




2019-20 PRESEASON GUIDE

WRESTLING

A photograph showing a male wrestler lying on his back on a wrestling mat. A female coach or medical professional is kneeling over him, looking down at his head and neck area. The background shows a wrestling arena with spectators.

Wrestlers who sustain an apparent head or neck injury will be given additional time for examination under a rule change approved by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee.

HEAD/NECK/CONCUSSION TIME ADDED

In an ongoing effort to minimize the risk of injury in high school wrestling, additional time will be given to evaluate head and neck injuries when an appropriate health-care professional is present at a match.

In addition to the 1-1/2 minutes of injury time allotted for each wrestler, an appropriate health-care professional will have a maximum of five minutes to evaluate injuries to the head and neck involving the cervical column and/or nervous systems. At that point, the wrestler would have to continue or default the match.

The revision in injury time in Rule 8-2-4 was approved by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee at its April 3-5 meeting in Indianapolis. All recommendations were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

A second injury to the head and neck involving cervical column and/or central nervous system in the same match shall require the wrestler to default the match. If an appropriate health-care professional is not present, all injuries to the head and neck would be covered by the same timeframe as other injuries. If the five

minutes expires, the athlete would be required to prepare without delay for continuation or default the match in an injury time out.

When the new provision is used in an injury time out, it will count as one of the two injury time outs allowed for the athlete but the time consumed for the injury will in no way affect time used, or available, for other types of injuries. Using any part of the five minutes is equivalent to using all of it; the time cannot be "banked."

If the appropriate health care

SEE "INJURY TIME" P. 2

► INJURY TIME CONT. FROM P.1

professional decides the athlete may continue, the coach may overrule that decision. But the opposite is not true; the coach may not overrule the health care professional's decision that the athlete may not continue.

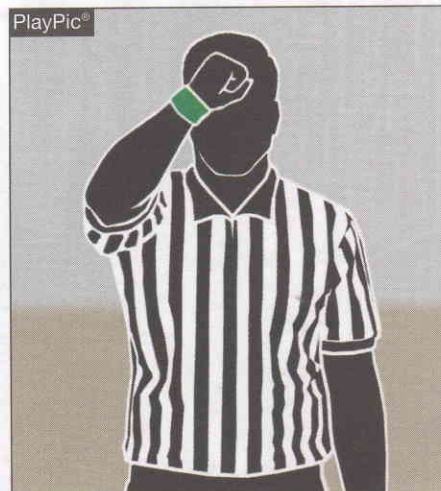
In the case of a wrestler exhibiting signs of a concussion, the individual would be removed from the match and could not return to competition in the absence of an appropriate health-care professional.

In the absence of an appropriate health care provider, all injuries to the

head and neck involving the head, neck, and/or cervical column will be covered in 1-1/2 minutes like all other injuries.

It is not up to the official to determine if the additional time is needed. It is part of the official's job to meet with the appropriate health care provider prior to competition to make sure he or she understands the rule and how it should be applied.

In order to alert timers that the rule is in force, a new signal has been adopted. As seen in the PlayPic at right, the referee places a fist against the forehead. □



EQUIPMENT-RELATED RULES AMENDED

Two rules related to equipment were the focus of attention for the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee this year.

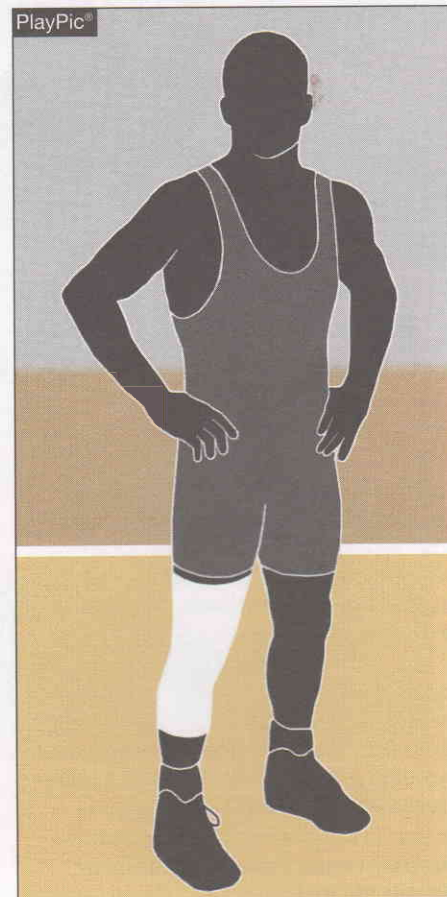
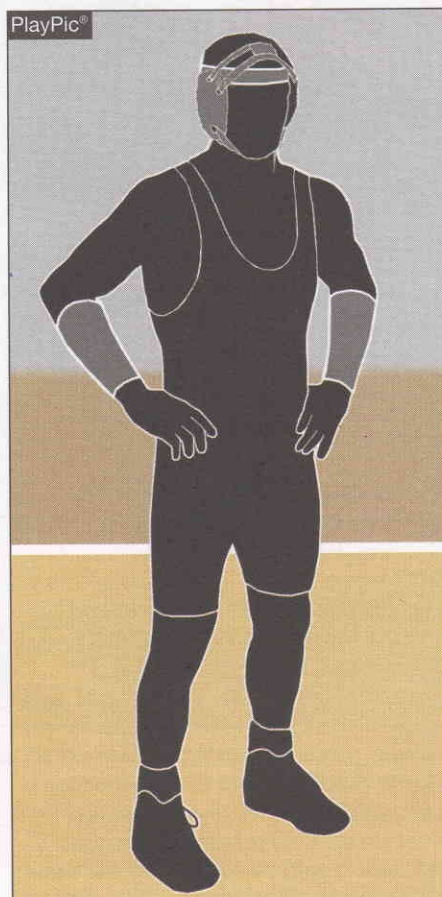
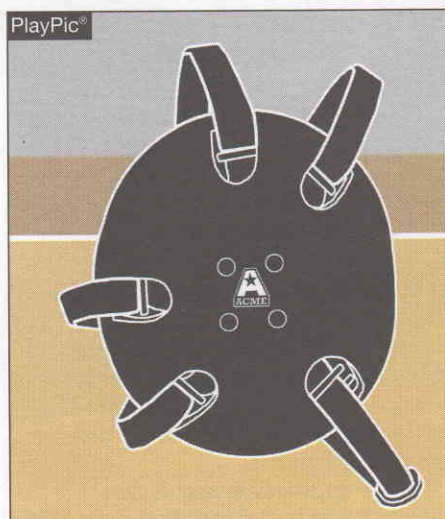
Under a change to Rule 4-1-4, any manufacturer's logo/trademark/reference that appears on the wrestling ear guards, including legal hair covering, can be no more than 2-1/4 square inches with no dimension more than 2-1/4 inches. Such item may appear no more than once on ear guards. No additional manufacturer's logo/trademark or promotional reference shall be allowed on the wrestling ear guard.

