and wish the team good luck tonight.
  - It is recommended all referees 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.

**Note:** Officials need be aware of the new two-piece alternative uniform; a tight fitting shirt and shorts.

## CAPTAINS / COIN TOSS

- In the center of the mat, meet with the team captains.
- Remind them they are to assist the coach with sportsmanship from the team bench.
- Proper procedure; ask a visiting captain to call the color of the disc (NFHS 1978-79 “call the coin”).
- Winner of the disc toss has choice of even or odd matches, with the first match determined by the random draw. **Always allow the disc to hit the wrestling mat.**
- Good luck and get on with the match.
- If it is a dual meet tournament, by selecting the team to be red also determines the visiting team.
- The referee is considered the expert, and has full authority at the wrestling match. Every referee must read / study the National Federation Rule Book, the Case Manual and Green Book on a regular basis. Every referee should be comfortable applying the rules based on criteria to support each call.
- 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.

### Reporting to the Mat:

- Make sure that the correct wrestlers have reported for check-in at the scorer’s table.
- Double check the proper wrestlers and weight class have reported directly to the center of the mat.
- Make sure that the wrestlers are legally equipped, properly groomed and ready to wrestle.
- Ensure that both wrestlers extend their right hands for a proper pre-match handshake.

## Referee Mechanics in Neutral Situations

### Wrestler’s Position in Neutral Start:

- Both wrestlers must place one foot on their respective starting line and the other foot on or behind the line or the line extended.
- Hands and/or foreheads cannot touch the opponent.
- Wrestlers must be standing on two points, no other body parts touching the mat in front of lead foot.
- Both wrestlers must be stationary until the whistle sounds (no rolling starts).

### Start of the Match:

- Make sure wrestlers are in proper position and stationary.
- The referee should step in between the wrestlers with an out stretched arm between the red and green starting lines. Make sure this position does not interfere with the wrestlers, either their view each other or by touching them. The referee should be facing the scorer’s table.
  - Make eye contact with the time keeper.
  - Sound your whistle and simultaneously make a visual hand/arm motion to start the match.
- Move out quickly and back your way towards outer boundary line.
- Glance up momentarily to insure that the clock has properly started.
- Always keep both wrestlers in your line of sight as you back out.
- The whistle should remain in the official’s mouth.

### Neutral Standing Position:

- Situate yourself so that you are far enough away from the wrestling to observe the action and not interfere with sudden changes in position.
- Be close enough to immediately reposition yourself to stop potentially dangerous and illegal maneuvers.
- Six to nine (6-9) feet is suggested, find your comfortable space. A wider range allows greater perspective.



- Know how various takedowns finish so you know where to position yourself to stay out of the way and to observe control as it is established.
- Always situate yourself to be centered and able to look between both wrestlers as they face each other.
  - Anticipate position.
  - Do not chase the action; stop and let the action come back to you.
  - Sometimes moving counter to the wrestlers' rotation is more effective.
  - Square yourself to the action.
- Change levels and be mobile in order to be in proper position to observe; do not bend at waist.
- It is important to loudly verbalize the award of takedown points to afford the opportunity to the scoring wrestler to release the locked hands without penalty.
- Award points in a confident manner using approved hand signals without eye contact with the scorers or coaches. Trust the table team to do their job correctly; focus on the wrestlers.

### Boundary Line:

- On or near the boundary line, the referee should be in a position to observe the location of the supporting points of each wrestler. Straddling the line is one position, and getting perpendicular to the wrestlers also affords the referee a greater opportunity to catch on the O-B line; safety first.
- Call out of bounds by the letter of the rule and be consistent from call to call.
  - Use proper hand mechanics w/ simultaneous whistle.
- Always keep safety in mind.
  - Be ready to reposition yourself to protect wrestlers heading out of bounds.
  - May have to sound a pre-mature whistle when safety is a concern.
- When possible, on feet-in takedowns award the earned points before sounding your whistle.
  - Award points in the proper sequence as they occurred.
- Be patient, do not overly anticipate an out of bounds situation occurring. Bite your whistle until you are sure a situation finishes out of bounds.
  - Hip-Toss and throws, especially to the back w/ shoulder(s)/scapulae are in near fall criteria and are the only body part(s) in bounds.
- The referee may verbally request that both wrestlers "work center" (do not coach with comments).
- If no action is occurring at the boundary line, the official may restart the wrestlers in neutral position.
- Where/when possible, points should be awarded prior to whistle.

### Attacking Wrestler Down on the Mat Scrambling For a Score:

- Position yourself square (perpendicular) to the action:
  - Defensive wrestler is sitting on mat with attacking wrestler's arms locked around both thighs (crotch-lock, waist-lock, double under hook)
  - When control is gained verbalize awarded points,
  - Likewise, verbalize no control w/ proper mechanic if still neutral.
  - Anticipate the action to stay ahead of it.
  - You may have to circle in the opposite direction to catch-up to the action.

### Assistant Referee (AR):

- First on & last off of the mat, be active, and assist with **the same latitude of mobility as the referee**.
- Match referee always passes on inside path when crossing, **AR no closer** than the referee.
- Mirror the referee w/ freedom to be completely mobile around mat. (**Approximately 180° opposite**).
- **AR** has freedom to move to seek his/her best position to complement the **HO** making calls.
- **AR** should move and be in position to be the extra pair of eyes when and where they are needed.
- Lower level to look underneath in tie-up and head lock situations.
- **Movement** and **communication** should be constant and are the keys for success.
- The **AR** should not yell across the mat, rather move to circle behind the **HO** and make your statement

- If the **AR** questions a situation, he/she should conference at the appropriate time.
  - Conference away from coaches.
- Bring infractions to the referee's immediate attention. Cover the front side (when action rotates towards you) and wait for the referee to catch up to the action before rotating 180°.
- Be responsible for the time. Make sure the clock starts and stops on the referee's whistle.
- Police the designated coaches' area.
- Assist the referee with injury, recovery and blood time protocol (discuss responsibilities before the match).
- On boundary situations, be in position to insure the safety of the wrestlers going out-of-bounds.
- **The AR must help "catch"/protect the wrestlers from injury; Going into the table, a wall/stage, etc.**
- Be immediately available to give your opinion on a situation when asked by the referee.
- Never be afraid to voice an opinion to the **HO**; the **AR** may agree, disagree or have no opinion.
- Support the referee when a close but correct call is made.
- Never communicate with a coach. Direct the coach to the match referee.
- Be in position to watch the clock w/ wrestlers in your field of vision during the last 10 seconds of the period.
- **Anticipation is essential for the AR.**

## Mechanic Hand Signals

The following hand signals are the only approved hand mechanics that should be used during the referee executing his/her job on the mat. Officers of each local association must review these mechanics during your local association meetings. **Only authorized approved mechanic signals must be utilized. Spectators must understand the sport and table workers the score.**



Starting the Match



Stopping the Match



Time Out



Illegal Hold



Near-Fall: 2,  
3 or 4 Points



No Control



Out-of-Bound



Coach Misconduct



Indicates Control



Defer Choice



Stalemate



Reversal



Caution-False Start or  
Incorrect Starting Procedure



Stalling



Interlocking Hands or  
Grasping Clothing



Technical Violation



Awarding Points



Neutral



Unsportsmanlike  
Conduct



Flagrant Misconduct



Potentially Dangerous



Unnecessary Roughness



Match ends Technical Fall  
Disqualification or Default

**Note:** Proper mechanics to award the escape point is the following sequence; one-hand one-point in the air, followed with the signal for neutral being earned.

