

2019-20 NFHS Wrestling Rules Changes

4-1-1a — Clarified that a suitable undergarment that provides maximum coverage shall be worn under a one-piece singlet.

4-1-1b — Clarified that a suitable undergarment that provides maximum coverage shall be worn under a short designed for wrestling and under compression shorts.

4-1-1c NOTE — Clarified that female wrestlers wear an undergarment that completely covers their breasts and that all wrestlers wear suitable undergarments that completely covers parts of their body.

ART. 1 ... A legal uniform consists of:

a. a one-piece singlet cut no lower in the back or front than the level of the armpits and under the arms no lower than one-half the distance between the armpit and belt line. A suitable undergarment, which completely covers the buttocks and groin area, shall be worn under a one-piece singlet. Any other undergarment worn under the one-piece singlet which extends beyond the inseam shall be tight-fitting and shall not extend below the knee. The one-piece singlet may be worn with full-length tights with stirrups. The one-piece singlet shall be school-issued.

NOTE: Female contestants wearing a one-piece singlet shall wear a form-fitted compression suitable undergarment that completely covers their breasts.

b. compression shorts or shorts designed for wrestling shall have a minimum 4-inch inseam that shall not extend below the knee; shorts designed for wrestling shall have an elastic waistband and a drawstring that is not exposed. Compression shorts or shorts designed for wrestling shall not have exposed drawstrings, belt loops, zippers, snaps, buttons or pockets. A suitable undergarment, which completely covers the buttocks and groin area, shall be worn under shorts designed for wrestling and compression shorts. Shorts designed for wrestling may be worn over the singlet. Compression shorts or shorts designed for wrestling may be worn with a form-fitted compression shirt. Compression shorts or shorts designed for wrestling shall be school-issued.

c. a form-fitted compression shirt which shall not cover or extend below the elbow and shall have a minimum 3-inch tail; the form-fitted compression shirt may be worn under a singlet or with compression shorts or shorts designed for wrestling. The form-fitted compression shirt shall be school-issued. (Photo 1)

NOTE: Female contestants wearing a one-piece singlet shall wear a suitable undergarment that covers their breasts and minimizes the risk of exposure. All contestants wearing a one-piece singlet shall wear a suitable undergarment which completely covers the buttocks and groin area.

Official Comment: This rule reinforces the importance of how wrestlers should be required to be properly attired on the mat during competition, regardless of gender. Previously, there was no specific requirement for what a wrestler wears under a singlet. Light colored or white singlets become transparent if an undergarment is not worn underneath. This creates a modesty concern that athletes are revealing more than is appropriate.

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4-1-3 — Clarified how wrestling shoelaces shall be secured in an acceptable fashion.

ART. 3 . . . *Wrestlers shall wear light heelless wrestling shoes, reaching above the ankles. If laces are visible, they shall be secured in an acceptable fashion. If the shoelaces come undone, the penalty would be an automatic stalling call.*

NOTE: *An acceptable secure fashion could be double knotting of the laces.*

Official Comment: This rule holds the coach and wrestler accountable regarding verification that they have come to the mat properly equipped, and if not, there would be an automatic stalling call issued. This also allows the use of double knotting of the laces as another way to secure the shoes. If the laces become unsecure from the locking device and visible, there is no penalty. If the laces become undone, now there is a stalling call issued.

4-1-4 — Clarified what can be displayed on wrestling ear guards.

ART. 4 . . . *Wrestlers shall wear wrestling ear guards designed by the manufacturer for the sport of wrestling that are rigid and padded, which provide:*

- a. adequate ear protection;*
- b. no injury hazard to the opponent; and,*
- c. an adjustable locking device to prevent it from coming off or turning on the wrestler's head.*

Any manufacturer's logo/trademark/reference that appears on the wrestling ear guards, including legal hair covering, can be no more than 2¼ square inches with no dimension more than 2¼ inches and may appear no more than once on ear guards. No additional manufacturer's logo/trademark or promotional reference shall be allowed on the wrestling ear guard.

Official Comment: The available space on ear guards has become a blank canvas for non-school issued, non-approved promotional logos or references. The intent of NFHS Rule 4 is to maintain the sanctity of the wrestler's uniform and ear guards by not allowing images that detracts from school-issued equipment and uniforms.

