



michigan high school athletic association



**WRESTLING OFFICIATING  
MECHANICS & PROCEDURES  
2022-23 "BLUE BOOK"**

Dan Hutcheson; Assistant Director  
Sam Davis; Rules Interpreter  
Jamie VanDerMoere; Administrative Assistant

**Michigan High School Athletic Association**  
1661 Ramblewood Drive  
East Lansing, MI 48823  
[www.mhsaa.com](http://www.mhsaa.com)

MHSAA WRESTLING REFEREES BLUE BOOK  
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Michigan high school and junior high/middle school levels do not accept collegiate mechanics and procedures as a standard practice for scholastic wrestling

The following mechanics manual provides every Michigan scholastic wrestling referee with consistent explanations of the why and how is to approach proper procedures and mechanics while officiating wrestling. Our scholastic referees work with young student-athletes who range from sixth grade to 12th grade. The collegiate referee works with young people between 19 to 24 years of age. There is a tremendous mental and physical difference between these two groups.

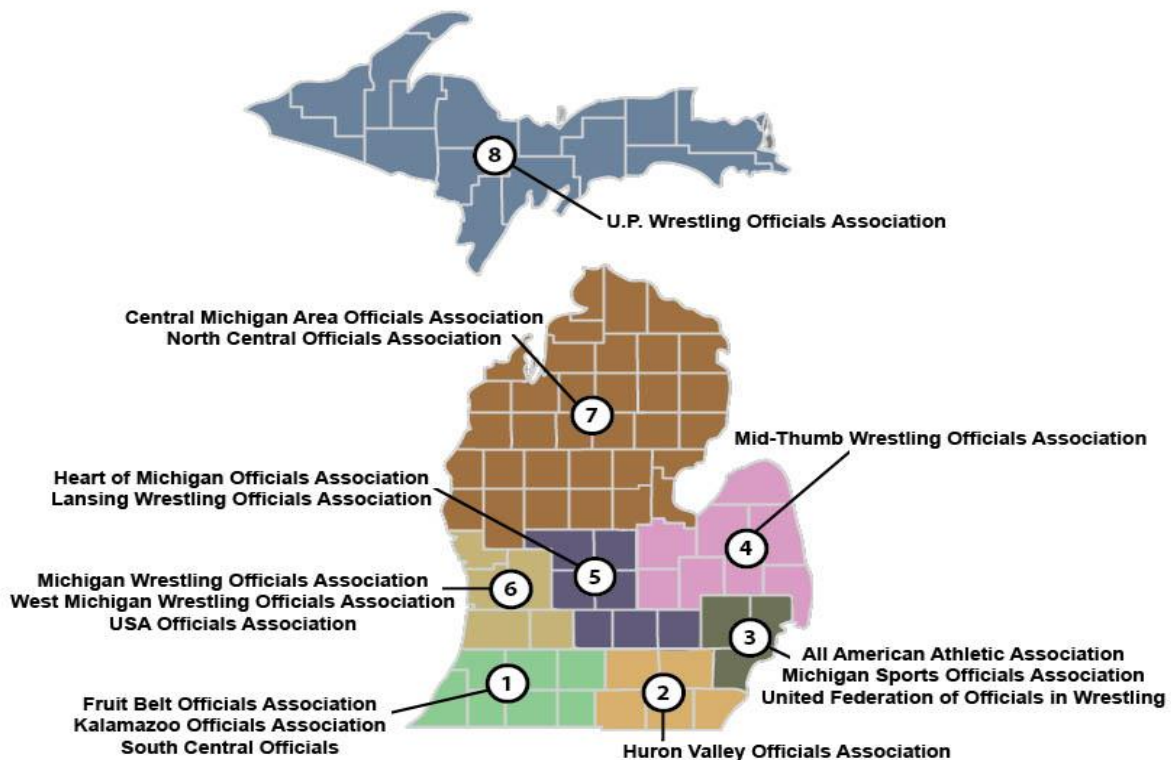
The high school and junior high wrestlers are still emerging in their physical, mental, and psychological growth. Research identifies bone growth and muscular development as two particularly important developmental issues that should play a pivotal role in how the scholastic wrestling referee should evaluate every wrestling match. Scholastic athletes' reaction time and sense of their bodies' abilities are not as sharp as that of the collegiate athlete. The average scholastic athletes are slower to react to weight and pressure fluctuations than the average collegiate athletes are.

The NFHS promotes both a safe and healthy environment for young athletes and strives to have each state association foster and uphold the over-riding concern of safe participation for all student-athletes.

The Michigan High School Athletic Association and our various Officiating Associations have adopted mechanics and accepted procedures that all Michigan wrestling referees must follow to address the concern of safe participation for all student-athletes.

We thank the Ohio High School Athletic Association and the following Michigan Wrestling Officials Associations for the invaluable contributions and assistance in the production to the:

#### MHSAA Bluebook of Wrestling Officiating Mechanics and Procedures



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## PREAMBLE

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- The MHSAA continues to look at new ways to further advance the sport of wrestling to its member schools, coaches, athletes, officials, and fans.
- To complete this objective the MHSAA has developed the "Blue Book" for wrestling officials. The Blue Book is designed to make available to each MHSAA official, detailed information regarding the officiating techniques, which, through evaluation and studied development, have come to be recognized by the MHSAA and Michigan Wrestling Association leadership as accepted standards of officiating performance.
- This is an authoritative guide to the best in wrestling officiating and will assist all officials in maintaining their effectiveness and provide for a more consistent application of rules through proper mechanics.
- The MHSAA "Blue Book" is a mechanics and best practices resource guide and supplement to the NFHS Rules Book, Cases Book and Manual. The goal is to improve rule applications and consistency through better mechanics and procedures across the state. It is not a replacement.

