January 2, 2012

TO: ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, WRESTLING COACHES, AND WRESTLING OFFICIALS

RE: REMAINDER OF THE WRESTLING SEASON

Dear Athletic Directors, Wrestling Coaches, and Wrestling Officials:

Happy New Year! I hope you each took time to relax and spend time with your families and friends over the holidays. In a little over a month 1A and 2A sectional tournaments will be taking place!

Education
A couple of years ago the theme of the January wrestling letter was, “Being our best, so they can be their best.” I was recently reminded again that it is important for each one of us to be our best for the students who need us the most. Those students are not the returning state champions or the ones most dedicated to wrestling. The students who need us the most are those who struggle making a commitment and may receive few encouraging words except from a coach, an administrator, an official, or someone else associated with wrestling. Every wrestling room has students who may not contribute nearly as much to the wrestling program as the wrestling program contributes to them. Those students need us the most. As we move into the final weeks of the regular season let’s not forget the students who will not be participating in post-season competition, but who need wrestling as a positive experience in their lives.

Sportsmanship, Character & Professionalism
These are three powerful words and they relate to each one of us. If we do not display these characteristics no one else affiliated with Iowa high school wrestling will either.

Officials, the way you interact with wrestlers, coaches, administrators, and spectators speaks volumes about your character and your expectations. Model respect and professionalism and accept nothing less from those you deal with.

Coaches, remember, athletics is an extension of the classroom and you are the educator! I am a firm believer that educators should dress professionally! I am proud to say that most coaches I saw at meets in December were dressed in a professional manner. I don’t expect coaches to wear a tie; however, those of you I’ve seen in ties looked great! I do expect something more professional than blue jeans, and t-shirts or sweat shirts, and a cap! The Athletic Association does not mandate dress for coaches, but I am asking each coach to dress in a professional manner, i.e. no blue jeans, t-shirts, sweatshirts, caps.

Ejections
During November and December, there were ten wrestler ejections. Six of these ten ejections were for biting! I understand that sometimes coaches and wrestlers don’t agree with calls
Officials make regarding biting. Rule 5.2.2 is very clear, “If, in the opinion of the referee, a wrestler has bitten an opponent this will be deemed intentional biting and will be called flagrant misconduct.”

Officials, be sure you are in good position and base your decision on the action taking place, i.e., hard cross face that could result in teeth marks, actually seeing the biting take place, the reaction of the wrestler allegedly bitten, the reaction of the wrestler allegedly biting their opponent, and/or the appearance of upper and/or lower bite marks. Bite marks alone may, or may not, constitute biting depending on what else you saw at the time. If you are convinced biting took place, do not hesitate to eject the offending wrestler.

Coaches, take a hard line on biting. Be sure your wrestlers know that you or your coaching staff will not tolerate biting, or any other unsportsmanlike conduct. This behavior cannot be allowed!

**Slams**
A slam is defined as lifting and returning an opponent to the mat with unnecessary force. A **slam can occur from any position** (top, bottom or neutral). A wrestler does not need to be in a standing position to be called for slamming the opponent. A slam should be called without hesitation if the official believes it occurred. **With the increased attention to concussions it is extremely important for coaches to coach safety first and for officials to officiate from a safety first perspective. WRESTLER SAFETY MUST BE EVERYONE’S FIRST PRIORITY!**

**Post-Season Tournament Dates for 2012**
* Class 1A & 2A Sectional Tournaments: Saturday, February 4, 2012
* Class 1A & 2A Regional Dual Meets: Tuesday, February 7, 2012
* Class 3A Regional Dual Meets: Wednesday, February 8, 2012
* Class 1A, 2A, & 3A District Tournaments: Saturday, February 11, 2012
* State Dual Team Wrestling Tournament: Wednesday, February 15, 2012
* State Individual Wrestling Tournament: Thursday - Saturday, February 16-18, 2012

**Weigh Ins**
Wrestlers cannot weigh-in below the lowest weigh class listed on the school’s weigh-in form. Doing so means the wrestler weighed in at an ineligible weight class. If the wrestler then competes at that weight class, they will be required to forfeit that match at a minimum. **Coaches, save yourselves and me a lot of headaches by reviewing your weigh-in form before each meet to be sure where your wrestlers can weigh-in!**

