

2015-16 NFHS WRESTLING RULES CHANGES

Rule 3-1-4 Referees and Their Duties

Before the dual meet begins, the referee shall:

- a. perform skin checks or verify skin checks have been performed by a designated, on-site meet, appropriate health-care professional;
- b. inspect contestants for presence of oils or greasy substances on the body or uniform, rosin, objectionable pads, improper clothing, all jewelry, long fingernails, improper grooming, health and safety measures;
- c. clarify the rules with coaches and contestants upon request;
- d. have the head coach verify that the team is groomed, properly equipped and ready to wrestle, including shoelaces being secured;
- e. review with the scorers and timekeeper the signals and procedures to be used; and
- f. meet with head coaches and captains and explain to them that they are to make certain everyone exhibits good sportsmanship throughout the contest.

Rule 3-1-5 Referees and Their Duties

Before an individual, combination or team advancement tournament begins each day, the referee shall:

- a. perform skin checks or verify that skin checks have been performed by a designated, on-site meet, appropriate health-care professional;
- b. inspect contestants for presence of oils or greasy substances on the body or uniform, rosin, objectionable pads, improper clothing, all jewelry, long fingernails, improper grooming, health and safety measures;
- c. clarify the rules with coaches and contestants upon request;
- d. have the head coach verify that the team is groomed, properly equipped and ready to wrestle, including shoelaces being secured; and,
- e. review with the scorers and timekeeper, the signals and procedures to be used.

Rule 3-3-1 Scorer

The official scorer shall be seated at the scorer's table and is responsible for:

- a. recording points scored by each contestant when signaled by the referee;
- b. circling the first point(s) scored in the regulation match, including overtime;

Rule 4-1-2 Wrestlers' Uniform

NOTE: One American flag, not to exceed 2 inches by 3 inches, may be worn or occupy space on each item of uniform apparel. By state association adoption, to allow for special occasions, commemorative or memorial patches, not to exceed 4 square inches, may be worn on the uniform without compromising its integrity.

Rule 8-1-3 Penalty Administration

Penalties and warnings are cumulative throughout the match. Each infraction has its specific penalty. The penalty for an illegal hold/maneuver, technical violation (except false start or incorrect starting position), unnecessary roughness and wrestler's unsportsmanlike conduct in the match is awarding the opponent of the offender one match point on the first and second offenses, and two match points on the third offense. A fourth offense shall result in disqualification.

The first call for stalling will receive a warning prior to the opponent of the offender being awarded a match point. The first two calls for a false start or incorrect starting position will receive cautions. Following the two cautions, one match point will be awarded to the opponent of the offender for each subsequent violation. (See Penalty Chart)

Rule 10-2-9 Entries

If two wrestlers in the championship bracket simultaneously cannot continue the match due to both being disqualified for stalling or having their injury or blood time elapse, the wrestler who is leading on points at the time the match is terminated will continue in the consolation bracket. If the match is tied at the time of termination:

- a. the wrestler whose opponent has received an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty at any time during the match will continue in the consolation round;
- b. if no unsportsmanlike conduct occurred by either wrestler, the wrestler who scored the first point(s) in the match (first three periods, or first or second 30-second tiebreaker) will continue in the consolation bracket; or
- c. if no points were scored, neither wrestler will continue.

2015-16 NFHS POINTS OF EMPHASIS

Communicable Skin Conditions and Skin Checks

Communicable skin conditions continue to be a major concern in wrestling, in part because of recent MRSA and Herpes Gladitorium outbreaks. If a participant has a suspected skin condition, NFHS Wrestling Rules require current, written documentation from an appropriate health-care professional stating the athlete's participation would not be harmful to an opponent. Cold sores are considered a skin lesion and are subject to the communicable skin condition rules.

The NFHS has developed a form that can be used for that documentation, and several state associations have adopted similar forms for use in their states. Regardless of the form used, it is imperative that ALL coaches perform routine skin checks of their wrestlers and require any wrestlers with a suspect condition to seek medical attention and treatment. It is also imperative that ALL referees perform skin checks – or verify that skin checks have been done by a designated, on-site meet, appropriate health-care professional – as part of their pre-meet duties prior to EVERY dual meet and tournament. If there is a suspect condition, the wrestler or coach MUST present the proper clearance form at the weigh-in for any dual meet or tournament in order for the wrestler to be allowed to compete. The only exception to the requirement of the proper clearance form would be if a designated, on-site meet, appropriate health-care professional is present and is able to examine the wrestler either immediately prior to or immediately after the weigh-in. The designated, on-site meet, appropriate health-care professional has the authority to overrule the diagnosis of the appropriate health-care professional who signed the proper clearance form presented to the referee at the weigh-in.

One of the keys to preventing the spread of communicable skin conditions is for coaches and referees to fulfill their responsibilities professionally. It is, however, only one of the keys. The other and equally important key is proper prevention. While prevention can be complicated, in most cases it only requires that a few basic steps be taken by ALL involved in the sport.

- Educate coaches, athletes and parents about communicable skin conditions and how they are spread.
- Clean wrestling mats daily with a solution of 1:100 bleach and water or an appropriate commercial cleaner.