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## REFEREE'S UNIFORM

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- Short-sleeved knit shirt, with alternating black and white 1-inch stripes, a gray with black pinstripes, or an event provided shirt common to all referees at the event. All officials at a site must match.
- The MHSAA default is the black and white shirt when officials do not have matching shirts.
- Black full-length trousers and a black belt (if the trousers have loops), black socks, black officiating shoes (without colored highlights).
- Colored wristbands. Red worn on the (left) and green on the (right).
- The NFHS requires officials to use a black whistle. Veteran officials recommend a pea-less whistle. Lanyards used by officials, must be solid black.
- A colored flip disc, which is red on one side and green on the other side.
- The MHSAA official's emblem on the left pocket area of the shirt. An association patch, when worn, is to be on the right shoulder.
- Additional emblems and patches, approved by the MHSAA, which can be worn on the official's shirt:
  - American flag patch/emblem (not to exceed two by three inches) is optional and, if worn, shall be on the left shoulder approximately two inches below the shoulder with the star field facing to the front.
  - Trainer emblem, when worn, is to be on the left sleeve.
- Jewelry prohibited except for a wedding band and/or a medical alert necklace or bracelet. A religious medallion that is not visible is permissible. A watch is permissible as part of the duty the referee has for keeping track of special timing events during the contest.
- A black warm-up jacket with or without logo.

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## THREE IMPORTANT SAFETY ISSUES

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Please pay attention to the following:

- Contagious skin conditions
- Potentially dangerous calls
- Athlete's safety

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## PRE-MEET DUTIES

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- The MHSAA encourages officials to arrive a minimum of 60 minutes prior to the start of the match.
- The authority time of the referee begin(s) upon arrival at the site and conclude(s) with the approval of the scorebook in dual meets and when the referee signs the bout sheet after the last match of the tournament.

- Arrive at event site dressed appropriately (to represent the MHSAA).
- Immediately find one or more of the following:
  - Athletic Director
  - Meet Administrator
  - Wrestling Coach
- Introduce yourself.
- Begin your duties as a properly dressed professional.
- It is the lead referee's (LR) responsibility to conduct the random draw for dual meet events.
- The random draw weight class is also the beginning weight class to weigh-in.
- The MHSAA Staff conducts the random draw for the Individual Districts, Regionals and both Finals.

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## INSPECTIONS & WEIGH-INS

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### Inspection Guidelines:

- Inspections should take place in an area not readily visible by the public.
- *"The referee, or other authorized person, shall supervise the weigh-ins."* The rule cited also applies to inspections.
- *"All contestants shall weigh-in wearing a legal uniform and a suitable undergarment that completely covers the buttocks and the groin area. Female contestants shall also wear a sports bra which completely covers their breasts and minimizes the risk of exposure."* Contestants may wear socks that may not be removed or added if the wrestlers do not make weight. Contestants shall not weigh-in wearing shoes or ear guards. This rule also applies to inspections. NOTE: No additional weight allowance shall be granted for weighing-in wearing a legal uniform.
- Male and female wrestlers shall weigh-in together in the same lineup.
- Require all participants to present any special equipment at the weigh-in or inspection.
- No part of the wrestler's body can be covered in tape prior to the official skin inspection by the referee.
- Any athlete with a suspicious skin condition must present, during the inspection, a properly completed NFHS/MHSAA Communicable Disease Form "Skin Form" signed by an MD, DO, PA or NP. Only the MHSAA / NFHS Communicable Disease Form (or a digital photo of the exact form on an electronic device) is accepted as evidence that the wrestler's condition is acceptable within the rules.
- During the inspection process carefully check the skin for areas of concern.
- A wrestler may not be taken to a medical facility or doctor after weigh-in/inspection has begun and then return with a completed NFHS/MHSAA "Skin Form" to compete that day.
- The referee is the last line of defense to protect everyone from the spread of any condition.
- "Non-contagious" notes are valid throughout the entire season.
- If an MD, DO, PA, or NP is the designated on-site physician, his/her decision is final.
- If an MD, DO, PA, or NP stipulates that the athlete may wrestle if the area is covered, you should ask if the area is contagious. If the designated on-site physician says the area may be or is contagious, the wrestler cannot compete.
- Covering a communicable condition shall not be considered acceptable and does not make the wrestler eligible to participate
- Read the doctor's note carefully and check the dates stipulating when the wrestler may return to competition.

### Inspection/Weigh-in:

In general, the best and most efficient inspection is a visual inspection.

Suggested pattern of inspection:

- A. Check fingernails
- B. Check the contestant's facial hair. (**It must allow visible skin inspection**).
- C. Have wrestler(s) correct any violation(s) of inspection criteria.

### "Shoulder-to-Shoulder" Inspection:

This inspection takes place before a "shoulder-to-shoulder" weigh-in (like the process used for Individual District, Regionals, or Finals).

Prior to the weigh-in for each MHSAA competition, each wrestler shall be inspected to evaluate whether there is visual evidence that a communicable disease, or a condition which is suspiciously like a communicable disease, is present on any wrestler.

The person who inspects the wrestlers should be a meet-appointed physician (MD, DO, PA or NP) with experience in skin conditions (dermatology, for example) if possible. If no meet-appointed physician is available, the inspection of contestants is performed by the official(s) with assistance from athletic trainer(s), if needed and requested by the official(s).

- No wrestler may weigh-in (step on the scales) until they have passed the communicable disease inspection and met the requirements of the National Federation.
- Coaches must be aware of their wrestlers' health conditions and are expected to advise the tournament manager, as outlined in the MHSAA Wrestling PSTI, of any suspicious condition(s).
- Physicians should be encouraged to participate with the inspection of wrestlers, under the conditions of Michigan Public Act 30, which provides immunity for physicians who volunteer their services to schools.
- All skin inspections, whether done by a physician or official, must be done in the same manner for all wrestlers on-site.

### "Home Weigh-In" Inspection:

This inspection takes place before a competition (dual, tri, quad, or tournament) where home weigh-ins have taken place, and the competitors arrive to the event where they shall be inspected before being allowed to compete.

Each participating school must supply the "inspecting" official(s) (or meet personnel in charge of inspection) with the completed MHSAA High School Wrestling Home Weigh-in Record. Each team will line up by weight division (light to heavy) with the head coach present during inspection. As the official(s) completes the inspection of everyone (skin, hair, nails.), the official shall:

1. Enter their initials in the box labeled "REF INITIALS" approving competition for that wrestler.
2. Not enter their initials if the wrestler in question needs to cut their nails, comply with health and safety rules, etc., until the athlete returns in the allotted time with the required corrections, at which point the official would then initial the corresponding box approving that wrestler's participation.
3. Place a capital N (nails), M (medical) E (equipment/Uniform) next to the name of the contestant who initially fails to pass inspection due to one or more of these issues.

Marks an "X" in the box for any wrestler who fails, or is not present for, inspection. The wrestler's name should be struck through to indicate they are not allowed to participate in the event, the Head Coach shall witness this act. Give the completed form to the on-site administrator facilitating the event once inspections conclude. That individual will supply a copy to each of the teams participating in the event.