Wrestlers may only compete at the weight class for which their actual scale weight qualifies them, or one weight class above. For example, in a dual meet, if a wrestler’s two eligible weight classes are 132# and 138# they may weigh-in for the 138# weight class and compete at either 138# or 145# without affecting their descent plan. They cannot weigh-in for the 132# weight class and compete at 145# because that is more than one weight class above the weight class for which their actual scale weight qualifies them. **At individual tournaments, the coach must declare if a wrestler is going to move up a weight class before the weigh ins are completed.**

**Growth Allowance**
Wrestlers who have made scratch weight at the lowest weight they intend to compete for the remainder of the season receive the growth allowance at any eligible weight class in
which they choose to weigh-in. For example, if a wrestler has made scratch weight at 132#, they receive the growth allowance at either 132# or 138# without losing their certification at 130# or negatively affecting their descent plan. In addition, they can use the growth allowance at 138# before using it at 132# with no adverse effects.

For wrestlers who have made scratch weight, and whose coaches have indicated in the NWCA on-line system they are using the growth allowance, its use is mandatory. These wrestlers must use the growth allowance for the remainder of the season. To weigh-in for the 132# weight class a wrestler who receives the growth allowance would need to weigh in excess of 128#. IF A COACH DOES NOT WANT A WRESTLER TO RECEIVE THE GROWTH ALLOWANCE THEY SHOULD BE SURE THE WEIGH-IN FORM INDICATES “NO” UNDER “RECEIVES 2LB. GROWTH ALLOWANCE”.

Scale Allowance
A scale allowance due to consecutive days of competition or weather-related postponements is optional for each wrestler. Some wrestlers may choose to use it while others may choose not to. A WRESTLER CANNOT USE A SCALE ALLOWANCE TO WEIGH-IN AT A WEIGHT CLASS BELOW THE LOWEST WEIGHT CLASS THEY ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THAT WEEK. For example, if a wrestler’s minimum wrestling weight is 127#, he cannot use the consecutive day scale allowance to weigh-in at 126#. ONCE A COACH MAKES THE DECISION THAT A WRESTLER WILL USE THE GROWTH ALLOWANCE OR RAISE THEIR MINIMUM WEIGHT CLASS, IT CANNOT BE CHANGED!

Wrestlers Properly Reporting to the Scorer’s Table in Dual Meets
If wrestlers do not report to the scorer’s table properly, in the correct order or for the correct weight class, it is possible to correct the situation until wrestling actually begins. Once the official blows the whistle to start the first period, it is too late to correct the error. Officials, know which team is to report first and direct that team to do so. Coaches, have your wrestlers ready to report for the proper weight class.

Example #1: It is Team A’s turn to send their wrestler to the scorer’s table first at 113#. In his excitement, Team B’s 113# wrestler reports the table first and Team A decides to send a different 113# wrestler or to forfeit the weight class. Team B protests. Ruling: The referee should send the wrestlers back to their benches and have them report in the proper order, Team A first, then Team B.

Example #2: It is Team A’s turn to send their wrestler to the table first at 138# and wrestler A does report first. Team B is going to forfeit at 138#, but their 145# wrestler gets excited and reports to the table immediately after Team A’s 138# wrestler. There is confusion at the head table and they believe Team B’s wrestler is reporting for the 138# weight class. The error is noticed: a) before wrestling actually begins, or b) after wrestling begins. Ruling: In a), the error can be corrected because the whistle has not been blown to begin the first period, but in b), wrestling has begun so it is too late to make a correction. In b), Team B must forfeit at 138# because of the use of an ineligible wrestler at that weight class and their 145# wrestler is not eligible to compete at 145# as he has already represented his school at 138#.

Another issue that comes up from time-to-time is wrestlers who report to the head table properly, then go to the mat and are waiting for the official to signal for them to shake hands. If
one wrestler does not have his chinstrap snapped or needs to pull up a kneepad, what is the proper procedure? It seems to me, the official should direct the wrestler to fasten the chinstrap or pull up the kneepad, have the wrestlers shake hands, and begin wrestling. If a wrestler is legally equipped, our past practice has NOT been to penalize a wrestler for fastening his headgear or pulling up a kneepad after reporting to the table.

