

# **A Guide to Becoming a USA Wrestling Mat Official**

Freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling cannot be provided unless we have qualified Mat Officials who are knowledgeable of the sport of wrestling as well as skilled at Officiating the sport. If you are interested in becoming a USA Wrestling Official please read through the guidelines below or contact Eric Frandsen, Director of Mat Officials for the State of Michigan at 616-292-7911 or [frandsen.eric@gmail.com](mailto:frandsen.eric@gmail.com) .

## **GUIDELINES**

First of all, you must have a valid USA Wrestling Membership. This can be obtained by signing up for a free membership at [USA Wrestling Membership \(usawmembership.com\)](http://usawmembership.com). Once you complete your profile you will need to purchase a wrestling leader's membership. If you are 18 or older you will need to purchase a background check and complete your SafeSport certification in addition to purchasing your membership. If you are a coach with a wrestling leader membership you are already eligible to officiate. If you are a competitor, you are also eligible to officiate. There is also a Volunteer membership which is free that allows you to officiate. However, you can only officiate at your own local State tournaments.

## **Training to Become an Official**

The first thing you need to do is look the part. The attire includes black pants, black polo shirt, black belt, black shoes and socks. If you're wrestling and officiating it is okay to wear shorts and your wrestling shoes. You will need Red and Blue wristbands and a whistle. If you know the sport you have a great head start. If you're at a tournament get with the head official and he will arrange for you to work with one of the experienced officials. More importantly, there are many training sources on the United States Wrestling Officials Association Website ([www.uswoa.com](http://www.uswoa.com)) Go to the Home Page and click on the "Official's Education" tab located on the top toolbar. This page is loaded with all kinds of training materials. It would be worth your while to review all of it. Also, clinics are provided from time to time prior to the season and during the season.

## **Opportunities in Officiating**

Besides being able to give back to the sport you love you can take advantage of other opportunities as an official. The one thing that everyone asks is "will I get paid"? The answer is "yes". Each individual tournament will set aside money from the entry fees to pay officials (both mat and pairing). What amount of money you receive is based on several factors. The Head Official and/or the Tournament Director will determine what each official will get paid.

- The size of the tournament
- How many officials are working the tournament
- The category you've been evaluated at; M3, M2, M1C, M1 (UWW maintains their own categories). Visit USWOA Website to review the criteria for obtaining a higher category.
- The quality of your officiating
- The time spent officiating versus coaching or competing. It's not fair to expect to be paid more if you only officiate half the number of matches as those who officiated the entire time.

If you stick with officiating you will have the opportunity to officiate regional and national events.