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4-2-1 — Modified the hair rule and identified inappropriate hair-control items.

ART. 1 . . . During competition all wrestlers shall be clean shaven, with sideburns trimmed no lower than earlobe level. **Hair** shall not extend below the top of an ordinary shirt collar in the back; and on the sides, the hair shall not extend below earlobe level; in the front, the hair shall not extend below the eyebrows. (Photos **2-3**) A neatly trimmed mustache that does not extend below the line of the lower lip shall be permissible. If an individual has hair longer than allowed by rule, it **shall be** contained in a cover so that the hair rule is satisfied. (Photo 4) **Physical hair treatment items that are hard and /or abrasive such as (beads, bobby pins, barrettes, pins, hair clips, etc. or any other hair-control device) shall not be permitted. A legal hair-controlled device such as rubber band(s) shall be secured so as not to come out readily during wrestling.** The legal hair cover shall be attached to the ear guards. A bandanna is not considered a legal hair cover. The legal hair cover must be of a solid material and be nonabrasive. The wrestler opting to wear a legal hair cover must wear it to the weigh-in procedure and be checked for grooming with it on. The legal hair cover must be removed prior to the wrestler stepping on the scale to be weighed. If a referee is not present at weigh-ins, the hair cover must be checked by the meet referee upon arrival at the site.

If an individual has facial hair, it **shall** be covered with a face mask. All legal hair covers and face masks will be considered as special equipment. If an individual's hair is as abrasive as an unshaved face, the individual shall be required to shave the head to the same requirements for facial hair, or wear a legal hair cover.

Official Comment: The term "well groomed" is extremely subjective and there is no standard to meet such an arbitrary expectation. Hair that is manipulated poses no threat to either wrestler. It is neither abrasive nor cumbersome. However, physical hair treatments/control items do present a risk to either wrestler due to the hardness, texture (sharpness) or abrasiveness and should not be allowed.

4-3-5 — Clarified what a wrestler shall not wear during a match.

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

Official Comment: There is no purpose or function for use of a leg or arm sleeve that does not contain a pad for protection. There is no peer review data or research to support their existence. They are intrusive and do not properly fit all wrestlers.

4-5-7 — Clarified what item(s) a female wrestler shall wear at weigh-in.

ART. 7 . . . All contestants shall weigh-in wearing a suitable undergarment that completely covers the buttocks and the groin area. Female contestants **shall** also wear a **suitable form-fitted compression** undergarment that **completely** covers their breasts. Contestants may wear low-cut socks that cannot be removed or added if the wrestlers do not make weight.

Official Comment: This language specifies that a female wrestler wears item(s) that completely covers their buttocks and breasts.

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5-27-1a — Modified the definition of a technical violation.

ART. 1 . . . *There are five types of technical violations. Each is penalized without warning as outlined in Rule 7-3:*

- a. Intentionally going out of the wrestling area or forcing an opponent out of the wrestling area **to avoid an imminent scoring situation.***
- b. Grasping of clothing, mat or ear guards.*
- c. Interlocking or overlapping the hands, fingers or arms.*
- d. Leaving the wrestling area without referee's permission.*
- e. Reporting to the scorer's table not properly equipped, ready to wrestle or any equipment that is detected as being illegal after the match has started.*

Official Comment: By adding this language, it will clarify that intentionally going off the mat or forcing your opponent off the mat to avoid wrestling would be stalling. If it occurred to avoid being scored upon, it would be considered a technical violation. This technical violation has been under-utilized for years, and hopefully this will give officials the tools and the confidence to distinguish between it and stalling.

7-3-1 — Clarified the application of a technical violation.

ART. 1 . . . *Going out of the wrestling area or forcing an opponent out of the wrestling area, by either wrestler at any time as a means of avoiding **an imminent scoring situation**, is a technical violation for **fleeing the mat**. Both wrestlers should make every effort to remain inbounds. When the referee feels that either wrestler has failed to make every effort to stay inbounds **during an imminent scoring situation**, the offending wrestler shall be penalized for **fleeing the mat**. There can be no technical violation of fleeing the mat if near-fall points have been earned.*

Official Comment: The current rule for stalling presents a situational conflict for the referee to make one of two calls – fleeing versus stalling for the similar type of action. Fleeing is an automatic point where stalling may be a warning on the first violation and a point on the second violation. This change would allow the referee to only apply the technical violation call of fleeing when the action is related specifically to a scoring situation. All other types of leaving the wrestling area as a means of avoiding wrestling would fall under the rule of stalling.

