

12/10/20

To: Wrestling schools (A.D. and head coach), wrestling officials
From: Lewie Curtis, IHSAA wrestling administrator

Wrestling season is underway! School personnel, please share this memo with your assistant coaches and junior high coaches! If you have questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact me by email at lcurtis@iahsaa.org or by phone at 515-432-2011.

- State finals tickets are not going on sale any time soon. Please inform the person normally responsible for setting up this purchase that it is not taking place at this time. I will give you as much advanced notice as possible once the decisions have been made regarding state tournament ticket sales and other information regarding the postseason and particularly the state tournaments.
- A reminder that all wrestling schools can have one varsity team. That means your other teams (junior varsity, girls, freshmen, etc.) are considered sub-varsity. This is an important differentiation as it relates to eligibility (general transfer rule, open enrollment, etc.) and the 90-day varsity rule. Be sure to wrestle only eligible athletes on your varsity team or at any varsity event (some JV teams go to varsity events – these are “off limits” to those ineligible students). Call or email for clarification, if needed, but the athletic director should know the status of each athlete on your team's roster.
- Girls division tournaments will be posted on our website. If you plan on attending one of these with some of your female wrestlers, please contact that school to let them know your plans. Offering a girls' division is fantastic but can turn rotten if only a few people show up! Sending a quick email will help the host school determine whether there are enough girls to warrant having the division. Communication is the key!
 - Information regarding the IWCOA Girls State Wrestling Tournament will be coming out soon. The event is being held in Coralville on January 22 and 23.
 - The event is being hosted by Iowa City West, Iowa City High, and Waverly-Shell Rock with the IWCOA serving as the event sponsor. It will be held at the new Xtream Arena.
- In some cases, wrestlers are reporting to the scorer's table with a mask or face covering on then returning to the team bench to take the mask or face covering off. The idea would be to reduce exposure at the scorer's table. We should allow for this to happen, but not allow for the wrestler to receive any last-second instructions, etc. They should simply get rid of the mask or face covering by handing it to their coach and reporting directly to the center of the mat.
- Questions that have come up regarding the hair rule, shoelaces rule, masks/face coverings, setting wrestlers in the “referee's position”, consecutive day weigh-ins (JV and Varsity), etc. Here goes:
 - Masks/face coverings are special equipment and can be worn during competition. Treat them like headgear in that they might come off during live wrestling, but if there is any kind of action or scoring possibilities the official keeps wrestling going. When there is a natural break (out of bounds, for example) or there is no action, the official may stop the match and allow the wrestler to put the mask back on without penalty. This may happen repeatedly during a match, and there is still no penalty.
 - The hair length rule has changed. We no longer check for the length of hair. If the wrestler uses any type of hair control device, which is optional, the device must be legal.

So, it can't be hard or abrasive, and if the wrestler chooses to wear a hair cover, it must be legal, which includes being attached to the ear guards.

- What if the rubber bands or scrunchy repeatedly falls out of the hair? Is that a penalty at some point?
 - First, there is no penalty for this happening. It is not stalling, it is not a violation or illegal. Nothing. Just have the wrestler fix it when you have a break in action.
 - Second, you do not have to stop wrestling immediately and you should not stop wrestling when there is action, scoring, near fall, etc.! Let wrestling continue and when there is a natural break or no action, stop the match and have them fix their hair. Coaches, take responsibility for your wrestlers and their hair, helping them get things tightened up, covered, etc. so that there won't be excessive stoppages.
- Shoelaces that come untied are considered stalling. Same situation as hair, stop wrestling when there is no scoring or action to get the laces tied. Give the stalling call during that time when the laces are being tied. Don't stop wrestling because of untied shoelaces when there is action, possible scoring, or near falls!
 - If after the shoe(s) come untied and the match is stopped to re-tie the laces and stalling is called, the wrestler wants to also tape the laces, you would then go to injury time to allow for the taping of the laces (similar to if they go to the table to report with their shoelaces not tied).
 - Coaches instruct your kids on this simple and often overlooked issue! Take 1-2 minutes to deal with it and make it a non-issue. There really is no need for the shoelaces to be a part of any match! Tape them, double knot them, etc. to take care of the issue before it becomes a problem.
- The shoe coming completely off is a technical violation. One point is awarded to the opponent. Injury time does start to allow for the wrestler to put their shoe back on (this is one of the two injury timeouts allowed in a match).
- The headgear comes off repeatedly during the match. What do we do about that?
 - Same as hair. Stop the match when there is no action, scoring, or near fall. Fix the headgear or put it back on. No penalty for headgear problems.
 - Coaches, again this is something that you can help with. Check on your kids' headgears, the fit, etc. No different than fitting a football helmet! Take a few minutes to help the kids get things fitting properly before they compete. Shouldn't have to be much of an issue.
- When setting wrestlers in the "referee's position" or top-bottom position, the official needs to consistently follow the following cadence, as it will help with consistency and lessen the likelihood of false starts:
 - "Bottom man set"
 - "Top man cover"
 - "Set" (this single word should be said quickly, followed immediately by the whistle to start wrestling)
- As a reminder, there are no such things as "exhibition matches" that should be taking place at any wrestling event. Here are a few examples that coaches may want to have happen, but should not be allowed:

