



**WRESTLING OFFICIATING
MECHANICS & PROCEDURES
2024-25 “BLUE BOOK”**

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MHSAA WRESTLING OFFICIALS 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 why and how to approach proper procedures and mechanics while officiating wrestling. Our scholastic referees work with young student-athletes from sixth to 12th grade, while the collegiate referee works with young people between 19 and 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 significant developmental issues that should be pivotal 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 the collegiate athlete's. The average scholastic athletes are slower to react to weight and pressure fluctuations than the average collegiate athletes.

The NFHS promotes a safe and healthy environment for young athletes and strives to have each state association foster and uphold the overriding 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 of the:

MHSAA Bluebook of Wrestling Officiating Mechanics and Procedures

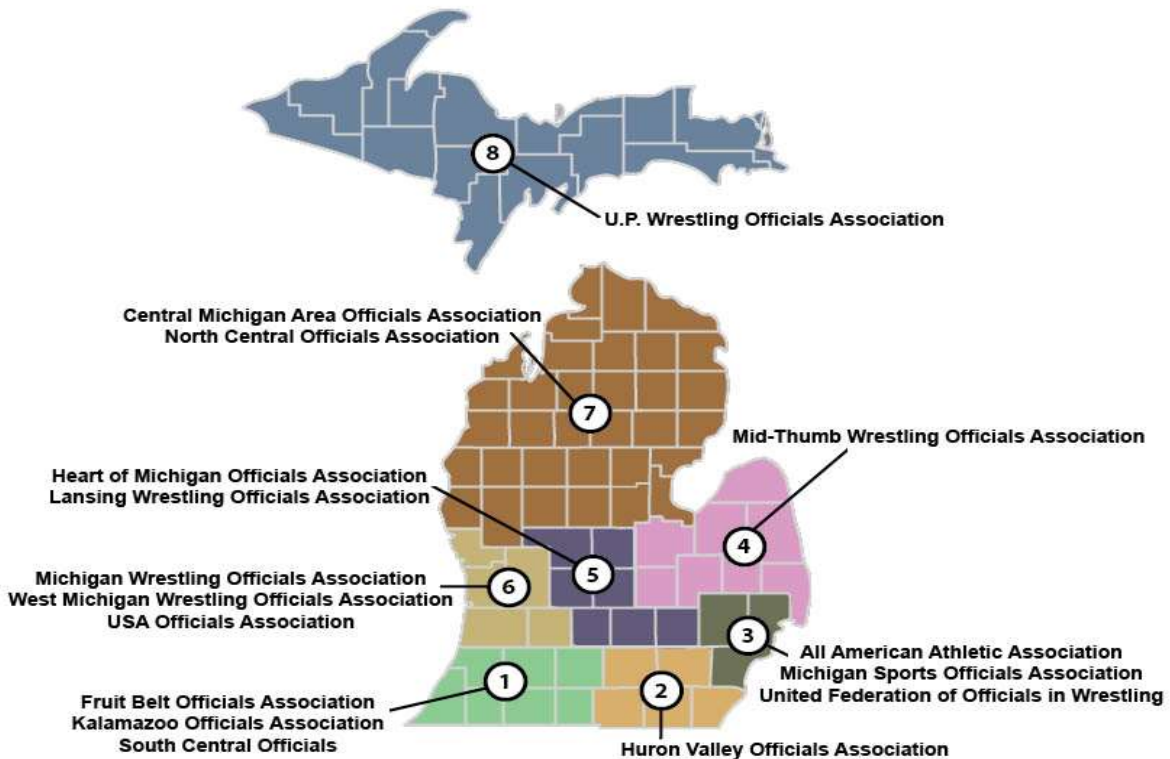


TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREAMBLE	5
REFEREE'S UNIFORM	5
THREE IMPORTANT SAFETY ISSUES	5
PRE-MEET DUTIES	5
INSPECTIONS & WEIGH-INS	6
Inspection Guidelines:.....	6
Inspection/Weigh-in:.....	6
“Shoulder-to-Shoulder” Inspection:.....	6
“Home Weigh-In” Inspection:.....	7
The Referee Should Disqualify the Athlete from Competition If:.....	7
PRE-CONTEST	7
PRE-MATCH	7
CAPTAINS / COIN TOSS	8
READY TO WRESTLE	8
REFEREE MECHANICS	<i>Error! Bookmark not defined.</i>
Start of the Match:	8
Neutral Standing Position:.....	9
Boundary Line:	9
Referee's Start:.....	9
Referee's Position:	9
Movement as Wrestling Continues:.....	10
When the Defensive Wrestler Comes to Their Feet:	10
THE ASSISTANT REFEREE (AR)	10
REFEREE MECHANICS IN NEAR-FALL SITUATIONS	10
Assistant Referee (AR) in Near-fall Situations:	11
CONCUSSION PROTOCOL & PROCEDURES	11
INJURY, BLOOD, OR RECOVERY TIME	11
Injury Time:.....	11
Injury Time (Extended):	12
Blood Time (Supersedes all other timeouts):	12
Recovery Time:.....	12
Mechanics of Injury, Blood, HNC, and Recovery Time:	12
STALLING	13
Neutral Stalling Guidelines:	13
Neutral Stalling Tactics (examples):.....	13
Offensive Stalling:	14
General Guidelines (Top):.....	14
Offensive Stalling Tactic Examples:.....	14
Defensive Stalling:.....	14
General Guidelines (Bottom):	14
Defensive Stalling Tactic Examples:	15
Warnings and Penalties for Stalling:	15
FLEEING / TECHNICAL VIOLATION	15
FLAGRANT MISCONDUCT/BITING	15
Important Aspects to Consider for a Bite DQ:	15
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	16
POST CONTEST EJECTIONS	16
POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS	16
Aspects of Making a Potentially Dangerous Call:	17
STALEMATE	17
The Proper Stalemate Call and Mechanics:	17
Common Mistakes:	17
COACHES CONFERENCE AT THE SCORER'S TABLE	17
The Role of the Referee:.....	18
WRESTLING SIGNALS	20

PREAMBLE

- 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 detailed information regarding the officiating techniques available to each MHSAA official. Through evaluation and studied development, these techniques 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, Case 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.

○ REFEREE’S UNIFORM

- Short-sleeved knit shirt, with alternating black and white 1-inch stripes, gray with black pinstripes, or an event-provided shirt standard 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, and black officiating shoes (white or gray trim is allowed).
- Colored wristbands. Red worn on the (left) and green on the (right).
