

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH
SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATIONS**

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Following is the press release on high school wrestling rules changes for 2003-04 as approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations Wrestling Rules Committee. The release is also included as an attachment.

Wrestling Rules Committee Continues Focus on Weight Management

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jerry Diehl INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 23, 2003) -

In its continuing effort to ensure healthy weight-control programs in high school wrestling, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Wrestling Rules Committee provided state associations another option for determining an individual's lowest wrestling weight during a state tournament series. In its April 13-14 meeting in Indianapolis, the committee provided those state associations with weight-management programs involving hydration testing, body-fat testing and a plan to monitor an average weight loss of 1.5 percent per week the option of using those programs to determine the lowest weight at which an individual may wrestle during the state tournament series, instead of the "50 percent rule," which requires a wrestler to have at least one-half of his or her weigh-ins during the season at the minimum weight he or she will wrestle during the state tournament series. With the change in Rule 1-3-2c, state associations with programs involving hydration and body-fat testing, and a plan to monitor an average weight loss of 1.5 percent per week, may use the minimum weight determined by the body-fat testing as the lowest weight at which an individual may wrestle during the state tournament series. State associations may still use the 50 percent rule, if they wish, even though they have the above-mentioned three-point program.

The NFHS has devoted considerable attention to healthy practices of weight control in wrestling for several years. The current rule requires each state association to develop and use a specified weight-control program as a means of discouraging severe weight reduction and/or wide variations in weight. The planning should involve the wrestler, his or her parents, physician and coach. NFHS rules recommend a minimum body fat not lower than seven percent for males and 12 percent for females.

"The change implemented for next season does not affect any aspect of the current rule, unless a state association has a weight-management program that involves hydration and body-fat testing, and monitors an average weight loss of 1.5 percent a week weight loss during the season," said Jerry Diehl, NFHS assistant director and rules liaison to the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee. "If a state has such a program, it is not required to follow the '50 percent' rule.

"By implementing the above-mentioned three-point program, a competitor will reduce weight in a more reasonable manner, while letting the wrestler continue to compete each week as the weight is being reduced. This is a more sensible weight-management plan because the loss is gradual and does not permit a competitor to 'crash' or lose a large amount of weight in a short period of time."

In other changes, beginning next season, there will be no more ties in dual meets in high school wrestling. The Wrestling Rules Committee approved a change in Rule 9-2-2f that requires a tie-breaking plan to be implemented if a dual meet ends in a tie. Although ties are broken in tournaments for teams to advance, this will be a first for dual meets.

The suggested team tie-breaker that previously has been in the NFHS Wrestling Rules Book and voluntarily used for tournament progression, will now be officially brought into the rules book. If a match ends in a tie, no more competition will occur; the steps will be followed in order until a winner is determined. The first criterion in the team tie-breaker plan is "the team whose opposing players have been penalized the least

number of team points for flagrant or unsportsmanlike conduct shall be declared the winner.” If all other suggestions fail to produce a winner, the last option is the flip of a wrestling disk.

“This change was supported very strongly on the annual rules questionnaire,” Diehl said. “Tie matches in dual meets do not happen often, but the committee believed it was time to initiate a plan for when the situation does occur.”

Two changes were approved by the Wrestling Rules Committee with strong emphasis on risk management. In Rule 4-2-4, the committee agreed that if a physician is present at the site of a match, he or she may overrule the diagnosis of a previous physician, who had indicated, in writing, that an apparent skin condition was not communicable. In Rule 8-2-5, if a physician/medical staff person determines that an injured wrestler should not continue, even though consciousness is not involved, her or she shall not be overruled.

“In Rule 4-2-4, the committee recognized that a change in one’s skin condition could occur from the time the original evaluation was completed,” Diehl said, “as the committee wanted to make sure that the most recent medical evaluation would be used.”

Two other major changes were approved by the committee, including Rule 5-2-5i, which states that “if near-fall criteria have been met and the defensive wrestler applies an illegal hold, commits unnecessary roughness of an unsportsmanlike act, near-fall criteria earned will be awarded in addition to the penalty point(s) for the infraction(s).” Last year, the committee altered this rule to penalize the defensive wrestler for acts that are determined to be unsportsmanlike, illegal or unnecessary roughness in relation to near-fall criteria. Diehl said some found the language too wordy and difficult to understand and interpret. He said by consolidating the language, the rule will be more clearly stated. A change in Rule 6-6-4 moves the timeframe for correcting an error in a team score or match score from 48 hours after the conclusion of the dual meet to 30 minutes after completion of the meet.

Six other changes were approved by the committee as follows:

- Rule 3-1-3 - The jurisdiction time of the referee will begin upon arrival at the site and will conclude with the approval and signing of the scorebook in dual meets, and when the referee signs the bout sheet following the last match of the tournament.
- Rule 4-1-1a - If sufficient reason exists, the referee may permit an undershirt to be worn.
- Rule 9-1-7 - If no scoring occurs in the 30-second tiebreaker, the offensive wrestler will be declared the winner. One match point will be added to the offensive wrestler’s score to determine the final match score.
- 9-2-1e - A team forfeit shall be scored 1-0; if the offended team is ahead, the score stands.
- 9-2-3b - One team advancement point shall be scored for each match won in the consolation elimination round, except for the final third-, fifth- and, if applicable, seventh-place matches. A wrestler who has a bye in the consolation round shall receive one advancement point, provided the wrestler wins the next round match.
- 9-2-3h & 10-3-3 - Language has been added to indicate the awarding of points for tournaments scoring eight places.

Points of emphasis for the 2003-04 high school wrestling season will be fleeing the mat, weigh-ins, front headlocks and unnecessary roughness (set ups).

Wrestling is the sixth-most popular sport for boys at the high school level, with 244,637 participants, according to the 2001-02 High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS. In terms of school sponsorship, wrestling ranks eighth with 9,578 schools nationwide. Girls participation in wrestling continues to rise. The 2001-02 survey indicated that 3,405 girls in 798 schools nationwide participated in wrestling.



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