



IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 10, BOONE, IA 50036-0010
(515) 432-2011 FAX (515) 432-2961
www.iahhsaa.org

RICHARD WULKOW, IHSAA Executive Director
DAVID ANDERSON, Assistant Executive Director
TODD THARP, Assistant Executive Director
CHAD ELSBERRY, Comm & Marketing Director
ALAN BESTE, Assistant Executive Director
ROGER BARR, Director of Officials
BUD LEGG, Information Director

January 5, 2014

TO: ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, WRESTLING COACHES, AND WRESTLING OFFICIALS

RE: REMAINDER OF THE WRESTLING SEASON

Dear Athletic Directors, Wrestling Coaches, and Wrestling Officials:

Happy New Year! I hope you each took time to relax and spend time with your families and friends over the holidays and are ready for the second part of the season. Sectional wrestling is just a little over one month away!

Education-Based Athletics

I had an opportunity to attend a conference in Chicago in early December. One of the speakers talked about **“making space” within our programs to teach the philosophy of education-based athletics.** I have often said we need to use the teachable moments that present themselves, but this speaker went even further and talked about creating those teachable moments within our programs based on what else was happening within society, our communities, our schools, etc. As I was listening, I was reminded of the IHSAA’s mission statement and core beliefs. I share them with you here for your consideration as part of your philosophy of education-based athletics.

IHSAA MISSION STATEMENT

“The Iowa High School Athletic Association serves its member schools and students by providing leadership and support for education based interscholastic athletics that enrich the educational experience of the student athlete.”

IHSAA CORE BELIEFS

- Extracurricular, interscholastic athletic programs enrich each student’s total educational experience and positively impacts academic achievement.
- The IHSAA is the recognized authority in Iowa regarding boys’ interscholastic athletic programs, and developing and interpreting rules that promote fair play and minimize risks for participating students.
- Extracurricular, interscholastic athletic participation develops ethical behavior, character development and good sportsmanship.
- Participation in extracurricular, interscholastic athletic programs promotes student academic achievement.
- Participation in extracurricular, interscholastic athletic programs helps students develop healthy lifestyles.
- Extracurricular, interscholastic athletic programs contribute to positive school and community relationships.
- Conduct counts in all aspects of extracurricular, interscholastic athletics for participants, coaches, administrators, parents, and spectators.

- Properly trained administrators, coaches, and athletic directors promote the educational mission of extracurricular, interscholastic athletic programs.
- The IHSAA is committed to working cooperatively with other professional, education-based organizations.
- Extracurricular, interscholastic athletic programs foster involvement of a diverse population.
- Properly trained officials enhance extracurricular, interscholastic athletic programs.

Let's all 'make space' in what we do in interscholastic wrestling to promote the benefits of education-based athletics.

Growth Allowance

Wrestlers who have made scratch weight at least one time at the lowest weight they intend to compete for the remainder of the season can receive the growth allowance for the remainder of the season. For example, if a wrestler has made scratch weight at 132#, they receive the growth allowance at either 132# or 138# without losing their certification at 132# or negatively affecting their descent plan. *In addition, they can use the growth allowance at 138# before using it at 132# with no adverse effects.* Remember, once a wrestler uses the growth allowance they cannot go below the lowest weight class they have made scratch for to that point.

Coaches, it is extremely important that you log into your TrackWrestling account, go to "Roster" and check to be sure the Minimum Weight Class (MWC) for each of your wrestlers is accurate. The TrackWrestling system will use this column to determine which wrestlers receive the growth allowance. If a wrestler has made scratch weight at the **MWC** listed, then the wrestler will automatically receive the growth allowance at either of their eligible weight classes listed on the weigh in form. There is nothing you need to do as a coach, EXCEPT **check to be sure the Minimum Weight Class (MWC) for each of your wrestlers is accurate.** If you plan to raise a wrestler's **MWC**, you need to do that before they weigh in for the first time in 2015.

Remember, for wrestlers receiving the growth allowance, its use is mandatory for the remainder of the season. Here is a situation from the NFHS Wrestling Case Book for clarification: "**SITUATION 4.4.4** - When the growth allowance is used, how does it affect weight classes?"

RULING: When the growth allowance is used, each weight class is, in essence, increased by 2 pounds. All reference to weight classes will remain the same, but, in reality, the 106-pound class becomes 108 pounds, the 126-pound class becomes 128 pounds, etc.

COMMENT: An individual can only be qualified to wrestle in two weight classes. The one in which the actual weight qualifies the wrestler for and one weight class up. Therefore, after the growth allowance is in effect, in order to be eligible as a 126-pound wrestler, an individual must weigh in excess of 115 pounds and no more than 128 pounds. The wrestler could then wrestle in either the 120-pound class or the 126-pound class."

