

# ASSISTANT REFEREE

(8/10/2015)

## Goals:

**Help minimize human error in rule application and judgment.**

**Help aid in the prevention of injuries.**

**Increase confidence and create opportunities for all officials.**

**Get it right!** - Communication between the head referee and assistant referee is the most important component for success in using the assistant referee (AR). The head official in a tournament should lead a discussion with all officials prior to implementing the AR. In the discussion, you need to emphasize and review the expectations of working with a partner. One of the most important components for a successful team is that both referees must feel they have equal authority. Of course, the referee has the edge if they disagree and is the only one with a whistle. (In fact, the assistant should put the whistle in his pocket.) We also must agree to 'check our ego at the door'. Be willing to accept the fact that everyone makes mistakes, and that the bottom line is we want to do what is right for the athletes. Sometime during a match, the AR's opinion, location, and input will help '**GET IT RIGHT**'. From the onset, you must be willing to agree to disagree. Work as a team and you will appreciate the support you each have to offer. It will increase your confidence, prevent injuries, and you will enjoy the competition even more. It takes a lot of effort to be a good AR, you must stay focused 100% of the time.

**Clock** – One of the duties of the AR is to make sure the clock starts and stops on the referee's whistle. If it doesn't, the AR needs to mentally count time and inform the referee when a break in the action occurs and make an adjustment on the bad time. If at all possible, try to position yourself, especially near the end of a period, in a manner in which you can view the wrestlers as well as the clock. Never miss a critical call because you are looking at the clock. Always be aware of the time left in the match. Especially be aware of when there is five and two seconds left in a period (critical for 3 or 2 point NF). When points are awarded, the AR should always check the scoreboard to make sure the score is accurate. Whenever possible, it is not a bad idea to inform the referee when there is 10 then five seconds left in the period. Holding both hands up and extend your body upward (**GET BIG**) and say "**TIME**" when the period expires. When possible, use a "tapper" to notify the officials of the end of the period. With crowd noise and multiple wrestlers on multiple mats, it can be very confusing as to when time expires. At the very least, it will get the attention of the AR and create an awareness that time is near the end. Have the tapper approach and count down the last 4-5 seconds to the HR and then tap the HR when time expires. The assistant should also monitor the clock during injury time, blood time, and recovery time and verbally (in intervals) keep the referee informed of time left during each of these time outs. As an AR, you should attempt to never block the view of the official timer and the scorer. In tournaments, try not to stand directly in front of the coaches that are sitting in the corners.

**Other Responsibilities-** The AR should always know which wrestler has choice at the onset of each period, and who is in control on every restart. You should know which wrestler has been penalized and how many times. Be aware of their advancement on the penalty chart. In addition, know who has been warned / penalized for stalling, and refresh the referee's mind when you feel that it might be appropriate (definitely do this prior to an overtime). Know how many injury time outs each wrestler has had and how this might affect a restart. Never approach the referee during a match and say, "green is stalling". If you think a wrestler may be stalling, saying "green" or "red" is the appropriate way to convey your thoughts.

**Positioning** – It is important that the referee does not alter his style or normal positioning on the mat. The responsibility falls on the AR to position himself to assure the referee has complete freedom of movement – ‘adapt to the referee’. During wrestling, the AR will position himself 180 degrees opposite the HR whenever possible. You will usually be located on or just inside the 28 foot circle. The AR will ‘close down’ when the wrestlers are approaching the boundary line, during NF situations at the period nears the end and during scramble situations. The AR is encouraged to make contact with the referee periodically throughout the match, not only when a disagreement occurs. It is very important that the AR communicate his thoughts regarding stalling. This is easily accomplished prior to a restart. The two officials should do a “walk by” periodically throughout the match. This simply involves touching base or passing by each other during the match, at the end of the period, or prior to restarts. Always keep comments / thoughts brief. Positive words and reinforcement are always a good thing. Sometimes just a nod or a look reaffirms that you are certainly in agreement. It also assures coaches and spectators that you indeed are a team and working together. On the other hand, the AR should have minimal conversation with the wrestlers. This is the referees job and will prevent confusion on the part of the wrestlers. The position of the AR will allow him to help monitor bench conduct and he should not hesitate to inform the referee when unsportsmanlike conduct is observed. It is paramount that the assistant 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!

**Starting Positions** – The two referees should position themselves 180 degrees opposite of each other in a neutral start. Always let the referee conduct the start and award any cautions. If you notice something improper about their positioning, let the referee know prior to next restart. When starting from the referee's position, they should be at a right angle (90 degrees) to each other. It is not the job of either referee to be “nit picky”, but for the AR to communicate anything he may see from his position. Always let the referee conduct the start, but if the AR notices something they can bring it to the attention of the referee prior to the next restart.

