

The Referee's Model

➤ **Mechanics – Position, Anticipation, Movement and Match Procedure**

Positioning: Mechanics are for the most part positioning. A referee should always be in position to (1) stop the action for potentially dangerous situations; (2) to view the action properly; (3) make appropriate calls; (4) stop actions for penalties when appropriate; (5) call near falls and falls and (6) be in the correct position to stop out-of-bounds situations.

The referee should always keep an appropriate distance from the action. The distance should be far enough away during times of action to allow for a good overall view, yet should not be so close as to interfere with the action. In all situations, the referee should maintain a distance that allows him to react to potentially dangerous or illegal situations. The referee should always attempt to keep the wrestlers in view; for example, always look the wrestlers back to the center from out of bounds.

Positioning in out of bounds situations should generally be at a distance and angle that allows the referee to determine control and to evaluate supporting parts. Usually, this is best observed by straddling the out-of – bounds line but may not be appropriate if the referee is concerned about possible injuries due to action continuing onto the apron. When an out of bounds is imminent, the referee should shift his focus to the wrestlers' supporting points.

The assistant referee should position himself so as to complement the referee's vantage point in order to minimize the possibility of one of the referees missing an important wrestling action. The assistant is usually on the opposite side of the wrestlers from the referee, which means the assistant standing on the mat apron must circle constantly to maintain his proper vantage point. The assistant must involve himself in the match at the same level of concentration and activity as the referee in order to carry out his responsibilities.

Anticipation: It is expected as a result of experience and knowledge, that the referee can foresee the potential of an action. Anticipation guides the position of the referee. Generally, running after an action is a result of poor positioning. Rather, anticipation should put the referee in position as the action occurs.

It is imperative that a referee anticipate actions that may be or may lead to dangerous situations. This does not mean that the referee will stop that action, only that he is in a position to do so if necessary and is close enough to verbally caution the wrestlers of a dangerous situation.

In addition to recognizing potentially dangerous situations and being in a position to call points, the referee should also be able to anticipate situations that may be emotional. In hotly contested matches, the referee should always take preventative actions that would head off any abusive activity.

Movement: Movement is connected to both positioning and anticipation. The referee should have the ability and conditioning to keep up with the action at any speed. This means that movement should always have a purpose: it should place the referee in a position to make the proper calls.

Match Procedures: Proper mechanics at the beginning, during and at the end of matches should be followed. The referee should quickly return to the center of the mat from out of bounds, keep the wrestlers in view, set them in correct starting positions, provide consistent starting procedures, and carry out appropriate end of the match procedures. The referee should not look at the scoring table when awarding points and keep the wrestlers aware of the time and score of the match. The referee must follow the rules in conducting coaches conferences remaining professional at all times. He must also understand the procedures to conduct injury time outs and overtime periods.

➤ **Signals – Whistle, Visual Signals, Demonstrative and Knowledge of the Rules**

Whistle: The sound of the whistle should be clear and precise. Since the sound of the whistle begins and ends all wrestling, it should be loud enough for all to hear and should not be faltering. The referee should set the wrestlers in the referee's position and blow the whistle as quickly as possible in order to avoid false starting. His hand and arm should also move to confirm to the table that he has started the match.

Visual Signals: The referee should always use the official wrestling signals. When awarding points, the hand on the arm with the proper colored wristbands should be held well above the head and very slowly rotated so that the fingers may be seen at all angles. This should be held long enough to be seen by the table (about 3-4 seconds when possible).

When signaling points, no points, out of bounds, etc. the appropriate visual signal should be shown immediately, clearly and decisively. There should be no hesitation. When awarding points on the edge of the mat, the points should be given before the whistle for out of bounds.

When the assistant wants to stop the match, he holds his hand high over his head, palm out. It may be necessary to verbally communicate with the referee at this point in order to get his attention.

Demonstrative: The referee should be animated, decisive and show conviction; but he should not be offensive. How a referee carries himself, his mat presences, portrays confidence. A referee's actions should be made decisively and without hesitation. However, there should be no confusion between being forceful and demonstrative and being arrogant. The referee and his assistant should always maintain a sense of professionalism. They should not appear to challenge the coaches or wrestlers into a confrontation and never shout at the coaches, wrestlers, and fans.

