

2026-27 WRESTLING RULES CHANGES

1-5-1	Weight Control Program Change: ART. 1 . . . Each individual state high school association shall develop and utilize a specified weight-control program which will discourage excessive weight reduction and/or wide variations in weight, because this may be harmful to the competitor. Such a program should be planned to involve the wrestler, as well as the parents/guardians, appropriate health-care professionals and coach in establishing the minimum certified weight class. An ideal program would be one where an appropriate health-care professional would assist in establishing a minimum weight class through hydration testing, body fat assessment and a monitored descent plan. Minimum body fat should not be lower than seven percent for males or 12 <u>19</u> percent for females. Rationale: Based upon peer-review research data, increasing the body fat percentage for high school girls establishes a safer margin for minimal wrestling weight for those intent on achieving a lower weight class.
1-5-2	Weight Control Program ART. 2 . . . For health and safety reasons, the state's weight control program shall require hydration testing with a specific gravity not greater than 1.025, which immediately precedes the body fat assessment. A minimum weight class will be determined by a body fat assessment. Any wrestler's assessment that is below seven percent for males and 12 <u>19</u> percent for females shall have a medical release to participate signed by an appropriate health care professional. This

negative effect on other body tissues. The weight management plan should also involve a nutritional component developed at the local level.

Rationale:

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4-2-6

Wrestlers' Appearance and Health

ART. 6 . . . Each contestant who has braces or has a special orthodontic device on the teeth, shall be required to wear a tooth and mouth protector. A tooth and mouth protector (intraoral) shall include an occlusal (protective 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. It is recommended the protector to be properly fitted and:

- a. Constructed from a model made from an impression of the individual's teeth and braces or special orthodontic device;
- b. Constructed and fitted to the individual by impressing the teeth and braces or special orthodontic device into the tooth and mouth protector itself;
- c. Not include any attachments(s) that do not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth; and
- d. Not include anything on it that is a health or risk issue (e.g. choking) and can pose a danger to themselves and other wrestlers.

NOTE:

State associations may deem a tooth and mouth protector required equipment.

	This is a universal rule adaptation by every NFHS Rules Committee to be uniformed for every NFHS Rule publication.
4-5-1	Wrestlers' Appearance and Health ART. 1 . . . Contestants shall have the opportunity to weigh in, shoulder to shoulder <u>or by team(s)</u> first competition at the start of a dual meet or a team's first competition each day a multiple-dual event is scheduled to begin. When a preliminary meet is followed by a varsity meet, weigh-ins may, by mutual consent, precede the preliminary meet. Rationale: Creates consistency between individual and team format events, while providing the option to weigh in by team to the host if it is more practical and efficient to do so. This option is also helpful if entering weights live into weight management systems.
5-24-4b	Stalling a. Remains the same. b. legally holds the heel to the buttocks while the defensive wrestler is broken down on the mat for more than five seconds. <u>The referee shall signal and vocalize a five second count;</u> or c. and d. Remain the same. Rationale: This makes the wrestlers, coaches, and fans aware of the potential stalling situation.
5-28-3	Time-Out ART. 3 . . . Recovery time. If a contestant is injured <u>or bleeding</u> as a result of an illegal hold/maneuver, unnecessary roughness, unsportsmanlike conduct during the match or the result of a false start (by the opponent) in the neutral position, the wrestler is entitled to two minutes of recovery time, which is not deducted from the wrestler's injury time allowance nor shall it constitute an HNC time-out.

