

Continuing Series from "Are You a Duck?"

Toughest call in wrestling – The scramble in OT

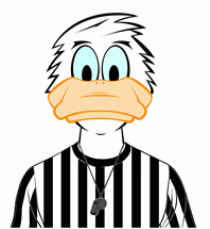
In a referee's career...there will be 1-2 calls that you will remember for a lifetime and I guarantee you that it will involve a scramble in OT. It will be that type of call that you and only you will know what YOU saw and better yet... what you felt. The rule book talks about that control is "sometimes felt". At Midlands one year....in a semifinal in OT...I had a situation that the coach of the kid who thought it was a TD asked me why I didn't give it...I told him that what I was about to tell him...I had NEVER said to another coach. I said "Coach...all I can tell you is that I needed more and that I "felt"control was not established. I didn't say I wasn't sure...I didn't say didn't know...I said I felt...tactile...by feel...that it wasn't there. He looked at me like I was crazy and walked away. More than 2 years later...at the D2 Nationals he came to me and said that he started to officiate some and then and only then did he finally understand what I was trying to tell him that day. It was like having a balance scale...each plate is exactly level...if a little feather landed on one...that would be enough to tip the scale and control established...that's how though these calls are. In most scramble situations in OT there is one thing you always need to remember...LET IT BURN!

There is always criteria for the right call...make sure you know what they are. For example...who put who where? Is the counter as strong as the initial attack? Are hips controlled? Is a hip up or down? Head out? Arm out? Legs controlled? Many questions need answered. One thing you must remember is...LET IT BURN!

If you look at the top officials, you notice they are calm and cool in tight situations. Just because the situation is tense doesn't mean you need to be. Be calm, be cool. The calmer you are...the easier it is to concentrate and see what you need to see. If you are all uptight and wound up like a rubber band...you will overreact and call things too quick....LET IT BURN!

Put your two hands together palm to palm and press with all your might...which hand is dominate? Neither...that's exactly what you have in some tight OT TD situations. Looks like a TD...but doesn't feel like a TD...hence...no TD. Don't freak out. Calm yourself and steady yourself by indicating no control both in voice and with visual signals. Make sure you are backed off some...standing straight up or kneeling, your being vocal with "no control no control" and visual is telling everyone what you have no control. Both corners are screaming but you know what you see and what you need to occur in order to give the TD. If it's not there...do not succumb to the pressure of thinking you HAVE to do something. It is ALWAYS better to LET IT BURN and let it play out. If the TD is there...it will be there...clear as day. If you give it too quick...based on some criteria...you will never know what might have occurred.

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Time is your friend here. I am not talking a long time...it’s a matter of seconds. I have seen things change in a matter of seconds...so LET IT BURN!

One of the worst things a coach can ever say to you is “you couldn’t of made the correct call because you were out of position. Always make sure you are in the optimum position. Which side is better? Depends on what is occurring. Most time it will be the “open” side...which is where the action is occurring. Might be the front to see if hips get covered, or the rear for the same reason...you have to have the experience to know which is best. How do you get that experience, mat time, plain and simple.

You will make mistakes...but if you cover your bases you will eliminate many of those mistakes...and the first thing is LET IT BURN! There isn’t a rush...really. If it’s there...let it settle and make the call.

The biggest reason for not getting it right is inexperience.

I tend to point whenever I see whatever it is that has changed, that shows me that control has been established. Also...in the microseconds that I point and something changes...I can very easily continue with my “no control” visual signal and no one is the wiser that I was about to score a TD.

Help yourself...watch higher level matches on Flo, You Tube and the Big Ten channel. Talk to senior refs who have been there. Also...check your ego at the door and be willing to learn.

The keys to success are;

Work at higher levels

Watch higher level matches

Know what you are looking at and for

Take your time

Be calm, be cool

Back up a bit further

Get in the right position

And above all....LET IT BURN.

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