

Injury Time & Rewarding Choice-High School

Once again, as our sport continues to evolve, the topic/area of “injury and time outs” continues to be an interesting issue.

We always error on the side of safety! We all are in agreement with that. However, the question comes up quite often, when an athlete screams, or asks for injury time, has an injury really occurred?

We are not doctors. Understood! We are not mind readers. Understood!

We have a protocol to protect the athletes, from the shoulders up. We have a process now known as “Head Neck and Cervical” time out. This is a five minute period of time where a healthcare professional, makes sure that the athlete can safely continue to action, with the safety and concern of a possible head neck and/or cervical injuries. This is a good rule.

The NCAA seems to have gotten this correct. Meaning, after the first injury time out, once it is confirmed that the athlete is OK to continue, the wrestlers’ opponent is given **“choice of position,” (top, bottom, neutral)**. On the second injury time out, the wrestler’s opponent is awarded **“one point.”** Although this rule seems to have worked well in college, this rule might be a little extreme at the high school level.

Please consider the following proposal.

On the **First injury time out**, the wrestlers’ opponent is given **“choice of position”** (top, bottom, neutral), when we resume wrestling.

On the **Second injury time out**, the wrestler’s opponent is **“given choice”** again.

Rationale!

- Conditioning, is one of the most important, and special attributes of our sport. **Is it really fair to both athletes**, if we award up to 90 seconds of injury time, with very little, to no consequence to either athlete, when the wrestlers, ask for injury time or screams, as action is stopped immediately in this situation?
- This is exactly the protocol that we follow, after a wrestler takes a **second injury timeout**, when it occurs at the end of the **“sudden victory”** period. Meaning, the opponent is given choice of position on the **“next two tiebreak periods.”**
- In a situation where a wrestler realizes that they can **“possibly”** be in a near fall situation, **but not an “eminent near fall”** situation, they know that if they scream or ask for injury time, they can avoid giving up near fall points. No consequence!