#### REMINDER:

- All contestants must wear suitable undergarments that completely cover the buttocks and groin area.
- Do not inspect contestants without another adult present.
- The inspections are to be visual in nature. DO NOT touch any contestant during inspections.

### The Referee Should Disqualify the Athlete from Competition If:

- The MHSAA / NFHS Communicable Disease Form (or digital photo of this exact form on an electronic device) is not properly completed and signed by a physician.
- If a Rx slip or letter from a physician (not the official MHSAA form) is presented.
- If the lesions appear in other places than are marked on the body diagram.
- If the lesions are still moist, cream-colored pustules.

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## PRE-CONTEST

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After competitor inspections:

- Inspect the wrestling area, the mat and mat markings.
- Talk with the scorer/timer for both teams about their duties and responsibilities.
- Instruct table workers to put away any personal electronic devices during competition.
- Remind table workers of the need to focus on the match.
- Check and ensure that a biohazard receptacle is present at scorer's table.
- Support the event/support staff at the scorer's table.
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## PRE-MATCH

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The pre-match instructions and reminders to the wrestlers and coaches should minimally include the following:

- Sportsmanship is number one.
- Reinforce rules and set expectations for the event and the competitors.
- Address major rule changes and clarify any confusion.
- Check the legality of any special equipment.
- Wrestlers are to compete aggressively, but under control, the entire match.
- Work to stay in the center circle.
- Ask if there are any questions and encourage the team to be safe and good sports.
- Always ask the coach if his team is “legally equipped and ready to wrestle.”
- Reinforce the three (3) distinct roles of Referee, Coach, and Wrestler. Stay “in your lane.”

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## CAPTAINS / COIN TOSS

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- Meet with the team captains in the center of the mat.
- Coaches are encouraged for the toss but are not required.
- Remind competitors that **sportsmanship** is number one.
- Assign a color to each team.
- Flip the disc and allow it to land on the wrestling surface.
- Winner of the toss has choice of even or odd matches.
- Notify the scorer’s table of the outcome of the flip.
- The first match determined by the random draw is always odd and that school must send their wrestler to the table first (they cannot be withdrawn once checked in) and gets choice of starting position in the second period.

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## READY TO WRESTLE

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Referee **MUST** be at the scorer’s table:

- Wrestlers must be ready to go to scorer’s table, immediately when called by the referee.
- Call for the correct wrestlers (by color and weight) to report for check-in at the scorer’s table.
- Verify the wrestlers name, current weight class called, and school.
- The wrestlers are not **officially checked in** until the mat official or AR verbally checks them in.
- The wrestler to be sent to the scorer’s table first, who then cannot be withdrawn or replaced without being disqualified and the weight class being awarded to the other wrestler by disqualification if there is one, shall be determined by the pre-meet disk toss.
- Once the second wrestler has properly reported to the scorer’s table in proper sequence, as determined by the pre-meet disk toss, neither can be withdrawn or replaced without disqualification and the weight class awarded by disqualification.
- If an ineligible wrestler reports to the scorer’s table, and it is caught before the official checks that wrestler in, the wrestler can be withdrawn and substituted for the correct wrestler.
- If an ineligible wrestler reports to the scorer’s table and is checked in by the official; but this is determined **BEFORE** the wrestler goes to the mat, the ineligible wrestler is disqualified. No wrestler can be substituted and the meet proceeds on. The weight class is forfeited to the opponent.
- If an ineligible wrestler reports to the scorer’s table and is checked in by the official; but this is determined **AFTER** the wrestler goes to the mat, the ineligible wrestler is disqualified. At that point, the meet is terminated and the school that presented the eligible wrestler wins the meet by a score of 1-0. No additional wrestling is allowed
- **Again**, check the legality of the wrestler(s) equipment.
- Have each wrestler report directly to the center of the mat to their assigned color.
- Ensure a proper pre-match handshake.



### Start of the Match:

- Both wrestlers must place one foot on their respective starting line and the other foot on or behind the line or the line extended.
- Neither wrestlers' hand(s) or other body parts may touch the mat in front of the starting line.
- Hands and/or foreheads cannot touch the opponent.
- In matches involving wrestlers with visual impairment,
  - The finger-touch method shall be used by the wrestlers in the neutral position.
  - Initial contact shall be made from the front.
  - Contact is to be maintained throughout the match.
- Both wrestlers must be stationary until the whistle sounds.
- The referee should step in-between the wrestlers (facing the scorer's table) with an outstretched arm.
  - This position should not interfere with the wrestler's view of each other.
  - Avoid making physical contact with either wrestler.
  - Make eye contact with the timekeeper.
  - Sound your whistle and simultaneously make a visual hand/arm motion to start the match.
  - Move-out quickly and back your way towards the outer boundary line.
  - Glance up to ensure that the clock has properly started.
  - Always keep both wrestlers in your line of sight as you back out.
  - The whistle should be always close and readily accessible.

### Neutral Standing Position:

- Situate yourself so that you are far enough away not to interfere with the action, but close enough to stop potentially dangerous or illegal maneuvers.
- Six to nine (6-9) feet is suggested (*find your comfortable zone*).
- Be familiar with the various takedowns so you know where to position yourself to observe control as it is established.
- Always situate yourself so that you may look between both wrestlers as they face each other.
  - Anticipate position
  - Do not chase the action
  - Sometimes moving counter to the wrestlers' rotation is more effective
- Change levels to ensure the proper position to observe and make calls.
- Verbalize the awarding of takedown points to inform wrestlers.
- Award points using NFHS/MHSAA approved hand signals.
- Avoid looking at scorer's table or coaches when awarding points.

### Boundary Line:

- On or near the boundary line, the referee should be able to:
  - Observe the location of the supporting points of each wrestler.
  - Straddle the line.
  - Get perpendicular to the wrestlers.
- If possible, award earned points before sounding your whistle.
- Be patient. Do not overly anticipate an out-of-bounds situation occurring.
- Delay blowing the whistle until you are sure a situation safely finishes out-of-bounds.
- The referee may verbally request that both wrestlers "work center" (*do not coach with comments*).

### Referee's Start:

- Hand movement should be simultaneous to the whistle.
- Loudly blow the whistle!
- Remain stationary until the whistle is blown.