Additionally, the committee passed a change to Rule 4-3-5. As a result, wrestlers may not wear wristbands,

sweatbands, bicep bands or leg or arm sleeves during a match that do not contain a pad.

The committee decided there is no purpose or function for use of a leg

or arm sleeve that does not contain a pad for protection. Also, there is no peer review data or research to support their existence, and they are intrusive and do not properly fit all wrestlers. □



MODIFICATIONS TO HAIR RULE OK'D

Changes to NFHS wrestling Rule 4-2-1 will make it easier to determine what hair styles are legal.

Under the revised language, hair shall not extend below the top of an ordinary shirt collar in the back. On the sides, the hair shall not extend below earlobe level. In the front, the hair shall not extend below the eyebrows.

The term "well groomed" was deleted as it was deemed extremely subjective and there is no standard to meet such an arbitrary expectation. Hair

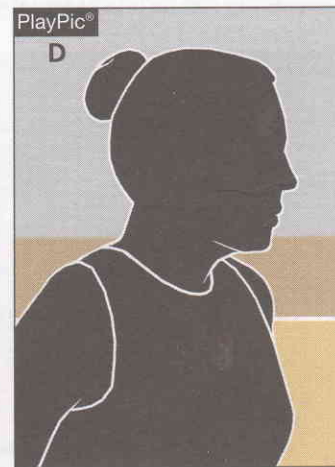
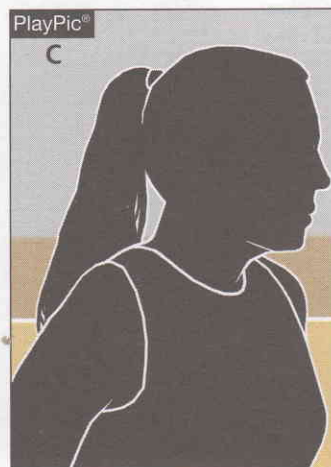
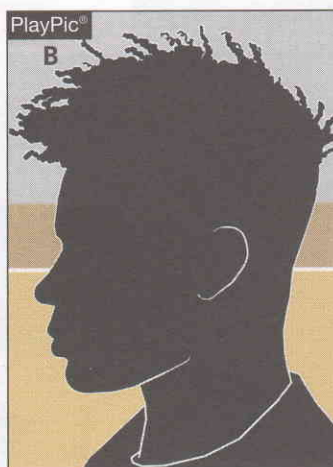
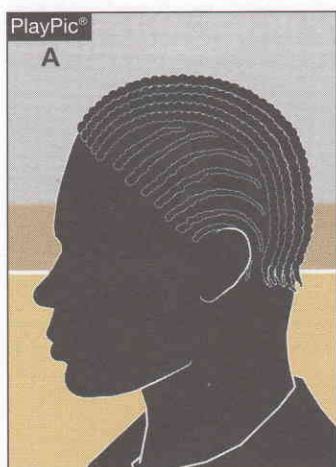
that is manipulated poses no threat to either wrestler. It is neither abrasive nor cumbersome.

If an individual has hair longer than allowed by rule, it shall be contained in a cover so that the hair rule is satisfied.

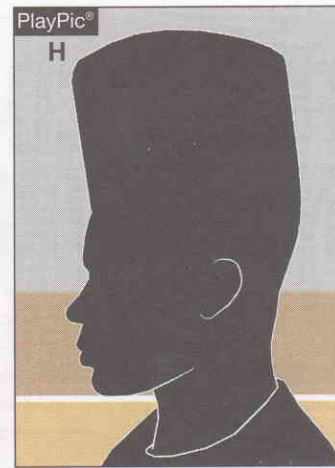
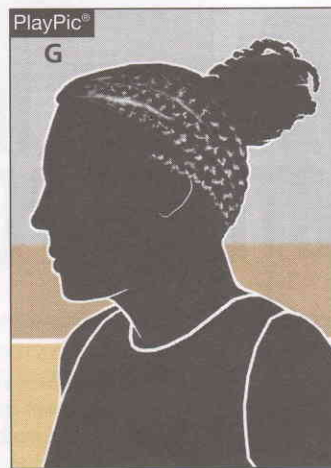
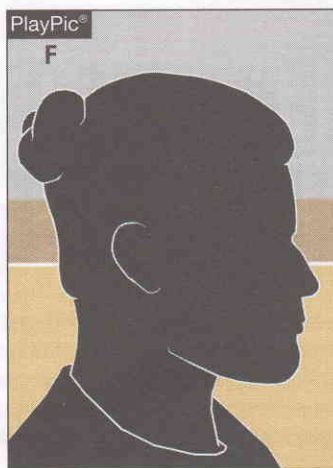
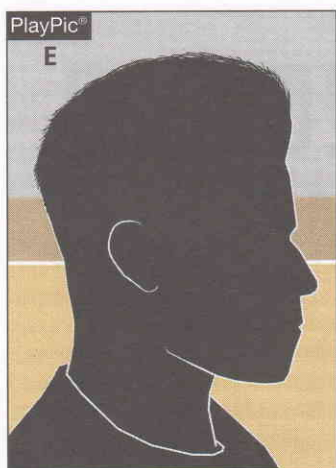
The rule includes hair items that may not be worn. Physical hair treatment items that are hard and /or abrasive such as (beads, bobby pins, barrettes, pins, hair clips, etc. or any other hair control device) shall not be permitted. Legal hair-control devices such as rubber

band(s) shall be secured so as not to come out readily during wrestling.

"Hair that is manipulated poses no threat to either wrestler," said Elliot Hopkins, director of sports and student services and liaison to the Wrestling Rules Committee. "It is neither abrasive nor cumbersome. However, physical hair treatments do present a risk to either wrestler due to the hardness, texture or abrasiveness, and should not be allowed." □



The hair in PlayPics A and B is legal. If hair is longer than allowed (PlayPic C), a legal hair-controlled device such as a rubber band shall be secured so as not to come out readily during wrestling (PlayPic D).



The hair in PlayPic E is legal. A legal hair-controlled device such as a rubber band shall be secured so as not to come out readily during wrestling (PlayPic F). If hair is longer than allowed, a legal hair-controlled device such as a rubber band shall be secured so as not to come out readily during wrestling (PlayPic G). The hair in PlayPic H is legal.

FLEEING IS A TECHNICAL VIOLATION

Referees will no longer have to decide whether a contestant who flees the mat is guilty of a technical violation or of stalling, which are similar types of action. A change to Rule 7-3-1 clarifies that when the referee feels that either wrestler has failed to make every effort to stay inbounds during an imminent scoring situation, the offending wrestler shall be penalized for fleeing the mat.

Fleeing is an automatic point while stalling may be a warning on the first violation and a point on the second violation. With the change, the referee may apply the technical violation call

of fleeing when the action is related specifically to a scoring situation. All other types of leaving the wrestling area as a means of avoiding wrestling will fall under the rule of stalling.

