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WIAA to use The Penalizer at State Tournaments

Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) Deputy Director, Dave Anderson, met with Xcel Wrestling Owner/President, Todd Goldbeck, to discuss the use of a wrestling penalty scoreboard at the Wisconsin State Individual and Team Tournaments. Goldbeck, who is also one of the WIAA's Master referees, developed The Penalizer, Wrestling Penalty Scoreboard, in response to several scoring errors that occurred at the WIAA State Individual Tournament over the past few years.

The Penalizer is a device that records and displays any warnings for stalling, or cautions that occur during the course of an amateur wrestling match. The Penalizer is able to be placed on the scorer's table, where it will be visible to the coaches, participants and spectators. It will be controlled by the scorekeeper and will assist the coaches in knowing the exact status of both wrestlers' penalty situations throughout the match, which often impacts strategy. When an official makes a signal for a warning or caution to the scorekeeper, the penalty will be recorded on The Penalizer and in the scorebook.

During the course of a wrestling match, many points are scored, offensively, defensively, and as the result of penalties. The various points are recorded by the scorekeeper in a scorebook, which is the only "official" score of the match. The scoreboard, which brightly displays the score for all of the spectators in the arena, is simply present as a secondary display for the fans. In the past, the only way for the coaches to know what the official scorebook had in it, was to actually look at it by coming to the scorer's table...until now.

Penalties in amateur wrestling are progressive. The more penalties you receive, the more severe the punishment will be. Therefore, if any of those penalties is not recorded during the match, it could have, and has had, major implications on the outcome of the match. Sometimes, penalties go unrecorded. The Penalizer will alert the coaches that the scorekeeper has missed a call or signal, and the official can correct it as soon as possible. Everyone involved with wrestling hopes that this new innovation will eliminate scoring errors, and ultimately, give all the high school wrestlers a fair shake.

The WIAA has purchased The Penalizers for the Wisconsin State Individual and Team Tournaments, which can be seen on every scoring table. The initial response from the coaches and schools who are currently using The Penalizer have been very positive and we look forward to the same at State.