### Referee's Position:

- The referee should be at a 45-degree angle (*right or left*) to the wrestlers. If the wrestlers are 12 o'clock, the referee should be at 10 or 2 o'clock. The referee should typically be opposite the "near side" of the offensive wrestler.



- The referee should stand far enough away from the wrestler to be able to see the palm on the navel and the rear leg position.
  - This gives the referee the ability to see the placement of the offensive wrestler's head in the mid-line, the palm on the navel, the palm on the elbow, and the back foot.
  - The offensive wrestler's legs or feet may not be in contact with the defensive wrestler.
- Once the defensive wrestler is "set" in a stationary legal starting position, then:
  - Direct the offensive wrestler to "assume the proper position" or "cover legal." e.g.
  - Give the offensive wrestler verbal "set" command.
- Pause briefly before blowing the whistle. Alternate the pause to avoid anticipation of the whistle.

### Movement as Wrestling Continues:

- The referee should primarily be at the head and shoulders of the wrestlers.
- The referee may want to move closer, so they are able to stop potentially dangerous situations.
- Vary distance from wrestlers depending on the situation.

### When the Defensive Wrestler Comes to Their Feet:

- The referee should face wrestlers.
- Pay attention to hand control and fingers.
  - If the offensive wrestler does not make an honest attempt to return the defensive wrestler to the mat, the referee will warn and/or penalize the offensive wrestler for stalling.
  - Do not stop the match when making a stalling call in this situation.
- If an arm(s) of the defensive wrestler is trapped, locked to the side, or the defensive man is rendered unable to protect themselves when being lifted off or returned to the mat, the referee must blow the whistle to stop the move or maneuver as potentially dangerous.

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### THE ASSISTANT REFEREE (AR)

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- AR should discuss and understand the responsibilities/expectations with the LR before the contest begins.
- First on and last off the mat.
- Be active, assist by being as mobile as the Lead Referee (LR).
- Stay outside of the 28-foot circle, unless directed otherwise by the LR.
- Mirror the LR around mat. (*Approximately 180° opposite*).
- If the LR is at 2 o'clock, the AR will be at 8 o'clock.
- The AR may make slight adjustments for better vantage.
- Movement and communication should be constant.
- Do not yell across the mat, move to circle behind the LR to offer your input.
- Bring infractions to the LR's immediate attention in a manner that does not draw attention to the AR.
- Be responsible for the time. Make sure the clock starts and stops on the LR's whistle.
- Watch the clock, with wrestlers in your field-of-vision.
- The AR should count *down "four, three, two, one ... Time!" (Especially if no tapper is present)*.
- Assist the LR with injury (including HNC), recovery and blood time protocol.
- Support the LR while on the mat.
- If you feel strongly about the situation, discuss, or disagree in the locker room.
- Give an honest and informed opinion when asked by the LR.
- Never initiate communication with a coach. Redirect communication attempts by the coach to the LR.
- The only approved NFHS/MHSAA signals the AR can use are for interlocking hands or grasping clothing, and signal "C" to caution for an improper start/position of either wrestler.
- Understand that calls are the responsibility of the LR.

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## REFEREE MECHANICS IN NEAR-FALL SITUATIONS

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- Follow the flow of the action. When the back of the defensive wrestler is exposed, (*get down on the mat*) with a line of sight of the wrestler's back, that gives the best vantage position of both shoulders/scapulae.
- Anticipate a takedown directly to near-fall criteria.
  - Once in position, maintain a silent count while getting down on the mat.
  - Do not place or reach a hand under the scapula or shoulders of the defensive wrestler.
- Watch for the fall, while also looking for violations happening around the face, e.g., hands in the face, eyes, etc...
- The near-fall count begins only when the offensive wrestler controls the defensive wrestler, in a pinning situation and near-fall criteria has been met.
- Once criteria are met, give a clear, precise, verbal count, "*one thousand one, one thousand two, etc...*"
- Whenever possible include a simultaneous full-swipe motion with your hand.
  - A verbal count enables the participants to understand where they are in the process, as they may not see the hand motion.
  - The full swipe of the arm tells the coach and spectators that the maneuver has met criteria and points are possible.
- Place your fingers down (*holding two or three points*) once points have been earned.
  - The offensive wrestler may roll the defensive wrestler back to his stomach and then tilt again; it is the same hold situation.
  - Once the offensive wrestler lets go of the arm and allows the defensive wrestler to base out (clear his arm, and can defend themselves), the referee can then award the earned points.
  - Be aware of the offensive wrestler's back. The offensive wrestler may roll on their own back and create a defensive fall situation.

### Do Not Make Up Signals:

- Never make a gesture showing how close the wrestler's back is to the mat.
- Never make a signal to symbolize a degree angle in a near-fall situation.
- Never wave an arm/hand back and forth indicating in and out of criteria.
- The above-mentioned gestures are not approved NFHS signals, and therefore are a form of coaching.

### Assistant Referee (AR) in Near-fall Situations:

- Once a near-fall situation occurs, the AR should remain standing, over the top of the action.
  - The job as the AR is to observe that everything remains "*legal*" up top.
- The AR is to watch for illegal holds, maneuvers, technical violations and monitor the clock.
  - Should an illegal or potentially dangerous situation occur, notify the LR.
  - The LR will make the call based on their own observations.
- In monitoring the clock, the AR should count down *four, three, two, one and then yell "time"* while making a crossing signal above his head with his arms to inform everyone that time has expired.

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## CONCUSSION PROTOCOL & PROCEDURES

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- The NFHS adopted a concussion rule with respect to safety and stoppage of the match until an Appropriate Health-Care Professional (AHCP) approves his/her safe return.
  - NFHS RULE ... "*Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.*"
  - In the absence of an appropriate health care professional (physician and/or certified athletic trainer) all injuries to the head and neck involving the cervical column and/or nervous system will be covered by the same period as other injuries.
  - Referees have no role in determining a concussion other than the obvious where a wrestler is unconscious. Referees will merely point out to a coach that a wrestler is injured and advise that the wrestler should be examined by a health care professional for an exact determination of the extent of injury.
- Submit an online Officials Report with the MHSAA.

### Injury Time:

- Each wrestler is limited to a maximum of two injury timeouts. The combined total cannot exceed 90 seconds.
- The wrestler whose opponent has taken a second injury timeout gets a choice of position on the restart.
- The match is defaulted to the opponent if the injured wrestler attempts to take a third timeout.
- Wrestlers may take injury timeouts simultaneously.
  - If one of the wrestlers has previously used a timeout, and takes a second timeout, their opponent gets the choice of position on the restart of wrestling.
  - Should both wrestlers have already taken a timeout, neither wrestler would get choice on the restart.