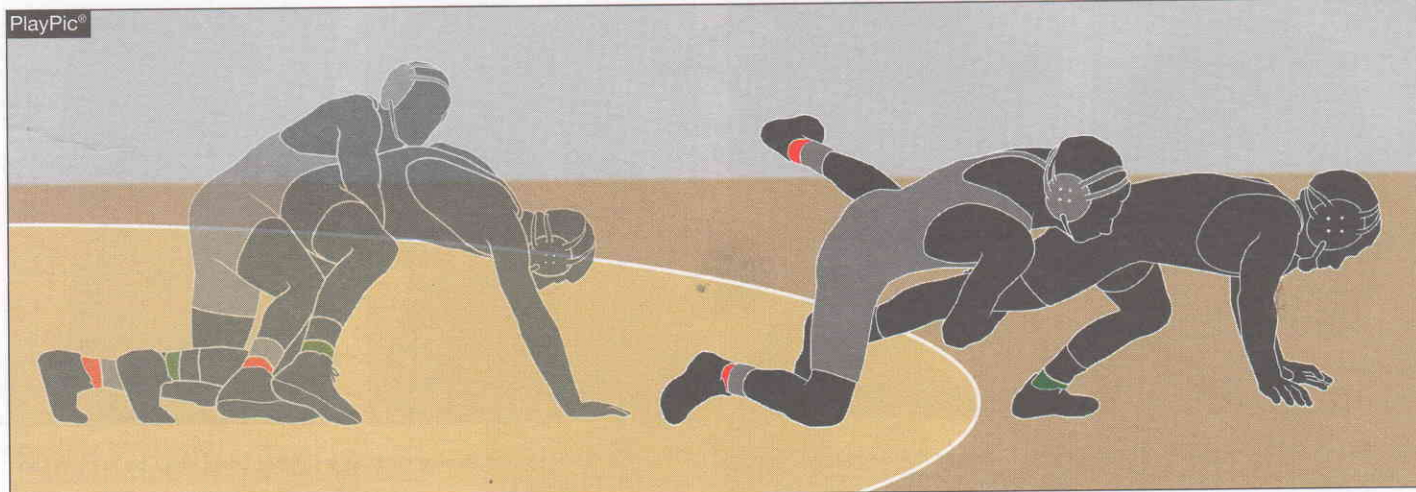
Change clarifies that intentionally going off the mat or forcing the opponent off the mat to avoid wrestling would be stalling. Such a situation is depicted in the MechaniGram below.

If the fleeing occurred to avoid being scored upon, it would be considered a technical violation.

The committee believes that technical violation has been

underutilized for years, and it is hoped the change will give officials the tools and the confidence to distinguish between it and stalling.

"This change allows the referee to only apply the technical violation call of fleeing when the action is related specifically to a scoring situation," said Elliot Hopkins, director of sports and student services and liaison to the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee. "All other types of leaving the wrestling area as a means of avoiding wrestling would fall under the rule of stalling." □



RULES COMMITTEE IDENTIFIES 2019-20 NFHS WRESTLING POINTS OF EMPHASIS

The NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee and the NFHS Board of Directors believes there are areas of interscholastic wrestling that need to be addressed and given special attention. These areas of concern are often cyclical, some areas need more attention than others, and that is why they might appear in the rules book for consecutive editions. These concerns are identified as "Points of Emphasis." For the 2019-20 high

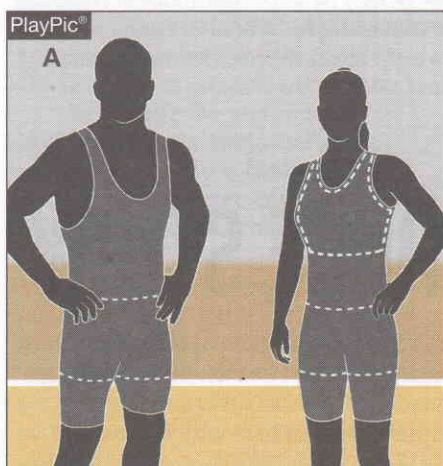
school wrestling season, attention is being called to: wrestler's equipment, particularly the coach's verification that the wrestler is properly equipped and in proper uniform; the inspection of such equipment by the referee; the compliance of NFHS Rules; the appearance and wearing of the wrestling uniform; stalling; concussion evaluation time extension; sportsmanship; and the importance of hydration when conducting

body fat assessments. When a topic is included in the Points of Emphasis, these topics are important enough to reinforce throughout the academic year because they are not being given the proper attention needed.

Wrestlers' Equipment

The head coach has the obligation to ensure that each wrestler is properly ►

► equipped and in proper uniform (PlayPic A). Furthermore, he or she is the adult who is responsible that each wrestler's skin, nails and hair are suitable and compliant for competition. Regarding the uniform and wrestler's appearance, we are experiencing modesty challenges which reflect negatively on the sport. Both genders shall wear suitable undergarments that completely covers their buttocks and groin area. Especially, when the school-issued uniform is light-colored or white; once wet from perspiration, the uniform can become transparent and without the proper undergarment, it makes the wrestler feel self-conscious and anyone around the area feeling uncomfortable. We are encouraged that wrestling is inviting to so many girls, however, we have to ensure that their breasts are completely covered and supported for the vigorous rigors of interscholastic wrestling.



Stalling

Wrestling is an aggressive endeavor and should be coached and executed in that manner. It is expected that wrestlers stay inbounds and compete. There is no passive wrestling. There are no provisions in the rules to allow a wrestler to rest. Backing off the mat out of bounds, pulling (PlayPic B) or pushing (PlayPic C) the opponent out of bounds, 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. Regardless of the position, top, bottom or neutral, stalling is not acceptable. The referee shall be firm and consistent in enforcing the letter and spirit of the rule. They shall be unwavering in their penalizing a stalling infraction without warning or hesitation.



Concussion Evaluation Time Extension

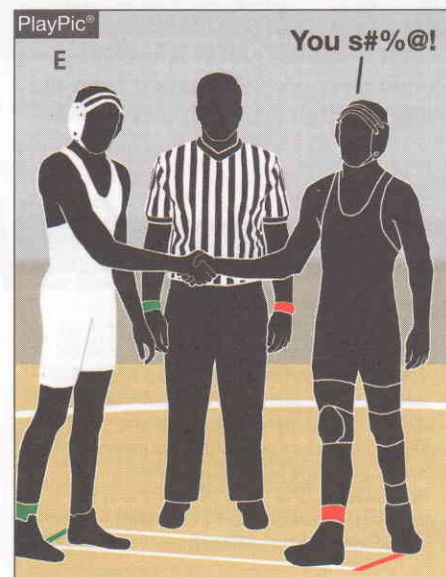
We have modified the injury timeout to incorporate more time to evaluate any head, neck, cervical column and/or nervous system. When an appropriate health-care professional is present, they have the authorization to extend the time to evaluate the wrestler's condition to a maximum time limit of five (5) minutes (PlayPic D). If a subsequent similar injury occurs during the same match, then the injured wrestler shall default the match. When this provision is use, the time consumed for evaluation of the injury shall not affect time used or available for other types of injuries.



