

Wrestling Rules Changes - 2025-26

BY NFHS ON June 2, 2025 | WRESTLING, RULES CHANGE

1-2-2: Dual Meet

ART. 2 . . . Competition in dual meets shall be conducted by random draw of weight classes, or lowest weight to heaviest. In multi-dual events, the sequence determined by the draw will be followed for that day's subsequent meet competition; the subsequent dual meet shall begin one weight class beyond the starting weight class of the previous round. The following procedure shall be used for the optional random draws:

- a. The random draw shall take place immediately preceding weigh-ins.
- b. The referee or other authorized person shall supervise the random draw.
- c. Subsequent matches will follow in sequential order.

Rationale: The NFHS already permits states to select from three different weight class categories. This proposed change aligns with that flexibility, allowing states to choose how to determine the starting weight class for dual meets. Just as states currently can select a weight class category, they should also have the option to start duals at the lowest weight class and proceed sequentially, while remaining compliant with NFHS rules.

4-1-2: Wrestlers' Uniform

ART. 2 . . . Effective July 1, 2027, the school's name, school nickname, school logo, school mascot, weight classification and/or the wrestler's name are permitted on the uniform top and/or bottom. Any manufacturer logo/trademark/reference that appears on the wrestling uniform, including legal hair covering can be no more than 2 1/4 square inches with no dimension more than 2 1/4 inches and may appear no more than once on each item of uniform apparel. No additional manufacturer's logo/trademark/or promotional reference shall be allowed on the wrestling uniform.

Rationale: This is a universal rule adaptation by every NFHS Rules Committee to be uniformed for every NFHS rule publication.

4-3-5: Special Equipment

ART. 5 . . . Wrestlers shall not wear wristbands, sweatbands, bicep bands or leg or arm sleeves that do not contain a pad during a match.

Rationale: We allow wrestlers to wear tights on both legs and that is no different than a sleeve on one leg. Requiring a pad on these sleeves serves no purpose other than more equipment monitoring for the officials. Manufacturers produce knee sleeves that are just the same and add a separate knee pad, and it has no negative effect on the opponent. Requiring a pad in leg sleeves is unnecessary.

5-11-2c; 5-11-4b: Technical Fall

ART. 2 . . . A near fall occurs when the offensive wrestler has control of the opponent in a pinning situation and near-fall criteria are met for a period of two seconds or longer. (Photos 5-6)

a.- b. Remain the same.

c. A near fall is ended when the defensive wrestler gets out of a pinning situation. The referee must not signal the score for a near fall until the situation is ended and only one near fall shall be scored in each pinning situation, regardless of number of times the offensive wrestler places an opponent in the near-fall position criteria during the pinning situation. If the near-fall creates a 15-point advantage, the match shall continue until the near-fall criteria is no longer met. Conclusion of the near-fall criteria is immediate.

d.- i. Remain the same.

Rationale: This rule change would define when a technical fall shall be awarded and eliminate any confusion between a pinning situation and near-fall criteria.

ART. 4 . . . A technical fall occurs when a wrestler has earned a 15-point advantage over the opponent, however;

a. if a takedown or reversal, straight to a near-fall criteria creates a 15-point advantage, the match shall continue until the near-fall criteria is no longer met. Conclusion of the near-fall criteria is immediate.

b. once the technical fall has been earned, the offensive wrestler cannot lose the match. If a near-fall creates a 15-point advantage, the match shall continue until the near-fall criteria is no longer met. Conclusion of the near-fall criteria is immediate.

Rationale: This rule change will clarify when a match shall be stopped to award the technical fall. By adding the near-fall to this rule it will make consistent with the takedown or reversal that creates the 15-point advantage.

7-1-5n: Illegal Holds/Maneuvers

n. leg block (cut-back) when leaving the feet and using the foot or leg to "cut out" an opponent's leg, to include from the rear-standing position.

Rationale: This rule change seeks to clarify language regarding the leg block or "cut-back". When applied the move/maneuver can cause significant injury to the defensive wrestler lower extremities. Other rules code language clarifies it as illegal when you leave your feet, NFHS language does not.

7-3-3: Technical Violations

ART. 3 . . . Interlocking or overlapping the hands, fingers or arms around the opponent's body (with or without an extremity arm included) or both legs by a wrestler in the advantage position, unless the opponent has all the weight supported entirely by the feet or has lifted the opponent off the mat or the opponent has met near-fall criteria, is a technical violation and the penalty point(s) shall be awarded in addition to points earned. (When bringing your opponent to the mat, hands overlapping or interlocking beyond reaction time is a technical violation.)

(Photos 103-106)

Rationale: Locking hands and including a leg in the clasp around the trunk of the body is the same as locking hands with an arm included.

Official Wrestling Signals:

(#3) Remove Officials' Time-out signal.

Rationale: It is an irrelevant signal, that the high school wrestling community does utilize to signal time-out.

(#9) Change direction of arrows in Indicate No Control to left and right instead of circular.

Rationale: Clarification. The circular motion is incorrect.

(#21) Modify the existing three-finger in the near-fall signal – the three fingers should be signaled like the "OK" sign.

Rationale: This was the recommendation from the NFHS Wrestling Officials Sub-Committee. The goal was to remove signals that are no longer used and clarify the proper signal mechanics being used nationwide.