### Referee Mechanics in Mat Wrestling Situations

#### Start of the Referee's Position:

- First and foremost the hand movement should be simple and simultaneous with the whistle.
- As with other hand signals, the hand motion is also for the table, coaches, and fans.
- Hit the whistle hard and loud!
- If your matches have an inordinate number of false starts, it is possibly the official causing the problem.
- Be stationary & vary whistle.

### **Setting in the Referee's Position: 12 o'clock is in reference to the heads of wrestlers**

- The referee should be at an angle (right or left of center) to the wrestlers. If the wrestler's are 12 o'clock, the referee should be at 10 or 2 o'clock. He/she should typically be opposite the "near side", or as we say on the open side of the wrestlers.
- The referee should stand (may lower level to view the palm) and move several steps to the open side of the wrestlers.
  - This gives the referee the ability to see the placement of the offensive wrestler's head in the mid-line, the palm on the navel, the palm on the elbow, and the back foot.
  - Do not be out on the edge of the circle...that is too far away!
- The referee may have a difficult view of the near side back foot, but by moving sides he/she can make sure it too is legal.
- The defensive wrestler gets in position and "set" first, then the referee will direct the offensive wrestler to "cover", once legal and stationary start the match with a simultaneous hand signal and whistle.
- Remember a brief pause momentarily before the referee give a simultaneous hand signal and whistle start.
  - Do not allow the top wrestler to rock the bottom wrestler off his base - caution
- The referee should be stationary and ever vigilant to observe rolling and false starts.

### **Working with an Assistant:**

- The referee will want the assistant positioned to observe the palm on navel, knee on hip and back feet.
- If the mat referee is at 2 o'clock, the assistant will be at 8 o'clock.
- Have view of clock for both starts and stops.

### **Movement as Wrestling Continues:**

- After the start and throughout the mat wrestling, the official wants to be primarily at the head & shoulders of the wrestlers, suggested six to nine feet from the wrestlers.
- As the offensive wrestler breaks his opponent down and applies bars, wings, power halves or comes closer to near falls, the referee may want to move closer to be in position to stop potentially dangerous situations and/or not to miss near falls.
- In other words, vary distance from wrestlers depending on situation. The referee should be in a position to block or stop potentially dangerous situations BEFORE they become illegal.

### **When the defensive man comes to his feet:**

- As the defensive wrestler makes it to his/her feet, the referee should come to the head /shoulders of the wrestlers once again.
- The referee should pay particular attention to hand control and fingers.
  - Should the top man not begin to attempt to return defensive wrestler to the mat, as per rule, he will be called for stalling. Key word is attempt.
  - If the offensive man is attempting to return his opponent to the mat he is not stalling! We do not stop match when making the stalling call in this situation.
- In a rear standing position, the referee must anticipate the offensive man throwing his opponent 180 degrees, and be ready to move to that position.
  - If an assistant is involved, he/she should be in position to observe that action.
  - If the defensive man's arm or arms are barred, locked to his side, or in any other way the defensive man is rendered unable to protect himself when coming to the mat, the referee must stop the match as potentially dangerous and be in a position to catch or break the defensive man's fall. It helps on any lift, to use a command of "keep it legal".

### On the out of bound line:

- The referee will still be at the head/shoulder side of wrestlers, but focus will shift to supporting point(s) (shoulders, buttocks, knees, and feet, to determine in or out of bounds).
- Vary closeness to wrestlers based on the situation.
  - Referee should always take best position to see most important action while protecting the out of bounds,
  - The referee should visually scan the wrestlers and the boundary line.
- When the wrestlers are facing the boundary on the mat or standing position, the referee should be positioned on the boundary between the wrestlers and follow them to the center using commands of "center, center".
- Make sure the command is loud and forceful.
  - While returning to the center the referee should walk between the wrestlers, never in front of the pair. The referee may anticipate a stalling, or fleeing call. Do not turn your back to wrestlers.
- As the wrestlers move toward the OB line, the **HO** and the **AR** should pinch closer together to herd them in.

### Based on the new 2017-18 out of bounds near fall criteria; the following will be Ohio's protocol.

- Since the NFHS rule committee's intent was to allow near fall scoring on the out of bounds line similar to that of scoring a takedown, an escape or a reversal, and
- Since wrestling can continue and a takedown scored with one wrestler standing out of bounds holding a single leg while the opponent is standing on one leg in bounds, and
- If the attacking wrestler lifts his opponent with a double leg, then step out of bounds and the pair of wrestlers are both considered out of bounds ...
- Then Ohio's interpretation of the out of bounds near fall will be the following;
  - If the out of bounds wrestler is in near fall, wrestling will continue when either both knees are in bounds supporting his weight, or,
  - If one knee is in bounds supporting his weight with the other knee off the mat.
  - Wrestling shall be stopped and the wrestlers deemed to be out of bounds when both knees are lifted off the mat, with the offensive wrestler on his toes. The weight is being carried by the offensive wrestler. The toes cannot be bearing the wrestler's weight.

It is necessary to be consistent with respect to scoring on the out of bounds line when scoring takedowns, escapes and reversal, then we need to be consistent with respect to the supporting points of the offensive wrestler being inbounds or out of bounds. Our above interpretation is consistent with respect to scoring on the out of bounds line, makes common sense and follows the intent of the rule and the committee's reasoning for the new near fall scoring rules out of bounds.

### The Assistant Referee (AR):

- The **AR** has only two signals; the "C" for caution/starting violations or clasp hand violation.
- The referee should clearly identify his/her expectations of the **AR**.
- The **AR** must be aggressive enough to point out when he/she disagrees with the referee, but passive enough to know the call is the ultimate responsibility of the referee.
- The referee should always call the match as though he/she has no **AR**.
  - The referee should not confer with the **AR** before the call.
- Generally, a conference happens after a call, away from the coaches and wrestlers.
  - The conference is brief and to the point.
  - The match referee should receive the opinion of the **AR**,
  - Then share his/her thoughts if necessary ... remember it is brief but thorough.
  - First priority is to get it right, then follow procedure with respect to mechanics.
  - If a disagreement exists, the Head Referee makes a final decision and the match moves forward.
- The **AR** should be opposite the referee unless the referee specifies otherwise.

- The **AR** should always be in a position to identify illegal holds, technical violations, potentially dangerous situations, and scoring maneuvers that go away from the referee.
- The **AR** should notify the referee immediately of illegal or unsafe situation. It is up to the referee to stop the match should it become necessary.
- The **AR** is responsible for the timing and the clock.
  - The **AR** should have a direct line to see the clock start and stop on the whistle.
  - The **AR** should assist with any correction on the clock that is necessary.
- The **AR** may count down four, three, two, one ... time! (especially if no tapper is present).
- The **AR must help “catch”/protect the wrestlers from injury; Going into the table, a wall/stage, etc.**

**Note:** The **AR** should not traverse across the center of the mat to get back into the action. **Anticipation is essential.**

## Referee Mechanics in Near Fall Situations

### Directly from the FEET:

- Follow the flow of the action. When the back of the defensive wrestler is exposed, (work to be down on the mat) directly underneath the head of the wrestler on his back, this gives the best vantage position to view both shoulders/scapulae.
- Be in appropriate position ASAP, anticipate takedown directly to near fall.
  - Maintain a silent count while getting down on the mat if the scapulae are in criteria.
  - Do not place or reach a hand under the scapulae or shoulders of the defensive wrestler.
- The referee may need to move off to one side or the other.
  - Look for the fall underneath, while also looking at action happening around the face, hands in the face, eyes, etc.