- The NFHS requires officials to use a black whistle. Lanyards 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 is 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.
 - The trainer emblem, when worn, is to be on the left sleeve.
- Jewelry is 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 to keep track of timing events during the contest.
- A black warm-up jacket with or without a logo.

○ THREE IMPORTANT ISSUES

- Please pay attention to the following:
 - Contagious skin conditions
 - Potentially dangerous calls
 - Athlete’s safety

○ PRE-MEET DUTIES

- The MHSAA encourages officials to arrive at least 60 minutes before the match starts.
- The authority time of the referee begins at the site and concludes with the scorebook’s approval in dual meets and when the referee signs the about sheet after the tournament’s last match.
- Arrive at the 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 Finals.

○ INSPECTIONS & WEIGH-INS

Inspection Guidelines:

- Inspections should take place in an area which considers the athletes' modesty concerns.
- *"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 wrestler fails to 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 shoulder to shoulder 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 (*a digital copy 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 for clearance to compete after the weigh-in/inspection has begun 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 is not 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:
 - Check fingernails.
 - Check the contestant's facial hair for adornments that may be hard or abrasive.
- 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. (
- 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 that is suspiciously like a communicable disease.
- The person who inspects the wrestlers (upon request by the official) 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 the 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 NFHS requirements.

- As outlined in the MHSAA Wrestling PSTI, coaches must be aware of their wrestlers' health conditions and are expected to advise the tournament manager of any suspicious condition (s).
- Physicians should be encouraged to participate in the inspection of wrestlers under Michigan Public Act 30, which provides immunity for physicians who volunteer their services to schools.
- All skin inspections, whether performed by a physician or official, must be the same 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. When competitors arrive at the event, 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 (according to the random weight drawn), with the head coach present during the inspection. As the official(s) completes the inspection of everyone the official shall:
 - Enter your initials in the box labeled “REF INITIALS” approving competition for that wrestler.
 - **Do Not** enter your 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.
 - 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.
 - Mark 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. DO NOT touch any contestant during inspections.

The Referee Shall Disqualify the Athlete from Competition If:

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

○ PRE-CONTEST

- 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.
 - The official score must be kept at the designated mat “head table.”
 - By default, the designated official scorer must be provided by the home team.
- 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 the scorer's table.
- Support the event/support staff at the scorer's table.

