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NAW Officials: Duties of Referees

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Below are a list of the categories that have been identified as key areas to be aware of as a wrestling officials. They have been put together to help all referees be consistent with the duties of all officials/referees in Arizona.

1. Jurisdiction
 - a. Time of arrival on site until signing of score book
2. Arrival
 - a. Arrive 15 – 30 minutes early
 - b. Make sure the mats are aligned with the scorer's tables (red/green/markers)
 - c. Call home school about times
 - d. Meet with coaches making sure teams are on time
 - e. Number of mats and matches
 - f. Health care professionals
 - g. Check health of athletes; skin, documents, hair restrictions, nails. Before weigh-ins. Nets
3. Weigh-Ins
 - a. Head to Head or shoulder to shoulder
 - b. Can a team weigh-in on time if?
 - c. Drawing for starting weight class
4. Pre-Match
 - a. Meet with scorer's table:
 - i. Scorer and time keeper
 - ii. Go over signals; how to write, circle first score
 - iii. Extra papers and pencils
 - iv. Injury clock
 - v. Towel person
5. Match
 - a. Stand at top of circle facing scorer's table
 - b. Watch wrestlers check in at table

- c. Look for: uniform, taping, shoes, hair, headgear, ready to wrestle
6. Mat Mechanics Overview
 - a. Mat mechanics is often the ruler officials and coaches use to gauge the performance of officials
 - b. Mat mechanics refers to; the speed and or efficiency officials get into position, level changes, anticipation, clear crisp signals, overall communication, distance, stalling, recognition, near fall recognition, handling difficult situations, composure, proper position, maintaining flow
 - c. Just as wrestlers learn and practice series of techniques for proficiency, officials must also learn and practice techniques to attain proficiency.
 7. Addressing Coaches
 - a. Allow the coach to speak
 - b. If the coach is questioning your judgement, the coach must be penalized
 - c. If clarifying a situation or score, provide the clarification and return to wrestling promptly
 - d. If the official is wrong, change the call or fix the situation and return to wrestling promptly
 - e. Allow only one coach from each school at the table
 8. Criteria
 - a. The top wrestler is on his belly between bottom wrestler's legs (bottom wrestler is on his buttocks)
 - i. If the top wrestler is holding both legs of the bottom wrestler anywhere from the knees to the waist beyond reaction time, award a takedown
 - ii. The term "setting" is a criteria many officials use to describe when to award the take down
 - iii. In this same basic position, if the offensive wrestler encircles the waist of the defensive wrestler, give the takedown (old criteria)
 - b. Neutral position, one wrestler takes other wrestler to the mat so that only both hands are on the mat (wheelbarrow) beyond reaction time, award a takedown
 - c. Takedowns at the boundary are unique
 - i. If both feet of the top wrestler are within the boundary line, award a takedown even if the bodies of both wrestler are out of bounds
 - ii. The top wrestler must be holding either both feet or both legs
 9. Stalling in the advantage position (mat wrestling)
 - a. When the offensive wrestler is content to hold his opponent on the mat without moving to a perpendicular position and work for a fall, he is stalling
 - b. Use time as a measure to gauge the length of time the offensive wrestler remains on the hips
 - c. 20-25 seconds is sufficient for any wrestler to move off to the side (perpendicular)
 - d. After coming off the hips it is sufficient for the offensive wrestler to simply move out to a perpendicular position and hold his opponent on the mat without working for the fall
 - e. There must be appreciable action, turning or almost turning an opponent is the measure of an appreciable action
 - f. Consider 90 degrees or more as appreciable action
 10. Stalling in the defensive position (mat wrestling)
 - a. Remaining on all fours is a basic start
 - b. Content to just lie on the mat is a belly-down position (camping out)
 - c. Grasping the opponent's hands and just holding them close to the body
 - d. Lying on the mat with elbows held in close to the body
 - e. Looking at the clock
 - f. Not making any real attempt to escape or reverse
 11. Fleeing the mat (Section 3 – Technical Violation – Article 1)

