

# **Revised Aspiring Wrestling Officials Program**

## **3/18/2013**

### **Purpose:**

In an effort to address the declining number of wrestling officials in Wisconsin, the WWCA, in cooperation/collaboration with WIAA, propose the implementation of the Aspiring Wrestling Officials Program. The goal of this program will be to provide ongoing initiatives for the recruitment, retention, and education of wrestling officials in the state of Wisconsin.

### **Objectives:**

1. To increase the number of qualified high school and middle school wrestling officials.
2. To continually retain an adequate number of qualified high school and middle school wrestling officials.
3. To maintain the high level of high school and middle school officiating currently being experienced by wrestling programs.
4. To assist in the development and education of the novice wrestling official.

### **Program Initiatives:**

1. **Since many high school coaches have a great deal of influence on their student athletes, the WIAA & WWCA encourages all high school coaches to annually help recruit wrestlers with characteristics of a potential official.**

**Stipulations:** (note: high school students may obtain a license at no charge that allows them to officiate up to and including grade 9)

- a. This message can be spread by promoting the revised **Aspiring Officials Program** annually on the rules interpretation video.
- b. The WWCA will also annually help promote the revised **Aspiring Officials Program** to their membership.
- c. WIAA personnel and the head of officials will meet with and encourage all individual state and team state qualifiers at the respective state tournaments to consider officiating during high school and also upon graduation.
- d. The brochure "Stay in the Game – Be an Official" will be distributed to all potentially interested athletes at these meetings / events. This brochure will explain the steps and procedures necessary to becoming a licensed official.

### **Other considerations:**

- a. Coaches should help these athletes get involved with officiating both middle school and youth contests within their districts and possibly adjacent districts.
  - b. Coaches should also encourage host schools employing these young officials to always have at least one experienced official at these contests to help mentor the relatively inexperienced high school official(s).
  - c. The coach will hopefully be willing to aid the young official in obtaining contracts for these events in nearby districts.
  - d. Coaches should encourage these high school age officials to join the local officials association and attend as many meetings as possible.
2. **An official's clinic to be held as Part of the Annual WWCA Coaches Clinic.**

### **Stipulations:**

- a. Coaches, as well as officials, are encouraged to attend this breakout session.

- b. Coaches and officials are asked to encourage aspiring wrestling officials to be in attendance.
- c. There shall be no cost incurred for attendance by an aspiring wrestling official for attending this clinic.
- d. This clinic should be approved in advance by the WIAA so that participants, as described by the WIAA official's manual, may receive an increase in their certification level through their attendance.
- e. The clinic organizer will report to the WWCA executive board regarding their curriculum as well as numbers that were in attendance.

**Other Considerations:**

- a. The Aspiring Officials Program should be reviewed annually with the officials attending the clinic.
- b. Encourage all wrestling officials state wide to become active members of an officials association within their geographical area. If your area does not have an association, contact the WIAA to obtain information about forming one.
- c. Encourage associations state wide to have at least one representative at the WWCA clinic so they may go out and spread the 'message' to their membership.
- d. Encourage all officials associations to waive their annual dues fee for all high school and college enrolled officials joining their group or attending their meetings.
- e. Associations should encourage their members to briefly mention the need for officials when making announcements prior to weigh in, particularly at multiple events. Stress the brochure "Stay in the Game, Be an official". This is available on-line at the WIAA website.
- f. Officials associations are encouraged to create an agenda for each of their meetings that will benefit not only their veteran members but also those new to officiating.

**3. Official's Mentoring Program**

The first few years for any new official can be the most difficult ones and tend to have the highest probability of individuals discontinuing as an official. This program shall provide an opportunity for an experienced official to be teamed up with an aspiring official in an effort to support and retain young officials in the sport of wrestling.

**Stipulations:**

- a. All officials associations should develop a mentoring program that works for them.
- b. Mentors are encouraged to invite the aspiring official to come with them to contests as observers or as an assistant referee (with host school / coaches approving).
- c. Varsity officials, with both schools approving, should always invite the JV official working the contest before them to be their assistant referee at the varsity event.
- d. On weekends, when the aspiring official is not officiating, they could be invited to attend local tournaments. If approved by the host school, invite them to observe meetings and/or be at mat side to interact with the off mat official(s).
- e. Throughout the season, the assistant referee should be used as often as possible. All multiple team events provide an opportunity to do so. In addition to "getting the call right", it allows for aspiring officials and upcoming officials to get "hands on" mentoring from a veteran.

**Other Considerations:**

- a. *The WWCA must educate their membership on the importance of being patient and understanding with these aspiring officials and giving them an opportunity to learn and grow within the sport of wrestling as an official. Many new / young officials are not retained due to the insensitive comments and treatment from coaches at all levels. We need to change this attitude and work together to help recruit, retain, and educate officials to avoid anticipated official shortages that are already taking place in many sports throughout the country.*