**Fleeing the Mat**

Fleeing the mat is a national point of emphasis this year covered at all rule’s meetings and officials’ clinics. There are a couple of basic premises to keep in mind when considering fleeing the mat. 1) The intent of the rule is to penalize a wrestler for obvious refusal to wrestle by attempting to leave the wrestling area or force an opponent out of the wrestling area. 2) Both wrestlers have an equal responsibility to make every attempt to stay inbounds. 3) If, in the referee’s opinion, the defensive wrestler is actively working to leave the wrestling area in an attempt to avoid wrestling, or the offensive wrestler is actively working to force the defensive wrestler from the wrestling area, or not allow him to return to the wrestling area in an attempt to avoid wrestling, it should be considered fleeing the mat. 4) The referee should exercise a degree of patience so he is confident fleeing took place before making the call. If there is uncertainty, a warning for stalling may be the appropriate call. 5) If the offensive wrestler has earned near-fall points, there can be no technical violation for the defensive wrestler fleeing the mat.

It is NOT necessary for a wrestler to leave the wrestling area for the official to call fleeing the mat. If a wrestler is actively working to leave the wrestling area he can be called for fleeing whether he is actually successful in leaving the wrestling area or not. However, stalling is probably the most common call if the wrestlers do not go out of bounds. The referee CAN call fleeing if he is convinced the defensive wrestler is actively working to leave the wrestling area in an attempt to avoid wrestling or the offensive wrestler is attempting to avoid wrestling by actively working to force the defensive wrestler from the wrestling area.

**Blood Time**

For the safety of all athletes, bleeding time always takes precedence over injury or recovery time. Questions do occur when there is bleeding in addition to injury or recovery time. Here are a few situations to help everyone understand the interpretation:

**Situation #1:** During the first period of a match, the two wrestlers butt heads. Wrestler A is obviously injured and is granted an injury time-out. During the injury time-out, Wrestler B’s nose starts to bleed. *Ruling:* A is granted an injury time-out. As soon as it is detected that B is bleeding, the injury time for A would be stopped, and the blood time for B would start. *Comment:* In any bleeding situation, the bleeding must be taken care of prior to starting either injury or recovery time. In this situation, however, because the injury to A came to the attention of the referee first, it would count as one of wrestler A’s injury time-outs.

**Situation #2:** Wrestler A is injured by an illegal cross face that results in a nosebleed. What is the correct procedure for the referee in a situation that has both recovery time and blood time? *Ruling:* Because Wrestler A was injured and bleeding occurred, you must first control the bleeding and once that is controlled, you would start the recovery time clock.
**Communicable Skin Conditions**

Athletic directors, coaches, wrestlers, and officials all play a crucial role in preventing communicable skin conditions from occurring.

Athletic directors and coaches, be sure any disinfectant cleaners used to clean the mats are effective against viruses, fungi, and bacteria. Cleaners appropriate for mats may NOT be appropriate for wrestlers due to causing skin irritation. Be sure to visit with your school nurse, athletic trainer, or other medical professional about the appropriate items for removing blood from wrestlers.

Be diligent about cleaning practice and competition mats regularly to protect the wrestlers. Clean competition mats between each round at a tournament to help minimize the risk to the wrestlers. Here is a link to guidelines for controlling communicable skin conditions - [http://www.iahsaa.org/Sports_Medicine_Wellness/Comm/Skin.pdf](http://www.iahsaa.org/Sports_Medicine_Wellness/Comm/Skin.pdf)

Below is a link to an 8-minute video featuring Dan Gable and Joe Heskett, Head Wrestling Coach at Army, which does a good job of addressing the importance of keeping wrestling, their clothing, and the equipment they use clean. [http://www.nwcaskinprevention.com/webinar/Video.asp?chap=5](http://www.nwcaskinprevention.com/webinar/Video.asp?chap=5)

Officials, continue to do thorough skin checks before meets for the protection of all wrestlers. For any condition that is suspect, require a Wrestling Skin Condition Report form before allowing the wrestler to compete.

If you have any questions don’t hesitate to contact me. I’m here to work with you. We may not always agree, but I’m willing to listen to legitimate concerns. Have a great rest of the season and I wish you success in the post-season.

Sincerely,

Alan Beste
Assistant Executive Director
[abeste@iahsaa.org](mailto:abeste@iahsaa.org)