

Refereeing for Beginners

So, you have decided to become a wrestling referee. What are the things you are going to need to start in this avocation? You will need:

- A thick skin
- A sense of humor
- The ability to take criticism
- The ability to function when total chaos reigns.
- Black trousers
- Black socks
- Black shoes
- Black whistle & black lanyard
- Black & white stripped shirt (1 “ stripes), short-sleeve or gray shirt w/black pinstripes
- Red & Green wristbands
- A red & green flip disk.
- A current rule book

Some of the things that you will want to have are:

- Spare pants
- Spare shirt
- Carry bag for all items
- A mentor
- Spare everything else
- A case book
- Did I mention a sense of humor?

Once you have, at least, the required items it is time to attend a training clinic. Here you will learn the rules of wrestling as it is done in high school and youth programs, collectively known as Folkstyle, Collegiate or Scholastic. Once your head stops spinning from the rules, as you know them to be, not as you thought they were, it is time to work on the mechanics of being a referee. That is why you are here. As a new referee it is not likely that you will be asked to work by yourself, you will have an experienced referee to ask questions of and be corrected by. As you gain experience you will progress from lower level matches to higher level matches. Most youth programs only have tournaments, high schools have tournaments and other types of meets based on the dual. All events require a weigh-in prior to wrestling.

The dual is a match between two teams with one bout in each weight class. The schools can only have one wrestler actually wrestle in each bout. The wrestlers must qualify for that weight class to wrestle in that

weight. If one school does not have a wrestler for a weight class, then that match is forfeited by that school. A wrestler who receives a forfeit can not wrestle in any other weight class. If neither school has a wrestler for a weight class, then it is a double forfeit and neither school will earn points for that match. Once all matches are wrestled, the team points earned by each wrestler are totaled, subtracting team point penalties, and the winning team is determined. If there is a tie between the teams, follow the tie-breaking criteria listed in the rule book.

The various types of events based on the dual are:

- Tri's – meets with three teams in attendance
- Quad's – meets with four teams in attendance
- Multi-ways – meets with 5 or more teams in attendance
- Dual meet tournaments – meets where teams advance through brackets based on win/loss of a dual

Individual tournaments are meets where the schools are represented by one wrestler in each weight class. The wrestlers then progress through the event based on win/loss of each bout.

In all cases you, as the new official, will report to the Head/Lead official to find out what your assignment will be for the event. Do not leave the event without notifying the Head/Lead official. The Head/Lead official is there to administer the tournament and assist with your progress.

Now, are you ready to step out on the mat? Think so, well think again. OK, lets' do it.

The Match

Step out to the center of the mat. Make sure you are in proper and complete uniform before doing so.

From there you will observe the wrestlers as they head to the score table to check in for the match. Check them as they move towards the table to see if they are properly dressed and equipped. If you spot an error, have them fix it before they check in. If their errors are fixed prior to check-in, you do not have to penalize them. Once they have checked-in then it will be necessary to follow the penalty chart and assess penalties. Make a mental note of which wrestler is which color; you will need to know this later.

Have the wrestlers stand on their lines (neutral starting position) and shake hands. When ready step back and blow your whistle, also give the starting hand signal. Now observe the wrestlers carefully from a distance. You want to be far enough away so that you can see everything they are doing but close enough to stop them from violating the rules or hurting each other. Basically you will want to be looking between them as they face each other. When one of them makes a scoring attempt you will need to change position so that you can observe the entire move and be in the best spot when the attempt finishes.

Once a takedown is secured move to the front (where the heads are) to observe what is happening. Move from side to side to watch what is happening away from the heads and make sure everything is a legal hold.

Blow the whistle to stop the match when:

- They go out of bounds
- An illegal hold is applied
- Bleeding or injury
- You become concerned for safety (potentially dangerous hold)
- Both wrestlers need to be addressed
- A fall or tech fall occurs
- Time expires
- A coach requests a timeout to discuss a rule, when there is no significant action

Restarts from out of bounds call for each wrestler to be placed where they were when they went out of bounds, Offensive, defensive or neutral. The offensive wrestler may inform the referee of his intent to have a neutral start. Score an escape for the defensive wrestler and start the match in neutral.