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7-6-6d — Modified the definition of stalling.

ART. 6 . . . *It is stalling when either wrestler:*

- a. repeatedly grasps or interlocks around one leg of the opponent to prevent scoring; or*
- b. delays the match. This includes straggling back from out of bounds, unnecessarily changing or adjusting equipment or delay in assuming the starting position on the mat; or*
- c. repeatedly creates a stalemate situation to prevent an opponent from scoring.*
- d. has shoelaces that become undone.*

Official Comment: This rule holds the coach and wrestler accountable to verification that they have come to the mat properly equipped. If shoelaces become undone, this impedes the flow of the match and the intent of continual action. This also alleviates the burden on the official to determine if it was intentional and/or unintentional.

8-1-3, 8-1-4, 8-1-5, 8-1-6, 8-1-7 — Modified the administration of the stalling penalty.

Penalty Chart — Modified to reflect the administration of the new stalling penalty.

ART. 4 . . . *Warnings and penalties for stalling are cumulative throughout the match and are penalized independent of the progressive penalty chart. On the first offense the wrestler will receive a warning. The opponent of the offender will be awarded one match point on the second and third offense, two match points and choice of position on the next restart for the fourth offense. A fifth offense shall result in disqualification. (See Stalling Penalty Chart; "Table" above)*

STALLING PENALTY CHART

Stalling	Rule	Warning	First Penalty	Second Penalty	Third Penalty*	Fourth Penalty
* (Plus opponent will have choice of position on next restart)	7-6, 8-1-4	Yes	1 Pt.	1 Pt.	2 Pts.	Disqualify

Official Comment: Officials need to call stalling more consistently in order to increase the level of aggressive, offensive wrestling. By removing stalling from the progressive penalty sequence, officials will be able to penalize wrestlers more freely without complicating the matter when it is combined with other penalties (locked hands, fleeing, grasping clothing, etc.) Removing the stalling call from the penalty progression will allow officials more freedom to call stalling earlier, more consistently and without hesitation when they feel it is warranted.

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8-2-4a, 8-2-4b(1), 8-2-4b(2), 8-2-4b(3) — Modified the rule to extend time to evaluate head, neck and cervical column injuries.

ART. 4 . . .

a. *Any contestant who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the match and shall not return to competition until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. (See NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports, in Appendix B.)*

b. *The following modifications to injury time-outs will be used in all competition regarding injuries to the head and neck involving cervical column and/ or nervous system:*

1. In the absence of appropriate health-care professional, (physician and/ or certified athletic trainer) all injuries to the head and neck involving the cervical column and/or nervous system will be covered by the same timeframe as other injuries. (5-28-6, 8-2-1)

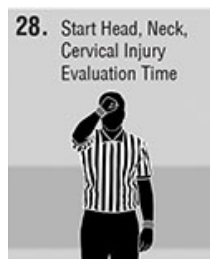
2. When appropriate health-care professional(s) are present, they have jurisdiction to extend the allowed time limit to a maximum of five (5) minutes for evaluation of the injuries to the head and neck involving cervical column and/or nervous systems only, at which time the athlete would be required to prepare without delay for continuation or default the match.

3. A second occurrence of injury to the head and neck involving cervical column and/or central nervous system in the same match shall require the wrestler to default the match.

NOTE: *When this provision is used, the time consumed for the injury will in no way affect time used, or available, for other types of injuries.*

Official Comment: This rule allows additional time to evaluate head, neck, cervical column and/or nervous system injuries when an appropriate health-care provider is present. If one is not present, the regular injury time is used. It cannot be used for any other types of injuries.

Official Signal 28 — Modified new signal to indicate that additional time has begun to evaluate head, neck and cervical column injury.



9-2-2f — Modified the tie-breaking criteria in a dual-meet competition.

f. *The team giving up the least number of forfeits.*

Official Comment: This rule maintains that forfeits should not be encouraged by rules that give the forfeiting team an advantage. Teams should be encouraged to put a wrestler on the mat for every weight class – not penalized by the likelihood of giving up scoring events counting against them (criteria h and beyond).