2014-15 NFHS WRESTLING RULES CHANGES

Rule 4.2.1 WRESTLER’S HEALTH AND APPEARANCE
ART. 1 . . . During competition all wrestlers shall be clean shaven, with sideburns trimmed no lower than earlobe level and hair trimmed and well groomed. The hair, in its natural state, 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 may be braided or rolled if it is contained in a cover so that the hair rule is satisfied. (Photo 4) The legal hair cover shall be attached to the ear guards.

Rule 4.3.1a SPECIAL EQUIPMENT
Special equipment includes, but is not limited to:
- Legal hair coverings attached to the ear guards, face masks, braces, casts, supports, eye protection and socks;

Rule 5.1.1 BAD TIME
Bad time is wrestled with the wrestlers in the wrong position or the wrong wrestler being given choice of position:
- a. at the start of the third period.
- b. at the start of the second 30-second tiebreaker.
- c. at the start of the ultimate tiebreaker.
- d. after opponent has taken his/her second injury timeout.
- e. on the next restart after opponent receives a two-point stalling penalty.

Rule 6.6.2 CORRECTION OF ERRORS
When an error occurs in positioning wrestlers:
- a. at the start of the third period; or
- b. at the start of the second 30-second tiebreaker; or
- c. at the start of the ultimate tiebreaker; or
- d. after the opponent has taken his/her second injury timeout; or
- e. on the next restart after the opponent receives a two-point stalling penalty.
NOTE: All points earned during bad time are canceled – Exceptions: Rule 5-1-3. In a.-c., following corrections made and a rest of one minute, the period shall be re-wrestled. In d. and e., and other situations when there is bad time, and if the amount of bad time can be determined by the referee, bad time shall be deleted and/or properly re-wrestled without delay.

Rule 10.2.9 INDIVIDUALLY BRACKETED TOURNAMENT 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, 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. If no points were scored, neither wrestler will continue.

2014-15 Major NFHS Editorial Changes
Mat area diagrams were updated to further clarify that approximately 5 feet of safety area is needed between the out-of-bounds circle and any obstructions, such as chairs, walls, scorer’s tables, bleachers, etc.

Rule 8-1-1 - Reworded so the technical violation for reporting the scorer’s table not properly equipped or not ready to wrestle comes before the disqualification for failure to correct the situation within the 1 ½ minute injury time.

“Any contestant reporting to the scorer’s table not properly equipped or not ready to wrestle is a technical violation. A wrestler with greasy substance on the body or uniform, improper grooming, objectionable pads and braces, illegal equipment, illegal uniform or any equipment that is detected as being illegal after the match has started shall be disqualified if not removed or corrected within the 1½-minute injury time.”

9-2-2b – The word “opposing” was added for clarity to the dual team tie-breaker.

“The team whose opposing head coach has been penalized the greater number of team points for coach misconduct shall be declared the winner.”
11-1-4 NOTE – Added to clarify that ALL wrestlers must weigh-in the first
day of a multi-day team tournament in order to be eligible for the second
day.

“NOTE: All wrestlers must weigh-in each day of the multiple-day
event and they must weigh-in at the same weight class each day of the
event. A wrestler is only eligible for two weight classes during a multiple-
day, team-advancement tournament, and those two weight classes are
determined at the first day weigh-in and cannot change during the
remainder of the event.”

Referee’s signals were added for Unnecessary Roughness and
Default/Technical Fall/Disqualification. See 2014 Wrestling Referee’s
Signal Chart.

2014-15 NFHS POINTS OF EMPHASIS

AVOIDING WRESTLING AND
ENCOURAGING WRESTLING IN CENTER OF MAT

Going out of the wrestling area by either wrestler or forcing an
opponent out of the wrestling area at any time as a means of avoiding
wrestling is a technical violation (Rule 7-3-1). There are many occasions
when this happens and no call is made or a wrestler is called for stalling
when the appropriate call would be a technical violation for fleeing the mat.
There can be no technical violation of fleeing the mat if near-
fall points have been earned.

One common scenario that occurs is often initiated from the
offensive/defensive starting position in the center of the mat when both
wrestlers work their way to their feet and the action goes out of bounds. It
can be difficult to determine if the offensive wrestler is pushing the
defensive wrestler out of bounds, if the defensive wrestling is running out of
bounds to make it look like the offensive wrestler is pushing him/her out, or
if it is aggressive action by both wrestlers. Another common scenario is
when one wrestler has a single leg in the air near the out-of-bounds line,
and the other wrestler tries to jump or spin out of the situation and ends up
out of bounds.

In the above situations as well as similar situations where a wrestler
may be using the edge of the mat to get out of a situation, judgment is
required by the referee with the primary question being “Was the wrestler
wrestling aggressively and trying to stay in bounds or using the edge of the
mat as a means to avoiding wrestling?” If he/she was using the edge of the mat as a means of avoiding wrestling, a technical violation should be called. Good wrestling action requires both wrestlers to make an honest attempt to stay within the wrestling area.