If the first period ends and you do not have a winner, move to the second period. Give the choice of position to the correct wrestler and start the period.

For duals, the correct wrestler will be decided by the pre-meet disk flip. One team will have chosen odds and the other team is evens. That choice determines who reports first for each match as well as who will have choice in the second period. The team with the odd matches will have choice in the 1st, 3rd, 5th, etc... All matches count as odd or even, including forfeits. For tournaments you will flip the colored disk and the color that shows will have choice. The choices available are, offensive (top), defensive (down), neutral, or defer choice. Ask the correct wrestler "Do you want to be up, down, neutral or defer?". Try to position the wrestler so that he is facing his coach when you ask for his choice. Once the wrestler answers, that is the choice; coaches can not change the choice nor can the wrestler. If the answer was "Defer" ask the other wrestler "Do you want to be top, bottom or neutral?". Place the wrestlers in the correct positions and start the period. If the second period ends without a winner then give the other wrestler choice and start the third period. Develop a system to remind you who will have choice for the 3rd period, flip disk, wrist band, etc... If there was no winner in the 3rd period, place the wrestlers in the neutral starting position and start Sudden Victory. The wrestler who scores first will be the winner. If the score involves a takedown to the back then he is allowed to continue the match to attempt to get a pin.

If there is no winner from the Sudden Victory, then go to the tie-breakers. See the sheet on the Tiebreaker for 2007-08. At the end of the match bring both wrestlers back to the center and have them shake hands. Then raise the hand of the winning wrestler.

Stopping the match

If the wrestlers go out of bounds then blow the whistle and stop the match. Have the wrestlers return to the center of the mat. Always keep at least one wrestler in front of you on the way back to the center. This way they can't do anything you can't see. Put them in the correct position and restart the match.

If the offensive wrestler applies an illegal hold. Stop the match and watch them closely as they get up. Do not let them do anything stupid at this point.

Face the scorer's table and signal the penalty and point(s) properly. If you awarded points due to the illegal hold then correct the score and continue the match. Place the wrestlers for the restart, as an out of bounds, and restart the match.

If the defensive wrestler applies an illegal hold, evaluate the situation. If he is not on his back, stop the match and penalize as above. If the defensive wrestler is in near-fall criteria and in danger of being pinned, slow down and evaluate the situation closely. If there is no danger to the offensive wrestler, allow the hold to continue. If the situation ends without a pin, stop the match and award points as required. Rule 5-9-2i.

Stop the match when you observe bleeding from one or both of the wrestlers. Award points as earned (5-9-2f, g, h) and start the blood time clock for the wrestler involved. Make a note to yourself about the position of the wrestlers when you stopped the match. Have the coach/medical staff attend to the bleeding wrestler and go to the scorer's table to monitor and advise on blood time left.

Each wrestler has 5 minutes of blood time with no limit on the amount of time-outs for bleeding. Once bleeding is stopped and treatment given, stop the blood clock. Have the coach clean up any blood from his wrestler that is on the mat. Restart the match as an out of bounds.

If one of the wrestlers is injured or indicates injury, stop the match. Award points as earned (5-9-2f, g, h) and start the injury clock for that wrestler. It is injury time if the wrestler is hurt by a legal move. Summon the coach onto the mat to tend to his wrestler or allow the wrestler to go to his coach. If needed, summon the competition medics. Go to the

scorer's table and monitor and advise on the injury time left. Injury time is limited to 1 ½ minutes or 2 timeouts. Once either of those conditions occur, there is no more injury time and the wrestler must either wrestle or default. If this is the 2nd injury timeout for a wrestler, his opponent will have choice of position for the restart.

If the wrestler was injured by an illegal move, he has 2 minutes of recovery time. If he can not continue the match after using recovery time, he will win.

If a hold moves to potentially dangerous and you become concerned for the limb or joint, stop the match and restart it as an out of bounds.