Sportsmanship Enforcement

Education-based athletics plays a tremendous role in the development of our young people. Each person associated with high school wrestling is responsible to teach, model, support and administer good sportsmanship. Without good sportsmanship, we lose everything we are trying to accomplish and the young person is failed and let down by the very same adults that he/she trusts. Coaches should promote good sportsmanship in their coaching method and being an appropriate role model. The referee shall enforce our sportsmanship rules, from opening handshakes to make stalling or fleeing the mat calls. The lessons learned on the competition mat are the supports and underpinnings of developing a young person into a conscientious and responsible adult. Finally, the wrestler is ultimately responsible for his or her behavior and

► SEE "POE" P. 6

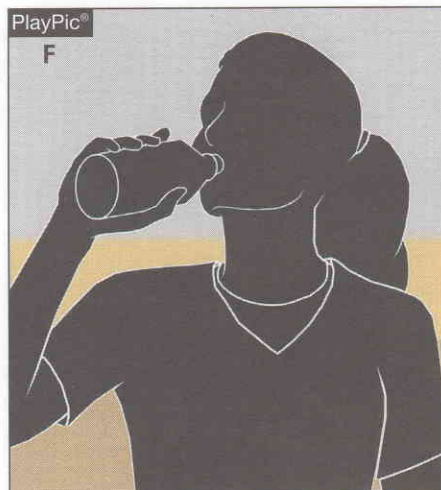


► POE CONT. FROM P.5

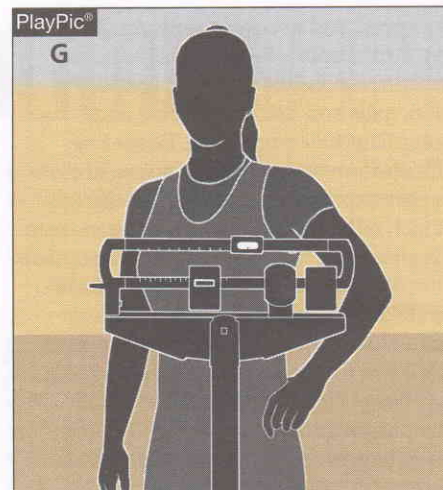
decorum (PlayPic E). To gain a victory by using poor sportsmanlike moves or techniques only masks the temporary exhilaration of the win. The success becomes hollow and you will eventually lose the joy of competing; which is not the purpose of high school athletics. Working collectively by promoting good sportsmanship, we can increase the number of opportunities for more people to participate in the sport at various levels of engagement.

Importance of Hydration with Body Fat Assessment

Assessing hydration status prior to body composition testing is the cornerstone of establishing body fat percentage, fat free mass, and a healthy minimum wrestling weight. Studies show that dehydration may significantly overestimate the percentage of body fat when assessing with skin calipers, bioelectrical impedance, and the BodPod. There is also no evidence regarding the accuracy of ultrasound



testing when determining body composition in dehydrated individuals. In addition to concerns regarding reliability of body fat percentage measurements, it is essential to weigh the wrestler in a well-hydrated state (PlayPics F and G) to ensure that you are beginning your minimum weight calculation from a safe and healthy weight. If the wrestler is dehydrated when



weighed, then that wrestler is starting from a "lower than normal" weight and will thus be certified to wrestle at a potentially unsafe weight. While it is recognized that there may be some difficulties in obtaining a urine sample, hydration testing prior to weight certification is vital to the health and safety of the wrestler. □

WRESTLING INJURY SURVEILLANCE STUDY

As high school sports participation continues to increase in the United States, the number of sports injuries will also likely increase unless effective injury prevention programs are implemented. The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and the NFHS Sport Rules Committees use information from the National High School Sports-Related



Injury Surveillance Study (High School RIO™) to monitor rates and patterns of sports injuries among high school athletes. High School RIO™ is currently collecting the 14th year of sports exposure and injury data.

High School RIO™ data shows that wrestling continues to have the third highest injury rate of the nine original sports under surveillance, following football and girls' soccer respectively. Wrestling also had the second highest practice concussion rate (2.86 per 10,000 AE), following only football. Wrestling injury rates have not significantly increased or decreased over time. Sprains/strains are the most common injury in wrestling in both competition (39.9%) and practice (43.4%). Overall, the head/face was the most commonly injured body part

(18.2%), followed by the knee (15.7%) and shoulder (10.5%). Skin infections made up 7.4% of all wrestling injuries/adverse events during the 2017/18 school year – a much higher proportion than any other sports under surveillance. The most common types of skin infections include tinea lesions (53.3%) followed by bacterial infections (40.0%). An understanding of such patterns of injury is one important tool that can be used when considering risk minimization efforts such as rule changes or educational programs aimed at keeping wrestlers as safe as possible.

If you are interested in more information on the High School RIO™ Study or a certified athletic trainer interested in becoming a reporter for wrestling, please visit <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/PublicHealth/research/ResearchProjects/piper/projects/RIO/Pages/Study-Reports.aspx> for summary reports. □

QUICK TIP

Clothes can make the referee. Appearance matters in business and on the mat. If your uniform is untucked or your pants are dirty when you arrive for your duties, your credibility will likely suffer. If your pants are too tight or your shirt is faded or wrinkled, participants know you don't care about your appearance. The next thought will be that you probably don't care that much about officiating well either.

STALLING RULES MODIFIED

Stalling has been removed from the progressive penalty chart and will be penalized separately.

In Rule 8-1-4, the first penalty for stalling will be a warning. The opponent will be awarded one match point on the second and third offenses, two match points and choice of position on the next restart for the fourth offense.