Eligible Weight Classes

Coaches should be sure to place their wrestlers on the proper line of weigh-in sheets. A wrestler can compete at the weight class for which they weigh in and one weight class above that weight class. *(For individually bracketed tournaments the weight class at which they will compete must be declared to the weigh master before the last 285# wrestler steps off the scale.)* A wrestler CANNOT compete at a weight class below where they are placed on the weigh-in sheet, regardless of their actual scale weight. For example, if a wrestler's eligible weight classes (EWC) are 132# & 138#, but they weigh less than 126#, the only option they have is to wrestle at the 132-pound weight class. They cannot compete at 126# because they are listed above that weight class and they gave up the opportunity to wrestle at the 138# weight class because they can only compete one weight class above where their scale weight actually qualifies them. An additional weigh in is not required or permitted. So, a wrestler who is listed on the 132# line, but does not make weight is eligible for 138# and 145#. The proper protocol is for the coach to use a pen or pencil and make the change on the weigh in form before it is signed by the opposing coach(es)/weigh master so everyone is informed. However, if that does not happen, the wrestler is still eligible for 138# and 145# by rule.

IHSAA Wrestling Skin Condition Report Form

What was intended to be a minor change to the IHSAA Wrestling Skin Condition Report Form has caused a large amount of undue confusion in the medical clearance section. Therefore, that section has been changed to make it more clear. The medical professional now has the three choices related to suspect skin conditions. The skin condition:

- * IS NOT communicable at this time
- * IS COMMUNICABLE AT THIS TIME, and the student:
 - * MAY NOT return to participation until cleared on a follow up examination
 - * MAY RETURN on the date listed here

The challenge of changing forms in mid-season is that some medical professionals will have the old form on file in their offices. If the old form is provided as clearance for a wrestler, the return date on the form will be honored just as it is on the new form. Below is a link to the copy of the new form. Coaches and athletic directors should do their best to provide the new form to wrestlers going a medical professional for clearance related to a suspect skin condition.

http://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/WR_Skin_Form_1229142.pdf

Remember, **ONLY A DESIGNATED, ON-SITE APPROPRIATE HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONAL** may overrule the diagnosis of the appropriate health-care professional signing the IHSAA Wrestling Skin Condition Report form for a wrestler to participate or not participate with a particular skin condition.

Out of Bounds & In Bounds

NFHS rules state, "Out of bounds occurs when **A SUPPORTING POINT OF BOTH WRESTLERS is beyond the boundary line.**" They further state, "Contestants are

considered to be inbounds if ALL THE SUPPORTING POINTS OF EITHER WRESTLER are inside or on the boundary lines. Supporting points are the parts of the body touching the wrestling area which bear the wrestler's weight, other than those parts with which the wrestler is holding the opponent.

a. When down on the mat, the usual points of support are:

1. the knees;
2. the side of the thigh;
3. the buttocks;
4. the hand(s);
5. the head.”

Remember, this is different than the college rule. Please review rule 5.15 regarding what constitutes in bounds for high school wrestling when the wrestlers are on the mat. **The key is if a supporting point of both wrestlers is beyond the boundary line, the wrestlers are out of bounds.**

Uniform and Special Equipment Items

Remember, traditional wrestling ear guards are the only legal ear guards that may be worn for high school wrestling. **MMA headgear, boxing headgear, etc. are all illegal.** Wrestling ear guards must be worn as designed and intended by the manufacturer. That means both ear cups would need to be from the same manufacturer, but they are not required to be the same color. The ear guards also need to be school issued or approved, but that is for the school to determine, not the official. Ear guards, like the rest of the uniform, may or may not be school colors and can still be legal. That, again, is for the school to determine, not the official. Also, remember **stickers CAN cover the ear holes**, if the ear guard has ear holes, but tape on any part of the ear guards is illegal.

If a wrestler has oral braces, a mouth guard must be worn. The plastic sleeves that only cover the braces are not legal. The mouth guard must cover all areas of the braces or orthodontic devices. NFHS rules state, “Each contestant who has braces or has a special orthodontic device on their teeth, shall be required to wear a tooth and mouth protector. A tooth and mouth protector (intraoral) shall include an occlusal (protecting and separating the biting surfaces) and a labial (protecting the teeth and supporting structures) portion and cover the teeth and all areas of the braces or special orthodontic device with adequate thickness. This would include upper and lower teeth if devices are present on both.”

Special equipment is defined in Rule 4.3.1 is any equipment worn that is not required by rule. **Any equipment which does not permit normal movement of the joints and which prevents one's opponent from applying normal holds/maneuvers shall not be permitted.** Special equipment includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Legal hair coverings attached to the ear guards, face masks, braces, casts, supports, eye protection and socks;
- b. Any protective equipment which is hard and/or abrasive must be covered and properly padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½-inch thick;

ART. 2 . . . All parts of a pad must fit snug against the wrestler's body. Loose pads are prohibited.

ART. 3 . . . Taping or strapping which substantially restricts the normal movement of a joint shall be prohibited. The taping of fingers and thumb is not a violation.

This is a two part rule. Part one **MUST** be met before part two comes into play. In other words, **anything that prohibits normal movement of a joint or prevents an opponent from applying a normal hold is ILLEGAL, regardless of whether it is padded. A BRACE, SPLINT, or CAST that prevents a joint from moving can NEVER be legal.**

Sport glasses, such as Rec Specs, can be ruled as legal special equipment if the official determines the following: a. they have no sharp edges, b. they have a strap suitable to secure them to the head, c. they fit tight to the face, d. they do not pose a hazard or disadvantage to the opponent.

