

**MID - MAY 2018**

**TO: SOUTHERN PLAINS COACHES & STATE LEADERS**  
**FR: RUSTY DAVIDSON**  
**RE: NATIONAL COACHES COUNCIL**

### Coaches & Leaders

As we prepare for our Southern Plains Regional Championship, there are some simple protocol things that bear reminder. I got to help conduct a Bronze Clinic, last weekend, in conjunction with our State Championship.

Much of what's coming is so simplistic, you're likely to think, "Come on, dude, everyone knows that". Well, I thought so, too, and I learned a lot!

You see, "Coaching" at the Regional level is not what it once was. There was a time when each state named a handful of coaches to conduct a training camp, ride the bus, and be on the floor with a state full of athletes.

Today, many parents sit in the corner with their own kid, while the state designated coaches run warm ups and do paperwork. The event director issues floor passes, based on an equitable ratio. But, they also sell floor passes to any Bronze (or higher) Certified current member. I'm not saying Good, or Bad! But, a little review of "How it Works", outside the local event, may save some us some heartache.

### Three-Person Mechanics

I'm not sure what all of you see, locally. I know some SP States are Referee Rich, while others (like mine) struggle to get one person on each mat. At the Dodge City event, we will have referees from all over the country (It's that popular and that well run). Each mat has a designated person in charge. Each bout has three officials: Whistle, Judge, Chair.

Chirping at the Whistle is barking at the moon. Same with the Judge. They cannot help you. In fact, if you get them rattled enough they can hurt someone! The Chair is responsible for precise application of rules. "Precise" means BOTH athletes got equal access to all that whatever rule had to offer. Not every rule offers the same opportunity... Ponder that!

If something's badly wrong, approach the Chair and wait for a break in the action. ASK a QUESTION. Listen to the answer. Don't catch yourself thinking it's a debate. It doesn't matter how smart, or experienced, you are. If the Chair feels like there's something wrong, they can ASK. They cannot, however, gun down two other humans that agree on what they saw. Now's a chance for you to practice that "Overcoming Adversity", we all brag about.

I have, honestly, never met the human that will drive a thousand miles, to eat free food and cheat a kid! You have three humans evaluating a violent conflict between two other humans. Mistakes get made. This is not Good Ole' Ed, down at the barber shop, who knows Billy is Three Time All-Neighborhood. These people study hard and do the best they can do. Rub some dirt on it... and move forward!

## **UNIFORMS**

The Southern Plains remains the ONLY Regional Championship that uses the term, "Recommended", regarding Red and Blue singlets. This effort has been debated for 30 years. The Region's leaders deserve to be proud of that effort, on behalf of those few economically disadvantaged families borrowing school singlets.

Then, there are others who have some vast collection of designer singlets. OK. But, let's all agree on a couple of things that do not have wiggle room.

It has to be a Singlet. There is discussion about adopting a two-piece uniform, similar to what the NFHS rules did. Not yet !

Some athletes are wearing a Leg Sleeve, with built in knee pad. These, like two-legged tights, are NOT LEGAL. The exception would be an athlete who presents legitimate medical documentation.

Headgear is MANDATORY for all athletes, Schoolboy/girl and younger. Shoelaces must be visibly secured, beyond double-knotting. CARRY A ROLL OF TAPE in your pocket. If the shoes don't have velcro or zippers, tape 'em.

## **BEGINNING and END of MATCH**

Get parents to help monitor the tournament flow, on Track Wrestling. Athletes will not be allowed on the floor, before they are on deck. But, SOMEONE needs to know where they are. In that rare occasion, the athlete will get THREE calls to the mat, timed 30 seconds apart. After that, the match WILL be forfeited. Being in a Regional Championship is new to many of our families. Please help prevent these hear-breaking accidents !

Once at the mat, athletes need to say their FIRST and LAST NAMES to the Computer Operator. If necessary, the operator may change the color assigned to the athletes. Upon reporting to the center of the mat, athletes will be greeted by the referee with a hand shake.

The referee is required to visibly "check" each athlete for oily substance. This seems old-fashioned, but it's still part of the protocol. Please explain to parents why "That guy is touching their kid".

At the Developing Age Groups, the expectation is that athletes will exchange a good, old-fashioned Hand Shake, prior to starting the bout. Please help kids understand how important this is to the presentation of our sport to spectators.

Same at the end of the bout. In addition, please advise both Athletes and Parents that BOTH Winner and Loser stay with the referee for the entire end of match procedure. This is different from Folkstyle, where the loser is released.

While not required, it has become custom for athletes to visit, and shake hands with, both Judge and Chair. The winner needs to repeat their name to the computer operator. We also encourage athletes to visit the opposing coach. This all being said... If a kid is losing control, and about to embarrass themselves... let 'em go. You can visit with officials and opposing coach, on their behalf. Let's not make a bad situation worse, trying to corral an emotional oops with grown up logic. We can address it, in private, and get it fixed.

## **PERIOD LENGTH**

Periods for everyone, up to and including Schoolboy/girl, are Two Minutes. Cadets and Juniors wrestle Three Minute periods ON THE FRONT SIDE. Please remind athletes and parents... This year, Cadets and Juniors wrestle TWO MINUTES on the BACK SIDE.

## **ADMISSION**

We are fortunate, in Dodge City, that we compete in a fabulous venue. That venue comes with its own staff and union rules. Do not get shocked when they ask you to WAIT for the scheduled time of admission to the arena and floor. Prepare your athletes, so that their warm up flows, despite all the regulations. Pick your battles! (My personal battle is NO OUTSIDE COFFEE ALLOWED). Drink up!

## **AWARDS**

Here is one more important task for your State Assigned Coaches. The Southern Plains gives a set of unique awards... one per state. The Bob Cairns / David Stormo Award is given, annually, to an athlete from each state. The award recognizes character and contribution, more than achievement. As you go through your training climate and the trip to Dodge City, keep an eye out for "That Kid".

## **MEETINGS**

Two important meetings happen Sunday Morning, in Dodge City. State leaders meet at Inn Pancake House, 2408 West Wyatt Earp Boulevard, at 7:00am. Agenda items include: Person of the Year Awards in three categories; Bids to HOST the Southern Plains; Discussion about PERIOD LENGTHS; Preparation for Nominations in Fargo; Possibilities for TWO PIECE uniforms; Further implementation of SafeSport standards.

The second meeting, in a conference room at the venue, is specifically for COACHES. Starting at 8:45am, the meeting will be quick, but vital to communication. Your National Coaches' Council depends on your input and feedback to guide discussion on issues like those before the State Leaders. Please take time to get one or more of your state's coaches there.

As always, I need to say, "Thank You"! The time and energy you pump into the sport makes a huge impact on the lives of young people. Please congratulate the 2018 Graduates that are part of your clubs and schools.

Safe Travels!      Rusty