### From the MAT:

- As action is happening, start lowering your body, get in a ready position to see the near fall coming.
  - The referee must anticipate wrestling skills, to move into position.
- Once criteria is met, give a clear precise, verbal count, “thousand one, thousand two, thousand three, thousand four, thousand five”, along with a simultaneous half swipe motion with your hand. Bend at the elbow; bring it into the chest and then out.
- Verbal count is critical for both wrestlers, while visual signal important to for the coaches, fans and table .
  - The advantage to this is your doing two things at once, this allows everyone around to see and understand what you are doing, and where you in the process.
  - This also slows down your count to a true five seconds.
  - It also allows you an out. If there is not a full swipe of the arm, tell the coach you didn’t have a full two seconds, therefore no points.
- The referee should be down on the mat when the near fall happens.

### Anticipating a Tilt:

- Ready yourself to be able to move to where the back will be exposed.
- The referee should be down on the mat at this point.
- Anticipate the tilt; position yourself at the head of the defensive wrestler ready to see the NF.
  - Start the count once the defensive wrestler is restrained in criteria.
- Once a five count is attained, put your three fingers down on the mat (holding three points). Reason for this is the offensive wrestler may roll him back to his stomach, it’s the same hold. Once the offensive wrestler lets go of the arm and allows the defensive wrestler to base out, clear his arm, and can defend himself, the referee can then award the points (it may be two points if you only got a two, three, or four count). Keep an eye on the offensive wrestler’s back, once in a while he may pull his opponent over the top of himself, possibly pinning himself.

- **DO NOT MAKE UP HAND SIGNALS.**
  - Never make a hand gesture with fingers and thumb showing how close the back is to the mat.
  - Never make a hand signal with a hand straight up and down symbolize a 90 degree angle.
  - Never wave a hand back and forth
  - These are not approved NFHS hand signals, and are a form of coaching.

### **Assistant Referee (AR) in Near Fall Situations:**

- Once a near fall situation occurs the **AR** should remain standing, hopefully over the top of the action.
  - The job as the **AR** is to keep everything clean “up top”.
  - The head referee should be on the mat looking underneath the back of the defensive wrestler being pinned.
- The **AR** job is to observe the hands in the face.
  - In an emergency, he/she may remove the fingers from the eyes. Notify the **HO**
  - Make sure the defensive wrestler isn’t doing anything illegal, the offensive wrestler isn’t doing anything illegal, or to see if the hold becomes illegal.
  - If it becomes illegal, the **AR** needs to notify the head referee, “it’s illegal”. The decision is predicated on if it became illegal by the bottom man doing something to make it illegal, or the top man made it illegal. Then the head referee will make the correct call.
- Also, the **AR** should be watching the clock: two advantages to do so.
  - First; to see if there is either two seconds or more on the clock, or
  - Second; if five seconds or more is on the clock.
  - If not he can help determine how many back points should be awarded.
  - This also helps with the “fall call” If the referee had the fall before the clock was out.
- The **AR** counts down from “four, three, two, one”, then makes a crossing signal above his head with his arms, this lets everyone know, time is out! (as previously discussed w/ referee prior to event)
  - No other scoring can occur now.
  - The **AR** should work opposite from the head referee to see back side action.
  - As the wrestlers get in near fall criteria the **AR** needs to get closer to the action, working to give himself/herself the best view of the head and face area of the defensive wrestler, and also a view of the clock if that is possible.
  - When the defensive wrestler is violently tapping, the official may read this action as a non-verbal form of a scream in pain, honor the possible injury and handle it as per normal stoppage procedure.

## **CONCUSSION PROTOCOL & PROCEDURES**

- The NFHS adopted a concussion rule with respect to safety and stoppage of the match until an Appropriate Health-Care Professional (**AHCP**) approves his/her safe return. [OHSAA.org/wrestling](http://OHSAA.org/wrestling) to find **OHIO HB 143**.
- Ohio House Bill 143 stipulates the appropriate education necessary for all sports officials.
- This is for either a suspected concussion or a head injury
  - **NFHS RULE ...** “Any contestant who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the match and shall not return to competition until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.
  - **NFHS RULE ...** “A designated, on-site appropriate health-care professional who determined a wrestler should not participate, shall not be overruled.”
- **Ohio Law:** starting 2013-14 now requires each sports official to have taken an approved concussion management course, and provide the completion certificate if required by one of the two listed below.
- All OHSAA licensed officials shall possess either a current Department of Education-issued Pupil Activity Program/Coaching Permit or **show evidence of completing an approved online concussion education course** as stipulated in the section entitled **Approved Online Concussion Education Courses**. This course is valid for three years from the date of completion.

- NFHS Associations Concussion in Sports - What you Need to Know:  
<http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=38000>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Heads Up Concussion in Youth Sports On-Line Training Program: [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online\\_training.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html) -
- **The Student-Athlete may not return to competition the same day.**
- The Student-Athlete may only return to practice and/or competition after being assessed by an **AHCP** with written approval from an **AHCP**.
- The OHSAA has provided the referee's concussion report form on-line at OHSAA.org.

## Injury, Blood or Recovery Time

### INJURY TIME:

- The wrestlers are limited to a maximum of two injury time outs totaling 90 seconds.
- The opponent is given choice of position when wrestling resumes after the second injury time out
  - Giving the opponent choice of position upon the conclusion of the second injury time is a huge deterrent to any form of delaying the match.
  - The opportunity to change the choice of position will occur at any time during the match when the second injury time is taken.
- If a wrestler would require a third time out for any injury he/she would automatically default the match to the opponent.

**EXAMPLE:** During the 30-second ride-out overtime period, and with only seven seconds left on the time clock, **wrestler A** uses his second injury time. **Wrestler B**, the defensive wrestler, will have his/her choice of either top or bottom when the match resumes. He/she may elect the top position to finish the :30 second period to win the ride-out period and the match. Remember; at the conclusion of the: 30 second period the offensive wrestler is declared the winner and receives one point for the ride-out.

### BLOOD TIME:

- Blood time has a total accumulative time of five (5) minutes, with as many stoppages necessary.
- The blood clock starts once the referee sees blood from either wrestler in any position, and at any time.
  - The referee signals blood time by touching his/her nose with the appropriate colored arm band.
- Because of the seriousness of blood related problems, the sight of blood takes precedence over all else.
- The new rules regarding near fall situations reward the offensive wrestler if the defensive wrestler starts to bleed or scream.
- The blood clock is **stopped** once the bleeding is **stopped**.
  - The referee should signal the table to stop blood time and record it on the score sheet
  - The referee should then notify both coaches of the amount used.
- Any necessary cleaning of blood from the mat, wrestlers and/or uniforms is time taken by the official and shall not be used from the individual's five minute allotment.
- One important point of emphasis to note, an injury time clock cannot be started if the five-minute blood clock is completely taken. Once a wrestler has taken a total elapsed time of five-minutes, and would require further time to stop any bleeding, the match is stopped and the opponent declared the winner by default ... Although the two-minute recovery clock can be started if the bleeding was caused by an illegal hold, an unnecessary roughness violation or an unsportsmanlike act.

**EXAMPLE:** **Wrestler A** turns **wrestler B** to his back with a cross face cradle. After one-thousand one, the official notices the nose of **wrestler B** begins to bleed. The referee should stop the match, start the blood clock for **wrestler B** and award **wrestler A** two-point (2) near fall.

**EXAMPLE:** **Wrestler A** turns **wrestler B** to his back with a cross face cradle. After one-thousand one one-thousand two, the referee notices the nose of **wrestler B** begins to bleed. The referee should stop the match, start the blood clock for **wrestler B** and award **wrestler A** three-point (3) near fall.



**EXAMPLE: Wrestler A** turns **wrestler B** to his back with a cross face cradle. After the complete five counts, the referee notices the nose of **wrestler B** begins to bleed. The referee should stop the match, start the blood clock for **wrestler B** and award **wrestler A** four-point (4) near fall.