- Team A has a JV wrestler who is normally a 120-pounder that weighs in at 124 (thus a 126-pounder). He was scheduled to wrestle Team B's 113-pounder (who made weight at 113) who was going to "bump up" one weight class. Since we now have a 113 scheduled to wrestle a 126, and that is not legal, the coaches decide to have an "exhibition match" between the two, in order to get them a match. This cannot happen and the coaches should not allow or ask for it to happen. The official, who may not know exactly what is taking place, should not officiate that match, nor should the official be put in that situation. Don't let this happen.
- Team A has a big kid that currently weighs 298 pounds, and his body composition assessment does not allow him to make the 285-pound weight class until January 3. In a dual meet, Team A's coach visits with Team B's coach, who has a JV wrestler that weighed in at 283 pounds. The two coaches decide to have these two wrestle an "exhibition match" in order to get them both a match, as there aren't many opportunities for these two to wrestle. Again, this cannot happen, and the coaches need to be the ones to not allow it nor ask for it to occur. Officials, if they know what is happening, should not officiate that match nor allow it to occur.
- Use of Assistant Referee (AR) - process of communication
 - When officials get the chance to work with an assistant referee (perhaps in a dual meet or championship matches of a tournament) they are encouraged to do so. When this happens, I want to suggest proper ways to communicate between the Head Referee (HR), the AR, and the coaches.
 - On edge of mat calls, the HR should always make eye contact with the AR, looking for some kind of confirmation. The AR might nod his head or give some other nonverbal signal to confirm the call. If the AR does not necessarily agree with the call, the same nonverbal cue can be given, which should prompt a verbal discussion between the two officials. This discussion should take place away from the coaches and scorer's table. During this discussion, the HR should ask the AR for his opinion on the call or situation. The AR should simply share his opinion. Examples of what an AR might say include:
 - "I saw control with the feet in bounds."
 - "I had no control before they went out of bounds"
 - The opinion might be "I had a bad angle, so this one is your call"
 - The opinion shouldn't be "I wouldn't touch that call with a ten-foot pole"
 - When the AR sees a call that he disagrees with, but the HR does not seek help from the AR, the AR has two choices:
 - Say nothing and accept the call of the HR
 - Get the attention of the HR and ask for a conference to discuss the call
 - The HR should be willing to listen to the AR's opinion, knowing that ultimately the HR has to make the decision and go with what he thinks is correct
 - The discussion should take place with getting the correct call in mind, not who is right or wrong

- I prefer the HR to initiate the discussion, but the AR can initiate it if needed
- NFHS rule regarding length of matches.
 - Rule 6-1 addresses the length of match for high school wrestling. Article 1 states that “Regular matches in dual meets or tournaments championship competition shall be six minutes in length divided into three periods of two minutes each.” (2-2-2)
 - Article 2 states that consolation matches shall also consist of three periods. However, the first period may be on or two minutes in length, while the second and third periods both shall be two minutes in length. This decision is up to tournament meet management and should be clearly communicated in advance of the tournament.
 - Following approval from our IHSAA Board of Control, the length of match rule was adjusted for sub-varsity matches. It is now up to the host management of the event to determine the length of the sub-varsity matches. So, these could be 2-2-2, they could be 1-2-2, they could be 2-1-1. Please be sure to clearly communicate this prior to the start of the event (duals or tournaments).
- As a reminder, coaches need to look over their schedules in the TrackWrestling OPC and make sure they are accurate, especially the column for Level (Varsity or Junior Varsity are the most typical choices). Selecting the correct level allows the individual wrestler to have their wins and losses recorded as Varsity or JV, which will be critical at the tournaments where TW seeding is used (including postseason and state). Coaches need to change the Pending option to Accepted once the teams are added to a triangular or quad, as well as any tournament they are in. Without accepting the event you will not be able to print off a weigh in sheet.
- Coaches – be aware that the first IWCOA Dual Meet Rankings will open up for voting this coming Sunday, Dec. 13, and will stay open until Tuesday, Dec. 15 at 10:00 a.m. Do some research and be ready to vote for 16 (Class 1A or 2A) or 24 (Class 3A) dual meet teams as you see them being ranked across the state. These directions might assist in the research.
 - Log into your TrackWrestling site and click on “My Account” at the top of the page, then click on “My Extras” on the left-hand side of the page. Under the “My Extras” tab, click on “Dual Records.” From there you can filter for your class, titled “League” (IHSAA Class 1A, IHSAA Class 2A, or IHSAA Class 3A) and level of competition, titled “Level.” You want “Varsity.”
 - You will now see four columns titled: Team, Level, Record, Win %. You can sort by Team, Record, or Win % by clicking on the title of the column you want and using the up or down arrows. If you click on a school’s record you can view their opponents and who won or lost the meet. If you click on the school name, you can view their opponents and team scores.
 - If you cannot recall your IWCOA login password (which is different than your TrackWrestling password), email me and I can look it up. Generally, that password starts with IA and ends with three digits.
 - After voting has concluded on Tuesday, each coach’s votes will be made available for other coaches to see. This request came from the wrestling coaches advisory committee. This will be done as soon as we can make it happen, as we don’t currently have the ability to generate that report. It may need to be done manually.
- Weather, consecutive day and scale allowance:

