

Best Practices – Match Preparation and Pairings

1. Saturday night to Monday morning – use this time to review your previous week’s matches and make adjustments as necessary to correct information if needed, and adjust weights or skill levels where appropriate
2. Tuesday – download .csv files from upcoming opposing teams and run initial pairings software
 - a. Verify how many mats you will be running, and appropriate name and color-code each team before running software for the weekend’s match as well as set the number of matches in between wrestler’s pairings to a minimum of “6”. Additionally, it is a best practice to set the years experience per mat based on 0-1 years’ experience for Mat #1, 2-4 years’ experience to Mat #2, 3-4 years’ experience, etc. Many teams have different coaches for different skill level wrestlers and this will ensure that coaches get to “coach their own wrestlers” on a mat by mat basis as much as possible.
 - i. You should move priority bar to make weight the number one highest priority function, age second, skill level third and experience fourth.
 - ii. Additionally make sure the software is looking for at least 2 matches per wrestler with a maximum of “5” matches total. You likely never have 5 matches for a wrestler in a weekend but this is important so that when you go through matchups, a wrestler stays visible throughout the process so switches in pairings may be made later.
 - iii. RUN SOFTWARE NOW. HIT SAVE ONCE THE MEET IS CREATED. THIS WILL CREATE A .WRS FILE.
 - iv. Close the program and reopen. Choose “Edit Existing Meet”. Open your .WRS file to make sure that it will open with no issues.
 - b. Perform initial scratches if they are known (from your team)
 - i. Other coaches should send you their initial scratches as well
 - c. Look for “odd age/weight” wrestler combinations – i.e. 8 yrs old, 100 lbs or 13 yrs old 75 lbs. – verify if there are possible matches
 - d. Look at skill level ratings – primarily for 4 and 5 skill level wrestlers – ensure there are matchups for these wrestlers with other teams
 - e. Any of the wrestlers, from any of the teams, who do not look like they may get matches, please notify the other coaches and:
 - i. Look at league schedule – find other teams nearby that may be hosting, contact their coach or matchup assignor and see if you are able to send wrestlers to their meet instead (assuming they have matches available for the pairing)
 - ii. And/Or.. Send a message to the icwl-contacts@intercountywrestlingleague.org email distribution list letting all know that you have wrestlers available that need matches (include age/weight/experience/skill level)
 - f. SAVE .wrs file and send initial copy to other match assignors from the upcoming

weekend so you're all working off the same file

3. Wednesday to Thursday - continue making any adjustments to scratches
4. Thursday matchup session process:
 - a. Each team brings up current copy of .wrs file in pairings software
 - b. Each team goes through final scratches for the upcoming weekend – done through “edit roster” function ONLY. Do NOT delete wrestlers but, rather, use this so the kids show up on the software with a “strike-through” on their name. This is in case someone was to change their minds and become available later on.
 - c. Begin matchups with largest team alphabetically A to Z. This is usually best procedure because likely most other teams will have 1-3 matches per wrestler by the time the largest team is completed.
 - d. Do NOT haggle over wrestlers with no experience. 0 years experience and a few lbs. in weight should be glossed over to ensure there are no inaccuracies in information only.
 - e. General rule of thumb is not to haggle over wrestlers’ weights except to care for matches where over 10% of body weight is given up.
 - f. Consider matching 0 year wrestlers with low-rating 1st year wrestlers if needed. General rule is to try and give wrestlers opportunities to compete with other, non-experienced, wrestlers – but let them wrestle vs. not having matches at all.
 - g. Matching up higher rate skill level 3 wrestlers with level 4 or 5 wrestlers should be discussed but considered as well.
 - h. Age – general rule is to keep matches within 1-1.5 years for wrestlers age 6-8/9, and 1-2 years maximum for ages 10-13. Keep in mind, junior high wrestlers will have different body types than 9 or 10 year olds will have and this needs to be taken into account.
 - i. It is ok to match two wrestlers where one gives up a little age, and the other gives up a little weight so long as neither is out of proportion to the rules above.
 - j. You do not need to discuss a wrestler’s entire history during matchups. If there is a key disagreement, or question, a wrestler’s general ability, or key matches, should be taken into consideration if no other pairing information produces definitive results.
 - k. 1-2 matches MAXIMUM for 0 and 1 year experience wrestlers. 2-3 matches MAXIMUM for 2 year experience+ wrestlers. Depending on size of meet, 3 matches may be fine or may cause problems.
 - l. As you begin to go through matches, HIT SAVE, HIT SAVE, and HIT SAVE – WHENEVER POSSIBLE. The very first time you hit save, it will have created the program. Any additional “saves” ensure the work you’re doing in the matchup session won’t be lost due to software or human error.
 - m. Keep in mind the total number of matches via the second tab. You can get a maximum of 12-13 matches/hour/mat completed. This should be taken into account for referee committed time as well as the host’s gym time allowed. Do not think you can squeeze 14 or 15 matches per hour in... it does NOT happen.
 - n. Have fun with the matchup sessions – it builds good will and bonding with others – but

keep “story telling” and side conversations to a minimum. Thursday nights can run late and no one likes to complete this process at 1 a.m. if possible. Matchups, when done correctly, and assuming all previous steps have been cared for and handled, should take no longer than two hours maximum.