### Injury Time (Extended):

- As soon as an injury is detected by the official or the wrestler signals by waving their finger(s) or tapping out, begin injury time.
- When appropriate health care professional(s) (physician or certified athletic trainer) are present, they have jurisdiction to evaluate the injured wrestler for injuries to the head and neck involving the cervical column and/or nervous system only during the allotted time limit (maximum) of (5) minutes.
- After the evaluation, the wrestler is required to prepare, without delay, to continue wrestling or default the match.
- A second occurrence of injury to the head and neck involving cervical column and/or central nervous system in the same match shall require the injured wrestler to default the match.

### Blood Time (Supersedes all other timeouts):

- Blood time has a total accumulative time of five (5) minutes per wrestler. There is no limit on the number of stoppages during those five minutes.
- When blood is observed on or from either wrestler at any time, the referee shall start the “blood time” clock.
  - The referee touches their nose with the hand that has the colored armband, which corresponds to the bleeding wrestler.
- Addressing the presence of blood takes priority in the match and all other action **MUST** cease.
- The blood clock stops once bleeding has stopped (as verified by the referee).
  - The referee should signal the scorer’s table to stop blood time and record it on the score sheet.
  - The referee should then notify both coaches of the amount of blood time used.
- Cleaning up blood from the mat, wrestler(s) and/or uniform(s) is time taken as referee time and shall not be deducted from the individual’s five-minute allotment.
  - After the five-minute blood clock has expired, using an injury timeout for blood violates the rule. Therefore, any bleeding beyond the five minutes would result in the opponent being declared the winner by default.
  - If bleeding occurs because of unsportsmanlike conduct, illegal holds/maneuvers or unnecessary roughness and the bleeding contestant uses 5 minutes of blood time, which is not deducted from the bleeding wrestlers “blood time” allowance, the bleeding wrestler is declared the winner of the contest by default.
- Simultaneous blood time is possible.
- It is possible for a wrestler to go from injury time to blood time, and then back to injury time.
  - In the situation above, the wrestler has one injury timeout.
  - The referee monitors the amount of time used for each situation.
- If one contestant is injured and the other is bleeding, **only start the blood time clock.**

### Recovery Time:

- Recovery time occurs following an injury caused by an illegal hold, unnecessary roughness, or an unsportsmanlike act.
- The two (2) minutes of recovery time immediately follows the penalty assessment.
  - Recovery time starts when the referee signals the scorer’s table with an inverted swirling index finger, on the corresponding-colored armband, and announces (“start recovery time,” green or red).
  - Upon the referee’s signal, time stops and is recorded in the scorebook.
- If the injured wrestler cannot continue because of the injury, the injured wrestler wins the match by default.
- The injured wrestler may default the match prior to the two-minute recovery clock expiring.
- Once wrestling resumes, any unused recovery time from that incident is no longer available to the injured wrestler.
- The wrestler may use an injury timeout once wrestling resumes.

## Mechanics of Injury, Blood, HNC, and Recovery Time:

- At all levels of competition, each scorer's table should have a mechanism to monitor time.
- Direct signals toward the scorer's table using the assigned colored armband for the time stoppage.
- Timer starts the clock.
- If there is a stopwatch available, have the stopwatch brought to the referee. Inform the coach when there is one-minute left, and when 30 seconds are left.
- The referee should stay near the table except to advise the coach of the time remaining for the wrestler.
- Answer questions asked by the medical personnel based on your observations. Do not offer medical opinions!
- Do not talk to the coach(es) or the wrestler(s) about the medical status of the injured wrestler.
- Prior to the expiration of time, the coach and/or the injured wrestler must determine whether the injured wrestler will continue to compete.
- The injured wrestler may default prior to the expiration of time.
- If time expires, the referee will then use the applicable rule to render a decision.

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## STALLING

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Stalling is a simple call to make if you develop a philosophy that adheres to the principals and tenets of stalling and then apply them in all situations. Stalling is an objective call; make the call consistently throughout the match and event. The referee must have a clear and intimate knowledge of wrestling and an understanding of the criteria used to recognize stalling.

- Each wrestler is required to make an honest attempt to stay within the 10-foot circle and wrestle aggressively regardless of:
  - Position
  - Time of the match
  - Score
- Both wrestlers are equally responsible for initiating and maintaining action.
- The defensive wrestler is not stalling when being overpowered.
- It is the responsibility of coaches, wrestlers, and referees to discourage the use of stalling tactics.
  - Stalling is rarely the result of one specific action or maneuver; rather, it is the result of a series of blocking, avoiding contact, and delaying maneuvers occurring throughout the match.
- When stalling is recognized, the offender shall be warned/penalized without hesitation by the referee regardless of:
  - Score of the match
  - Position on the mat
  - Time in the match

## Neutral Stalling Guidelines:

- A "true" takedown attempt requires an attack/aggressive action and follow-through.
- Wrestlers should be allowed time to set-up takedown attempt(s) utilizing:
  - Tie-ups
  - Changes of levels
  - Pushing/pulling the opponent off balance
- Countering a takedown attempt is not stalling unless:
  - Defensive wrestler is content in not improving their position
  - There is no effort at initiating counter attacks

Observe which wrestler is attempting to be the aggressor before calling stalling in the neutral situation.

## Neutral Stalling Tactics (examples):

- Circling with no attempt to attack
- Not making an honest attempt to stay within the 10-foot circle
- Changing levels with no attempt to attack
- Feigned attack(s) with no follow-through
- Moving opponent to create angles but no follow-through attacks
- Set-ups with no follow-through to take advantage of scoring opportunities

- Interlocking fingers behind the opponent's head and blocking with both elbows
- Backing out of the ten-foot circle without first physically contacting the opponent
- Continuously avoiding contact with opponent
- Preventing opponent from returning to or remaining inbounds
- Making contact but moving out to the edge of the mat
- Playing the edge of the mat
- Continuously pushing/pulling with no attack attempt
- Tying-up an opponent with an underhook and wrist control without a follow-through attack
- Collar tie pushing/pulling with no follow-through
- Single or double underhook without an attack attempt
- Wrist control (single or double) without attempt to attack or prevent opponent's attack
- Blocking with a forearm or head in a tie-up with no attempt to attack or to prevent opponent's attack
- Repeatedly grasping or holding a leg with no attempt at follow-through to improve position
- Repeatedly grasping or holding a leg to prevent opponent from scoring
- Elevating a single leg without attempt to finish takedown
- Repeatedly causing a stalemate
- Standing behind an opponent in control of their torso without attempting to finish on the mat
- Running a two on one (Russian Tie) without an attack attempt
- Slowly returning from out-of-bounds
- Unnecessarily changing or adjusting equipment

### Offensive Stalling:

It is stalling when the contestant, in the advantage position, does not wrestle aggressively and attempts to secure a fall or earn near-fall points. The exception is when the offensive wrestler intentionally releases the opponent to thereafter immediately attempt to secure a takedown.