Multiple Day Event Weigh-ins

I think everyone understands that all wrestlers must weigh-in each day of a multiple-day event and they must weigh-in at the same weight class each day of the event. The question has come up about whether wrestlers who have a suspect skin condition and do not have written clearance on the first day of a multiple day team event are eligible to weigh in on day one so if they are cleared they can compete on day two. The answer is, yes, they are eligible to weigh in on the first day, but not to compete, unless cleared by a designated, on-site appropriate health-care professional. The wrestler could receive written clearance to compete on the second day of the event and would be required to weigh in for the same weight class as on day one.

Required Safety Mat Area Surrounding Wrestling Mats During Competition

NFHS rule 2-1-2 states, "The wrestling area of the mat shall be a circular area a minimum of 28 feet in diameter. **Surrounding and secured to the wrestling area of the mat shall be a safety mat area of approximately 5 feet wide.**" This means **there shall be approximately 5 feet of safety mat area from the out of bounds circle to the nearest obstacle, i.e., bleachers, walls, gym floor, tables, chairs, etc.** The wording "approximately 5 feet" is used because as mats age they may shrink, which could reduce the safety mat area slightly. The wording is NOT meant to allow less than 5 feet of safety area because the gym is too small for the number of mats being used.

*** If a section of one, or more, mats is removed in order to fit all mats into the gym, the approximate 5 feet safety mat area rule CANNOT be ignored.**

*** If a mat is rolled part way up a wall, the approximate 5 feet safety mat area rule CANNOT be ignored. Even if the wall is padded, there MUST be an approximate 5 feet safety mat area from the out of bounds circle to the padded wall.**

If this rule is not met, meaning there is not a safety mat area of approximately 5 feet wide secured to and surrounding all mats, competition CANNOT be held until

there is compliance with the rule. Compliance with this rule is the responsibility of meet management and shall be enforced by the official(s).

Below is a link to a diagram of what is **legal** according to rule 2-1-2.

http://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Safety_Mat_Area_Diagram-Legal_102914.pdf

Below is a link to a diagram of what is **illegal** according to rule 2-1-2.

http://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Safety_Mat_Area_Diagram-Illegal_102914.pdf

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- 1) When an official believes biting has occurred it is deemed as intentional and called flagrant misconduct. The official is to make this call when it occurs. When biting occurs, there is no other call that can be made by the official and it must be called at the time the official believes it occurred.
- 2) Wrestlers cannot be penalized or required to cover a tattoo unless it is determined by the official to be taunting or derogatory to someone. There is no rule support for doing otherwise.
- 3) Religious gestures, such as pointing upwards, making the sign of the cross, bowing, etc. are also not prohibited by rule unless they are determined by the official to be taunting, derogatory, otherwise considered unsportsmanlike, or delay the start of the match (stalling).

Stalemate vs. Stalling

I have received a number of phone calls and emails about the POE on stalemate vs. stalling. That tells me that we have raised the awareness of both officials and coaches regarding the guidelines on the rules related to stalemates and stalling. Remember, while the final decision lies in the judgment of the referee, it is our hope these guidelines will provide more consistency in these two calls.

Below are the definitions of stalemate and stalling, and the basic responsibilities coaches, wrestlers, and officials have regarding these rules.

Rule 5-23 (**Stalemate**) states, “It is a stalemate **when contestants are interlocked in a position, other than a pinning situation, in which neither wrestler can improve their respective position(s); or either competitor has the hands locked around one leg of the opponent to prevent scoring**. The referee shall, as soon as possible, stop the match and wrestling shall be resumed as for an out of bounds. Hands locked **repeatedly** around one leg of an opponent to prevent scoring is considered stalling.”

Rule 5-24 (**Stalling**) states, “Each wrestler is required to make an **honest attempt to stay within the 10-foot circle and wrestle aggressively, regardless of position, or the time, or score of the match**. Action is to be maintained throughout the match by

the contestants wrestling aggressively whether in the top, bottom, or neutral position and **both contestants are equally responsible for initiating action. It is the responsibility of contestants, coaches, and referees to avoid the use of stalling** tactics or allowing the use thereof. This shall be demonstrated by those responsible, with strict enforcement by referees.”

* **Coaches are responsible** to **teach an aggressive style of wrestling**, whether in the top, bottom or neutral position.

* **Wrestlers are responsible** for **creating action, avoiding the use of stalling tactics, and making honest attempts to wrestle aggressively**, whether in the top, bottom or neutral position.

* **Officials are responsible** for being **firm in enforcing the letter and the spirit of the rule and consistently penalize any stalling** infraction.

* **In summary**, if coaches do not accept responsibility for teaching aggressive wrestling and wrestlers do not accept responsibility for wrestling aggressively, the official is responsible for penalizing the lack of aggressiveness.

Have a great rest of the season and I wish you success in the post-season.

If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Alan Beste
Associate Director
abeste@jahsaa.org