

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS**



NEWS RELEASE

**Appropriate Dress for Weigh-ins
Addressed in High School Wrestling**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bob Colgate

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 26, 2010) — A revision in the appropriate dress for weigh-ins in high school wrestling was among four rules changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Wrestling Rules Committee at its April 5-7 meeting in Indianapolis. The changes, which were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors, will take effect with the 2010-11 season.

“The committee felt the need to make very few changes because the sport of high school wrestling is in good shape,” said Dale Pleimann, former assistant executive director of the Missouri State High School Activities Association and chair of the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee. “Two of the changes deal with minimizing risk, one deals with privacy issues and the other change was clean-up in a mechanics procedure instituted last year.”

Regarding weigh-ins, previously both male and female contestants had to weigh in wearing “no more than a suitable undergarment.” Beginning next year, specific language has been added regarding what constitutes a “suitable undergarment.” Male and female contestants will be required to wear a suitable undergarment that completely covers the buttocks and the groin area. In addition, for female contestants the suitable undergarment must also cover the breasts.

Bob Colgate, assistant director of the NFHS and committee liaison, said the change was made to consider privacy issues for all individuals involved with weigh-ins.

The committee also addressed the process for an offensive wrestler assuming a legal starting position. The following statement has been added to Rule 5-20-9:

“Once the offensive wrestler has assumed a legal starting position and is stationary, the referee shall verbally say ‘set’ and then pause momentarily before starting wrestling.”

“This rule change will eliminate either wrestler gaining an advantage by using a rolling start,” Colgate said. “It also eliminates the need for the offensive wrestler using a specific sequence when assuming a legal starting position, including the optional offensive starting position.”

Effective with the 2010-11 high school wrestling season, any contestant who shows signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be removed immediately from the match and shall not return to competition until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

The previous rule directed officials to remove an athlete from competition if “apparently unconscious.” The previous rule also allowed for return to competition based on written authorization by a medical doctor.

“Given that the vast majority of concussions do not include a loss of consciousness, but that athletes often show obvious evidence of concussion, the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) strongly believes that referees must continue to be empowered to remove these athletes from competition, thus protecting them from further injury,” said Dr. Michael Koester, chair of the SMAC. “Continued participation in any sport following a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, as well as increased risk for further injury to the brain and even death.

“The safety of the athlete is of paramount concern during any athletic contest. Referees, coaches and administrators are being asked to make all efforts at ensuring that concussed athletes do not continue to participate. Thus, coaches, wrestlers and administrators should also be looking for signs of concussion in all wrestlers and should immediately remove any suspected concussed wrestler from competition.”

In addition to wrestling, the new concussion language is being placed in all NFHS rules books for the 2010-11 season, as well as the “NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion.”

The Wrestling Rules Committee also added the “rear-standing, double-knee kickback” to the list of illegal maneuvers. Colgate said this maneuver, which is being used more frequently at the high school level, clearly puts the opposing wrestler in a dangerous situation and at a high risk for injury.

Perhaps as significant as the changes approved by the committee was one that was not. After much discussion, the committee voted against changing the wrestling weight classes and will stay with the 14 weight classes currently in place in the NFHS Wrestling Rules Book. Three proposals were considered by the committee this year on changing the wrestling weight classes.

“The response from member state associations was divided equally between Option B and making no change,” Pleimann said. “The committee, with no clear choice from the membership, did not believe it was appropriate to make a change in the weight classes just for the sake of change. However, the committee did request the NFHS to conduct another survey on wrestling weight classes during the 2010-11 season.”

Three “Points of Emphasis” were issued by the committee for the 2010-11 high school wrestling season: Concussion Recognition and Management, Communicable Disease and Fleeing the Mat.

Wrestling is the sixth-most popular sport for boys at the high school level with 267,378 participants in 10,254 schools during the 2008-09 season, according to the NFHS Athletics Participation Survey. In addition, 6,025 girls were involved in wrestling in 1,034 high schools.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and Rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing Rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.5 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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