



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

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Penalty for Unsportsmanlike Conduct Increased in High School Wrestling

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 19, 2004) — Beginning with the 2004-05 high school wrestling season, teams will be penalized two team points instead of one when student-athletes or coaches are disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Changes to Rules 6-6-6 and 8-1-4 were two of the nine rules changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Wrestling Rules Committee April 4-5 in Indianapolis.

In Rule 6-6-6, two team points will be deducted when a coach is disqualified (third offense) for misconduct at the scorer's table. In Rule 8-1-4, two team points will be deducted when a wrestler, coach or other team personnel is removed from the premises due to a second unsportsmanlike conduct violation.

"The committee believed that the one-point deduction has not been severe enough to deter unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of athletes and coaches," said Dave Carlsrud, assistant to executive secretary of the North Dakota High School Activities Association and chair of the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee. "We are hoping the loss of two team points will reduce the number of incidents of unsportsmanlike acts."

In addition to the nine changes approved by the committee, two rules proposals are undergoing further discussion. With regard to possible changes in the weight classes, information will be sent to state high school associations soon regarding possible reduction in the number of weight classes to 12. Any changes would not be made until the April 2005 meeting of the Wrestling Rules Committee.

Another proposal discussed by the Wrestling Rules Committee was one dealing with body-fat testing and the implementation of a comprehensive weight-management program. The NFHS Board of Directors, which reviews all actions of NFHS rules committees, has asked the Wrestling Rules Committee to reconvene and meet with several members of the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee to discuss this proposal in more detail. This meeting will be held May 5 in Indianapolis.

Other rules changes approved by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee include deleting the unsportsmanlike penalty that has been charged to the head coach if a competitor reports to the mat not properly attired or ready to wrestle.

“The competitor will continue to be charged with a technical violation, an injury time-out and the use of injury time needed to become properly attired,” said Jerry Diehl, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee. “The committee, however, felt the additional unsportsmanlike penalty charged to the head coach was too harsh.”

Two statistical or scorekeeping changes were approved by the committee. In Rule 6-7-1, if no scoring occurs during the tiebreaker period, the offensive wrestler will be declared the winner and one match point will be added to the offensive wrestler’s score. In Rule 9-2-2, when determining the winning team by use of the tiebreaker system, a team point shall be added to the prevailing team. The criterion used to break the tie shall be noted.

“Last year, the committee voted that all dual meets had to have a team winner; however, there was no mention of how to indicate/record the winning team,” Diehl said. “For record-keeping purposes, a team point shall be added to the prevailing team, and the criterion used to break the tie shall be listed.”

Three rules in Rule 5 were revised. In 5-1-2, the word “hands” has been added to clarify “supporting points.” In 5-1-6, a knee or foot now may be placed (previously read “shall be placed”) behind the defensive wrestler’s feet. In 5-2-5g, i, when a defensive wrestler is injured or indicates an injury or bleeding occurs after near-fall criteria are met, the match is to be stopped and a three-point near fall awarded. A technical violation was added to the list of offenses for which another point will be awarded.

The final change approved by the rules committee is Rule 3-1-13, which states that when a time-out occurs due to injury or bleeding, the referee should notify the coach/wrestler at the one-minute and 30-second marks as to the amount of time remaining.

“This procedure is a courtesy to the injured/bleeding wrestler,” Diehl said. “This notification in most instances will allow the competitor to know the time remaining and thereby be more efficient in making the decision as to continuing or stopping competition.”

In addition to the nine rules changes, three new symbols were added for use by scorekeepers, and a new signal for starting a match has been added to the signal chart. Points of Emphasis approved by the committee for the 2004-05 season are body-fat composition testing, stalling during the tiebreaker and the traditional post-bout coaches handshake.

Wrestling is the sixth-most popular high school sport for boys with 239,845 participants in 9,543 schools, according to the 2002-03 High School Athletics Participation Survey compiled by the NFHS. Almost 4,000 girls are involved in high school wrestling in 805 high schools.

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