○ PRE-MATCH

- 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 of the mat.
- 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.”

○ CAPTAINS / COIN TOSS

- Meet with the team captains in the center of the mat.
- Coach presence is encouraged for the toss but is 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.
- The winner of the toss has the 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 get a choice of starting position in the second period.

○ READY TO WRESTLE

- Referee **MUST** be at the scorer’s table:
- Wrestlers must be ready to report to the scorer’s table immediately when called for by the referee.
- Call for the correct wrestlers (by color and weight) to report for check-in at the scorer’s table.
- Verify the wrestler’s name, current weight class, and school against the official weigh-in sheet.
- The wrestlers are not **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.
- Check the legality of the wrestler(s) equipment.
- Have each wrestler report directly to the center of the mat to their assigned color.
- 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 is discovered during the match, the match is stopped and forfeited by the opponent. The dual continues with six (6) team points being awarded to the offended team, plus an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty is assessed to the offending team’s head coach, which requires the deduction of one additional team point (7-point penalty).
- If an ineligible wrestler is discovered after the match but before the completion of the dual meet, the dual continues with the team score being adjusted so that any team points earned during the match in question are removed. 6 team points are then awarded to the offended team, plus an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty is assessed to the head coach of the offending team, which requires the deduction of one additional team point (7-point penalty).
- In both cases, neither wrestler who competed in the “illegal” match may compete again during that dual meet.
- If this is discovered after the dual meet when the scorebook has been signed by the official and both teams have left the mat area, the results of the dual meet will stand.

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 wrestler’s hand(s) nor 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 always be 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 comfort 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 the 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 the 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 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 at 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 on or above the mid-line of the opponent's back, the far palm on the navel, the near palm on the elbow, and the offensive wrestler's back foot.
 - The offensive wrestler's legs or feet may not be in contact with the defensive wrestler.
- Once the defensive wrestler is "set" (ready to wrestle) 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 a 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 can 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 wrestler cannot protect themselves when being lifted off or returned to the mat, the referee **shall** blow the whistle to stop the move or maneuver as potentially dangerous.

○ THE ASSISTANT REFEREE (AR)

- AR should discuss and understand the responsibilities/expectations with the LR before the contest begins.
- Be first on and last off the mat.
- Be active and 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 the 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 a 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
 - to caution for an improper start/position of either wrestler.
- Understand that verbal calls are the responsibility of the LR.

○ REFEREE MECHANICS IN NEAR-FALL SITUATIONS

- 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.
 - Maintain a silent count while getting down on the mat. **DO NOT** give near fall swipes while you are on your feet.

- 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 **only** begins when the offensive wrestler controls the defensive wrestler in a pinning situation and near-fall criteria have 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 the criteria and points are possible.
- Place your fingers down (*holding two, three, or four 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 scoring 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 fall situation.

Do Not Create 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 of the AR is to observe that everything remains *“legal”* up top.
- The AR is to watch for illegal holds, maneuvers, and 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.

CONCUSSION PROTOCOL & PROCEDURES

- The NFHS adopted a concussion rule regarding 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 healthcare professional for an exact determination of the extent of injury.
- Submit an online Officials Report with the MHSAA.

INJURY, BLOOD, OR RECOVERY TIME

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 a choice on the restart.

Injury Time (Extended):

- As soon as the official or the wrestler signals detect an injury by waving their finger(s) or tapping out, injury time begins.
- When appropriate health care professional(s) (physician or certified athletic trainer) are present, they have the authority 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 must prepare, without delay, to continue wrestling or default on the match.
- A second occurrence of injury to the head and neck involving the 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 the 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 the 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 wrestler’s “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.
- Only the blood time clock runs if one contestant is injured, and the other is bleeding.

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. Recovery Time is **not cumulative**.
- If the injured wrestler cannot continue because of the injury, the injured wrestler wins the match by default.
- The injured wrestler may default on 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.
- The 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.
- Before time expires, the coach and/or the injured wrestler must determine if they will continue to compete.
- The injured wrestler may default before time expires.
- If time expires, the referee will then use the applicable rule to render a decision.
 - ✓ Note: A default during the match would be an injury default, NOT a medical default.

