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## AWOC Officials: Mat Mechanics

*AWOC*

*Northern Arizona Wrestling Officials / nawofficials.org*

This document outlines all the different scenarios that occur when evaluating stalling in a wrestling match.

### **1. Mat Mechanics refers to an official's look and how efficient they:**

- a. get into position,
- b. change levels
- c. anticipate
- d. give clear signals,
- e. communicate
- f. use distance,
- g. recognize stalling & near fall
- h. handle difficult situations/keep composure
- i. Maintain proper position,
- j. Maintain flow.

Mat mechanics is often the ruler officials and coaches use to gauge your performance.

### **2. Dress**

- a. Be professional and dress the part. Dressing the part includes:
  - i. Authorized AIA shirt
  - ii. Black Pants
  - iii. Black Belt
  - iv. Black Socks
  - v. Black shoes
  - vi. Red & Green Arm Bands
  - vii. Flipping Disc & Whistle
  - viii. Nicely Groomed
  - ix. Proper Hygiene

Just as wrestlers learn and practice series of techniques for proficiency, officials must also learn and practice techniques to attain proficiency

### **3. Movement**

- a. Do not be stationary. Do not camp out!

- b. Circle the wrestlers maintain a sufficient distance for good viewing, officials have the best seat in the house.
- c. In mat wrestling wrestlers often move in small circles, circle the opposite way! 5 Mat Mechanics

#### **4. Anticipate**

- a. Anticipate where the situation is going.
- b. Proper position as a result of anticipation will allow the near fall count to begin sooner. 6 Mat Mechanics

#### **5. Positioning - Distance**

- a. A rule of thumb move back, use the outer circle as your guide.
- b. Moving back gives the official a wider field of vision. Move in as necessary to stop action or in potentially dangerous situations. As a rule stay back. 7 Mat Mechanics

#### **6. Positioning Fall/Near Fall Positioning**

- a. Get into a position to view not only the fall but actions of both wrestlers.
- b. Do not be too close. If the official is having to look from side to side to see the fall then you're too close. Scoot Back!
- c. Putting the hand under a shoulder or scapula is not recommended and to be used only as a last resort.

#### **7. Positioning For Out Bounds**

- a. Circle to the out of bounds area to protect the wrestlers.
- b. When using a mat assistant the mat assistant has the catch and should circle to the out of bounds area. The head official should position himself on the boundary line to view supporting points.

#### **8. Positioning of Mat Assistants**

- a. Mat Assistants should start opposite of the head official at the start of each period.
- b. Once the match starts the proper position is 180 to 90 degrees from the head official.
- c. Mat Assistants should circle behind the head official if he wishes to suggest something.
- d. There should be no arguing with the head official during a match and no discussion with anyone but the head table and head official.
- e. The Mat Assistants can be close to the action but should not be closer than the head official.
- f. The Mat Assistants is not to assist in calling a pin but can verbalize any illegal or potentially dangerous hold during the pinning situation.

#### **9. Changing Levels**

- a. When the official recognizes near fall criteria is being met begin the count. That position may initially be from a standing position but the count should continue as the official is getting into position to view an impending fall (i.e. the count starts once recognized and NOT when the official gets into position)
- b. Go to your hands, knees or belly!
- c. Changing levels is also related to movement; when an official is readily moving from standing to knees to belly spectators, coaches and fellow officials know that the official is working just as hard as the wrestlers on the mat.

#### **10. Recognizing Stalling and Near Falls**

- a. Use your criteria, training material & past experience to call stalling.
- b. Use your level changes and anticipation to observe when a fall or near fall is imminent Special Note: The crowd recognizes these situations and are expecting us to do the same

#### **11. Counting a Near Fall**

- a. Be consistent in the count. Being consistent is all anyone can ask. Do not vary the durations of your count.
- b. Verbalize your near fall when possible. Note that many times the first number verbalized will be 2 or 3.
- c. Use your arm to visualize your count when possible.

**12. Herding Back From Out Of Bounds”**

- a. Circling out of bounds and herding both or at least the defensive wrestler back to the center is a technique that assists with minimizing those actions that delay and often lead to penalties that can be avoided with use of this action. This action is both proactive as well as preventive.
- b. Do not turn your back to both wrestlers at any time.

**13. Communicate - Use Audio And Visual Signals**

- a. Officials should stand between the wrestlers when starting the match from the neutral position to prevent injury from a false start. Be in view of both wrestlers when starting from the referee position.
- b. Move your hand and blow the whistle to signal the start of a match.
- c. Communicate, verbalize your calls as much possible.
- d. Rotate your hand back and forth when signaling more than one point.
- e. Raise signals high whenever possible.

**14. Communication**

- a. Sell your call through proper mechanics and verbal communication. If you can make your audience believe that you made the right call, you have won the 90% of the battle.
- b. Good Judgment is a Mat Mechanic when combined with communicating your call. Remember, not everything is black and white.

**15. Flow of the match (match management)**

- a. Every contest has a flow, wrestling matches last a relatively short period of time.
- b. It is important to keep all matches moving along briskly such that an unfair advantage is not gained.
- c. Things to watch for:
  - i. Coaches coming to table
  - ii. Wrestlers taking too much time to position
  - iii. Adjustment of legal equipment
  - iv. Etc.

**16. Composure**

- a. How well the official handles difficult situations and keeps his composure is truly a test for officials.
- b. Items to consider when determining if you kept your composure:
  - i. Was I Respectful?
  - ii. Was I Fair?
  - iii. Did I listen with an open mind?
  - iv. Was my language rated “G” ?
  - v. Did my body language say something different?
  - vi. Was I professional?

**17. Conditioning**

- a. Conditioning is a big part wrestling both for the contestants and the officials!
  - i. Be Prepared
  - ii. Good Nutrition
  - iii. Get Enough Rest
  - iv. Be in shape
  - v. Know what the wrestlers are experiencing

**18. Off Mat Mechanics**

- a. Don't be afraid to network. Introduce yourself to coaches / participants / helpers / etc.
- b. Let coaches and wrestlers know when they have done a good job or when congratulations are in order.
- c. Get to know the kids as much as possible.
- d. Explain calls that others were upset with after the situation has diffused.
- e. Do not spend the majority of time talking with members of a particular team.
- f. Be available when it is time to officiate!

**19. Closing**

- a. Mechanics are a big factor on how you're perceived as an official.
- b. When you here "others" say "I like that official", you will find that it is their mechanics making the difference.