

CORRECTABLE ERRORS IN WRESTLING:

a journey through the process

By Gary Berkowitz

Mel Brooks, writer and director of several Broadway and movie hits, was quoted as saying, "As long as the world is turning and spinning, we're gonna be dizzy and we're gonna make mistakes." Such a statement frequently applies to officiating.

Of course, no official professes to be infallible. However, we know that successful officials share one collective attribute: they're not hesitant about admitting mistakes. Most importantly, the good ones know when and how to correct them.

Mistakes! You diligently study your rules and case books, work previews, attend state interpretation and local association meetings for the sake of being in the right place, at the right time to make the right call.

And, then it happens: you incorrectly position the wrestlers following an out-of-bounds situation. Or, perhaps, you discover in the third period that a two-point near fall was recorded, instead of the three points you signaled back in the first period. What's correctable, what isn't? What's the procedure? Rule 6-6 of the 2005-06 NFHS Wrestling Rules Book addresses these questions.

First and foremost, Rule 6-6 breaks errors into three basic elements: *bad time*, *timekeeping errors* and finally *scoring errors*. Each has its own conditions that must be kept in mind when tackling correctable errors.

BAD TIME IS...

1. Time wrestled with the wrestlers in the *wrong position*, or
2. The clock continues to run at the *end of the period*, or
3. The clock continues to run *following a violation*.

In other than the start of the third period, which will be addressed shortly, when one encounters bad time, one must first evaluate whether the amount of bad time can be determined. If not, it would be deleted; otherwise, it must be re-wrestled prior to the start of any subsequent period.

Two other situations exist leading to bad time. Those include the wrong wrestler being given choice:

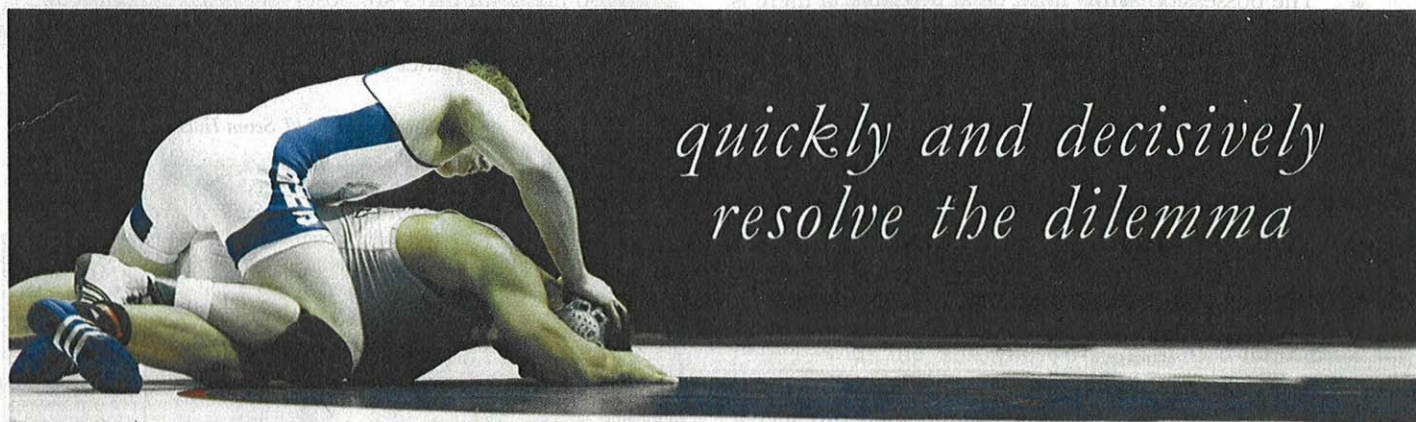
- ***At the start of the second period.***

You may be taken to the table (more than likely you will) and questioned by one or both coaches. Nevertheless, Rule 6-6-1 is clear-cut: the opponent is given choice at the start of the third period.

- ***Following the second injury time-out.***

Here, if the amount of bad time can be determined, it must either be deleted or re-wrestled prior to the start of any subsequent period. The wrestlers are to be placed in their proper positions and wrestling resumed without delay.

Any points, penalties (technical violations) or injury time that might have taken place during bad time are canceled. Everything except (there's always an exception) *flagrant misconduct*, *unsportsmanlike conduct*, *unnecessary roughness*, *illegal holds* and *blood time*. Gets a little complicated, doesn't it?



*quickly and decisively
resolve the dilemma*

Try this acronym to help the ol' brain cells as to what stays in the scorebook: "RIBFUN" (a meager tribute to summers past and those yet to come):

- R**oughness (as in unnecessary roughness)
- I**llegal holds
- B**lood time
- F**lagrant misconduct
- UN** sportsmanlike conduct

When a positioning error occurs at the start of the third period, that's bad time too, and the match would be stopped and both wrestlers given a one-minute rest. Except for "RIB-FUN," all points earned are canceled and the entire third period re-wrestled.