STALLING

Stalling is a simple call if you develop a philosophy that adheres to the principles 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.
 - Have a clear and thorough knowledge of wrestling and an understanding of the criteria used to recognize stalling.
- Each wrestler is required to make an honest attempt to stay inbounds and wrestle aggressively regardless of:
 - Position
 - Time of the match
 - Score
- Both wrestlers are equally responsible for initiating and maintaining the 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 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 in levels
 - Pushing/pulling the opponent off balance
- Countering a takedown attempt is not stalling unless:
 - Defensive wrestlers are content with not improving their position.
 - There is no effort to initiate counterattacks.

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 inbounds
- 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.
- Continuously avoiding contact with the opponent.
- Preventing opponent from returning to or remaining inbounds.
- Making contact but moving out to the edge of the mat.
- Staying on the edge of the mat, instead of working back towards the center of the mat.
- Continuously pushing/pulling with no attack attempt

- Tying up an opponent with an under hook and wrist control without a follow-through attack.
- Collar tie pushing/pulling with no follow-through.
- Single or double under hook without an attack attempt.
- Wrist control (single or double) without attempting to attack or prevent an opponent's attack.
- Blocking with a forearm or head in a tie-up with no attempt to attack or to prevent an 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 the opponent from scoring.
- Elevating a single leg without attempting to finish the 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 wrestlers must work for fall/near-fall.
- Watch for parallel riding (riding hips) without trying to break down the opponent.
- Watch for parallel riding with an opponent broken down on the mat, with no attempt to get perpendicular to work for a fall or near-fall.
- Watch for "busy wrestling," which means 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 the 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 defensive wrestler's leg held to the buttocks (while broken down) for more than 5 seconds. (No visual 5 second count)
- Two hands on two legs or two hands on one leg in action is 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 the opponent down for the sole purpose of control.
- Delaying the return 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 the 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 an opponent, resulting in a stalemate.
- Repeated use of cross-body ride with no attempt to improve position.
- Use of double grapevine for the 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 the opponent down.
- Running an arm bar with an 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 a defensive wrestler stands up/lifting a leg(s) off the mat.

Note – Repeatedly means two or more occasions.

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 attempt.

- 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 working 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 independently 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 offender's opponent will be awarded two match points, and the opponent will be given a position for the restart.
- A fifth offense shall result in the disqualification of the offending wrestler.
 - Note: Stalling follows its own Penalty Chart.

FLEEING / TECHNICAL VIOLATION

- 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 inbound.
 - 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 give the opponent an advantage. Both wrestlers should make every effort to remain in bounds.
- The wrestler's proximity to the OB line must be considered when 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.

FLAGRANT MISCONDUCT/BITING

- Flagrant Misconduct is the final and ultimate penalty for any wrestler.
- Flagrant acts include, but are not limited to:
 - Striking
 - Butting
 - Elbowing
 - Kicking
 - Intentionally biting an opponent
 - Back Suplay/Salto
 - 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 shall be assessed a **flagrant misconduct** penalty.
- The flagrant misconduct violation:
 - Results in disqualified from competition.
 - Carries a three-point team deduction.
 - Results in the offending wrestler's removal from future competition in the event.
 - The loss of all accumulated team points (individual event) previously earned.
- The official is required to file the online Official Report within 24 hours and contact the affected school's athletic director in person at the contest or by email or phone before noon the following business 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 Report.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Behavior by the coaches or other team personnel that becomes abusive or interferes with the orderly progress of the match/meet.
 - These acts can occur before, during, or after a match/meet.
 - Includes acts that violate the bench decorum rules.
 - Taunting
 - Acts of disrespect
 - Actions that incite adverse reactions from others.
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct by contestants during a match carries 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 may be construed as flagrant misconduct. Any unsportsmanlike conduct can be deemed flagrant.

POST CONTEST EJECTIONS

When a student or coach commits an ejectable offense after the contest concludes but before the official(s) leave the facility and/or grounds, the 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 unless jurisdiction exists by rule; the official must file an ejection report immediately but no later than 24 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 next business day to inform them of the ejection(s) that occurred.

POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS

- An important responsibility of 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.

- Some situations do not have names but 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 allow a severe injury to occur.
- Explain why the situation was potentially dangerous before resuming wrestling.
- The referee is never to indicate a 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.