- It is possible for both wrestlers to be using blood time simultaneously.
- It is also possible for both wrestlers to be using injury time simultaneously.
- It is also possible for a wrestler to go from injury time to blood time, and then back to injury time.
  - If this should occur, the wrestler is only charged with one injury time out. It is the official's job to be present with the stopwatch and keep track of the amount of time used for each situation. Remember, blood takes precedence and the wrestler may use as many blood time outs as necessary.
- But, if one is injured and the other is bleeding, only a blood clock is started because blood takes precedence

#### **RECOVERY TIME:**

- Recovery time may only follow a penalty point for an illegal hold, unnecessary roughness or an unsportsmanlike act.
- Recovery time is a total of two minutes (2), and may only be used immediately following the penalty.
  - Recovery time starts when the referee signals the table with an inverted swirling index finger of the matching arm band hand.
  - Time shall be stopped and recorded upon the referee's signal.
- Once the injured wrestler continues to wrestle, he/she may not use any of the unused recovery time.
- The wrestler may use an injury time out once he/she starts to continue the match.
- If the injured wrestler can't continue due to the injury caused by the penalty situation, he/she shall be declared the winner.
- **There are two very important "NO-NOs"** related to the recovery time situation.
  - First, the injured wrestler cannot use injury time immediately following the completed use of his/her recovery time.
  - Second, the injured wrestler cannot re-start the match, and then intentionally stop the match after one second to default to his opponent. There is a procedure to allow that. Read below:
    - The injured wrestler may default the match to his/her opponent prior to the two minute recovery clock expiring. The official may not volunteer this information because that would be coaching/assisting one of the wrestlers, but he/she may answer a question if the coach asks.

**EXAMPLE:** During the first period **wrestler A** lifts and slams **wrestler B**. The official stops the match, starts the recovery clock and awards **wrestler B** one point for the illegal slam. At the conclusion of the two minute recovery clock the coach of **wrestler B** says "my wrestler just needs a little more time and he'll wrestle. Start the injury clock for him and we will only take 20 seconds." This is incorrect, and the official cannot allow this to occur. The official needs to inform the coach that by rule once the two-minute recovery clock is completely taken, his wrestler must step to the stripe to continue the match or he must be declared the winner by disqualification. To continue this scenario, with this explanation given to the coach of **wrestler B**, he now says "well his kid is undefeated and he would have beaten my boy anyway. So, we'll start the match then you blow the whistle right away to stop it and we'll default to him." Again, this is incorrect procedure. We teach our young people nothing if we find a way to skirt the rules of the game. Once the illegal situation occurred and the recovery clock was started, only three things may occur; either **wrestler B** continues to wrestle, **wrestler B** wins by disqualification or **wrestler B** graciously defaults prior to the two-minute recovery clock expiring. The wrestler who commits an illegal act, an unnecessary roughness or an unsportsmanlike conduct violation cannot be declared the winner.

#### **Hand Signal and Mechanics for Injury, Blood and Recovery Time:**



Start the injury clock (1:30)



Stop the injury clock



Start the Blood clock (5:00)



Stop the Blood clock



Start Recovery Clock (2:00)



Stop Recovery clock

### **Mechanics of the Injury, Blood and Recovery Time:**

The mechanics will vary on these three situations depending on what facilitates the stoppage.

- At most levels of competition the table has a stop watch for the different times.
- Signals on the mat should be directed towards the table using the color for the stoppage time.
- Timer will start the stopwatch.
- The referee should stay in the middle or near the injured wrestler with the stop watch.
- Stay quiet as to what you saw, only answer questions asked by the medical personal.
- Don't talk to the coaches or the other wrestler. Silence is your friend here. If you talk to a coach or wrestler it can be misconstrued as favoritism, or worse yet a coach will tell you, "I told you it was illegal, now he is hurt".
- Have the stop watch brought so you can tell the coach when there is one minute left, 30 seconds and 15 seconds. At that point a determination must be made, as to the continuation or not. If the wrestler using the time stoppage can NOT continue, his opponent will determined the winner.
- Except in the case of the recovery time, if the wrestler uses all the recovery time and CANNOT continue, he is the declared winner. The caveat here is that the injured wrestler may default the match prior to the two minute recovery clock expiring.

## **STALLING**

### **General Guidelines**

The most difficult aspect of wrestling is to understand stalling. You must develop a philosophy that will assist in any and all situations. This is where the best referees are recognized above the good referees.

- Stalling is one of the most subjective calls in wrestling because:
  - No two officials call stalling identically
  - No two officials recognize stalling within the same time frame

- Consistency with calling stalling is tough due to the different dynamics occurring in each match
- The perspective of one coach with his wrestler's best interests in mind is always going to be different from the opposing coach's perspective and from the man in the striped shirt
- Because of these variables, stalling will always be a controversial call in high school wrestling
- Each wrestler is required to make an honest attempt to stay within the 10 foot circle and wrestle aggressively regardless of:
  - Position
  - Time of the match
  - Score
- Both wrestlers are equally responsible for initiating and maintaining action
- A wrestler who is overpowered is not stalling
- It is the responsibility of coaches, wrestlers and officials to discourage the use of stalling tactics
- When stalling is recognized, the offender shall be warned/penalized without hesitation by the official regardless of:
  - Score of the match,
  - Position on the mat,
  - Time in the match
- In order to correctly recognize stalling the official must have intimate knowledge of the sport/ wrestling skills, the wrestling rules and how to apply them
- The official must be able to discern when wrestler simply cannot execute and one who chooses not to execute
  - The level of the wrestler's ability must be considered
  - Top level wrestlers are better at masking stalling tactics
- The official must be able to dissect an action or series of actions occurring on the mat and determine if that action(s) is a legitimate attempt to aggressively wrestle or stalling.
- Stalling must be consistently called throughout the match from beginning to end
  - Officials must develop their own techniques and patterns of consistency to identify and penalize stalling
  - Stalling is rarely the result of one specific action or maneuver, rather it is the result of a series of blocking, avoiding contact, and delaying maneuvers occurring throughout the match
  - Aggressive wrestling occurs when a wrestler initiates a maneuver and follows through with an attempt to finish the move
- Each wrestler is required to make an honest attempt to stay within the 10-foot circle and wrestle aggressively, regardless of position or the time or score of the match. Action is to be maintained throughout the match by the contestants wrestling whether in the top, bottom or neutral position and both contestants are equally responsible for initiating action. It is the responsibility of contestants, coaches and referees to avoid the use of stalling tactics or allowing the use thereof. This shall be demonstrated by those responsible with strict enforcement by referees.
- **Neutral Stalling Guidelines:**
  - Allow wrestlers time to set-up takedown attempt(s):
    - Tie-ups
    - Changing levels
    - Maintaining contact
    - Set-ups
    - Pushing/pulling to throw opponent off balance
    - Genuine attempt at takedown within specified time period (30-45 sec.)
  - An honest takedown attempt requires a shot and follow- through
  - Countering a takedown attempt is not stalling unless:
    - Defensive wrestler is content not to improve position

- No efforts at initiating own shot attempts
  - Question to think about: Who is the aggressor?
- **Neutral stalling tactics:**
    - Circling with no attempt at shot
    - Changing levels with no attempt at shot
    - Feigned shot with no follow through
    - Moving opponent to create angles but no follow through attacks
    - Set-ups with no follow through to take advantage of scoring opportunities
    - Interlocking fingers behind the opponent's head and blocking with both elbows
  - **What to recognize:**
    - From neutral start backing out of the circle w/o making contact w/opponent
    - Continuously avoiding contact with opponent
    - Preventing opponent from returning to or remaining in-bounds
    - Playing the edge of the mat
    - Continuously pushing-pulling w/no shot attempt
    - Repeatedly faking contact w/o follow through
    - Tying-up an opponent with an under hook and wrist control without a follow-through shot
    - Collar tie pushing/pulling no follow through
    - Single or double under hook w/o shot attempt
    - Wrist control (single or double) w/o attempt at a shot or prevent opponent's shot
    - Blocking with a forearm or head in a tie-up w/no attempt at shot or to prevent opponent's shot
    - Repeatedly grasping or holding a leg w/no attempt at follow-through to improve position
    - Repeatedly grasping or holding a leg to prevent opponent from scoring
    - Elevating a single leg w/o attempt to finish takedown
    - Repeatedly causing a stalemate
    - Standing behind an opponent in control of torso w/o an attempt to finish on the mat
    - Running a 2 on 1 (Russian Tie) w/o an attack attempt

**Offensive Stalling:** It is stalling when the contestant in the advantage position does not wrestle aggressively and attempt to secure a fall or earn near fall points. The exception is when the offensive wrestler intentionally releases the opponent in order to thereafter immediately attempt to secure a takedown to earn a technical fall by a 15 point margin.