Knowledge of the Rules: The referee must have an excellent understanding of the rules. It is not necessary to be able to cite line and verse for each rule, but he should know each rule and when and where to apply it. He must know all infractions and the penalties for each and their sequence.

The referee must know the rules and be able to translate the rules to action on the mat. Each referee must know not only the literal interpretation of each rule but should also strive to know the spirit or why a rule is written. In cases where the action does not call for an exact translation of a rule, the referee should use good judgment and good sportsmanship as a guide. Common sense and good judgment are parts of understanding the spirit of each rule.

➤ **Judgment – Consistency, Edge of Mat, and Determining Control**

Consistency: Since judgment is the referee's overt application or interpretation of the rules, a referee should be able to carry out that judgment consistently from the beginning of the match until the end. The official makes a mental evaluation of criteria that must be met in order to make a call. In terms of consistency, the referee should use the same evaluation procedure and same criteria each time a call is made.

Edge of Mat: Referees must work to maintain the best position as wrestlers approach the edge of the mat in order to determine when there is an out of bounds. It is important to be cognizant of who initiates the action, who hinders the action and who is playing the edge. A position to the out of bounds side of the wrestlers with vision between them is the most desirable position. Wrestling is to continue as long as the supporting points of either wrestler remain in bounds.

Determining Control: The determination of control can sometimes be difficult. The referee must determine control in a decisive and consistent manner. The usual criteria for determining control in a reversal or escape situations is that the offensive wrestler maintains control until the defensive wrestler can establish his neutrality or control. The statement “Control is felt rather than observed” appears several times in NFHS publications. As new techniques are developed annually, this becomes more accurate. A referee must keep current and knowledgeable concerning pressure and how it is applied. The best way to understand the pressure is for the referee to get on the mat during clinics and feel the application of pressure.

➤ **Match Control – Poise, Communication and Flow**

Poise: The referee should always keep his composure, especially in difficult situations. He should show firmness in his application of the rules. He should not be intimidated by either coaching staff. In violate situations; the ability of the referee to remain calm, self-assured, and professional will dictate the ensuing atmosphere. In dealing with highly emotional situations, the referee should remember that he has the necessary authority to control the situation.

In difficult situations on the mat, the referee should always collect his thoughts and make deliberate judgments. These should be made in a timely manner but should follow the philosophy that it is better to get the call right than make a hasty incorrect call. He should utilize his assistant when in doubt and accept the assistant’s opinion categorically if circumstances dictate.

Communication: One of the major responsibilities of the referee is to communicate information to all interested parties in as clear, precise and quick a manner as possible. The information needs to be given in the simplest terms and the shortest time possible.

To the athlete it is important to be direct and to the point. The athlete often has a reduced capacity to understand complex instructions. To the coaches, the information needs to be unemotional, specific, and given in a professional way. It is important to use the official signals pictured in the Rules Book.

Communication with the timekeeper and scorer needs to be extremely clear. The referee should ensure that his verbal and visual signals are the official ones and that they are always clearly understood. When there is a need to clarify information with the scorer's table, it should take minimal time. It is a good practice to spend some time with the scorer and timekeeper before the match begins so that important matters concerning timing and scoring are explained.

Flow: A match should flow smoothly and be well paced. The match should not be unduly interrupted with unnecessary stopping and starting. The referee should encourage the wrestlers to keep the action going and to improve their position. This should be done without coaching the wrestlers. Contestants who straggle back from out of bounds or spend inordinate amounts of time pulling up knee pads or socks need to be penalized when their actions disrupt the flow of the match.

➤ **Teaming**

The referee and his assistant must cooperate with each other putting the job ahead of any other individual feelings. One's ego should not play a part in making a difficult call. Both officials must consider refereeing a team effort. Together they can call the match fairly and correctly, much better than could have been done by one official. A description of the duties of the Assistant Referee is given in Rule 3-2 in the Rules Book and should be reviewed regularly.