- o. We suggest you begin no later than 9 p.m. in order to finish by 11 p.m. – 11:30 p.m. This will give matchup assignors plenty of time to get home from practices, and get their computers up and running. If you can have one, or maximum two, other persons from your club present (especially if they know different sets of wrestlers better i.e. young kids, or more experienced kids, or they attend tournaments regularly) this is very helpful. It also provides a second “set of eyes” to your own data entry.
 - p. When all teams have run through their rosters, and pairings are complete, THE HOST TEAM SHOULD HIT SAVE WHILE THE OTHERS DO NOT. Host team should then close the file, then try and successfully reopen the file on their computer. In case something is wrong, you do not want to have all teams close at once so that the information you’ve just gone through still exists in an open file and can be adjusted or resaved elsewhere if needed. Once a successful reboot has been performed, resave and close.
5. Friday – host team should adjust mat settings and move kids around as needed. There are a few important things to pay attention to here as well:
- a. Any matches that come up “pink” means that there are conflicts within the allowable 6 matches in between matches. First, “hit optimize” to clear up many of these conflicts.
 - b. Second, you can click and drag wrestlers up or down to create space in between matches.
 - c. Third, take into consideration whether wrestlers are on the same mat all day. Although this is not “necessary,” it does make for less ambiguity on match day in wrestlers not knowing which mat to go to.
 - d. Where possible, in the case of multiple wrestlers per family (siblings/brothers), try and either keep them on the same mat all day together, or at least make sure that there is space in between matches so that parents can watch and cheer for their children. This will prevent parent requests to move matches up, or back, so they can attend.
 - e. Even out the total number of matches per mat so they’re all relatively ending at the same time.
 - f. Add any other wrestlers INTO the roster you may have taken from other teams who made such a request. Do the initial pairing as the host team but please DO communicate this to the other match assignors so you have their agreement and awareness.
 - g. Hit save and resend changes out via new .wrs file to all match assignors for the upcoming meet.
 - h. DO NOT PRINT.
6. Saturday – arrive early and get your computer, printer and table set up.
- a. Print a copy of attending wrestlers expected for each of the coaches – or whomever will

be checking kids into the match. This will allow you to keep track of last minute scratches, and not be looking for kids who have already scratched.

- b. As check-in concludes, make note of any kids who have not shown up ON PAPER along with the names and teams of the kids they were SUPPOSED to wrestle. This is done in case someone shows up late so you don't have to go back through and figure out who they were initially matched up with. Also, please note ON PAPER any additional matches you ADD in response to last-minute scratches. You should plan to have this completed approximately ½ hour BEFORE the meet will begin, thus, you should set expectations accordingly that the arriving wrestlers need to check in with their coaches no later than ½ hour before stated meet time. i.e. last check in for 8:30 a.m. start would be 8 a.m.
- c. Once finished with scratches and new match assignments, resave pairings software into final .wrs file.
- d. Open ..excel file as an Excel spreadsheet.
 - i. Adjust margins and pages to print 1 per team per page by moving column widths. DO NOT delete any columns until this is done. This is important so that attending coaches have name/age/weight/experience for their entire team in case changes or additional matches due to injury need to be performed during the meet.
- e. Once all teams have their "initial complete roster for the day," go back through and delete columns with age/experience/skill ratings. When completed, you can print.
 - i. First, print one copy of each team from 1st tab. This will immediately get posted on the wall so the kids and their parents can write down match numbers.
 - ii. Have one or more coaches begin to get the first 3 of their kids per mat TO THE MAT for warm-up and anklets.
 - iii. Second, print 1 copy each of tab #2 for the table workers. Once they have their copies, they can begin to fill in the master scorer's sheets per table.
 - iv. Third, print 1 copy each for EACH coach of tab #2 who will be coaching EACH mat. If you have 3 mats, and 3 teams attending, you'll need one per coach per mat printed.
 - v. Printers for under \$200 can be purchased that print at up to 12 pages/minute for color copies. Highly suggested you purchase, for your club, one of these printers!!!
 1. Do not print the night before. It causes too much trouble to hand-write changes, scratches, etc. on the day of the meet and it causes kids to leave early if they think they are finished, or stick around when there are no remaining matches for them which will cause you, as the match assignor, to continue to have to work through the entire meet diligently. No need for this!
- f. BEGIN YOUR MEET, GET A COFFEE AND HAVE FUN!

A FEW OTHER HELPFUL TIPS:

- Maintain a 'safe space' where you're working on meet-day. Do not let kids continually come up and ask "when their match is" or "who they are wrestling" – you have enough work to do. Find yourself someone to buffer you while you work and turn away wrestlers, parents and even coaches who look to interrupt this process!
- Do not continue to add matches to the meet long after the meet begins. This causes problems, too many to go into. If you do need to add a match, or delete one, make sure all coaches involved are notified, each parent of each wrestler affected is notified, and that the table workers themselves are notified. Prevent needless scrambling around at the 11th hour!!
- Get to your gym early and print something mundane to make sure the printer is working before crunch-time begins!
- If you have a PA system? Set it up and use it. A bullhorn or megaphone works too but it'll save your voice when having to make general announcements.
- Make sure you ask the referees not to begin until you give them the "ok" to do so. If one mat starts early it can ruin your day because the pairing software has some of these wrestlers only 6 matches apart. If they are not on the same mat, for whatever reason, and one mat begins early or moves too quickly, there is an increased likelihood that a wrestler may be "up" on two different mats at the same time which will, again, cause problems.
- Collect all coach's final sheets and make copies. The results of the matches, although not important to league standings, will be helpful during pre-seeding and seeding for the ICWL championship and other dual meet considerations throughout the year. You should safe-guard this information somewhere and retain copies.
- Once the meet has gone into hour #3, shut your computer down (hit save one last time to ensure you have the very latest information) and turn away as much as possible any last minute requests for additional matches to be added. Once the computer is shut down, the requests typically stop coming in.
- Breathe – and have help. Enjoy. Remember the interests of the kids are first.

Any questions, please call Michael Nichter at 484-343-4064 for process and procedure questions. Please call Brian Martz at 610-308-5401.