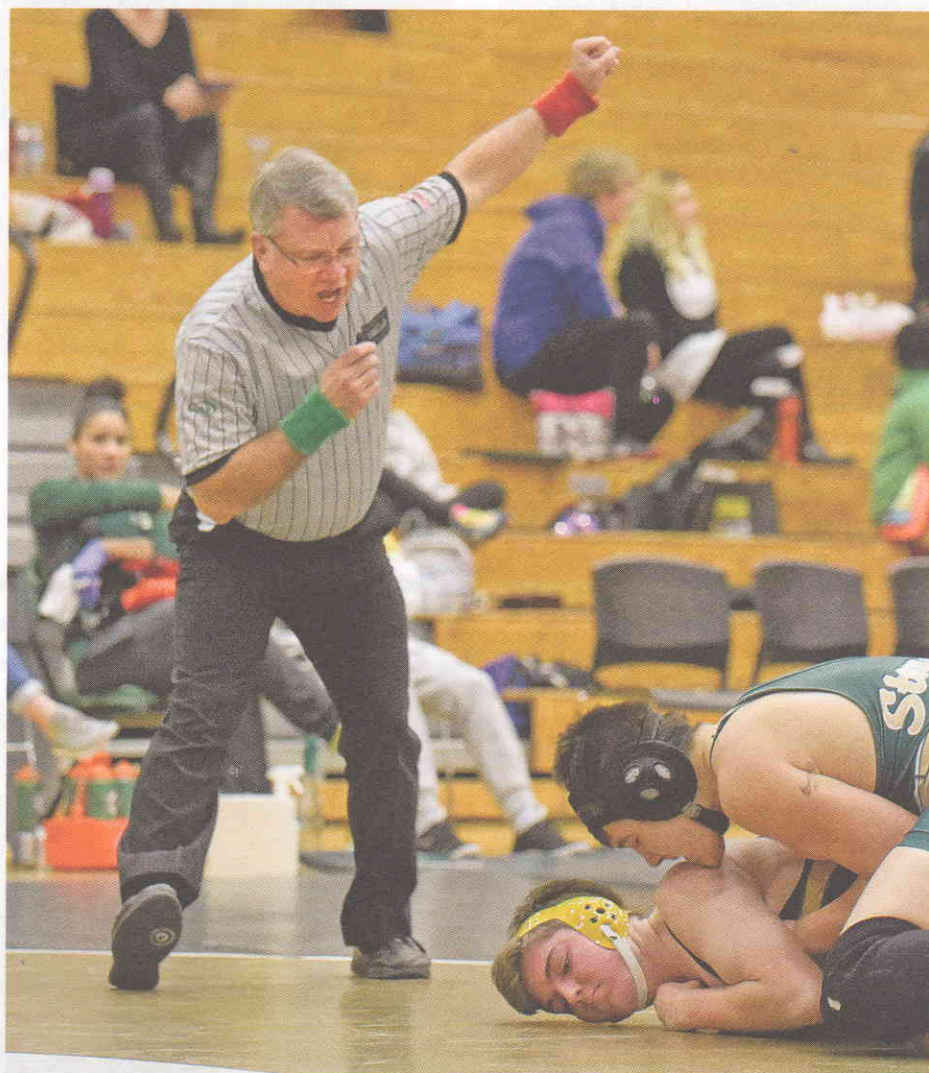
A fifth offense for stalling will result in disqualification.

"By removing stalling from the progressive penalty sequence, officials will be able to penalize wrestlers more freely without complicating the matter when it is combined with other penalties," said Elliot Hopkins, director of sports and student services and liaison to the Wrestling Rules Committee.

"Removing the stalling call from the penalty progression will allow officials more freedom to call stalling earlier, more consistently and without hesitation when they feel it is warranted."

In a related change, Rules 4-1-3 and 7-6-6d indicate that if a contestant's shoelaces come undone, the penalty is an automatic stalling call. If laces are visible, they shall be secured in an acceptable fashion. Acceptable secure fashion could be double knotting of the laces.

If the shoelaces come undone, the penalty would be an automatic stalling call. □



Chuck Tomkins, Kent, Wash., issues a warning for stalling.

UNIFORM CHANGES APPROVED

Items that wrestlers wear under their uniforms drew attention from the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee this year. As a result, three rules were amended.

In Rules 4-1-1a and 4-1-1c NOTE, a suitable undergarment, which completely covers the buttocks and groin area, shall be worn under a one-piece singlet. Any other undergarment worn under the

one-piece singlet which extends beyond the inseam shall be tight-fitting and shall not extend below the knee. Female contestants wearing a one-piece singlet shall also wear a form-fitted compression suitable undergarment that completely covers their breasts.

That rule reinforces the importance of how wrestlers should be required to

be properly attired on the mat during competition, regardless of gender. Previously, there was no specific requirement for what a wrestler wore under a singlet. Light colored or white singlets become transparent if an undergarment is not worn underneath. That created a modesty concern that

SEE "UNIFORM" P. 8

► **UNIFORM** CONT. FROM P.7

athletes were revealing more than is appropriate.

A change to Rule 4-1-1b mandates that a suitable undergarment, which completely covers the buttocks and groin area, shall be worn under shorts designed for wrestling and compression shorts. That rule reinforces the importance of how wrestlers should be required to be properly attired on the mat during competition, regardless of gender. The change fills a gap in the rules that did not specify a requirement for what a wrestler wears under shorts that are designed for wrestling and a compression short. Light colored or white singlets become transparent if an undergarment is not worn underneath. That created a modesty concern that athletes were revealing more than is appropriate.



At weigh in, female contestants shall wear a suitable form fitted compression undergarment that completely covers their breasts. That is addressed in Rule 4-5-7. By adding additional language

to minimize the risk of exposure, it is the expectation that the suitable undergarment should provide coverage and support during competition. □

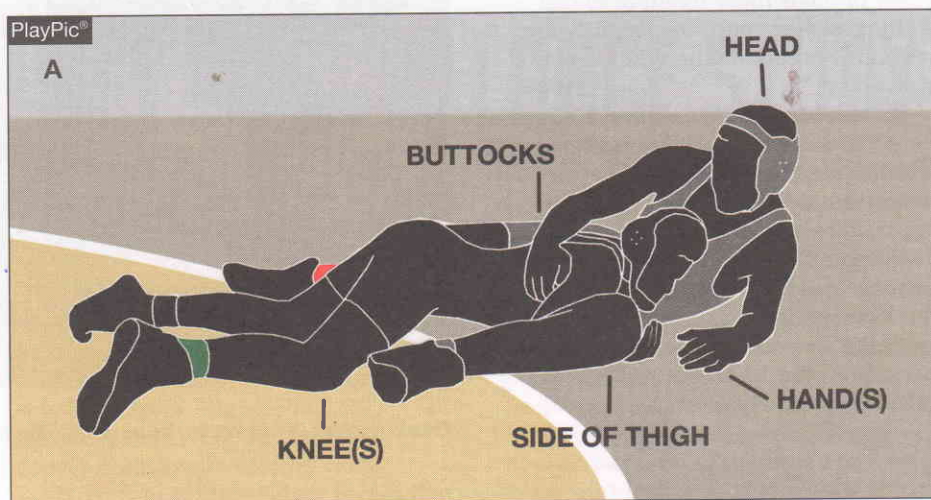
FLASHBACK: 2018-19 RULE CHANGES

Contestants are considered to be inbounds if a total of two supporting points of either wrestler are inside or on the boundary lines. The total of two supporting points could be two supporting points of one wrestler or one supporting point of each wrestler that are inside or on the boundary lines.

When down on the mat, the usual points of support are the knee(s), the side of the thigh, the buttocks, the hand(s) and the head.