- Maintain proper ventilation in the wrestling room to prevent the build-up of heat and humidity.
- Clean all workout gear after each practice including towels, clothing, headgear, shoes, knee pads, etc.
- Require each wrestler to shower or use a body-wipe after each practice and competition. Do not share bars of soap. Use individual soap dispensers.
- Perform daily skin checks to ensure early recognition of potential communicable skin conditions.
- Refrain from sharing razors or other personal hygiene supplies.

Covering an active infection does not meet the requirements of the NFHS wrestling communicable skin condition rule for competitions. An active infection shall not be covered in practice either. It is a coach's professional responsibility to ensure that skin clearance forms presented by his or her wrestlers are legitimate and reflect the athletes' true conditions.

Coaches and referees all play a vital role in controlling communicable skin diseases. They must err on the side of what is best for the health of all involved in the sport when dealing with communicable skin diseases. Referees are the last line of defense in keeping wrestlers with communicable skin diseases off the mat. The safety of all who step on a competition mat is at stake. Coaches must realize that referees would not be placed in a position to make difficult participation decisions if coaches would perform skin checks on all of their wrestlers each day.

NFHS Wrestling Rule 3-1-4a states that "Before a dual meet begins, the referee shall perform skin checks or verify that skin checks have been performed by a designated, on-site meet, appropriate health-care professional."

NFHS Wrestling Rule 3-1-5a states that "Before an individual, combination or team advancement tournament begins each day, the referee shall perform skin checks or verify that skin checks have been performed by a designated, on-site meet, appropriate health-care professional." The skin checks should take place by referees or a designated, on-site meet, appropriate health-care professional at weigh-ins whenever possible. NFHS Wrestling Rules 4-2-2, 3, 4, 5 are very specific concerning a contestant who is suspected of having a communicable skin disease. It is the responsibility of the contestant, parents, coach and referee to identify a

possible communicable skin disease and then have an appropriate health-care professional evaluate the condition if possible. Similarly, it is everybody's responsibility (coaches, referees, appropriate health-care professionals and tournament administrators) to ensure that all wrestlers are competing in an infection-free environment.

Biting

If, in the opinion of the referee, a wrestler bites his opponent, it will be deemed intentional biting and will be called flagrant misconduct (Rule 5-12-2c). Referees do not have to see the bite in order to call biting. Furthermore, any claim of biting must be brought to the attention of the referee immediately. One should not assume intentional biting has occurred if only one set of teeth marks is present on the skin. If the referee did not see the alleged bite, he/she should look for the presence of marks from both the upper and lower teeth. Incidental contact with an opponent's open mouth can result in what appears to be a bite; however, the presence of both upper and lower teeth marks is more likely to be the result of an intentional bite than from incidental contact with the teeth. Referees should pay close attention to a cross-face applied to the area of the mouth, especially when the mouth is open. If teeth marks are present after the cross-face is applied to the mouth, the referee should only call biting if he/she believes the wrestler actually bit down on his/her opponent.

Slams

Slams are extremely dangerous and every attempt must be made to prevent slams by reminding wrestlers of their responsibility to safely return opponents to the mat. It is the responsibility of wrestlers, coaches and referees to avoid slams. A slam is defined as lifting and returning the opponent to the mat with unnecessary force. A slam may be called on wrestlers in the neutral, top or bottom position. Wrestlers can be called for a slam from the offensive or defensive position, regardless of whether they have control of the opponent, when and if they are responsible for the unsafe return of the opponent to the mat. Referees must call slams without delay. Coaches bear the responsibility of teaching their wrestlers the proper techniques for lifting and returning their opponents to the mat safely. Wrestlers must never intentionally bring an opponent to the mat with unnecessary force. If the referee believes the slam was an intentional act intended to cause physical harm to the opponent, it would be considered flagrant misconduct and the wrestler committing the slam shall be disqualified from the match.

Stalling in the Ultimate Tiebreaker

The ultimate tiebreaker presents a different format when it comes to stalling. The referee should take into account that the offensive wrestler does not have to score to win, and can win by controlling the defensive wrestlers for 30 seconds. If the defensive wrestler scores, the match is concluded. This could be by an escape, reversal or through a penalty point(s). If the offensive wrestler scores, the match is also concluded. If neither wrestler scores, the offensive wrestler will be awarded one point and declared the winner.

To ensure that the offensive wrestler does not take advantage of the 30 seconds by just grabbing onto a body part(s) and holding on, a stalemate should be called immediately after determining that the offensive wrestler has grabbed onto a body part(s) solely in an effort to prevent the defensive wrestler from scoring. Wrestling will resume from the offensive starting position on the mat; if the offensive wrestler uses a similar tactic again, stalling should be called and penalized accordingly.

The Body Scissors

The Body Scissors has been a part of wrestling for decades. Although the maneuver is a legal hold in wrestling, referees should be very vigilant of it when applied. If the offensive wrestler is utilizing the body scissors to improve his/her position or to secure a fall, the maneuver is being properly executed. However, if the body scissors is applied solely to inflict pain, the referee must be prepared to break the hold immediately and penalize the offender for an illegal action, according to Rule 7-1-5u.