STALEMATE

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 their 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.
 - Please recognize that the stoppage of action is due to their locked positions, where they cannot improve their position.
 - Pause a moment to ensure neither wrestler can improve their position without fear of jeopardizing themselves.
 - Blow the whistle, give the proper mechanical 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.
- Allowing 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.

COACHES CONFERENCE AT THE SCORER'S TABLE

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 is 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 for 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; 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 must be penalized, and if applicable, team point(s) must be deducted.
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

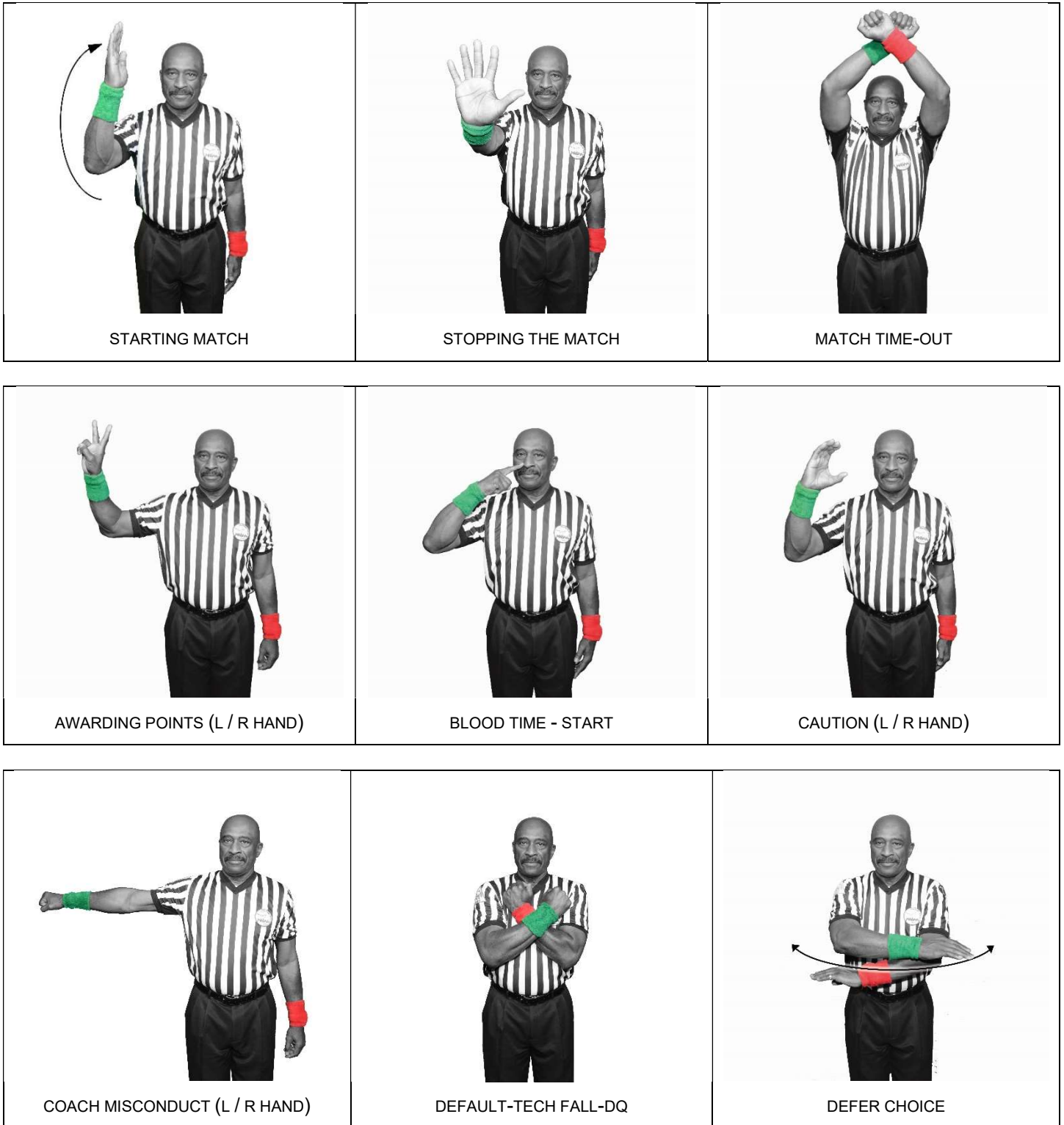
Doing so means that you will have knowledge of the criteria to support each call made or not made. You will then understand the intent of the rules and use your judgment and common sense to support your call(s).