If the match is degenerating into a stall fest or fistfight or other non-wrestling event, stop the match. Take both wrestlers to the center and talk to them there. Leave no doubt about what you want to see happen, wrestling.

If a fall or tech-fall happens stop the match. A fall is when the shoulders or scapula of one wrestler are held to the mat for 2 seconds. The match is over at this point. If a tech-fall (15-point difference) happens, stop the match unless the defeated wrestler is on his back. In this case wrestling continues to allow for the fall. Once the tech-fall happens the winning wrestler can only lose by flagrant misconduct. No additional scoring can happen.

If time has expired stop the match. Move on to the next period or declare the winner as appropriate.

If a coach has requested a timeout to discuss a rule. Stop the match when there is no action occurring. Discuss the situation with the coach. If a change is needed, make the change. If not, tell the coach he is now being penalized for misconduct (See Penalty Chart) and restart the match as an out of bounds. If there was a change, restart the match as appropriate.

Scoring

A wrestler scores when :

- He secures a takedown – gains control of his opponent down on the mat. 2 points.
- He escapes – gains a neutral position after being controlled. 1 point.
- He reverses – gains control over his opponent either down on the mat or from a rear-standing position. 2 points
- He holds his opponent in near-fall criteria for 2 second or more. 2 second = 2 points. 5 seconds = 3 points

- His opponent commits an illegal act – illegal hold, stalling, false start, unsportsmanlike conduct, unnecessary roughness, etc... 1 or 2 points, see penalty chart.
- He rides out his opponent in the tie-breaker- the top wrestler is awarded 1 point for the ride out (RO) which is recorded on the bout sheet.

The winning wrestler is the wrestler who:

- Has the most points
- Did not default
- Did not disqualify himself
- Did not forfeit
- Pinned his opponent

Ending the Match

When the match has ended take both wrestlers to the center of the mat. Have the wrestler's shake hands. Take hold of their hands with yours, matching their colors to your wristbands. Raise the hand of the winning wrestler. Release them and watch them to make sure they do nothing that would be USC. They are not required to shake the other coach's hand.

Penalties

Penalties during a match are usually match points. A wrestler is punished by giving his opponent points. A wrestler who commits 4 penalties is disqualified from the match and the match is over. The opponent wins. If one of the wrestlers commits flagrant misconduct during the match, the match is over and the opponent wins. Also 3 team points will be deducted from the offending wrestlers' team, all advancement points will be erased and the wrestler removed from the event and the premises.

Penalties that occur before or after a match will be team point penalties. These will be flagrant misconduct and unsportsmanlike conduct. Unsportsmanlike penalties are 1 team point for the 1st offense and 2 team points for the 2nd. UC penalties are attached to the individual committing them and require removal for the 2nd UC penalty. UC penalties carry over from day to day in an event. Flagrant misconduct penalties are 3 team points and removal from the event and premises for the duration of the event for the offender.

Coach Misconduct –

A coach who requests a timeout for a discussion and does not change the referee's mind will be penalized for misconduct. It is a warning for the 1st

offense, 1 team point for the second offense, 2 team points for the 3rd offense and removal from the premises for the day. Coach misconduct penalties are charged to the head coach of a team and start fresh everyday.

ALWAYS notify the Head/Lead official of all penalties to coaches. Make notes on the bout sheet of penalties to coaches. Misconduct can only occur at the scorer's table during a conference between the coach and the referee. If the coach interferes with the progress of the match from anywhere else it is unsportsmanlike conduct and a team point penalty (See Penalty Chart). A coach always has the right of approaching the table to request a conference. A referee will always grant the request when there is no action occurring.

Now that you have made it through your first match, repeat this between 80 and 150 times at your first tournament.

Things you can do to get better.

1. Read your rule book. Yes, again.
2. Read the case book.
3. Ask your mentor.
4. Watch video from the official's point of view.
5. Attend your association meetings.
6. Visit officials' forums on the internet.
7. Ask your mentor.
8. Read the rule book, yet again.
9. Attend events and observe other officials.