- **General Guidelines:**
  - Top man must work for fall/near fall.
    - No riding time in high school
  - Watch for parallel riding (riding hips) w/o an attempt to break down the opponent.
  - Watch for parallel riding with opponent broken down on the mat with no attempt to get perpendicular to work for fall or near fall.
  - Watch for "busy wrestling" meaning that the top man is moving from side to side without really doing anything.
  - Countering the defensive wrestler's bona fide attempts to escape/reverse (e.g., chain wrestling) is not stalling.
- **General stalling tactics:**
  - Feigning attempts to turn an opponent (e.g., spiral ride w/o getting out to the side and driving on toes or running a half-nelson with opponent broken down w/o getting perpendicular and driving on the toes).
  - Jumping sides with half nelson.

- Content with hanging on w/no attempt to score.
- **What to look for:**
  - Keeping the leg held to the buttocks for more than 5 seconds (defensive wrestler broken down).
  - Two hands on two legs or two hands on one leg in action not designed to break the opponent down, secure a fall, or prevent an escape or reversal.
  - Repeated grasping of one leg or two legs with both hands or arms to break opponent down for the sole purpose of control.
  - Slow hand mount around the waist in top starting position.
  - Repeatedly dropping to one leg when opponent stands up.
  - Deep waist and wrist or ankle w/no attempt to improve.
  - Staying behind an opponent in a rear standing position w/o attempting to return to the mat.
  - Repeatedly using a grapevine and being unable to turn opponent resulting in a stalemate.
  - Repeated use of cross-body ride w/no attempt to improve position.
  - Use of double grapevine for sole purpose of control w/no attempt to improve.
  - Use of cradle w/no attempt to turn.
  - Repeatedly grasping an ankle with no attempt to break opponent down.
  - Running an arm bar with opponent broken down on the mat w/no attempt to improve.
  - Repeatedly grabbing a leg to prevent a switch.
  - Crab ride w/no attempt to improve.
  - Repeatedly throwing in leg (approx. 2 times) when defensive wrestler stands up – lifts rudder leg off of mat.

### **Defensive Stalling:**

To penalize the **bottom wrestler** for stalling is thought by many to be the hardest to call. You really do know when the bottom wrestler is stalling because each has been there. Let's point out some common defensive stalling tactics:

- Does the bottom wrestler initiate an escape or reversal?
- When the top wrestler comes off the hips creating space, does the bottom wrestler attempt to take advantage or content to stay there? Does he/she attempt to improve his/her position to try to score?
- Lying on the mat with your elbows tucked into your body beyond normal reaction time. This position gives little chance for the fall.
- Moving only to counter or block the offensive wrestler. This is a tough call to recognize, however the referee must determine if the bottom wrestler is making an attempt to improve his/her position. The bottom must create action to score. Not initiating action may constitute stalling by his/her blocking the offensive action to turn.
- Grasping the opponent's hands (arms) and just hanging holding.
  - Can you see where this and the tactic mentioned above are similar? When doing this and making no attempt to improve the referee should be thinking stalling.
- Fore head down on the mat, balling up, or continually watching the clock.
- Watching the clock. This is particularly easy when the top wrestler is applying no pressure.
  - Remember looking at the clock is not an automatic stall call, but we should notice the difference in watching the clock and looking at the clock to determine how much time is remaining to make good use of that time by being active.
- Repeated locking on to one or both legs when the top wrestler comes out front.
  - Key here is repeated because you always have the option of calling a stalemate in this situation.
- Repeatedly crawling out of the ten foot circle,
  - To the edge,
  - Out of bounds with no attempt to improve his/her position would constitute stalling.
  - This is often times used as an attempt to get a breather (catch their wind).
- The defensive wrestler is not stalling if he/she is being over powered.

Good officiating isn't something that starts the first day of an officiating career. Rather it is acquired after many years of time on the mat, watching and learning from the top officials either in person, watching video and/or in meeting discussions. With advanced media we now can watch hours of wrestling to help performance to become a better referee. Each must sacrifice time and expense to constantly improve officiating skills. Each referee must put in the time and pay their dues to gain the valuable experiences necessary to recognize all wrestling situation.

## FLEEING / TECHNICAL VIOLATION

**Webster defines fleeing** “... 1. To run away or escape from danger, pursuit, unpleasantness, etc. 2. To pass away swiftly; vanish 3. To move rapidly, go swiftly to run away or escape from; to avoid.”

- There is a significant difference between a stalling violation, which is a warning, and fleeing the mat on the first offense. The fleeing violation should be a technical violation penalty point the first time it occurs, and called consistently.
  - **NFHS Rule** states, “Each wrestler is required to make an honest attempt to stay within the 10 - foot circle and wrestle aggressively, regardless of position or the time or the score of the match. Action is to be maintained throughout the match by the contestants wrestling aggressively whether in the top, bottom or neutral position and both contestants are equally responsible for initiating the action...”
  - **NFHS Rule** states, “Going out of the wrestling area or forcing an opponent out of the wrestling area, by either wrestler at any time as a means of avoiding wrestling, is a technical violation. Both wrestlers should make every effort to remain in bounds. When the referee feels that either wrestler has failed to make every effort to stay in bounds, the offending wrestler shall be penalized. **Penalty points shall not be awarded in situations where near-fall points are earned.**”
  - **NFHS Rule** states “... officials have the authority to penalize wrestlers and, when they fail to do so, they are, in essence giving his opponent an advantage.” ... “Both wrestlers should make every effort to remain in bounds.
  - The wrestlers proximity to the OB line must be considered with the fleeing the mat call.
  - When the referee feels that either wrestler has failed to make every effort to stay in bounds, the offending wrestler shall be penalized.
  - A wrestler goes out of the wrestling area or if he is forces his opponent out of the wrestling area at any time as a means of avoiding wrestling, it is a technical violation.
  - Each wrestler is to wrestle aggressively regardless of the position or the time or the score of the match.
  - Action is to be maintained throughout the match in the offensive, defensive, or neutral positions.

### NEUTRAL POSITION:

- **Wrestler A** shoots a single leg and lifts **wrestler B's** leg. **Wrestler B** hooks a whizzer, and then turns to the out of bounds circle, hops three or four times and pulls **wrestler A** out of bounds.
- Again, **wrestler A** lifts a single leg of **wrestler B**. This time **wrestler B** turns his opponent's back to the outer edge of the circle and drives him straight out of bounds. **Wrestler A** is still holding the leg as he is being pushed out of bounds.
- **Wrestler A**, while attacking from the center of the circle, takes numerous shots. **Wrestler B** continues to back, then eventually backs off the mat to avoid another strong double leg attack from **wrestler A**.