### General Guidelines (Top):

- Top wrestler must work for fall/near-fall
- Watch for parallel riding (riding hips) without an attempt to break down the opponent
- Watch for parallel riding with opponent broken down on the mat with no attempt to get perpendicular to work for fall or near-fall
- Watch for "busy wrestling" meaning that the top wrestler is moving from side-to-side without attempting to secure the fall or near-fall.
- It is not stalling when countering the defensive wrestler's bona fide attempts to escape/reverse (*chain wrestling*).

### Offensive Stalling Tactic Examples:

- Feigning attempts to turn an opponent (*e.g., spiral ride without getting out to the side and driving on toes or running a half nelson with opponent broken down without getting perpendicular and driving on the toes*).
- Jumping sides with half nelson.
- Hanging on with no attempt to score.
- Keeping the leg held to the buttocks for more than 5 seconds (*defensive wrestler broken down*).
- Two hands on two legs or two hands on one leg in action not designed to break the opponent down, secure a fall, or prevent an escape or reversal.
- Repeated grasping of one leg or two legs with either hands or arms to break opponent down for the sole purpose of control.
- Slowly returning to the center for the restart.
- Slowly placing the hand around the defender's waist by the offensive wrestler.
- Repeatedly dropping to one leg when opponent stands up.
- Deep waist and wrist or ankle with no attempt to improve.
- Staying behind an opponent in a rear standing position without attempting to return to the mat.
- Repeatedly using a grapevine and being unable to turn opponent resulting in a stalemate.
- Repeated use of cross-body ride with no attempt to improve position.
- Use of double grapevine for sole purpose of control with no attempt to improve.
- Use of cradle with no attempt to turn.
- Repeatedly grasping an ankle with no attempt to break opponent down.
- Running an arm bar with opponent broken down on the mat with no attempt to improve.
- Repeatedly grabbing a leg to prevent a switch.
- Crab ride with no attempt to improve.

- Repeatedly throwing in a leg(s) when defensive wrestler stands up/lifting leg(s) off mat.

### Defensive Stalling:

It is defensive stalling when the wrestler refuses to wrestle aggressively by attempting escapes or reversals.

### General Guidelines (Bottom):

- The bottom wrestler should initiate an escape or reversal attempts.
- When the top wrestler comes off the hips creating space, the bottom wrestler should attempt to take advantage of the scoring opportunity.

### Defensive Stalling Tactic Examples:

- Lying on the mat with your elbows tucked into your body beyond normal reaction time.
- Moving only to counter or block the offensive wrestler.
- Not initiating action designed to score.
- Grasping the opponent's hands (arms) and just holding.
- Forehead down on the mat, balling up, or continually watching the clock.
- Repeated locking onto one or both legs when the top wrestler comes out front.
- Repeatedly crawling out of the 10-foot circle or to the edge of the mat while making no scoring effort.

### Warnings and Penalties for Stalling:

- Warnings and penalties for stalling are cumulative throughout the match and are penalized independent of the progressive penalty chart.
- On the first offense the wrestler will receive a warning. The opponent of the offender will be awarded one match point on the 2nd and 3rd offense.
- Upon the fourth stalling offense, the match will be stopped, the opponent of the offender will be awarded two match points and the opponent will be given a choice of position for the restart.
- A fifth offense shall result in disqualification of the offending wrestler.

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### FLEEING / TECHNICAL VIOLATION

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- Intentionally going out of the wrestling area or forcing an opponent out of the wrestling area to avoid an imminent scoring situation" is a **technical violation**. Both wrestlers should make every effort to remain inbounds. When the referee feels that either wrestler has failed to make every effort to stay inbounds, penalize the offending wrestler. There can be no technical violation for fleeing the mat if near-fall or takedown points have been earned."
- Referees have the authority to penalize wrestlers. When they fail to do so, they are giving the opponent an advantage. Both wrestlers should make every effort to remain inbounds.
- The wrestler's proximity to the OB line must be considered with the fleeing the mat call.
- If the referee feels that either wrestler has failed to make every effort to stay inbounds during an imminent scoring situation, the offending wrestler shall be assessed a penalty.
- If the referee determines that a wrestler would have scored had an injury timeout not been taken by the opponent, the injured wrestler will be charged with an injury timeout and applicable points shall be awarded to the non-injured party.

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### FLAGRANT MISCONDUCT/BITING

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- Flagrant Misconduct is the final and ultimate penalty for any wrestler.
- Acts include, but are not limited to:
  - Striking
  - Butting
  - Elbowing
  - Kicking
  - Intentionally biting an opponent
  - Use of tobacco products



## Important Aspects to Consider for a Bite DQ:

- Address a bite if/when it occurs:
  - The wrestler and/or coach cannot wait until the end of the match, or sometime thereafter, to complain about a bite that allegedly took place earlier in the match.
  - The wrestler who alleges the bite must inform and show the referee the bite marks when it occurs.
  - The referee should look for **both the upper and lower sets of teeth marks** (indented) in the flesh of the injured wrestler.
  - The referee should recognize whether the alleged bite occurred in an area where it could be self-inflicted.
  - Remember, the referee should look for the **sharp edge impression of both the upper and lower teeth**, seeing the entire outline of the teeth may indicate a cross face with the defensive wrestler turning into it.
  - Seeing a cross face does not necessarily mean that the offensive wrestler received a bite from the defensive wrestler.
  - If the referee sees either wrestler bite himself or herself, and that wrestler shows the referee the teeth marks, that wrestler is to be assessed a flagrant misconduct penalty.
  - Biting is an intentional act of flagrant misconduct. The flagrant misconduct violation:
    - Results in disqualified from competition
    - Carries a three-point team deduction
    - Results in the offending wrestler's immediate removal from the premises. (Wrestler requires adult supervision)
    - The loss of all accumulated team points (individual event) previously earned.
- The official is required to file the online Official's Report within 48-hours and contact the affected school's athletic director in person at the contest or by email or phone before noon the following day to inform them of the ejection(s) that occurred.
  - When assessing a flagrant misconduct penalty, the official should:
    - Obtain a copy of the bout sheet/scorebook page for all the match information
    - Note the time of day
  - Take notes that explain the reason for the disqualification, which will assist you in completing the online Official's Report.

## Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Behavior by the coaches, or other team personnel, which becomes abusive or interferes with the orderly progress of the match/meet.
  - These acts can occur prior to, during, or after a match/meet
  - Includes acts that violate the bench decorum rules
  - Taunting
  - Acts of disrespect
  - Actions which incite negative reactions by others
  - Unsportsmanlike conduct by contestants during a match carry a match point(s) deduction
  - Unsportsmanlike conduct by non-participating contestants, coaches and other team personnel carries a team point(s) deduction.
  - Continuing acts of unsportsmanlike conduct, or any unsportsmanlike conduct, may be construed as flagrant misconduct.

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## POST CONTEST EJECTIONS

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When a student or coach commits an ejectable offense following the conclusion of the contest, but before the official(s) leaves the facility and/or grounds, an official shall disqualify the student or coach as though it had occurred during the contest. The official is not required to inform the offender at the time, but must file an official's report immediately, but no later than 48 hours after the incident. Additionally, contact the affected school athletic director(s) in-person at the contest, or by email or phone before noon the following day, to inform them of the ejection(s) that occurred.



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## POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS

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- An important responsibility for a wrestling referee is the prompt and proper application of the potentially dangerous call.
  - Preventing injuries is a critically important function of a wrestling referee.
  - There are some situations do not have a name, but they are potentially dangerous or unsafe. It is up to the referee, with his or her experience, to recognize and feel situations that can cause injury.
- The referee(s) should constantly position and re-position themselves to have the best line of sight to recognize those precarious situations where injury might occur.

### Aspects of Making a Potentially Dangerous Call:

- Call it when you see, sense, or feel a dangerous situation.
- Stop the action when a potentially dangerous situation develops. Do not hesitate!
- The referee's first reaction should be to blow the whistle firmly while stepping in to stop the action.
- A moment of hesitation may be all the time necessary for a severe injury to occur.
- Explain why the situation was potentially dangerous before resuming wrestling.
- The referee is never to indicate the potentially dangerous signal without stopping the match.
- When a wrestler applies a legal hold/maneuver and their opponent turns the legal hold into an illegal hold, there is no penalty. This situation is potentially dangerous.

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## STALEMATE

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It is a stalemate when contestants interlock in a position, other than a pinning situation, in which neither wrestler can improve their respective position(s) or either competitor has the hands locked around one leg of the opponent to prevent scoring. The referee shall stop the match as soon as possible and wrestling resumes as if it were an out-of-bounds situation.

### The Proper Stalemate Call and Mechanics:

- The referee needs to allow the athletes to compete, wrestle their way through the match and notice the point in time when their continued progress has been halted.
  - Recognize the stoppage of action is due to their respective positions locked in such a manner that they cannot improve their position.
  - Pause a moment to make sure that neither wrestler can improve their position without fear of jeopardizing themselves.
  - Blow the whistle, give the proper mechanic signal with the closed fists pressed together in front of the chest, and get them to release their grasps.
  - Verbally communicate with the scorer's table and wrestlers then restart the match.

### Common Mistakes:

- Calling a stalemate when neither wrestler is attempting to wrestle to a position of advantage or neutrality.
  - That would be a stalling call!
- Waiting too long or calling a stalemate too soon interferes with the progress of the match and the outcome.
- Failure to call stalling after a wrestler has created repeated stalemates without trying to improve their position.
- Allow too much time to run off the clock when there is no significant action.
- Not requiring action at the edge of the mat and/or one wrestler remains out-of-bounds.

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## COACHES CONFERENCE AT THE SCORER'S TABLE

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All conferences must take place at the scorer's table. Do not engage or entertain the coaches on the bench or in their corners.

- If the coach requests a conference and was correct with their statements, questions or request, the referee shall make the necessary correction and the match is continued without penalty.
- When a coach requests a conference but is incorrect in their statements and/or questions the referees' judgment and the referee does not change the call, the coach is assessed a misconduct warning.
- If the coach requests a conference and approaches the scorer's table in a disrespectful, abusive and or disruptive fashion, then assess an unsportsmanlike penalty.
- Whether the coach is correct or not, if their behavior is unsportsmanlike, penalize them according to the rules book.

### Proven Effective Ways to Manage the Coach's Conference:

- This process starts by instructing the wrestlers to stay inside the 10-foot center circle if an AR is present.
- If an AR is not present, send the wrestlers to their respective bench/corner area.
- Calmly and professionally, walk to the scorer's table to meet the coach.
- While moving to the scorer's table it is important to collect your thoughts and replay the last few moments of the match in your head.
- When you reach the scorer's table turn and stand open at 90 degrees to keep the wrestlers in your vision.
- Only the coach who called the conference is allowed at the scorer's table. The opposing coach is not allowed to be a part of the conference.
- Only one coach per school may conference at any one time.
- Assume an open body language position to listen to the coach; do not fold arms, e.g.
- Look the coach directly in the eyes (do not stare). Do not say a word!
- Listen to the coach.
  - Part of defusing a potentially heated situation, is not to "put fuel on the fire."
  - Do not give them new and more "stuff" to argue over.
  - If there is hesitation, then ask them in a calm, polite, professional manner "Coach, you called me to the table, what can I do for you?"
  - That beginning may be enough to defuse the situation.
  - As you listen, formulate, and deliver a calm, clear, concise answer to their question(s).
  - Focus on the criteria of the rule you applied to make the decision.
  - Do not let this become a question-and-answer session.
  - Keep it brief, then do one of two things:
    - Thank them and make the necessary adjustments to address the concern(s)
    - Thank them and inform them they questioned a judgment call, and they are receiving a misconduct warning. Then ask them to return to the coach's bench.
- If during the exchange, or at the conclusion, the coach is acting in an unsportsmanlike manner, assess the coach the unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and deduct the team point. Then ask the coach to return to the bench.
- Promptly return to the mat and resume the match.
- Do not linger and wait for the coach to continue.

