

The Orderly Progress of the Match

By Ira Fleckman

This situation actually took place during the finals of a tournament. The wrestler who was ahead in a close match attacked with a low leg shot. His opponent sprawled and grabbed the leg of the attacker at the ankle. The referee and the assistant referee were closely watching the situation. The coach of the attacking wrestler jumped from his chair, invaded the wrestling area while the match was still in progress and yelled at the referee. The referee blew his whistle and after a brief conversation with the coach who had charged onto the mat the match was continued. The crowd was loudly booing and their displeasure was directed at the wrestler who had been countering the attack.

There are a few ways to interpret the situation described above.

In scenario one, the coach who charged onto the mat while the match was in progress, saw the opponent attempt to leverage his wrestler's leg in an illegal manner. The coach no doubt attempted to prevent his wrestler's knee from being injured. If one does accept this scenario,

one must also accept the fact that the two referees either failed to notice this action or ignored the threat to his wrestler.

In the second scenario the coach in question sees that his wrestler has lost the initiative and is about to be countered. He interrupts the match in order to prevent his wrestler being scored upon. If one accepts this scenario one must accept that the coach is unethical and is cheating. Also, one must believe that the actions of the coach are intended to incite the crowd against his wrestler's opponent.

In either scenario, if the referee administers a penalty to the defending wrestler the actions of the coach that ran onto the mat have to be considered as influencing the call of the referee. If the referee fails to penalize the defensive wrestler he will most probably share the negative attention of the fans.

The match continued and the wrestler whose coach interfered with the match won. During the remainder of the match the fans continued to voice their displeasure with the wrestler who had been accused of illegal tactics.

There is yet another scenario to be considered. After the referee blew the whistle, he should have asked the coach, who charged onto the mat, if he wished to default his wrestler. (It is the belief of this author that coaches who can determine that their wrestlers are about to suffer life threatening injuries should be permitted to remove their wrestlers from harm's way.)

If the coach denies that he wishes to default his own wrestler but insists that the referee and his assistant both missed an illegal action, the referee should consult with his assistant to determine if the coach had indeed seen something neither of them had. If there had been an illegal action by the defensive wrestler it should be penalized.

The possible illegal action has to be investigated and dealt with. The coach must be cited for flagrant misconduct and ejected from the gymnasium prior to resuming the match. It is true that ejecting the coach may not quiet the crowd but it certainly will insure the coach doesn't run onto the mat again. 🚫

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