Additionally, the committee also voted to modify Rule 5-15-2 to read, "Supporting points are the parts of the body touching the wrestling area which may or may not bear the wrestler's weight, other than those parts with which the wrestler is holding the opponent." That means referees no longer have to make a judgment on where the majority of the weight is being supported – any combination of two supporting points means the wrestlers are inbounds (PlayPic A). The removal of "majority of weight" will aid the referee in focusing on inbounds and out of bounds, rather than trying to make a judgment on where the majority of the weight is being supported.

When the defensive wrestler is



on his or back while the supporting points of either wrestler are inbounds wrestling shall continue. In this situation any part of a defensive wrestler's shoulder or scapula is considered to be all the supporting points.

Wrestling shall continue as long as a total of two all the supporting points of either wrestler are inside or on the boundary lines. The total of two supporting points could be two supporting points of one wrestler or

one supporting point of each wrestler that remain inbounds. If there is no action at the edge of the mat and one wrestler is out of bounds, the referee may stop the match.

When there is no longer a total of two supporting points of either wrestler on or inside the boundary line, wrestling shall be stopped and wrestlers returned to the center of the mat and started according to the position of each at the time they went out of bounds.

If the wrestlers go out of bounds ►

► in the neutral position, the match shall be resumed with each wrestler at the designated green or red area.

a false start from the neutral position results in an injury to a wrestler such that the wrestler cannot continue after the expiration of recovery time.

In that case, the situation is handled the same as an injury caused by an illegal hold/maneuver, unnecessary roughness, or unsportsmanlike conduct during the match. If the injured contestant is unable to continue following a maximum of two minutes recovery time, the injured contestant shall be awarded the match by default.

If a contestant is injured as a result of an illegal hold/maneuver, unnecessary roughness, or unsportsmanlike conduct during the match or the result of the opponent's false start by the opponent in the neutral position, the injured wrestler is entitled to two minutes of recovery time, which is not deducted from the injured wrestler's injury time allowance.

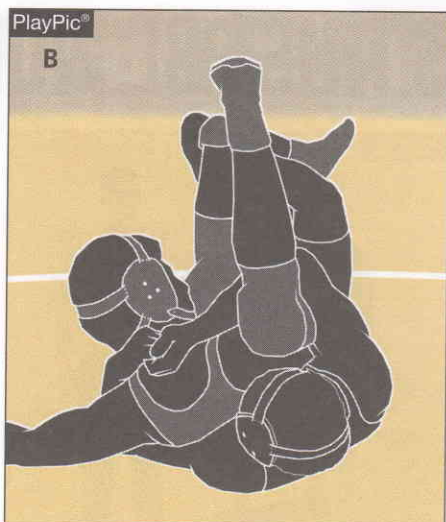
The Nelson Cradle as seen in PlayPic B is an illegal hold/maneuver. It is a combination made up of a half nelson on one side with a locked cradle from around the neck with the far side knee. The crotch of the knee acts as the other arm (arm pit) to complete the full nelson pressure on the neck and throat.

Also, the action occurring on the lower spine as the knee is brought up near the head is dangerous. When the move is finished the offensive wrestler can either roll it over or draw it backward, which is very painful to the defensive wrestler's neck and body.

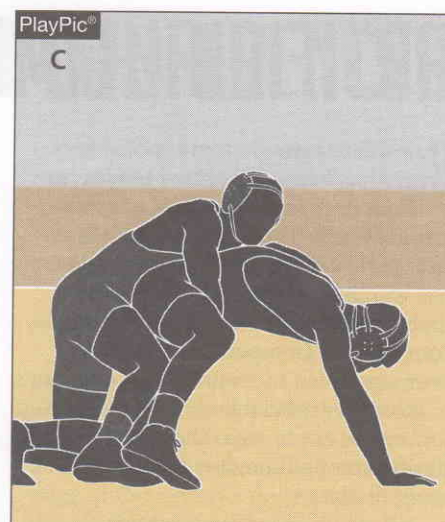
In addition to repeatedly dropping to one knee to break locked hands, it is illegal to repeatedly drop to one hand to break locked hands, as seen in PlayPic C. Continuing acts of unsportsmanlike conduct may be construed as flagrant misconduct.

Any manufacturer's logo/trademark/reference that appears on the wrestling uniform, including legal hair covering can be no more than 2-1/4 square inches with no dimension more than 2-1/4 inches and may appear no more than once on each item of uniform apparel (PlayPic A). No additional manufacturer's logo/trademark, nor promotional reference shall be allowed on the wrestling uniform.

References to the color and style of singlets and tights were removed from



Rule 4-1-1a. Because the committee approved the use of school-issued compression shorts to be worn under a one-piece singlet, the wording "single solid color and unadorned" no longer applies.



The Committee also passed a changed to Rule 4-5-7 regarding weigh-in attire. Contestants may wear low-cut socks during weigh-ins that cannot be removed or added if the wrestler does not make weight (PlayPic C). □

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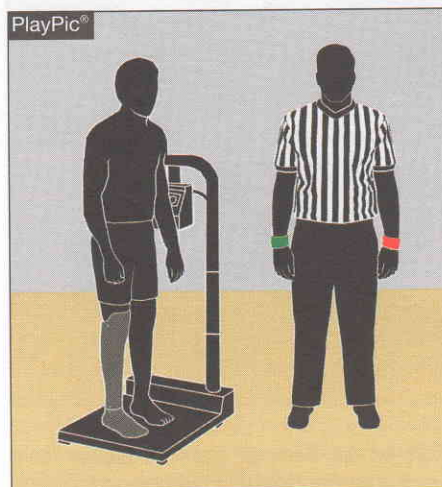
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ARTIFICIAL LIMBS MUST BE WORN AT WEIGH-IN

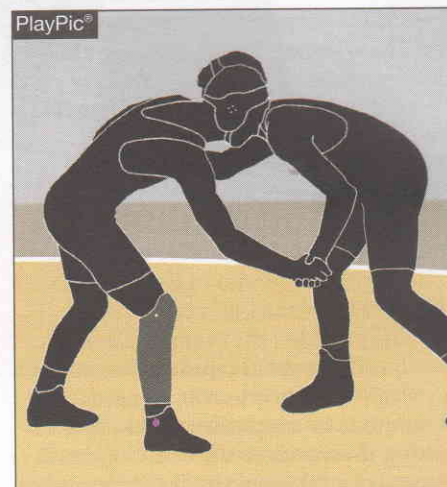
Rule 4-5-9 states that any contestant who has been authorized to wear an artificial limb shall weigh-in with the artificial limb if the contestant chooses to wrestle with it on. Once a wrestler has weighed in with the artificial limb, it shall not be removed during competition. Competitors who have been approved by their state associations to wear an artificial limb have the option to wear or not to wear the artificial limb during competition, but must weigh-in accordingly.