- If a school must cancel classes (or dismiss early) due to inclement weather, thus cannot have an official practice the day before a scheduled meet, the teams participating in that meet are granted a one-pound scale allowance. It is the responsibility of the school that has cancelled classes (or let out school early) to inform the host school, who must then inform all the schools participating. Please, this sharing of information must happen swiftly and be given to the appropriate people. The athletic administrator is who needs to receive the message. This is not for the coaches to discuss and decide, nor the secretaries. This is a job specifically for the A.D. to take care of or delegate accordingly, but the initial information must go through the A.D.
- This same situation might present itself due to a team cancelling practice(s) due to COVID protocols. If a team has to cancel practice on Monday due to COVID protocols, and they have a dual meet on Tuesday, each team in the Tuesday meet should receive a one-pound scale allowance. This needs to be communicated as soon as possible. The same would be true for cancellation of two practices immediately before an event, which would result in a two-pound allowance. There is never more than two pounds allowed, and there is no allowance granted if the cancelled practice is not a day immediately prior to the event. No Monday weight allowances are granted.
- Consecutive day scale allowances are becoming more and more common. There are some situations that can become confusing, so here are a few scenarios that might assist with your decision making. As a reminder, you can always call or email for clarification!
 - Friday-Saturday tournament – scratch weight on Friday, one-pound allowance on Saturday. This one is simple and why the rule was developed in the first place.
 - Thursday dual, then Friday-Saturday tournament – again, pretty simple. Scratch weight on Thursday, one-pound allowance on Friday, two-pound allowance on Saturday. The school(s) with the Thursday dual need to inform the tournament host about their meet so this information can be shared with the teams who have entered the Friday-Saturday tournament. 48 hours of notice is the rule, but cancellations and reschedules may not allow for that. Give as much notice as possible – call if you have questions.
 - Monday night JV tournament, Tuesday JV/V triangular. It is not an automatic guarantee that a one-pound allowance is granted for Tuesday. As a general “rule of thumb” we consider half of a team to be needed to have consecutive day allowance count for all. As an example, I take four kids to a JV tournament on Monday, then on Tuesday I plan on weighing in all 28 of my wrestlers for the triangular. That does not constitute a one-pound allowance on Tuesday for consecutive days. I’d consider half of a team to be at least 7 kids (half of 14), considering a JV team or a varsity team to be 14 kids. If a host school indicates that a one-pound scale allowance is to be given, then go with that decision. It is the host school’s responsibility to either know this general rule or check with the IHSAA for verification. Again, timely information is critical.
- In a 2-day tournament a wrestler suffers a possible concussion on day 1 and is removed from competition – he would need written clearance prior to competing on day 2.

- Junior High Wrestling meet considerations, as that level is allowed to return today, Dec. 10
 - Think about the number of matches that you schedule in an evening
 - Think about the number of mats that you will wrestle on
 - Think about the number of officials you have hired and how much they are being paid
 - Think about the distance that the traveling schools must drive and the time going home
 - After considering all these factors, determine whether you should always allow for three matches per wrestler. Junior High meets should be able to get finished in under 3 hours!
- With your local school board approval or administrative approval, junior high (7th and 8th grade) athletes may practice with high school athletes. We suggest making sure your school's legal counsel is also informed. This is not a decision made by a coach. It must go through the proper chain of command at your school. It is, however, a local decision. Coaches should use safety as a priority when this is allowed, making sure weight comparability as well as experience, strength, etc. is also factored into the decision of allowing Jr. High wrestlers to practice with High School wrestlers.

Best of luck,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lewie Curtis".

Lewie Curtis, Director of Officials
Iowa High School Athletic Association
(515) 432-2011 lcurtis@iahsaa.org