**PREVENTING FALSE STARTS FROM CREATING INJURIES – PREVENTIVE OFFICIATING**

Preventive officiating must be on every referee’s mind. One area of concern is injuries that occur during false starts from the neutral position. To avoid such injuries, the referee should stretch his/her arm(s) out between and parallel to the starting lines before blowing the whistle. By doing so, the referee can block either wrestler who false starts prior to the whistle, thus reducing the potential for injury to one or both wrestlers.

**AUTHORITY/RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OFF-MAT REFEREE TO CALL FLAGRANT/UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

The jurisdiction time of the referee begins when he/she arrives at the site of the competition and concludes with the approval of the scorebook in dual-meet competition and after signing the bout sheet after the last match in tournament competition. In either dual meets or individual tournaments, when a referee is not on the mat working, he/she still has jurisdiction in the mat area and responsibility for enforcing NFHS wrestling rules associated with the mat area. The referee on the mat is responsible for his/her match, but other referees involved in the competition should offer assistance in the mat area when necessary. Referees are reminded that just because they are not officiating a match, they still have responsibilities for enforcement of rules that extend beyond officiating a match.

**HAIR COVERINGS**

The NFHS wrestling rules define special equipment as any equipment worn that is not required by rule. Whenever a wrestler has hair that does not conform to the rule, a legal hair covering must be worn. Because of the physical contact in the sport of wrestling, hair that does not meet the rule is considered a safety issue as it may pose a risk to an opponent. Using a legal hair covering for hair that does not meet the rule helps to minimize the risk.

Legal hair coverings must be made of a solid material, must be nonabrasive and must be attached to the wrestling ear guards. The attached legal hair covering may be worn either inside or outside of the wrestling ear guards. The attached legal hair covering must be brought to
weigh-ins and inspected by the referee to determine their conformity to proper grooming with the legal hair covering on. The legal hair covering must be removed before the wrestler weighs in. If the referee does not conduct the weigh-ins, then the referee must check the hair covering prior to the meet.

The goal of wrestling is to have a continual match without interruptions except for normal out-of-bounds situations, the end of periods, etc. Legal hair coverings that are secured to the wrestling ear guards have less of a chance of coming off during the match than hair coverings that are not secured to the wrestling ear guards.

The manufacturers of legal hair coverings and wrestling ear guards have been alerted a year in advance of this rule change and some have chosen to modify their legal hair coverings accordingly. This new rule will significantly improve the continuity of matches whenever a wrestler is required by rule to wear a legal hair covering.

**CLEANING WRESTLING MATS AND WRESTLING EQUIPMENT**

Communicable diseases are a major concern in the sport of wrestling. It is imperative that ALL schools continually use best practices to control the spread of communicable diseases. A major aid in preventing the spread of communicable disease is to properly clean all wrestling mats and wrestling equipment.

Practice and competition wrestling mats must be cleaned prior to practicing or competing on them. Cleaning wrestling mats prior to use is highly recommended. An effective disinfectant is a solution of 1:100 chlorine bleach and water (¼ cup chlorine bleach to each gallon of water, or 1 tablespoon of chlorine bleach to each quart of water). There is no advantage of using a stronger chlorine bleach and water solution than what is recommended above. Commercial disinfectant products are also available.

When cleaning wrestling mats, it is beneficial to walk backwards in an effort to minimize contamination from the shoes of the individual who is cleaning the wrestling mat. Be sure that any product used states that it is effective against viruses, fungi and bacteria. Typically, the label will state the cleaner is bactericidal, fungicidal and virucidal. Please follow the label directions closely for the best effectiveness.

Several items should be kept at wrestling mat side to effectively deal with blood or other body fluids, including disposable towels and/or gauze pads, spray bottles containing a 1:100 chlorine bleach and water solution or a commercially prepared disinfectant solution. Protective gloves and
disposable plastic bags must also be readily available to clean up blood or bodily fluids.

Likewise, it is imperative to clean all wrestling equipment daily. All workout gear should be cleaned after each practice. This includes towels, clothing, headgear, shoes, knee pads and any bags used to transport this equipment. In addition to cleaning wrestling equipment and wrestling mats properly, a few basic steps must be taken by all involved in the sport in order to minimize the risk of spreading communicable diseases.

- Educate coaches, athletes, referees and parents about communicable skin conditions and how they are spread.
- Maintain proper ventilation in the wrestling room to prevent the build-up of heat and humidity.
- Emphasize to the athletes the importance of showering immediately after each practice and competition with antibacterial soap.
- Wash all workout clothing and personal gear after each practice.
- Perform daily skin checks to ensure early recognition of potential communicable skin conditions. Athletes cannot be allowed to practice or compete if an active infection is suspected, even if the infection is covered.
- Do not share towels or personal hygiene products (razors) with others.
- Refrain from full body (chest, arms, abdomen) cosmetic shaving.

Communicable diseases are preventable. Following these steps can certainly decrease the chance that these communicable diseases will be spread among the athletes in the wrestling room and/or during competition.