- a. One of the biggest distractions from wrestling from the standpoint of action and excitement is the excessive stoppage of the match due to wrestler going out of bounds. When wrestlers are really going at it and end up out of bounds... no problem. Rather it is the endless out of bound situations caused because the wrestlers have no regard for the out of bounds. The flow of the match is key to many aspects of a successful match.
- b. Why don't wrestlers make an effort to stay on the mat? Why do wrestlers repeatedly avoid wrestling by going off the mat? The reason should be obvious – because the referees are not enforcing the Fleeing the Mat call as intended.
- c. 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. The rule clearly states both wrestlers should make every effort to remain inbounds. The referee, according to this rule, should penalize the offending wrestler if he has failed to make every effort to stay inbounds, the offending wrestler shall be penalized. There can be no technical violation of fleeing the mat if near-fall points have been earned.
- d. Action should be maintained throughout the match regardless of whether a wrestler is in the offensive, defensive or neutral positions. There are too many occasions where wrestlers use the edge of the mat specifically to get out of a situation when, in fact, they should be penalized for going out of the wrestling area. The goal is to have continuous action with as few stoppages as possible. An official who maintains the flow of the match will experience more action as well as fewer penalties.
- e. Playing the edge of the mat or hanging out on the edge has to be recognized by the referee and the appropriate rules enforced. The referee has a new tool where he can stop the match and return the wrestlers to the center even if there is no out of bounds.
- f. Fleeing should and must be called according to the guidelines clearly stated in this rule. If either wrestler has failed to make every effort to stay inbounds, the offending wrestler shall be penalized. Wrestling will become much more exciting and a lot more scoring. Everyone benefits, especially the fans.
- g. There is nothing in this rule that states fleeing should be called only when it is obvious that a wrestler intentionally went off the mat. Rather, unless legitimate wrestling takes the wrestlers out of bounds, the referee should be looking to determine which wrestler did not make a concerted effort to stay on the mat.
- h. The NFHS stresses that wrestling should take place in the 10 foot circle. The actual wrestling area is a 28 foot circle. If a wrestler truly wanted to stay on the mat, he would be able to do so in many situations. If both wrestlers are attempting to wrestle inbounds, out of bound calls will be very limited.
- i. Let's look at common situations and use these as criteria to help officials make the Fleeing the Mat call consistently.
 - i. One of the wrestlers leaves the mat area by casually stepping out without being forced out by his opponent
 - ii. One wrestler is forcing his opponent out while that wrestler is attempting to stay on the mat
 - iii. Wrestler backs from the 10 foot circle out of bounds without making any attempts to circle in when nearing the OB line
 - iv. Wrestler in the defensive position stands up and goes straight out of bounds without making any attempts to circle in when nearing the OB line
 - v. Wrestler in the defensive position stands up and is moved out of bounds by the offensive wrestler. The defensive wrestler attempts to plant his feet and/or circle in.
 - vi. Wrestler picks up his opponent and has to take several steps before going out of bounds
 - vii. Wrestler's opponent has a single leg and has it lifted in the air. Wrestler turns towards the out of bounds.
 - viii. Wrestler's opponent has a single leg and has it lifted in the air. Wrestler turns towards the out of bounds.
 - ix. Wrestler has a single leg on his opponent and has it lifted in the air. Wrestler lifts the leg in such a manner to cause his opponent to go out of bounds.
- j. Things the officials should be looking for to verify if a wrestler is trying to stay on the mat

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- i. If a wrestler is backing up towards the line, the referee should watch to see if the wrestler attempts to move forward or circle in when he nears the OB line
 - ii. If a wrestler is being moved towards the out of bounds by his opponent, the referee should look at his feet to see if the wrestler is attempting to “plant” his feet. If this wrestler is facing out of bounds, then he would be up on his heels. If he is facing his opponent, he would be up on the balls of his feet.
- k. Remember, any time near fall points have been earned, there is no fleeing the mat. In fact, a wrestler has the right to intentionally go off the mat after near fall points have been earned without being penalized.