### OFFENSIVE POSITION:

- During the action of being reversed in a switch, **wrestler A** crawls out of bounds as **wrestler B** is arching over the top to turn his hips down to gain control. **Wrestler A** has avoided being scored upon and thinks he is going back to the center of the circle to get a clean start in the referee's position. **Wrestler B** may have earned his neutral position along with the penalty.
- **Wrestler B** hits a stand up and gets to his feet. **Wrestler A**, standing behind and still in control, lifts **wrestler B** and takes several steps to walk him off the mat.

- Or, **wrestler A** simply begins driving **wrestler B** forward. **Wrestler B** tries to turn to stay in bounds, but **wrestler A** continues to drive his opponent off the mat.

#### DEFENSIVE POSITION:

- **Wrestler A** gets taken down, and is immediately put to his back. As **wrestler B** is working to secure a half nelson, **wrestler A** bridges out of bounds before the official gets a two-count.
- **Wrestler A** gets thrown with a lateral drop and is immediately put to his back two, maybe three feet inbounds. As the referee counts ‘one thousand-one’ and flags out one hand count for the near fall, **wrestler B** bridges and drives himself over the out of bounds circle.
- **Wrestler A** applies a cross body then steps over the top into a double grapevine. As **wrestler A** starts a power half, **wrestler B** turns to find the outer circle and crawls out of bounds.

#### THE REFEREE’S POSITION IS CLEAR:

- He/she is to be fair, completely unbiased, and evaluate the match based solely on the performance of both athletes.
- The match official is to impartially apply the rules of the sport for both contestants.
- The examples mentioned above illustrate one wrestler using the out of bounds circle to avoid wrestling, and specifically to avoid being scored upon.
- A wrestling match involves two contestants, and it is not fair for one athlete to work aggressively in the circle while the other intentionally leaves the mat to avoid competition.
- By not awarding the technical violation penalty point when fleeing the mat occurs the aggressive wrestler is being put at a distinct disadvantage.
- Instead, the attacking wrestler should be recognized and rewarded for his wrestling skill and for carrying the bulk of the action in the match.
- Awarding the penalty point is both the correct and fair call in this situation when one of the wrestlers leaves the mat to avoid giving up a score.

**FINAL THOUGHT – SELL THE CALL:** The technical violation penalty should be made promptly, without hesitation, in the spirit of good sportsmanship for both athletes. The call should be made and explained with eye contact at the scoring table. With the call made in this manner, all can understand the referee’s position on the wrestlers leaving the mat to avoid competition. All can see the confidence the referee exhibits while making the call. The athletes can learn from the experience of the competition.

### BITING & FLAGRANT MISCONDUCT

- Biting, or any form of flagrant misconduct, is not to be taken lightly.
- It is the final and ultimate penalty for any wrestler.
- It is the responsibility of every wrestling official to handle the situation promptly and decisively. There are several important aspects the referee must be aware of in every alleged biting incident.
- **First**, if the bite occurs in a place where the defensive wrestler may have bitten himself, the official must see the biting action.
  - Just seeing a cross face doesn’t necessarily mean the defensive wrestler was bitten.
  - The official should see the clamping action of the jaws during the bite.
  - If the referee sees the **defensive wrestler bite himself** and that wrestler shows the referee the teeth marks, it should be an unsportsmanlike conduct on the defensive wrestler.
- **Second**, the bite must be handled when it occurs. Reference should be made to the NFHS Wrestling Rule Book, which states, “...When the referee makes this call it must be an occurrence that is brought to the referee’s immediate attention.”

- The wrestler and/or coach can't wait until the end of the match or sometime thereafter to complain about a bite that took place during the first period.
  - The bitten wrestler must inform and show the referee the bite marks when it occurs.
  - If the wrestler is bitten on his thigh, shoulder, or the back of his leg the official should certainly recognize he could not have bitten himself in these places.
  - The referee should look for both the upper and lower sets of teeth marks indented in the flesh of the injured wrestler.
    - Be aware a tooth and mouth protector will not leave teeth marks.
  - The impression of a bite should be the teeth marks left after the clamping of the bite occurs.
  - There may be bleeding and/or bruising around the bitten area.
  - This all verifies the bite, and now comes the difficult part. Informing the coach and wrestler.
  - Please remember the referee should look for the sharp edge impression of the teeth, seeing the entire outline of the teeth may indicate a cross face with the defensive wrestler turning into it.
- **Third**, once the referee is absolutely sure of the biting incident, it is important the referee handles this situation without delay.
    - If necessary, show the opposing coach the bite imprint for his satisfaction the correct call was made based on the necessary evidence of the situation.
    - He/she needs to exhibit self-confidence, and, in a prompt firm manner, make the flagrant misconduct call.
    - Remember, the flagrant misconduct violation now carries a three-point team deduction, the immediate removal from the premises, and the loss of all team points earned to that point.
  - All OHSAA referees are required to file the necessary written report within 48-hours and contact the offending wrestler's principal or school administrator the first school day following the incident, advising them of the flagrant act that resulted with the disqualification.
    - Look in the OHSAA Official's handbook and the report form is found on OHSAA.org web site.
  - **Suggestion:** get a copy of the bout sheet with the flagrant misconduct penalty recorded on the score sheet, and write yourself a memo of the incident.
    - This will be necessary to assist you in completing the state report form of the ejection. It is also advisable to attach a copy of the score sheet to the reports you distribute to the school and the OHSAA office.
  - All referees are responsible and expected to maintain a clean competitive playing field. Unsporting or flagrant acts must be dealt with promptly, decisively and within the spirit of the NFHS rule book.

## POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS

- The Mission Statement in the NFHS wrestling rule book reads in part ... "We believe national competition rules promote fair play and minimize risks for student participants."
  - **NFHS Rule** states "Holds are potentially dangerous when a body part is forced to the limit of normal range of movement."
  - **NFHS Rule** states ... "Potentially dangerous holds include double wrist locks, split scissors, the guillotine, chicken wing, toeholds, front headlocks (all headlocks), or any holds which could cause serious injury. ... The referee should anticipate the dangers of injury and be in position to block them before the danger point."
  - **NFHS Rule** states "No contestant should ever be put in a position where they must forfeit a neutral position, a position of advantage or a fall because of an injury or danger to life or limb."
- The NFHS provides for both the safe and healthy environment for young athletes, and each state association fosters and upholds the strong concern for safe participation for all student-athletes.
- The most important call for a wrestling referee is the proper and timely use of potentially dangerous.
  - Preventing injuries is the most important task for a wrestling referee.



- Some situations don't have a name, but none the less they are dangerous and unsafe. It is left to the referee and his experienced judgment to recognize situations that can cause serious injury.
- It is important for the referee to have excellent anticipation, knowledge and recognition of wrestling skills, body movement and the ability to sense the wrestlers in the thousands of positions they find themselves.
- The referee must constantly position and re-position himself/herself to have the very best line of vision to view the greatest amount of action.
  - This allows the wrestling referee to fulfill his/her most important duty;
  - The safety of the contestants.

**There are a few important aspects to making a potentially dangerous call:**

- Make the call promptly when a serious situation is anticipated or seen. Do not hesitate!
- A moment of hesitation may be all the time necessary for a serious injury to occur.
- Worse than hesitating, is the referee that walks around the pair of wrestlers indicating the potentially dangerous signal with one hand behind his/her head while following the wrestlers and pointing to the dangerous situation with the other hand. This is an invitation for disaster.
  
