



ASSISTANT REFEREE

Goals:

1. Help minimize human error in rule application and judgment.
2. Help aid in the prevention of injuries.
3. Increase confidence and create opportunities for all officials.

**Refer to pages 12-13 in the NFHS rules book for guidelines in working with assistant referees.*

General Comments

Communication between the head referee (HR) and assistant referee (AR) is the most important component for success in using the assistant referee. The head referee in a tournament should lead a discussion with all officials prior to implementing the assistant referee. In the discussion, the head referee needs to emphasize and review the expectations of working with a partner. Another important characteristic of a successful team is that both referees must feel that they have equal authority. However, the head referee has the final authority if the two officials disagree and is the only one with a whistle. In fact, the assistant referee should put his/her whistle in his pocket, so it is not visible. Both officials also must agree to 'check their egos at the door'. They must be willing to accept the fact that every official makes mistakes, and that all officials need to do what is right for the athletes. At some point during a match, it is likely that the assistant referee's opinion, location, or input will help 'get a call right'. Work as a team and officials will appreciate each other's support. It will increase your confidence, prevent injuries, and you will enjoy the competition even more.

Clock

One of the duties of the assistant referee is to make sure the clock starts and stops. If it doesn't stop when the head referee indicates it should, the assistant referee needs to mentally count time and inform the referee when a break in the action occurs and make an adjustment on the clock. The assistant referee should especially watch the clock at the end of a period to help the referee determine if points are earned prior to time elapsing. The assistant referee should also watch the scoreboard to make sure the score is accurate. The assistant referee should monitor the clock during injury time, blood time, and recovery time, and verbally (in intervals) keep the referee informed of time elapsed/left during each of these time out situations. Finally, the assistant referee must make sure time is accurately recorded. If the situation presents itself, the assistant referee may also inform the referee when there is 10-15 seconds left in the period.

Positioning

It is important that the head referee does not alter his style or normal positioning on the mat. It is the responsibility of the assistant referee to position himself in a way to assure the head referee has complete freedom of movement. The assistant referee must adapt to the head referee. During wrestling, the assistant referee should maintain a position anywhere from 90-180 degrees in relation to the head referee, with the 180 position as the optimal position to see the action that is not visible to the head referee. The assistant referee will be frequently on or outside the 28 foot circle, and will move closer to the wrestlers when a better view is required. When the assistant referee wishes to communicate with the referee, he should circle the mat toward the head referee. The head referee should back toward the edge of the mat, thus allowing a verbal exchange. The head referee may have to stop the match at the appropriate time to further the discussion and make a correction if necessary. After the exchange, the assistant referee should go back to his appropriate position opposite the head official. It is a great idea for the two officials to communicate anytime the match is stopped, prior to any restart. It is encouraged that the assistant referee makes contact with the referee periodically throughout the match, not only when a situation occurs. It is also very important that the assistant referee communicate his thoughts regarding stalling to the head referee. This is easily accomplished prior to a restart. The two officials may be closer during a rapid flurry on the boundary line or as the period ends. The assistant referee's positioning should allow him to monitor bench conduct and he should not hesitate to inform the referee when unsportsmanlike conduct is observed. It is paramount that the assistant referee be ready to aid the referee in the safety of the wrestlers should they go rapidly out of bounds or in a potentially dangerous situation that develops unexpectedly. Again, communicate, communicate, and communicate!

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Starting Positions

The two referees should position themselves 180 degrees opposite of each other. It is not the job of the assistant referee to be "nit picky", but for him to communicate anything he may see from his position. The assistant referee should let the head referee conduct the start, but if the assistant referee notices something that the head referee should be aware of, he can bring it to the attention of the referee prior to the next start. The assistant referee should casually walk over to the referee and let him know what you saw on the previous start. The assistant referee might say, "watch for ..."

Neutral Position

The referees should work opposite each other when the wrestlers are in the neutral position. As the wrestlers move toward the boundary, the officials should be in a position on the boundary edge so that it allows them to look directly at each other through the wrestlers. They both must be in a position to view supporting parts of both wrestlers.

Near Fall

The assistant referee will move into position to make sure neither wrestler performs an illegal maneuver while in the near fall situation. The assistant referee communicates to the referee that "everyone is OK", "good up here" etc. If you notice any violation by either wrestler, bring it to the attention of the referee so he can take appropriate action. The assistant referee should never go down on the mat and never swing his arm to count out near fall. If the head referee is out of position on a quick takedown directly to the back, it is expected that the assistant referee does a silent near fall count until the situation is over. It is acceptable for the assistant referee to get down on one knee on the mat in the situation just described, but should stand back up when the head referee is in position to count near fall. When the situation ends the assistant referee will communicate to the referee how many near fall points he counted for that situation. The head referee will then determine whether a 2 point or 3 point near fall has been earned. The assistant referee will never call a fall.

Making the Call

The referee always makes the call. If a close line call occurs, a call at the buzzer, or any other sudden flurry of action, the head referee should make the call, and if the assistant referee disagrees, he may approach the referee and express his opinion. The assistant referee may even occasionally approach the referee and assure him you are in agreement with a call. The head referee should not look at the assistant referee for an opinion prior to making a call. Communicating support for a call by the assistant referee is equally as important as disagreeing with one. Even a head nod is adequate in certain situations. Both the head referee and assistant referee should always use rule book criteria to support their opinions. Any verbal communication between officials should be done in a manner where neither team bench may hear the discussion. If the match needs to be stopped to discuss a call, this may require that the officials reposition themselves to remain discreet. If the assistant referee disagrees with a call, he should briefly explain why he saw it differently than the head official. If the head referee disagrees with the assistant referee, the call will stand. If the assistant referee does not have an opinion, that indicates a lack of concentration. By default, no opinion by the assistant referee means he agrees with the call. The assistant referee is encouraged to watch for potentially dangerous situations and express himself to the referee anytime one is detected. Officials must communicate freely with each other. They cannot feel threatened or undermined when discussing a call. If they do, the assistant referee system will not be successful.

Scorer's Table

During the match, the assistant referee should never talk to a coach at the corners of the mat or at mat side. If the head referee needs to go to the scorer's table, the assistant referee is responsible for keeping the two wrestlers near the center of the mat. The assistant referee should be the first one on the mat at the beginning of the match, and the last one off at the conclusion. From the center of the mat, the assistant referee should make sure to watch both wrestlers enter and leave the 28 foot circle. The assistant referee does have the authority to call unsportsmanlike conduct, but inform the referee and he will make the call if in agreement.