

Within the International Federations



Letter to wrestlers,
coaches, judges
and referees

by Milan Ercegan
President of the FILA

Junior amateur wrestling competition.

The following paragraphs have been extracted from an open letter written by Mr. Milan Ercegan, President of the FILA:

I will start my open letter to the wrestlers, coaches and officials by quoting an example which most evidently reveals to what extent the wrestlers and the coaches are interested in “victory by all means”, regardless of the fact that their behaviour jeopardizes the prospects of wrestling.

Although they are to be applied from January 1, 1981, thanks to the efforts of some Federations already in October and November 1980, the first competitions according to the new Rules were organised. Even before the new Rules were enforced and before the instructions for their implementation had been circulated, we were informed that some wrestlers and coaches had found several “weak points” and had consequently applied the “victory by all

means” system. This means that old habits are still alive and that wrestling is relapsing into passivity because the wrestlers, after having scored one classification point had managed, by being passive, to preserve it throughout the match and be the winners.

There is nothing wrong, with the Rules, but with their interpretation and implementation including the fact that certain wrestlers and coaches intentionally prefer poor victories to the beauty and abundance of opportunities provided by our sports.

What is the reason for this mis-understanding?

In the first place, point for passivity is no longer scored (it is replaced by the caution aiming at stimulating the bout).

Second, it has not been clearly understood in the Rules, that a Wrestler can be ordered to leave the mat, namely that he can be “disquali-

fied” for passivity, as we usually say in our wrestling terminology.

This means that the wrestlers and the coaches have mis-interpreted the abolishment of one point assigned for passivity as a possibility to be passive on the mat. This also implies that they have not properly read, article 21 of the amended Rules.

This arbitrary interpretation of the Rules is contrary to our purpose and jeopardises the whole concept of modern wrestling.

I am thankful to the wrestlers and coaches who have mis-interpreted the new Rules, for, by doing so, they have made us aware that a strict application of article 21 of the amendments on disqualification was necessary. This article reads as follows “... if a wrestler commits an obvious act against fair play or against FILA’s spirit and concept of total and universal Wrestling... he will be disqualified”.

This article was on purpose added to the new Rules with the aim of protecting the concept of modern wrestling. Frankly speaking, I personally insisted upon including this article in the new Rules for I was aware of the consequences of abolishing disqualification for passivity.

The meaning of article 21 implies that the wrestler who does not practise modern wrestling and refuses to comply with its latest concepts can be ordered to leave the mat and thus lose the match regardless of the number of points he has scored. In other words, “disqualification” remains a sanction to be applied against all wrestlers acting against the ideals and philosophy of modern wrestling. Criteria in this respect are even more strict now: verbal remarks prior to the first, second and third caution have been suppressed. According to the correct interpretation of the new Rules one can say that sanctions will be taken against those who act against the FILA concept of modern wrestling. The sanctions contained in the new Rules imply disqualification right after the second caution and the last caution in standing position, a last chance given to the passive wrestler who is either ordered to stand up and resume wrestling in the standing position, or who has himself managed to stand up but continues to be passive in standing position.

Wrestling, as a modern sports, can maintain its international standing only by being up-to-date.

The aim of this open letter is to make aware the wrestlers, coaches and officials of a strong interdependence between the technical aspect of the training process, on one hand, and the exact meaning of the amendments and modifications of the Rules, on the other hand and also to draw their attention on the consequences of all deliberate negative actions committed against the present Rules of modern wrestling.

Nowadays, sports provides the young people with a large range of spectacular beauties. Sports has also become an integral part of the dynamic aspect of human life. People are more and more interested in sports and want to experience it either as active participants or as spectators.

Our present aim is to rouse not only the competitors’ but also the public’s interest. We are living the age of television which, as a mass media, attracts millions of viewers whenever there is something attractive going on the screen.

The changes in the methodology in general and the technology of training in particular are to be considered as very important, as they are closely connected with essential elements which require:

- a) the adaptation to the speed requirements.
- b) assimilation of new techniques which imply a wider range of holds.
- c) new requirements with regard to endurance, particularly speed-endurance.
- d) the number of tactical variants under new conditions.

Total, universal and risky wrestling

I would like to emphasise the following three principles which are the basic elements of the new Rules and which require deep changes in the coaches working method:

- Total Wrestling.
- Universal technique of wrestling.
- Open wrestling style in which the wrestlers must compulsorily take risks.

The training process should be built upon the above three principles, which implies that the coaches should thoroughly change their work-

ing method. I would also like to point out that we have decided to develop a new aspect of wrestling based on the above three principles. That is why they constitute the very foundation of the new Rules.

Officiating entirely depends on a strict implementation of these principles. The officials will therefore have to work in strict conformity with them.

Modern total and universal wrestling requires a complete change in the concept of wrestling, from the viewpoint of both wrestlers and coaches. They should change their outlook on wrestling, adopt a new spirit, develop a new psychology in order to be able to meet its requirements.

It is obvious that some wrestlers and coaches of the present generation will have to give up wrestling. But fresh blood shall come to replace them, the wrestlers and coaches devoted to the new spirit and ideals of wrestling.

The coach is an integral part of all achievements in sports. The new Rules of wrestling impose on coaches very serious tasks. They themselves still have to learn in order to be able to teach their wrestlers. Wrestlers can only make progress when their coaches have outstanding technical knowledge of their sports. If this is not the case the wrestlers stagnate at the level achieved by their coaches. The new Rules and the new aspect of wrestling which lay stress on the knowledge and the taking of risks require from all coaches an outstanding knowledge of their sports.

This is the beginning of a new age for wrestling,

We shall spare no efforts to make it successful by eliminating all those who act against the spirit and ideals of modern wrestling.

M.E.