	Rationale: A wrestler who is injured because of an illegal hold/maneuver, unnecessary roughness, or unsportsmanlike conduct during the match or the result of a false start (by the opponent) in the neutral position is allowed two minutes to recover before winning the match by default. A bleeding contestant should not have to bleed for five minutes before being declared the winner if injured because of an illegal hold/maneuver, unnecessary roughness, or unsportsmanlike conduct during the match or the result of a false start (by the opponent) in the neutral position.
7-6-3	Stalling Sub articles a-f remain the same. <u>g. When wrestling is stopped for going out of bounds in the neutral position, one of the following four calls should be made (See Official Wrestling Signals):</u> <u>i. Stalling by one of the wrestlers for leaving the wrestling areas.</u> <u>ii. Stalling by pushing or pulling the opponent out of bounds.</u> <u>iii. Stalling by backing out of the wrestling area; or</u> <u>iv. Wrestling action is taking place.</u> Rationale: This education-based rule change allows more clarification to the wrestlers, coaches, and fans when calling stalling on the edge of the mat versus traditional stalling.
8-2-7	Injury ART. 7 . . . Any contestant who is bleeding will be charged blood time. The number of time-outs for bleeding is left to the discretion of the referee. If bleeding is not stopped within a cumulative time of five minutes, the match shall be terminated and the opponent shall be awarded the match by default. If bleeding occurs as a result of unsportsmanlike conduct, illegal holds/maneuvers, or unnecessary roughness, <u>or a false start (by the opponent) in the neutral position,</u> and the bleeding contestant uses 5 minutes of blood time <u>2 minutes of</u>

	the injured wrestler win the number of the contest is, default. Any cleanup necessary after the bleeding has been stopped is not counted against the maximum time limit of 5 minutes. Rationale: A wrestler who is injured as the result of unsportsmanlike conduct, illegal hold/maneuvers or unnecessary roughness or the result of a false start (by the opponent) in the neutral position has two minutes of recovery time before winning by default. A bleeding wrestler should not have to bleed for 5 minutes before winning the match by default.
Official Wrestling Signals	(#16a.) Add Stalling by pushing the opponent out of bounds signal. (#16b.) Add Stalling by pulling the opponent out of bounds signal. (#16c.) Add Stalling by backing out of the wrestling circle signal. (#16d.) Add Wrestling action is continuing after going out of bounds signal. Rationale: This was the recommendation from the NFHS Wrestling Officials Sub-Committee. The goal was to add the proper signal mechanics to be used nationwide.
5-3-1, 5-3-2, 5-3-3, 5-3-4, 5-3-5, 10-3-1, 10-3-2, 10-3-3, 10-3-4, and 10-3-5	Definitions ART. 1 . . . When the number of competitors is not a power of 2, that is 4, 8, 16, 32 and 64, there shall be byes. in the first round. The number of byes shall be equal to the difference between the number of competitors and the next higher power of two. Rationale: With the use of tournament management software systems (Trackwrestling, USA Bracketing, etc.), the reality is that byes do exist after the first round and are scored as such on both championship and consolation sides of the bracket. The addition of more scramble style tournaments, where wrestlers are placed in round robin pools and then advance to a bracket for placement, requires byes to exist after the first round, thus making this wording obsolete in the current form of

ART. 2 . . . ~~There shall be no byes after the first round of competition in both championship and consolation brackets, and no further drawing is necessary for championship or consolation rounds.~~ Byes do not count as a match and are not counted towards the maximum number of six matches per day or ten matches over a two-day event. Byes also do not count towards a wrestler's match record.

Rationale:

Same as in 5-3-1.

ART. 3 . . . When byes are required ~~for the first round~~, individuals receiving byes shall be placed by mutual consent or drawn so they are distributed evenly throughout the bracket.

Rationale:

Same as in 5-3-1, 2.

ART. 4 . . . No quarter bracket ~~or~~, half bracket or round robin pool, shall have more than one bye in excess of its paired bracket or pool.

Rationale:

With the significant increase in scramble events that divide wrestlers into round robin pools instead of placing them on traditional brackets, adding this language will clarify and give more guidance on this type of individual tournament.

ART. 5 . . . After seeded wrestlers have been placed in the bracket or pool and the byes have been placed or drawn, remaining wrestlers shall be placed by draw.

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