- The referee's first reaction should be to blow the whistle, and does it firmly while stepping in to touch the wrestlers to stop action.
- After a short explanation of what was dangerous, the wrestlers should be immediately re-started as they were before the potentially dangerous stoppage.
- **NFHS Rule** provides that a wrestler applying a legal hold/maneuver shall not be penalized when the opponent turns a legal hold into an illegal hold. This situation shall be deemed a potentially dangerous.
- **Remember: Call it when you see it, sense it or feel a dangerous situation.**

**What if the referee does not stop a potentially dangerous situation?**

- A wrestler will most likely be seriously injured, and can be sent off to the hospital with the rescue squad. Later, it is learned the injured wrestler is having surgery, will miss school, will not be able to participate in a spring sport (or out of athletics for years), and will need several months of painful extensive rehabilitation when the surgery heals.
  - This could have been avoided if the referee blew his/her whistle several seconds sooner.
  - If referees are going to make a mistake, make the mistake on the side of safety.
  - Allowing a situation to continue so a wrestler can possibly earn two points for a near fall is not worth the chance of serious injury, being hospitalized and a young athlete needing surgery?
- Coaches and parents not only entrust wrestling referees with the fair and unbiased evaluation of their athlete's match, but they are also entrusted with their safety.
- Referees should protect the wrestlers from hitting the wall,
  - Landing on the floor,
  - Being tossed into the scorer's table, and
  - Especially from injury due to the strange ways they get entangled with each other.
- Using potentially dangerous swiftly can save months of pain and family heartache.
- **The HO and the AR must protect them at all times.**

## **STALEMATE**

**Webster Defines Stalemate** "... 1. Chess: any situation in which it is impossible for one of the players to move without placing his or her king in check: it results in a draw 2. Any unresolved situation in which further action is impossible or useless; deadlock; draw."

- **NFHS Rule states...** “It is a stalemate when contestants are interlocked in a position other than a pinning situation, in which either wrestler can improve their respective position(s); or either competitor has the hands locked around one leg of the opponent to prevent scoring. The referee shall, as soon as possible, stop the match and wrestling shall be resumed as for an out of bounds. When both hands are locked repeatedly around one leg of an opponent to prevent scoring, it is considered stalling.”

#### **Common mistakes:**

- It is often called when there is no stalemate present and the athletes need to wrestle their way out of trouble, or
- It is called rather than making a stalling call, which
- An inappropriate stalemate call, called too soon or too late, is an act in which the referee is interfering in the progress of the match, and thereby could enter into the final outcome.
- Mixed signals are given when contradicting mechanics are shown. I.e. a stalling signal after already having given a stalemate call. If a wrestler has created the stalling situation because of repeated stalemates, then simply make the stalling call.

#### **The proper stalemate call and mechanics:**

- A stalemate occurs when both wrestlers are entwined in such a position that neither athlete can improve his/her position without jeopardizing either his/her own safety for fear of injury, or loss of position thus being scored upon.
- In essence, if he/she would let go to try to improve he/she would give up a score to the opponent, therefore by continuing to hold the stalemate position he/she is counter-wrestling and can't let go.
- The referee needs to allow the athletes to compete, wrestle their way through the match and notice the point in time when their continued progress has halted.
  - Recognize the stoppage of action is due to both their respective positions being locked in such a manner that they can't advance.
  - Pause a moment to make sure of the situation, and once you realize their positions will not improve for fear of jeopardizing themselves.
  - Blow the whistle, give the proper mechanic signal with the closed fists pressed together in front of the chest, and get them to release their grasp.
  - Verbally communicate with the table and wrestlers then restart the match.

#### **Recognize these positions and promptly make the correct call:**

- If the referee hesitates he/she allows time to run off the clock with no significant action.
- If there is no action at the edge of the mat and one wrestler is out of bounds, the referee may stop the match and return the wrestler to center.

## **Coach Conference at the Table**

How should the conference be handled when the coach comes to the table? What are a few helpful ways to handle the difficult coach during a heated situation? The official's body language speaks volumes.

1. Remember, it is important to approach all conferences in the same manner.
  - Don't assume the worst, and expect a screaming coach.
  - You need to handle yourself in a calm, patient controlling manner.
  - Keep in mind you are the official, and the only person in control of the entire situation.
  - This process starts by instructing the wrestlers to stay inside the 10-foot center circle,
  - If either or both leave the 10' circle it is unsportsmanlike conduct; make the call
2. Then walk to the scorer's table to meet the coach, one of whom must have been a coach sitting in the zone.

- While moving to the table it is important to collect your thoughts, and replay the last few moments of the match in your head.
- When you reach the table, turn and stand open at 90 degrees to keep the wrestlers in your vision.
- Assume an open body language position to listen to the coach; do not fold arms, etc.
- Look the coach direct in the eyes, and DON'T SAY A WORD!
- Listen to what he has to discuss.
  - Part of defusing a potentially heated situation, is not to put fuel on the fire.
  - By that we mean, don't give him new and more information to argue with.
  - If there is some hesitation, then ask him in a calm, polite, professional manner "Coach, you called me to the table, what can I do for you?"
  - This beginning may be enough to defuse the possible hot situation.
  - As you listen, formulate and deliver a calm, clear, concise answer to his question.
  - Especially the criteria of the rule you applied to make the decision.
  - Do not let this become a question and answer session.
  - Keep it brief, then do one of two, possibly three things;
  - Thank him and ask him to return to coach's corner or
  - Thank him, remind him he is not allowed to question judgment, and inform him of the warning for misconduct. Then ask him to return to the coach's corner, and
    - Instruct the scorer to record a warning for misconduct on Coach.
  - If during the exchange, or at the conclusion he is acting in an unsportsmanlike manner it is important to exercise the unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and deduct the team point,
  - The last resort is a flagrant misconduct call on the coach.
  - Return to the center of the mat and promptly resume the match.
- The **AR** remains in the 10 ft. circle w/ the wrestlers.
- The **AR** also prevents the wrestlers from leaving the circle as instructed.

#### Remember these six thoughts.....

1. The coach has the right to a conference and is heard at the table, while you have the duty to grant his request and listen to his questions or concerns.
2. Be APPROACHABLE ... LISTEN ... EXPLAIN ... THEN RESTART THE MATCH.
3. Be polite, professional, direct, decisive, confident and consistent.
4. **Know this**; a referee distinguishes himself/herself by how he/she handles the tough ones.
5. Do not tolerate verbal abuse or unsportsmanlike conduct in any form.
6. **DO NOT TOUCH THE COACH**, respect his space and he should respect yours.

The referee must be in control of the match. Do not allow a coach to become an embarrassment or belligerent. Do not allow a coach to harass the scorer's table and the workers, they are your team; protect them. Only one coach per school may conference at any one time.

### WARN OR PENALIZE THE COACH

#### Does the coach get a warning for his actions? ... Or is it an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty?

- Although the two may occur together, there is a distinction.
- The **only time a coach gets a warning for his actions** is when he asks for a conference at the scorer's table to discuss the misapplication of a rule.
  - If the coach was correct with his statements and approach to the matter in question, the referee shall make the necessary correction and the match continued without penalty.
  - If the official handled the situation correctly, and/or the coach questions the referee's judgment he receives a warning for misconduct.
  - This warning is actually on the coaching staff,
  - The next misconduct offense will result in a one-point team deduction.

