

A Stalling Philosophy **By Ed Rawlins**



The following is a philosophy for recognizing and penalizing stalling. Stalling is the nemesis of wrestling. There is not another area in wrestling that creates as much controversy as stalling. The reason is that everyone has their own understanding of stalling. The official has to recognize stalling and make a call or not make a call utilizing his best judgment. Stalling makes wrestling boring and unfair. It is the responsibility of the athlete, coach and official to avoid the use of stalling tactics.

This philosophy is mine and is consistent with the current Rules Book and Case Book and Manual. It is a philosophy that works *for me* has been developed after watching hours of wrestling, watching some of the top officials in the Nation and interpretations of the rules. It may or may not work for everyone but a written philosophy will create consistency and that is what the coaches and wrestlers expect. They may not agree with the call but if you call it consistent throughout a match or tournament, you will be regarded higher than being out there making calls up, doing nothing or appear to be influencing the outcome of the match.

PHILOSOPHY:

- Be fair to the kids. Don't worry about the coaches or fans.

- Don't let the coaches or fans call it first. Timing is everything!
- When you think they are stalling, they probably are.
- It is not the official's job to make wrestlers wrestle. The official's job is to penalize when stalling is recognized.
- Call stalling when recognized without hesitation at any time or period.
- Stalling is often a no win situation. More officials get into trouble for not calling stalling than calling it.
- Have the courage to call stalling.
- There are not different standards for stalling for 103 pounds and 285.
- Communicate to the wrestlers, verbally, when you call them.
- Don't confuse fleeing the mat with stalling; two different things.

NEUTRAL POSITION:

- Count legitimate shot attempts and keep them in your mind. Helps keep you in the match.
- Look for stalling in 1st period. No easier time to call it. **DON'T MAKE UP A CALL.** 2nd or 3rd period someone may be protecting a lead or trying to get the lead.
- A legitimate shot implies risk, level change, penetration or jeopardy on the aggressive wrestler.
- Watch a wrestler always taking action to the edge. Wrestlers should make an honest attempt to keep the action in the 10' circle. Is he looking to score on the edge or have an easy bail out route?
- Watch the hips when a wrestler is blocking or has head on shoulder, they'll be out and back.
- Look at ties and blocking with the arms or ties. Can be difficult to determine.
- Catching a wrestler continuously sprawling can be stalling. Make the call in mid sprawl.
- Hand fighting; determine who is trying to circle in.
- Defensive counters. **BOTH WRESTLERS ARE REQUIRED TO WRESTLE AGGRESIVELY AND WORK FOR A TAKEDOWN.**
- Warn both if needed—if neither is doing much.

BOTTOM POSITION:

- Hardest to call because bottom man can be overpowered.
- He must work for reversal or escape. Watch for him to be hanging on or covering up.
- Look for bottom man to try to get hand control and hips coming off the mat.

- If the top man gives him some space (perpendicular of off hips), is he trying to come up? The offensive wrestler coming off the hips creates a natural space for the bottom man to attempt to build a base.
- Don't let both wrestlers "fall asleep on you."
- Repeatedly stands up with legs in. Be patient. May need to stalemate a time or two but then it is a stalling tactic.

TOP POSITION:

- Top man must work for the fall or cut opponent away.
- Look for hip-to-hip or parallel riding (space). Working the fall often involves risk.
- Cross body and hanging on an ankle or arm. Stalemate first or second, warn or penalize after. **Announce: "STALEMATE CAUSED BY TOP MAN."** The stalemate is giving the top wrestler some benefit of doubt. If the cross body ride is applied and he can't turn, he can move onto a different technique.
- Top man must attempt to bring bottom man to the mat during standup; ensure top man is making honest attempts to bring to the mat. No time limit; it could be five seconds or 15 seconds.
- Bottom man stands and top laces legs. This is stopping action because a PD will normally follow.
- Is the top man applying a pinning hold/combination and trying to turn? Does the top man have a pinning hold? Chicken wing is a pinning hold but if he is hip to hip, he is not using it to turn-Look for stalling.

SUDDEN VICTORY (ONE MINUTE) & TIEBREAKERS #1 & 2 (30 SECONDS EACH):

- Make sure the best man wins.
- Before Sudden Victory begins, tell/remind each wrestler if they've been warned or penalized for stalling.
- If both wrestlers don't want to work or shoot, look at a double stall call to end the misery and begin tiebreaker.
- Call flagrant stalling, but let them wrestle and determine the outcome.
- Stalling in sudden victory/tiebreakers 1 & 2 should be called utilizing the same standards as in regulation.
- Sometimes you need to put away the whistle. If the score is 8-8 in OT, both wrestlers took risk through the course of regulation.

ULTIMATE TIE BREAKER (30 Seconds):

- There is a different standard for calling stalling during the ultimate tie-breaker.
- By making the top man ride out his opponent, we are encouraging stalling in TB. This is a different situation; the rules are forcing riding because the top man will win the match if he rides out his opponent for 30 seconds. . There

is a difference between wrestling to control and wrestling to hang on. Stalemate hanging on one time. Penalize hanging on the second. You'll get "boo'd" out of the gym but it is the right call.

- If you haven't called stalling in eight minutes, it is hard to justify calling it in the final 30 second TB.
- How many times can really call stalling in 30 seconds?

BETWEEN PERIODS:

- Hustle to the center while watching both athletes.
- Don't usher a slower wrestler to the center. Get to the 10' circle and everyone will see who is last to come to the center.
- Look for a delay of the match call, Technical Violation, if one wrestler is on the edge fixing gear and not returning to the center.



HOW TO CALL STALLING:

- Timing is everything.
- Call it verbally and visually with confidence.
- Don't coach the wrestlers. Address both by saying "Both improve, both work to score, work to center ect.." Don't say, "Use that arm bar Red, Come off the hips Green."
- Neutral, call it in mid-sprawl or when everyone sees a wrestler backing up/out.
- Tell the wrestler why he is penalized: "Stalling Green, you are riding parallel; Stalling Red, you are covering up."
- Don't bang the mat when the defensive wrestler is stalling, but let the bottom man know he has been hit.
- If you are repeatedly telling both to work, they are probably stalling.