**Neutral** – The referees should work opposite each other when the wrestlers are in a neutral position. As the wrestlers move toward the boundary, the AR should close down, and they should be in a position on the boundary edge so that it allows them to look directly at each other through the wrestlers either ‘on’ or 2-3 feet outside the boundary line. They both must be in a position to view supporting parts of both wrestlers

**Near fall** – The AR should “close down” and move into position to make sure neither wrestler performs an illegal maneuver / TV / USC / UR while in the near fall situation. The AR communicates to the referee that “everyone is OK”, “good up here” etc. Never say, “this shoulder is down” or “he is pinned”. It is the job of the referee to see both shoulders during a NF situation. Stay out of the referees way! There is often a tendency for the AR to get too close in a NF situation. If you notice any violation by either wrestler, bring it to the attention of the referee so he can take appropriate action. Never go down on the mat; never swing your arm counting out a near fall. If the referee is out of position on a quick take down directly to the back, it is expected that the AR does a silent near fall count until the situation is over. It is acceptable for the AR to get down on one knee on the mat in the situation just described but to get up when the referee is back into position. When the situation ends you will communicate to the referee how many NF points you had for that situation. The referee will then determine whether a 2 pt. or 3 pt. near fall had been earned. The AR will **never** call a fall.

**Making the call** – The referee always makes the call. If a tough line call occurs, a call at the buzzer, or a sudden flurry, whatever the situation, the referee should make the call and if the AR disagrees, he may approach the referee and say “**LET'S TALK**”. The AR may even occasionally

approach the referee and assure him you are in agreement. It is OK for both officials to carry on a brief discussion while wrestling is taking place. It doesn't and shouldn't occur often, but it certainly may. The referee will usually initiate the meeting by simply motioning the AR to come over. A situation that might warrant it is if the referee is trying to determine control or loss of control in an unusual situation. The referee should not look at the AR for an opinion prior to making a call except perhaps as just described. Communicating support for a call is equally as important as disagreeing with one. Even a head nod is sometimes adequate. It is the responsibility of the AR to bring the disagreement to the referee, not the other way around. If you disagree with a call you should quickly circle the mat toward the referee and he should back toward the edge of the mat enabling a brief verbal exchange. At that time the AR says **"Let's Talk"**. When there is insignificant action on the mat the match will be stopped. The conversation between officials should be held near the 28 foot circle in a manner that neither bench or score table hears the discussion. Give the contestants instructions as to where they are to be during the conference. Do not let them leave the wrestling area – keep them in or near the 10 foot circle. Face the wrestlers so at least one of you has them within your view. The AR should briefly / quickly explain his perspective using rulebook criteria. It is essential that all conferences be brief and move onto the match – **we are talking seconds not minutes**. Once the referee and AR have agreed or agreed to disagree, the AR will back away. The referee will inform the score table if there is a change, then call the coaches over to the table and briefly explain the changed decision. Do not let the coaches influence or change your call unless of course a rule has been misapplied. If the referee disagrees with the AR, the call will stand and there is no need to involve the table or talk to the coaches unless of course they request a conference. The AR should not say at the end of the match that "I wish you had come to me". This is not how it works. The AR is certainly encouraged to watch for potentially dangerous situations and express himself to the referee anytime one is detected. The only signal the AR should use is locked hands, grasping of clothing, mat or headgear. Otherwise, orally communicate all other violations. Officials must communicate. Never show your disk to illustrate choice, never wave your arms indicating out of bounds. Absolutely no signals or gestures. We cannot feel threatened or undermined when discussing a call, if we do, this system will not be successful. On occasion, but rarely, it is OK for the referee to stop the match during insignificant action to get the AR's opinion regarding a call. Again, he should not be looking for an opinion prior to making the call. This might occur on a line call that is made as they go out of bounds. Make the call then consult with your partner. A simple open hand gesture to the AR will indicate to him that you are looking for an opinion.

**Scorer's table** - During the match, the AR should never formally talk to a coach at the corners or at mat side. If the referee needs to go to the scorer's table, the AR is responsible for keeping the two wrestlers near the center of the mat, again seeing the BIG PICTURE. He should be the first one on the mat at the onset of the match, and the last one off at the conclusion. Let the HR always check wrestlers in at the table and the AR will position themselves 180 degrees opposite the score table near the far side of the 10 foot circle. From the center of the mat, make sure you watch both wrestlers enter and leave the 28 foot circle as well as an eye each bench. You certainly have authority to call any violations or unsportsmanlike conduct, just inform the referee what you saw and he will make the call if in agreement.