



### Managing Spectators

When you step on the mat as a wrestling official, you know from the nature of competitive sports that when two opponents compete, conflict is inevitable. Any event in the contest may trigger an eruption. A series of difficulties may cause frustrations to build, and sometimes your call or no call will make you the focal point of an angry spectator.

When the disruptive event occurs, and it will happen, here are some tips to help you safely and effectively deal with the irritated spectator.

- Don't take yourself too seriously
  - Remember that you chose to be out on the mat and officiating is something that you enjoy doing. Relax and set the tone for spectators to see that this is high school athletics and it is something that the athletes and spectators should enjoy, not stress over.
- Inform the administration
  - Advise the administration of potential issues and prepare them for any future actions that you may take.
- Never let them under your skin
  - If the spectator(s) know that they have gotten under your skin, they have you right where they want you.
- Never raise your voice
  - The agitator is just waiting for you to raise your voice or yell at them. They would love that. It would give them a chance to raise their voice and argue back. This changes the focus and makes your behavior the issue, not their behavior.
- Treat them with respect
  - Remember that you are the person in charge and you should not demean yourself or the uniform by being disrespectful, regardless of what they say. This

reinforces your respect for yourself.

- Offender identified
  - Once you have identified the offender, request the administration remove them. You should not engage them with your words or looks. Refocus your attention to the wrestlers and have fun on the mat.

**Remember:** *NFHS Rule 5.30.3...Spectators. "Any act which in the opinion of the referee, is serious enough to warrant removal, and shall cause the spectator to be removed from the premises for the remainder of the event. It is the home team administration or tournament directors/designee's responsibility to ensure a spectator is removed when directed by the referee".*

**Tip of the Day:** *"You cannot control the wind, but you can adjust your sails". ~Anon*

**Something to Consider:** *"Gimme a head with hair, long beautiful hair..."*

Loose and long hair in wrestling is a matter of fairness. If a wrestler's hair is so long that it impedes an opponent's ability to apply legal holds, it needs to be situated in a hair cap. But what is the point of having a cap if we are constantly stopping to ensure that the hair is not falling out. Officials should use the following guidelines for addressing hair continuously falling out from the head covering:

- First incident—Official's stoppage and have it corrected
- Second incident—Official's stoppage with a warning that further interruptions will be corrected using injury time.
- Third incident—Injury Stoppage
- Fourth and subsequent incidents—Injury Stoppage with the opponent's choice of restart position.

**What Your Call?:** In a particularly intense matchup, wrestler A forcefully slaps the face of wrestler B in a neutral position.

The official should immediately stop the match and award a penalty point to wrestler B for unnecessary roughness by wrestler A. Penalty points for unnecessary roughness are awarded in addition to earned points. If the official deems the action flagrant, he may eject the offender immediately.