- The third misconduct violation will again result in another two-point team deduction along with the head coach removed from the event for the remainder of the day.
- It is the responsibility of every referee to conduct the match so as to not allow coaches to overrun the scorer's table with time wasting questions. By applying the warning for misconduct rule promptly, the coaches will not take advantage of your good nature at the table. Although we must honor the coach's request for a conference, do not hesitate to apply the misconduct rule when necessary.
- Any form of unsportsmanlike conduct or certainly flagrant misconduct is hit with the penalty of point deduction(s) and/or removal immediately. There is no warning for these situations.
- The referees need to meet these embarrassing situations swiftly, and in a firm confident manner.
- It is important to learn the rules of the game, study and discuss them in your local meetings. We need to learn the criteria to recognize when these situations begin to appear.
- Listen to the veteran officials describe situations they have encountered during their many years, and learn from each other.
- The learning will be a life-long process, so remember to learn something from everyone.
- Below are several situational examples that may help in understanding the need to approach table confrontations promptly and in a professional manner.
- We've all been involved in a variety of different coach's conferences at the scorer's table.
- Some are short and simple, while others require a little more effort and patience.
- How should we handle the coach who comes to the table with his fuse already lit?
- What are a few helpful ways to handle the difficult coach during a heated situation?
  - First, it is important to approach all conferences in the same manner.
    - Don't assume the worst, and expect a screaming coach.
    - You need to handle yourself in a calm, patient controlling manner.
    - Keep in mind you are the official, and the only person in control of the entire situation.
  - Second, instruct the wrestlers to stay inside the 10-foot center circle, and then walk to the scorer's table to meet the coach.
    - While moving to the table it is important to collect your thoughts, and replay the last few moments of the match in your head.
    - When you reach the table, turn and stand so as to keep the wrestlers in your vision.
    - Look the coach direct in the eyes, and don't say a word.....repeat.....DON'T SAY A WORD!
    - Listen to what he has to discuss. Part of defusing a potentially heated situation, is not to put fuel on the fire. By that I mean, don't give him new and more information to argue at you.
    - If there is some hesitation, then ask him in a calm, polite, professional manner "Coach, you called me to the table, what can I do for you?"
    - This beginning may be enough to defuse the possible hot situation.
- As you listen, formulate and deliver a calm, clear, concise answer to his question.
- Especially the criteria of the rule you applied to make the decision. Do not let this become a question and answer session.
- Keep it brief, then do one of two things;
  - Thank him and ask him to return to coach's corner or
  - Thank him, remind him he is not allowed to question judgment, and inform him of the warning for misconduct. Then ask him to return to the coach's corner and instruct the scorer to record a warning for misconduct on Coach B.
- Return to the center of the mat and promptly resume the match.

### **CORRECTABLE ERRORS**

- What's correctable, what isn't? What's the procedure? Rule 6-6 addresses these questions.
- First and foremost, Rule 6-6 breaks errors into three basic elements:
  - Bad time,
  - Timekeeping errors, and

- Scoring errors.
- Each has its own conditions that must be kept in mind when tackling correctable errors.

**Bad Time:** is either...

- Time wrestled with the wrestlers in the **wrong position**; or,
- The wrong wrestler given choice at the start of the third period; or
- The choice of position not given after the second injury time out; or
- After a two point stalling call; or
- The clock continues to run at the **end of the period**, or
- The clock continues to run **following a violation**.
- Other than the start of the third period, addressed below, when encountering bad time you must first evaluate whether the amount of bad time can be determined.
- If not, it would be deleted. Otherwise, it must be re-wrestled prior to the start of any subsequent period.

**Two other situations appear to bad time, but are easily corrected:**

- Those include the wrong wrestler being given choice:
  - At the start of the second period, or
  - At the start of the first 30-second tiebreaker in overtime.
  - Rule 6.6.1 makes it clear on resolving this situation: the opponent may be given choice at the start of the third period or at the start of the second 30-second tiebreaker in overtime.
  - NO REWRESTLING IS NECESSARY.

**Following the second injury time out:**

- If the amount of bad time can be determined
  - It must be deleted and re-wrestled prior to the start of any subsequent period.
  - The wrestlers are to be placed in their proper position and wrestling resumed without delay.
  - All points earned during bad time are cancelled.
  - Although any penalties (technical violations), or injury time that may have occurred during bad time are also cancelled **except**
    - Flagrant misconduct, unsportsmanlike conduct, unnecessary roughness, illegal holds/maneuvers, and blood time.
    - Try this acronym as to what stays in the scorebook: **“RIBFUN”**  
**R**oughness (as in unnecessary roughness)  
**I**llegal holds  
**B**lood time  
**F**lagrant misconduct  
**U**nsportsmanlike conduct
- It’s also bad time when starting the wrestlers in the wrong position at the **start** of the third period.
- Stop the match and give both wrestlers one-minute rest.
- Except for “RIBFUN”, all points earned are cancelled and the entire third period re-wrestled.

**Timekeeping errors** occur when either...

- The timekeeper makes an error; or
- The clock fails to start when you indicate time is to begin.

You must make a judgment concerning the amount of time that should have been consumed.

Certainly it’s within your authority to consult with the timekeeper, or even the coaches, to get their perspectives on the matter. Ultimately, however, the decision is yours as to the amount of time that needs to be adjusted. As in bad time, timekeeping errors must be adjusted prior to the start of any subsequent period.

**Scoring errors** can be made by

- The referee, or
- The scorer
- Scoring errors can impact either the match or team score.
- Their correction depends entirely on whether they occur in a dual meet or tournament, and
- Whether it is a recordable or computational error.
- The various remedies under Rule 6.6.4 a. & b.
  - A recordable error is one in which the correct points and/or designated scoring symbol was erroneously entered on the scorebook or bout sheet.
  - A computational error is when a wrestler's or team's score is incorrectly added together.
- The correction process is handled differently depending on whether it is encountered in a dual meet or tournament.

#### **Dual meet match scoring errors by you, timekeeper, or official scorer:**

- A recordable error necessitating additional wrestling must be corrected prior to the offended contestant leaving the mat area
  - Mat Area: Rule 2.1.5: the wrestling mat plus 10 feet.
- If additional wrestling is not necessary the error may be corrected as long as the offended contestant or coach remains in the mat area.
- A computational error must be corrected within 30 minutes after the conclusion of the dual meet.
- If the error requires additional wrestling,
  - In the case of creating a tie taking the match into overtime, the error must then be corrected prior to the start of the next match.

#### **Tournament match scoring errors:**

- A recordable error must be corrected prior to the offended wrestler leaving the mat area if additional wrestling is necessary
  - Mat Area: Rule 2.1.5: the wrestling mat plus 10 feet.
- Otherwise, when additional wrestling is **NOT** necessary, the offended wrestler **or** coach must remain in the mat area.
- A computational error must be corrected prior to the next match in whom either wrestler competes.
- Again, if additional wrestling is necessary, it must be corrected prior to the **offended wrestler** leaving the mat area.

#### **Dual meet or tournament team scoring errors:**

- **Rule 6.6.5 a, b** Recordable or computational errors must be corrected within 30 minutes after the conclusion of the dual meet or tournament and posting of the official score. This means any discrepancy in computation must be reported to the tournament manager or head score keeper within the 30-minute time frame to give the tournament management the opportunity to check for any errors. If this is done within the 30-minute window the official score is not yet posted until it can be verified.
- There is no question errors create stressful situations for all concerned and could easily turn a competitive match/event into a major distraction.
- Avoiding errors is every referee's goal, but ...
- When they do occur, and given a thorough understanding of Rule 6.6, the referee is able to approach such situations equipped to act quickly and decisively to return everyone's focus back to the action.

**“Stand for something. Don’t quest for popularity at the expense of morality and ethics and honesty. Daniel Webster taught this country that what is popular is not always right, and what is right is not always popular.”**

**Howard Cosell**

**“Don’t be afraid to take a stand. Don’t be afraid to speak up. Consider whether something is right or wrong, not whether it’s popular. You cannot make any useful contribution to society unless you do.”**

**Howard Ferguson  
“The Edge”**