



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

## NEWS RELEASE

### **Separate Weight Classes for Girls, Choice of Weight Classes Established in High School Wrestling**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Elliot Hopkins

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 20, 2021) — States will have a choice of 12, 13 or 14 weight classes for both boys and girls competition in high school wrestling, effective with the 2023-24 season.

This will be the first separate weight classes established for girls in high school wrestling, and it marks the first time that state associations will have a choice in the number of weight classes.

The landmark change in weight classes was one of several significant revisions recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Wrestling Rules Committee at its April 7-9 meeting held virtually this year. All recommendations were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

States must select one of the three sets (12, 13 or 14) of weight classes for girls and one of the three sets (12, 13 or 14) for boys. States cannot adopt all three sets and cannot switch back and forth during the season.

The following weight classes (in pounds) were established for girls competition (girls wrestling girls), effective July 1, 2023:

12 Weight Classes – 100, 107, 114, 120, 126, 132, 138, 145, 152, 165, 185, 235.

13 Weight Classes – 100, 106, 112, 118, 124, 130, 136, 142, 148, 155, 170, 190, 235.

14 Weight Classes – 100, 105, 110, 115, 120, 125, 130, 135, 140, 145, 155, 170, 190, 235.

The following weight classes (in pounds) were established for boys competition (boys wrestling boys or girls wrestling boys), effective July 1, 2023:

12 Weight Classes – 108, 116, 124, 131, 138, 145, 152, 160, 170, 190, 215, 285

13 Weight Classes – 107, 114, 121, 127, 133, 139, 145, 152, 160, 172, 189, 215, 285

14 Weight Classes – 106, 113, 120, 126, 132, 138, 144, 150, 157, 165, 175, 190, 215, 285

“Previous surveys have indicated a varying number of weight classes that states wanted, so the committee attempted to meet the needs of as many people as possible,” said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS director of sports and student services and liaison to the Wrestling Rules Committee. “We have more and more state associations sponsoring girls wrestling and holding state championships for girls, so the committee believed it was time to establish uniform weight classifications for girls.

“The recommended weights were established based upon more than 215,000 assessments from the National Wrestling Coaches Association. We are excited about these changes to weight classes in high school wrestling as we believe it will provide more opportunities for male and female student-athletes to be involved in this great sport.”

In another major change affecting risk minimization, a separate 5-minute time-out has been established for the onsite health-care professional to evaluate potential head and neck injuries involving the cervical column (HNC) and/or nervous system.

“There was a desire to establish a separate injury time-out that concerns the head and neck involving the cervical column and/or nervous system and not connect it with the existing 1½-minute injury time-outs or any other stoppage of the match,” Hopkins said. “This separate time-out is supported and covered in existing rules that give the referee the authority to observe the signs, symptoms and behaviors of a concussion and respond appropriately.”

As a result of the separate HNC time-out, which takes effect next year, a number of other rules in the 2021-22 NFHS Wrestling Rules Book will be altered.

The other significant change in high school wrestling rules for 2021-22 addresses the number of matches allowed in one day of competition. Currently, no wrestler shall represent the school in more than one weight class in any meet or wrestle in more than five matches, excluding forfeits, in any one day of competition.

A change provides an exception to Rule 1-4-3 as follows: “No wrestler shall wrestle in more than six matches (championship or consolation), excluding forfeits, in any one day of a tournament conducted by the state high school association for qualification to the state high school championships or the specific state championships.”

This change was enacted as a result of a successful experiment by the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association. Hopkins said that increasing the number of matches from five to six would allow postseason tournaments with more than eight competitors in a weight class to complete the tournament in one day. He said, in many cases, this change would eliminate the need for schools to stay overnight to participate in respective state qualifying tournaments and state championship events.

“Since this exception would only allow six matches per day to be wrestled in the postseason qualifying tournament or state championship event, the impact on the total number of matches that an individual wrestles in an entire season would be minimal,” Hopkins said. “We do not want to extend this change to the regular season, and this exception would not come into play for the majority of participants.”

Two other minor changes were made in the rules for next year. Rule 4-5-7 no longer will require low-cut socks to be worn as a part of the weigh-in procedure, and one change was made in Rule 5-1-1 dealing with choice of position during bad time.

A complete listing of the wrestling rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org). Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Wrestling.”

According to the most recent NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, wrestling is the seventh-most popular sport for boys with 247,441 participants in 10,843 schools. In addition, a total of 21,124 girls are involved in the sport in 2,890 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 performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing 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 19,500 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including almost eight million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, 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 website at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Bruce Howard, 317-972-6900  
Director of Publications and Communications  
National Federation of State High School Associations  
[bhoward@nfhs.org](mailto:bhoward@nfhs.org)

Chris Boone, 317-972-6900  
Assistant Director of Publications and Communications  
National Federation of State High School Associations  
[cboone@nfhs.org](mailto:cboone@nfhs.org)

Cody Porter, 317-972-6900  
Manager of Media Relations  
National Federation of State High School Associations  
[cporter@nfhs.org](mailto:cporter@nfhs.org)

Nate Perry, 317-972-6900  
Coordinator of Media Relations  
National Federation of State High School Associations  
[nperry@nfhs.org](mailto:nperry@nfhs.org)