



How a Coach Should Work With a Referee

Coaches and parents make mistakes, and officials blunder, too! Coaches and parents should never expect any favors from the referee during a match. You should assume just the opposite—the official will make at least one (two-point), close call which will probably go against your wrestler. Officials, like coaches and parents, fall short of perfection — even the best of them. It cannot be helped; it is the price we pay for being human. We at USA Wrestling-Utah want to be complimented for our humane treatment of the referee. A wrestling official quit recently. The reason he gave for getting out was that he grew tired of being abused, harassed and intimidated by several highly successful local coaches and parents. This referee was conscientious and very competent. He basically said that he didn't need to be publicly humiliated any longer. A few coaches and parents in stretching their coaching responsibilities took the enjoyment out of something this man liked and was good at ... a big loss for all of us.

For the following reasons, USA Wrestling-Utah believes that coaches are out of line if they verbally criticize the referee:

1. Referees are adults with the same feelings as everyone else. No one likes to be criticized and humiliated ... *especially* in public.
2. If the referee does make a mistake, try to remember that you, as coaches and parents, make many mistakes, as do our wrestlers. The referee is doing the best he can.
3. A referee has a very difficult job. We often expect them to make instant perfect judgments every time. It does not *help* him to do a good job when a coach or parent is yelling at him during a match. It only adds stress. Who does well under those circumstances?
4. Your job is to coach your wrestlers ... *not* to be referee critics! You should do your job ... and the referee should be left alone to do his. Remember this is for the kids and is supposed to be fun.
5. Most times, yelling at the referee is no more than a display of poor sportsmanship. When things don't go the way you would like them to, the coach or parent often unloads on the nearest easy target. This seems to be more a lack of self-control than anything else.
6. A coach and parent's demeanor usually affects the behavior of their wrestler's family or club. We do not want to be responsible for teaching poor sportsmanship.
7. Tell the wrestlers that winning is their responsibility. "Don't expect a referee to win a match for you!" This something your wrestlers should know. For us to complain and bellyache means that we don't believe this concept.
8. If this referee quits, who will replace him? It will undoubtedly be someone less qualified and with less experience. Is this what you want? Finally, we should always think, "If it was just me and the referee in my living room, how would I treat him?" Hopefully, it would be with courtesy and respect. In a gymnasium during the heat of competition, he should be treated no differently. Should I not treat him as I would like to be treated myself?
9. Remember that this is a volunteer organization and, if you think you can do a better job, grab a whistle and help out.



How to Be a Productive, Supportive Wrestling Parent

Disruption and violence has all too often been tolerated and, to some degree, encouraged by small but usually vocal groups of individuals. Violence and disruption of any nature has absolutely no place in our sport. It is only allowed because people are willing to tolerate it. USA Wrestling-Utah believes that inappropriate behavior is unacceptable and, therefore, will not be tolerated. We not only expect but also demand that spectators and participants associated with wrestling be on their best behavior at all times before, during and following any wrestling event, regardless of the actions of others. Anything less should not and will not be tolerated. You are the one responsible for setting the example for your son or daughter. You are the one they will learn from and will try to emulate. It is your absolute responsibility to present yourself in the best possible light. You not only represent yourself and your family, but also your city, the School District, and the coaches, wrestlers, other parents and fans of the wrestling team. All in all, USA Wrestling-Utah is a *family*: parents, coaches and, above all, the wrestlers, with each member having his or her own place in that family. To make this family work, we must all come together for the benefit of your son and the sons of the other great parents.

1. Make sure your child knows that, win or lose, you appreciate his efforts and are not disappointed.
2. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic capabilities, his competitive attitude, sportsmanship and actual skill level.
3. Teach the athlete to enjoy the thrill of competition, to give it their best effort and work to improve their skills and attitudes.
4. Try not to relive your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure: you fumbled too, you lost as well as won. You were frightened, you backed off at times, and you were not always heroic. Don't pressure your child because you lost your pride.
5. Don't compare skill, courage or attitudes of your child with other members of the team, at least within his hearing.
6. Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that the philosophy, attitudes, ethics and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his leadership.
7. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before overreacting.
8. Make a point of understanding courage and the fact that it is relative. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear but a means of doing something in spite of fear or discomfort. The job of the parent of an athletic child is a tough one, and it takes a lot of effort to do it well. It is worth the effort when you hear your youngster say, "My parent helped, I was lucky in this."