



### Tick Tock, Tick Tock

Calling stalling in wrestling, for many officials, is the most difficult call to make in a match. Based on years of officiating wrestling and calling stalling, the call is not that difficult to make; the real trick is being consistent in recognizing and calling stalling from match to match and meet to meet.

As a group, officials struggle to find consistency in the way we call stalling. There is no solution or remedy to eliminate stalling from any level of wrestling, but developing a good system to recognizing stalling will help improve consistency and reduce stalling.

While officiating the wrestling match, there are several questions you must ask yourself in order to recognize and then call stalling. Is **each** wrestler:

- Honest in their attempt to stay within the 10-foot circle?
- Wrestling aggressively, regardless of position, time in the match or current score?
- Initiating action?

If you cannot answer all three questions in the affirmative, then you have stalling. Officials should also call stalling without hesitation. The exception would be if you determined that one of the wrestlers is being overpowered and not able to wrestle to the three requirements.

Rule 5-24 of the NFHS rule book specifies, *“Action is to be maintained throughout the match by the contestants wrestling aggressively whether in the top, bottom or neutral position and both contestants are equally responsible for initiating action.”*

It is also required that when a referee recognizes stalling occurring **at any time and in any position**, that the offending wrestler(s) shall be warned and subsequently penalized for stalling.

Some indicators that a wrestler is not stalling might be circling, creating forward motion, changing levels, changing direction, penetrating, creating angles and taking risks.

The official should verbally communicate with the wrestlers to encourage activity. Verbal cues such as “action,” “contact,” “center” and “motion” generally encourage activity and alert wrestlers and coaches that the official has observed a period of inactivity.

Remember that calling stalling when first recognized will set the tone for the remainder of the match. It will also confirm to both wrestlers and coaches that action is expected and the offending wrestler will receive a penalty for not creating sufficient action.

**Reminder:** When calling stalling, the official must be confident, authoritative and concise. Call stalling without hesitation when it is recognized. This is the key to consistent enforcement of the rules.

**Tip of the Day:** A tactic used to recognize which wrestler is stalling in the neutral position is counting **legitimate** shots. Counting legitimate shorts keeps officials alert and actively involved in the match. Anytime either wrestler takes three shorts to his opponent’s zero, it is a good indicator of stalling. The 3:0 ratio is the most basic way for an official to recognize stalling.

**Something to Consider:** Have someone videotape your match. Then take time to review the footage with another official; specifically focusing on where work is needed to help you to consistently recognize and improve your stalling calls.