Situation: Wrestler A reports to the weigh-in with an artificial limb commencing from below the elbow and a permission letter from the state association authorizing the wearing of this artificial limb. (a) The wrestler weighs in wearing the artificial limb, then later decides to wrestle without it; or (b) Weighs in without the artificial limb, then prior to the beginning of the match decides to wear the artificial limb during competition.

Ruling: In (a), it would be illegal to remove the artificial limb and wrestle without it since the wrestler weighed



If a wrestler chooses to weigh-in with an artificial limb, the wrestler shall wear the artificial limb during competition at all times.



in with it. In (b), the wrestler could not compete wearing the artificial limb. To wear an artificial limb during competition, it is required that one must weigh-in with the device. The wrestler would either have to compete without the artificial limb or not compete. Note

also that when an individual wrestles with a portion of the arm missing, the referee must make certain allowances for the starting position. As long as the wrestler with the amputated arm is attempting to establish legal positioning, there would be no violation. □

KEEP BAD TIME REMINDERS IN MIND

Bad time is time wrestled with the wrestlers:

- In the wrong position.
- The wrong wrestler being given the choice of position at the start of the third period.

QUICK TIP

Normally, referees are advised to move continuously to be in the proper position and adjust in order to best view the action. But in critical situations you need to get in close to view the critical elements. Don't let a hand, arm or equipment block your view. Don't guess it was a fall because you couldn't see. Get in there and work as hard as the wrestlers are.

- The choice of position not given after the second injury time-out or after the two-point stalling penalty.
- When the clock and wrestling should have been stopped.

Bad time can be wrestled with the wrestlers in the wrong position or the wrong wrestler being given choice of position at the start of the second 30-second tiebreaker and at the start of the ultimate tiebreaker.

Bad time is also wrestled with the wrestlers in the wrong position or the wrong wrestler being given choice of position at the start of the third period, after opponent has taken his/her second injury time-out or on the next restart after opponent receives a two-point stalling penalty.

For example, in a dual meet, (a) Wrestler A was supposed to start the second 30-second tiebreaker in the

top position, but the opponent was given the top position instead and it was brought to the attention of the referee 20 seconds into the second 30-second tiebreaker; or (b) Wrestler A was supposed to start the ultimate tiebreaker in the top position, but the opponent was given the top position instead and it was brought to the attention of the referee 20 seconds into the ultimate tiebreaker. In both (a) and (b), bad time would be applied as Wrestler A was not put in the proper position to start either the second 30-second tiebreaker or the ultimate tiebreaker. All points earned during bad time are canceled. Following corrections made and a rest of one minute, the second 30-second tiebreaker or the ultimate tiebreaker will be re-wrestled. □

REFEREE, ASSISTANT PRE-MATCH CONFERENCES

The use of an assistant referee is recommended. When more than one person is officiating, they can do a better job observing action on the mat. With the strength, speed and agility of today's wrestlers, it is often necessary to have another set of eyes on the action. However, typically, referees work with assistant referees in three instances — during the state championship series, helping train newer referees and in the finals of large regular-season tournaments. If the use of an assistant referee is to be beneficial, communication between the two referees is essential. That communication starts with the prematch conference between the referee and the assistant referee.

Create a bond

The pre-match conference has to create a bond between the two referees. It is imperative that they conclude the conference "on the same page." Thus, the conference should be a warm and positive discussion designed to create a team effort for the next couple of hours. In order to be a successful team, both referees will have to work together as one. Both referees have to feel that they have equal authority — but the referee is the only official with a whistle. The referee has a 51-49 edge in breaking split decisions.

Clock

Specific assistant referee duties include watching to make sure the clock starts and stops. If the clock does not start on time, the assistant referee should begin a non-verbal count and let the referee know at the first break in wrestling action. The referee will stop the match when there is no significant action and is counting on the assistant referee to inform the referee and the timekeeper how much time elapsed.

The assistant referee also needs to watch the clock at the end of each period to determine if points were scored before time elapsed. Speaking of points, the assistant referee should keep any eye on the scoreboard — to make sure the displayed score is accurate. Finally, the assistant referee should oversee that injury, blood and recovery time are kept

accurately and inform the referee as those time allotments are running out.

Starting positions

When starting the wrestlers down on the mat, both referees' positioning is critical if everything is to be observed. The two referees should be positioned 180-degrees opposite from each other. Most referees will take a position between two and three o'clock (wrestler's heads are at 12:00) which allows them to see the location of the back foot, the hand on the waist, the hand on the near elbow and head placement on or above the spine. Thus, the assistant referee should take a position between seven and eight o'clock — providing the opposite view as that of the referee. If the assistant referee observes anything illegal, the assistant

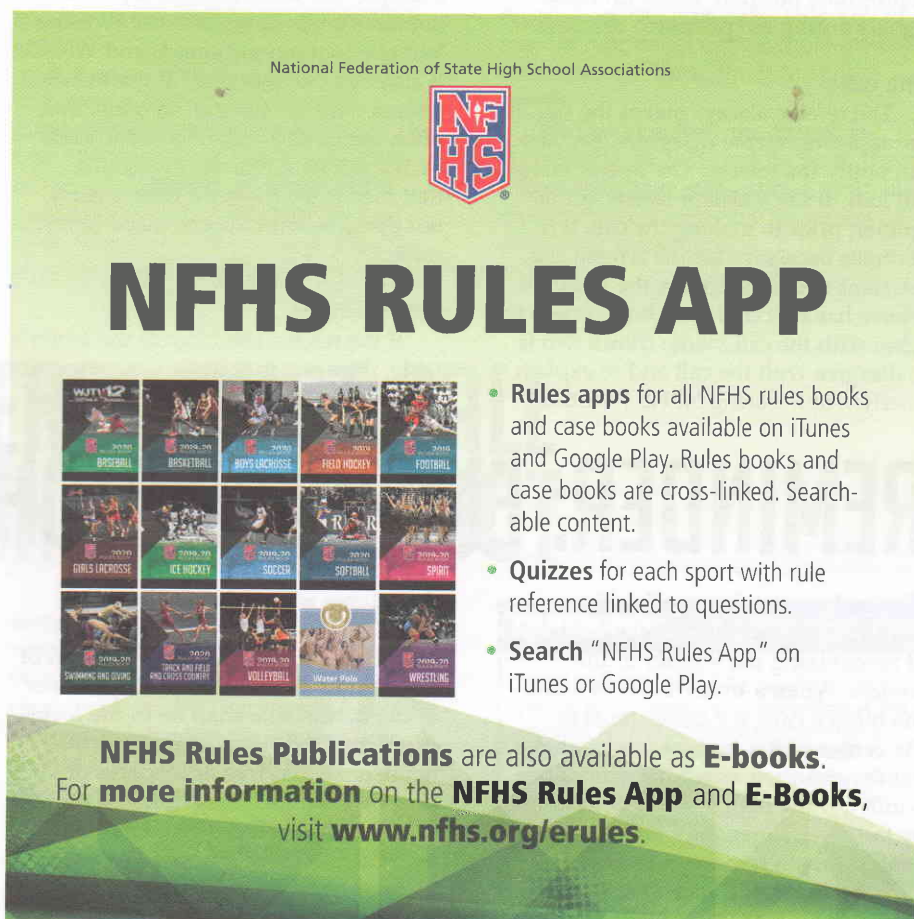
referee should move immediately toward the center of the mat with hands raised — unless a different mechanic was discussed in the pre-match conference.

