

# Wrestling Points of Emphasis - 2017-18

By NFHS on July 20, 2017

## wrestling

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### Off the Scale Activities

Off the scale activities have been identified as an area of concern and a subsequent rule change brings the topic to prominence. Any activities that are conducted to either lose or gain weight are prohibited. Activities (is not limited to) such as modifying clothing, hair, drinking fluids, gorging and regurgitation are not allowed. The practice of trying to modify a wrestler's weight is unhealthy and unsportsmanlike.

### Cleanliness of Uniforms and Pads

Communicable diseases are a major concern in the sport of wrestling and any infectious disease outbreak has the potential to end a team's season, or even suspend the sport across an entire state. It is imperative that ALL school officials, coaches and wrestlers 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. Cleaning wrestling mats prior to each use is highly recommended. An effective disinfectant is 10% bleach (mix 1 part household bleach to 9 parts 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. 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 directions on the label closely for the best effectiveness. When cleaning wrestling mats, it is recommended to walk backwards while mopping in an effort to minimize contamination from the shoes.

Likewise, it is imperative to clean all wrestling equipment and clothing 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. Communicable diseases are preventable. Following these steps will decrease the risk that these communicable diseases will be spread among the athletes in the wrestling room and/or during competition.

- Educate coaches, athletes, referees and parents about communicable skin conditions and how they are spread. (<http://www.nwcaskinprevention.com/webinar/>)
- 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. Soap must be used. If shower facilities are unavailable, athletes should clean all exposed skin with “baby wipes” immediately after practices and competitions.
- Wash all workout clothing and personal gear after each practice and competition.
- Coaches or athletic trainers should perform daily skin checks to ensure early recognition of potential communicable skin conditions. Athletes must not be allowed to practice or compete if an active infection is suspected, even if the infection is covered. Any suspicious lesions must be evaluated by an appropriate health-care provider prior to an athlete practicing or competing.
- Athletes must not share practice gear, towels or personal hygiene products (razors) with others.
- Athletes should refrain from any cosmetic shaving (chest, arms, abdomen) other than face.
- Athletes should clean hands with an alcohol-based gel prior to every wrestling match to decrease bacterial load on the hands.
- Make certain that athletes and coaching staff are current on all required vaccinations (MMR, Hepatitis B, Chickenpox, etc) and strongly encourage yearly influenza vaccination.

### **Braces that are Properly Padded and Covered**

As defined by rule, any equipment that does not permit normal movement of the joints and prevents a wrestler’s opponent from applying normal holds/maneuvers shall not be allowed. Any such equipment not limited to legal hair coverings, ear guards, face masks, braces, casts, supports, eye protection, prosthetics and socks must fit snug against the wrestler’s body and if the equipment is hard and/or abrasive must be covered and properly padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½-inch thick. This precaution is for the wrestler and his opponent so that they can compete to the best of their abilities.

### **Stalemate/Fleeing the Mat**

There are occasions that during a wrestling match the contestants are interlocked in a position other than a pinning situation in which neither wrestler can improve his/her respective position or gain an advantage. As soon as that situation is identified, the referee shall stop the match and wrestling shall continue. Hands locked around one leg of an opponent without the intent of taking him/her down or preventing the opponent from scoring is considered stalling. There is no passive wrestling. Wrestling is an aggressive endeavor and should be coached and executed in that manner. Regardless of the position, top, bottom or neutral, stalling is not acceptable. The referee shall be firm in enforcing the letter and spirit of the rule and consistently penalize any stalling infraction without hesitation.

Conversely, fleeing the mat to avoid wrestling at any time during a match is not permitted and will be penalized. Wrestlers shall make every attempt to stay inbounds and compete. Leaving the mat without permission from the referee or forcing an opponent out of bounds is a technical violation.

### **Illegality of Straight Back Salto and Suplay**

Risk minimization of the wrestlers is paramount. With the advent of new and innovative holds/maneuvers influencing our sport from other levels of combat sports, grappling and various martial arts, we have to

remain vigilant for any holds/maneuvers used in a way that endangers life and limb of our students. Any act that exceeds typical aggressive wrestling becomes unnecessary roughness. The use of a full straight back salto and straight back suplay are two examples that when applied (regardless of which body part hits the mat first) are illegal holds and should be stopped immediately.

### **Consistency of the Start of Each Match**

Consistency of the start of the match is imperative for the wrestlers, coaches and spectators. There is a uniformity that creates a familiarity for the wrestling world. Knowing what to expect each and every time speaks to the professionalism of the referee and the importance of conducting the match in a professional businesslike manner. The referee starts the match from the neutral position, the wrestlers shall be between the referee and the scorer's table. The referee will glance at the scorer's table to make sure that they are ready and then indicate to the wrestlers to shake hands (not hand slaps). After the handshake, the referee moves in partially between the two wrestlers to discourage a false start. Then the referee will blow his/her whistle while simultaneously giving the signal to start the match. Understanding the positioning for the referee in relationship to the two wrestlers and the scorer's table is critical to have and necessary in maintaining control of the match. For officials, they have to hone their skills in being consistent with the start of each wrestling match they work.