- Be fair and 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.

- Apply sanctions for rule violations by the opponent to avoid creating a disadvantage for the aggressive wrestler.
- 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 to be used while officiating wrestling.





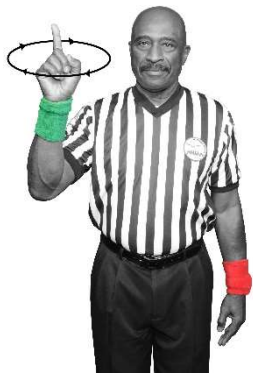
FLAGRANT MISCONDUCT (L / R HAND)



HNC INJURY EVAL TIME (L / R HAND)



ILLEGAL HOLD



INJURY TIME - START



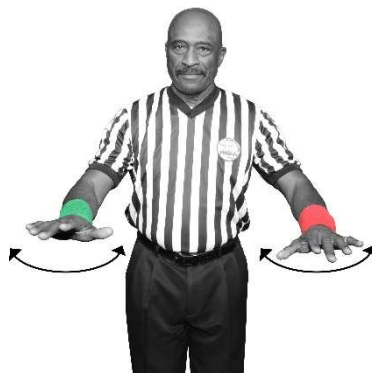
LOCKED HANDS-GRASPING CLOTHING



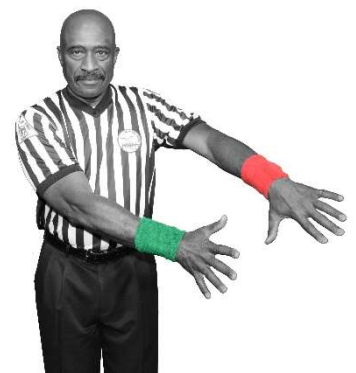
NEARFALL (L / R HAND)



NEUTRAL



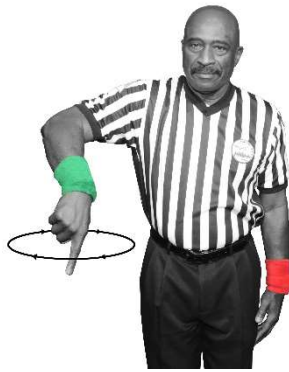
NO CONTROL



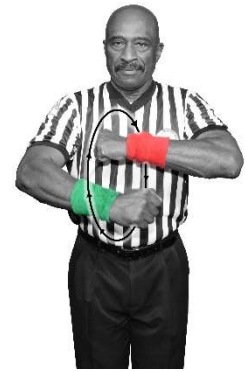
OUT OF BOUNDS



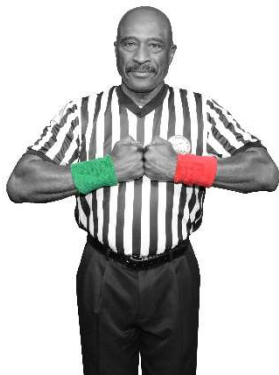
POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS (L / R HAND)



RECOVERY TIME - START



REVERSAL



STALEMATE



STALLING (L / R HAND)



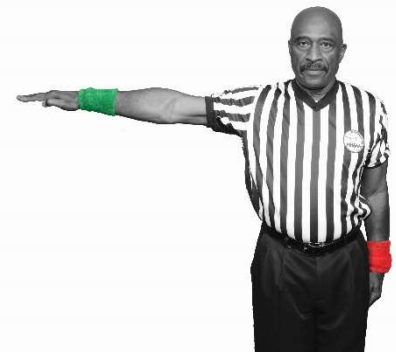
STOP: BLOOD/INJURY/RECOVERY



TECHNICAL VIOLATION



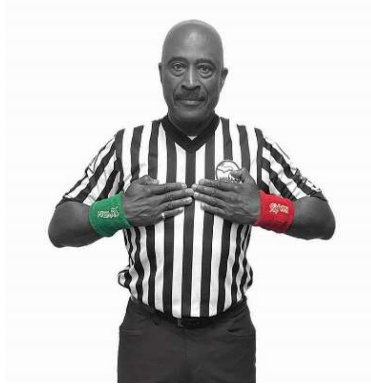
UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS (L / R HAND)



UNSPORTSMANLIKE (L / R HAND)



WRESTLER IN CONTROL (L / R HAND)



REFEREE'S TIME-OUT

Revised 09/2024.