### Proper Body Language Speaks Volumes. Approach All Conferences in The Same Manner:

- Be professional
- Do not assume the worst or expect a combative coach
- Remain calm and patient

### Remember These Eight Thoughts:

1. The coach has the right to call for a conference at the scorer's table; you have a duty to grant that request and listen to the coach's questions or concerns.
2. Conferences must only be held at the scorer's table. Let the coach approach, you never approach them.
3. Be approachable ... listen ... explain ... assess penalties if warranted, and then restart the match.
4. Be polite, professional, direct, decisive, confident, and consistent.
5. Referees distinguish themselves (positively or negatively) by how they manage these situations.
6. Verbal abuse or unsportsmanlike conduct in any form needs to receive a penalty, and if applicable, the deduction of team point(s).
7. Profanity or derisive behavior by the official is never acceptable.

8. Do not touch the coach, respect his/her space and he/she should respect yours.
9. As the referee, you are in control of the entire situation, and you have the final say in all matters.

### The Role of the Referee:

Be the expert on the rules and have full authority and control of the wrestling match. To accomplish this responsibility, read and study on a regular basis the:

- NFHS "Rules Book"
- NFHS "Case and Manual"
- MHSAA Referees "Blue Book"
- MHSAA Officials Guidebook
- Join and actively participate in a local "Approved Association" for Wrestling Officials

Doing so means that you will have knowledge of the criteria to support each call made or not made. You will then understand the intent of the rules and use your judgment and common sense to support your call(s).

- Be fair, completely unbiased, and evaluate the match based solely on the performance of both athletes.
- The match referee shall impartially apply the rules for both contestants.
- Avoid creating a position of disadvantage for the aggressive wrestler by not applying sanctions for rules violations by the opponent.
- Assess violations promptly, without hesitation.
- Do not become the show, which is for the wrestlers.

## WRESTLING SIGNALS

The following are the only NFHS approved signals used while officiating wrestling.



STARTING MATCH



STOPPING THE MATCH



TIMEOUT



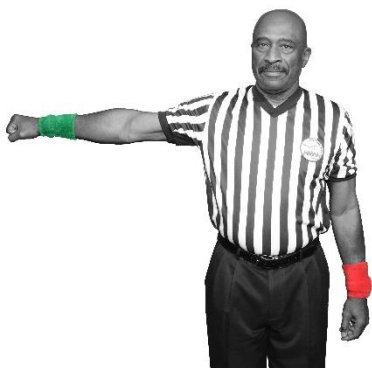
AWARDING POINTS (L / R HAND)



BLOOD TIME - START



CAUTION (L / R HAND)



COACH MISCONDUCT (L / R HAND)



DEFAULT-TECH FALL-DQ



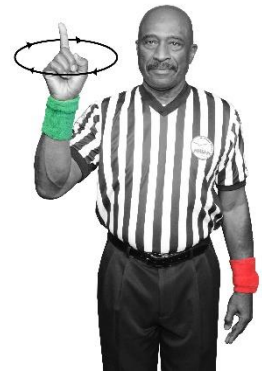
DEFER CHOICE



FLAGRANT MISCONDUCT (L / R HAND)



ILLEGAL HOLD



INJURY TIME - START



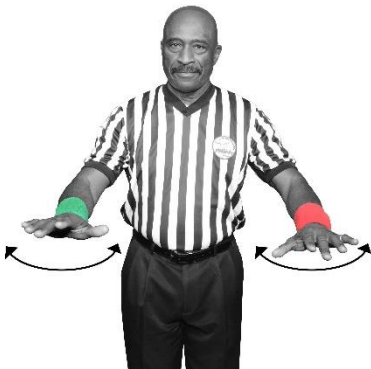
LOCKED HANDS-GRASPING CLOTHING



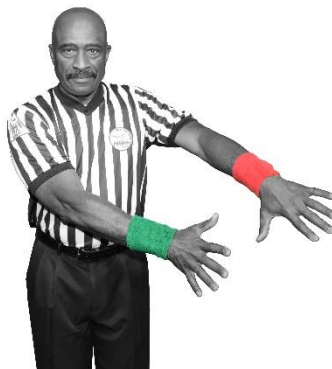
NEAR-FALL (L / R HAND)



NEUTRAL



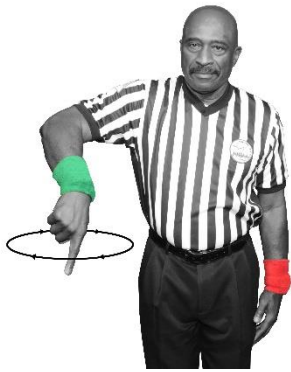
NO CONTROL



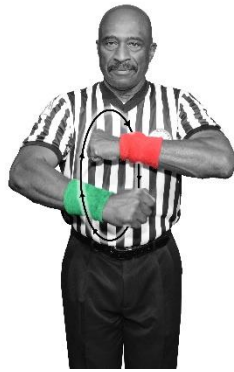
OUT OF BOUNDS



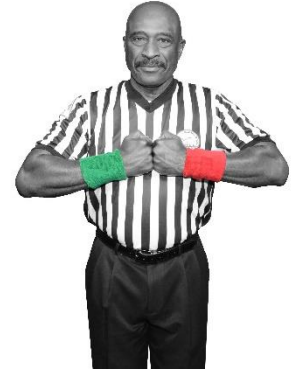
POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS (L / R HAND)



RECOVERY TIME - START



REVERSAL



STALEMATE



STALLING (L / R HAND)



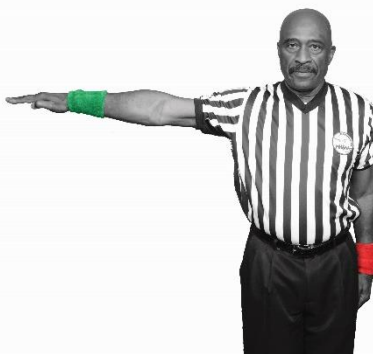
STOP: BLOOD/INJURY/RECOVERY



TECHNICAL VIOLATION



UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS (L / R HAND)



UNSPORTSMANLIKE (L / R HAND)



WRESTLER IN CONTROL (L / R HAND)