

Be Prepared, A Wrestling Referee's Pre-Match Checklist

By Ed Rawlins, August 2007

Personal preparation is the first step when working a dual meet or tournament. My military experience teaches you that before you conduct any type of operation you conduct Pre-Combat Checks (PCCs). These PCCs are normally some sort of checklist that you can run down and make sure you have the required equipment to be successful. I apply the same approach when preparing to officiate. The worse thing that can happen is to show up at your event and have forgotten something. Soldiers going through the U.S. Army Ranger School are quickly taught the first standing order that dates back to 1759, "*Don't forget nothing.*"

Below is a simple checklist to help prepare you for a match or tournament.

- A gym bag that holds all your gear**

Uniform/Accessories:

- Clean and professional looking slacks and shirt (Traditional or gray pinstripe (allowed beginning in 2007)). If your shirt is faded and your slacks look worn, you will look unprofessional when making a first impression. All shirts should have the correct patches in the proper place.
- 2-3 pair of black socks.
- Clean and bright wrist bands (Red and Green for Folk-Style, Red and Blue for International).
- Black shoes that are polished. This is the official's preference. I prefer the walking/cross training type of shoe, while others like wrestling shoes. If your shoe has white stripes on it, by rule they should be colored in and be completely black.
- Extra shoe laces.
- A black belt.
- Undergarments: T-Shirt/Underwear. I prefer compression shorts (always wear a dark color in case your pants rip) and a moisture repelling under shirt. There are many brands out there but I prefer the Under-Armor brand.
- Black whistle with lanyard. I prefer the plastic whistles (Fox 40 brand) rather than the metal whistle. If you like the metal whistles, recommend a cover to prevent injury to your teeth.
- Red/Green or Red/Blue flip disks.
- Random Draw Kit (Folk-Style) Example: [Download a Random Draw Kit](#)
- Black jacket for between sessions/to keep warm.

Note: For every piece of equipment listed above, it is a smart idea to bring two of everything. If your pants rip, you have a back up. If a fellow official forgets wristbands or a flip disk, you can help him out. An extra shirt can be used to change into for the finals of a tournament. Shoes are the exception, I usually bring one pair.

Personal/Hygiene Items: These are suggestions but I've found these to be useful to keep in the bag.

- A towel for showering.
- Shower shoes.
- Combination lock (Hopefully you'll get your own secured changing area provided by the host. However, this isn't always the case).
- Soap/Shampoo.
- Tooth Paste/Brush.
- Deodorant.
- Shaving items.
- Plastic bag (to put your wet/used uniform into when complete).
- Small sewing kit.
- Foot powder.
- Aspirin/Tylenol (any other needed medications).
- Chewing gum.
- A small medical kit can be included, but the host usually has trainers that can support you.
- Braces (knee) if you need them.
- Something to read/listen to during breaks

Wrestling Items: These items are not required and it is not the official's job to provide. However, I bring these items because the fact is, some schools/coaches are just not prepared and I don't want to waste time.

- One set of Red/Green ankle bands.
- A stop watch. There are many times when the school doesn't have these to keep track of Blood, Recovery or Injury time.

Pre-Meet/Officiating Items:

- Pen and Notebook. To take notes, write down names of wrestlers that have to correct their appearance ect.
- Current Rules Book, Case Manual and any on-line interpretations that may alter the printed publications.
- Forms required by State Association (Ejection Form).
- Locker room visit notes.
- Notes to brief your table workers; time keepers, score keepers, trainers, PA announcer, security personnel ect.

- Map/directions to the venue. Plan to arrive early enough to conduct your pre-meet duties, weigh-ins (if your area does them) and skin/health inspections.
- Contact phone numbers: Host AD/coach, fellow referees, association officers.
- Evaluation cards/forms if utilized.

The list is not inclusive and is subject to each official's needs but I find it helpful to have a list so you "*Don't forget nothing*".