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Rule 5-7 Default ... “A default is awarded when one of the competitors is unable to continue wrestling for any reason.”

There is a distinction between a wrestler who defaults a match or forfeits a match. Simply stated a wrestler who defaults a match may continue in the tournament. If the default was not caused by an illegal hold/maneuver, unnecessary roughness or an unsportsmanlike act by the opponent, the defaulting wrestler drops from the championship bracket to the consolation bracket. If the event is a pool or dual meet tournament the same is still true, the wrestler is allowed to continue in the competition.

Any competitor or his/her coach may default a match prior to the conclusion of wrestling for a variety of reasons. The most common is a medical default. This may occur during a match in which the competitor is injured and cannot continue. The competitor may default if he/she is accidentally injured during the normal course of wrestling, or if the competitor’s opponent causes the injury due to an illegal hold/maneuver, unnecessary roughness or an unsportsmanlike act. If the injury is caused by the opponent due to an illegal hold/maneuver, unnecessary roughness or an unsportsmanlike act during a match, the injured wrestler is awarded one point for the penalty and the two-minute recovery clock is started. If the injured wrestler intends to default in this case he/she or the coach must inform the referee prior to the expiration of the two-minute recovery clock. The referee should not volunteer this information to the coach, as it may be a form of coaching or assisting one of the competitors, but if asked the referee can explain

the rule, and then it is up to the coach to communicate the decision prior to the expiration of the two-minute recovery clock.

Also in the medical default category there is the case where a wrestler defaults prior to the match starting. This may happen because of a previous injury (e.g., last week or in the last match). In this situation the coach may choose to rest and save his wrestler for one last chance to qualify to the next event. In this case, the coach must notify the tournament director of the wrestler’s medical problem and his intention to default. The defaulting wrestler or his coach must appear at the announced mat to declare the default so it can be officially entered on the bout sheet.

A wrestler may default for a NON-medical reason. There has been some confusion on the correct procedure for a wrestler to purposefully default a match in the tournament and continue to wrestle.

The following procedure is for a NON INJURY default: The coach and wrestler must check in at the table. The coach then informs the referee that his wrestler is defaulting. It is now complete, no one has to go to the mat and both wrestlers may continue to wrestle in the tournament.

Rule 5-13 Forfeit ...“When the opponent, for any reason, fails to appear for a match, in order to receive a forfeit the wrestler shall be dressed in a legal wrestling uniform and appear on the mat. Forfeits do not count as matches when considering the five-match in-one-day limit.” A wrestler that forfeits a match cannot continue in the tournament.

It is extremely important that all tournament personnel know the distinction and mark the bout sheet correctly as to whether the match is a default or a forfeit. It is also the responsibility of the referee to make sure he/she checks for the proper recording before it is signed and sent to the head table for recording. No one at the head table may change the recorded bout sheet. If the head table feels there is a recording error, it must go back to the referee who had jurisdiction for that match. He/she has the final say.