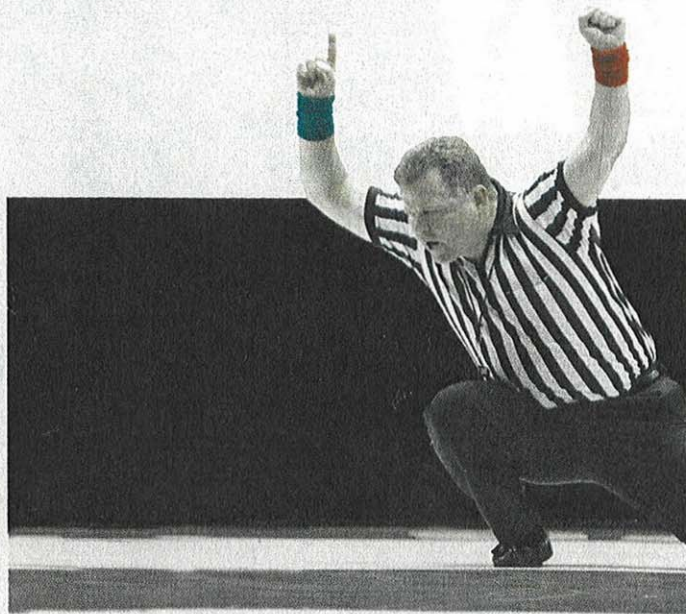
TIMEKEEPING ERRORS OCCUR WHEN EITHER...

1. The timekeeper makes an error, or
2. The clock fails to start when you indicate time is to begin.

You must make a judgment concerning the amount of time that should have been consumed. Certainly, it's within your authority to consult with the timekeeper, or even the coaches, to get their perspectives on the matter. Ultimately, however, the decision is yours as to the amount of time that needs to be adjusted.

As in the case of bad time, timekeeping errors must be done prior to the start of any subsequent period.

SCORING ERRORS can be made by you or the scorer and can impact either the match or team score. Their correction depends entirely on whether it occurs in a dual meet or tournament and whether it is a recordable or computational error. To appreciate the various remedies afforded under Rule 6-6-4a and 6-6-4b, let's first distinguish a recordable error from a computational error.



A **recordable** error is one in which the correct points and/or designated scoring symbol was erroneously entered on the scorebook or bout sheet. A **computational** error is when a wrestler's or team's score is incorrectly added together.

The correction process is handled differently, depending on whether it is encountered in a dual meet or tournament.

- **Dual meet match scoring errors:**

A **recordable** error must be corrected prior to the start of the subsequent match. If it is the last match of the meet, the correction must be made prior to you signing the scorebook.

A **computational** error must be corrected within 30 minutes after the conclusion of the dual meet. If the error requires additional wrestling, i.e., as in the case of creating a tie taking the match into overtime, the error must then be corrected prior to the start of the next match.

- **Tournament match scoring errors:**

A **recordable** error must be corrected prior to the offended wrestler leaving the mat area if additional wrestling is necessary (*Mat area. Rule 2-1-5: the wrestling mat, plus 10 feet*). Otherwise, when additional wrestling is NOT necessary, the offended wrestler or coach must remain in the mat area.

A **computational** error must be corrected prior to the next match in which either wrestler competes. Again, if additional wrestling is necessary, it must be corrected prior to the offended wrestler leaving the mat area.

- **Dual meet or tournament team scoring errors:**

Very simply, recordable or computational errors must be corrected within 30 minutes after the conclusion of the dual meet or tournament.

Clearly, errors create stressful situations for all concerned that could easily turn an incident into a major fracas. Avoiding errors is every official's goal. But, when they do occur, and by thoroughly understanding Rule 6-6, you approach such situations equipped to quickly and decisively resolve the dilemma, thus returning everyone's focus back to the action.

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Wrestling photo provided by 20/20 Photographic, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: For the past 32 years, Gary Berkowitz has been a wrestling official in both Ohio and Illinois. Berkowitz served as secretary of the North Central Ohio (Mansfield) Wrestling Officials Association for 13 years. He received the NFHS Officials Association State Distinguished Service Award in 1995 and was inducted into the Ohio Wrestling Officials Association Hall of Fame in 2003. He has been an official at the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) state wrestling tournament for 10 years. Berkowitz played a prominent role as part of a group responsible for the development of a 27-hour OHSAA training program currently in use for instructing soon-to-be wrestling officials. He developed and maintains a Web site (www.matref.org) to further enhance training opportunities for Ohio's wrestling officials. Berkowitz holds a bachelor's degree from Bowling Green (Ohio) State University and an MBA from Ashland (Ohio) University. He is the director of human resources for Medina County, where he resides with his wife, JoAnn. They have one daughter, Carrie.