Neutral


While the wrestlers are in the neutral position, the referee and assistant referee should also work opposite from each other. As the wrestlers move toward the boundary, both referees will move to the edge of the mat to a position that allows them to look directly at each other through the wrestlers. One of the big advantages of using two referees occurs when one wrestler uses a lateral drop (or some other kind of throw) away from the referee, often taking the opponent directly to their back.

SEE "PRE-MATCH CONFERENCES" P. 12

National Federation of State High School Associations



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► PRE-MATCH CONFERENCES CONT. FROM P.11

Near-fall

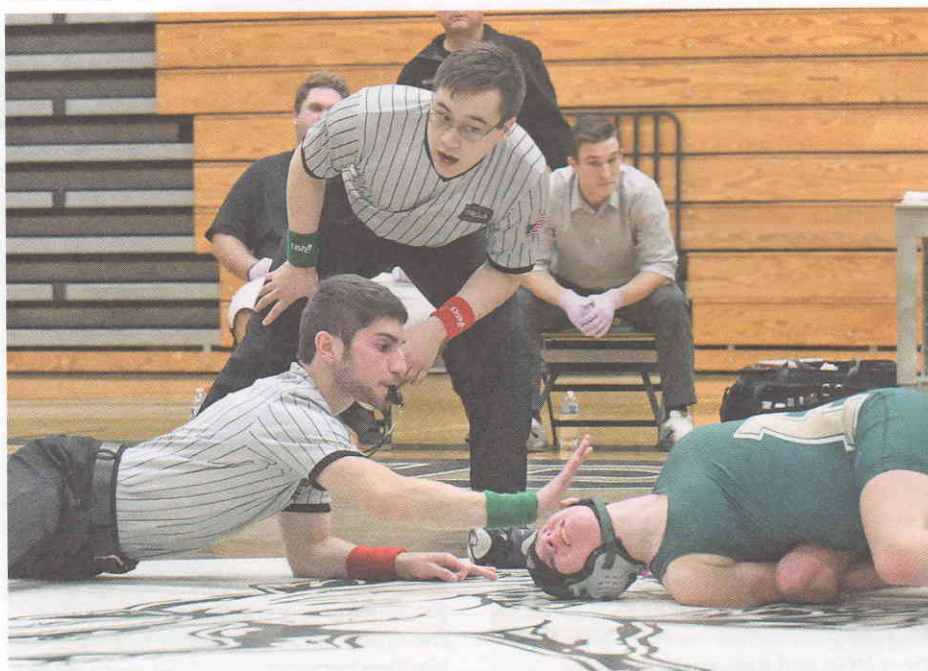
As the referee moves into position, the referee will verbally, in a loud voice, indicate when the takedown is awarded. In a near-fall situation, the assistant referee should not be down on the mat, but in a position to observe the action, the clock, and tap the referee when time expires.

Circle

The assistant referee should work out-of-bounds, outside the circle, until it is necessary to get a better view. If the assistant referee wishes to communicate with the referee, the assistant referee should circle the mat toward the referee and the referee should back to the edge of the mat — thus enabling a brief verbal exchange. At that point, the referee can stop the match for a brief conference or signify that the referee is comfortable with the decisions made so far. The assistant referee, after commenting, should continue around the mat to the appropriate position. Agree on those signals during the prematch discussion.

One call

The referee always makes the call. If the assistant referee disagrees, he/ she can notify the referee. The referee should not look at the assistant referee for an opinion prior to making the call. If it becomes necessary for the referee and assistant referee to confer, the assistant referee has two choices. Choice one is to agree with the call made; choice two is to disagree with the call and to explain briefly why — using NFHS Wrestling



As referee Cale Woyvodich, Tukwila, Wash., counts the near-fall points, assistant referee Nathan Kaneko, Woodinville, Wash., observes.

Rules Book criteria as support. For example, the referee might say, "I did not have a takedown because Wrestler A had one foot out-of-bounds and Wrestler B also had one foot out." If the assistant referee does not have an opinion, that often indicates a lack of concentration by the assistant referee. By default, that means the assistant referee does not disagree with the call made by the referee.

Scorer's Table

If the referee has to go to the scorer's table, the assistant referee is responsible for keeping the two wrestlers near the

center of the mat. During the match, the assistant referee should not talk to the coaches in the corner or at mat side. When the match is over, the assistant referee should go to the head of the circle and watch the wrestlers leave the mat. As stated earlier, it is very important that both referees conclude the prematch conference on the same page. They should be confident they are going to do a good job with the upcoming matches because sometime during the match, the input, the location and the assistant referee's opinion will help get the correct call made. Work as a team and you will enjoy the competition. □

REMINDER: END-OF-MATCH PROCEDURE

The end-of-match procedure is a sportsmanship act and also a means of recognizing the winner of the contest. When a match ends in a fall, the referee calls the contestants to the center of the mat, has them shake hands, and then raises the arm of the winner. If the match is not determined by fall, the referee may direct the contestants to remain in the ten-foot circle so that he/she can verify the final score. Once the score is verified,

the referee will return to the center of the mat, direct the contestants to shake hands and then raise the arm of the winner. In either case, the manner of the handshake shall be in the form of a firm, traditional and respectful handshake and free of displays of unsportsmanlike behavior.

Unsportsmanlike behaviors could include, but are not limited to any form of taunting of the opponent or spectators, as well as acts of excessive

celebration or displeasure with the outcome of the match.

It is imperative that coaches instruct their wrestlers to offer a firm handshake and to provide a respectful acknowledgement of their opponents. Fist bumps, high fives, hand slaps, etc., are not acceptable.

Referees need to be aware that unsportsmanlike conduct is to be penalized whenever it occurs regardless of the circumstances. □

RULES REMINDER: GRASPING THE EARGUARDS IS A TECHNICAL VIOLATION

According to NFHS Rules 5-27-1b and 7-3-2, grasping an opponent's ear guards is a technical violation. It is also illegal to grasp the mat or the opponent's clothing. Any advantage gained from such grasping shall be nullified. Grasping of clothing, mat or ear guards to gain or prevent an escape, reversal, takedown, near fall or fall is a technical violation and the penalty points shall be awarded in addition to points earned.

The other technical violations are:

- Going out of the wrestling area or forcing an opponent out of the wrestling area by either wrestler at any time as a means of avoiding wrestling. When the referee feels that either wrestler has failed to make every effort to stay inbounds during an imminent scoring situation, the offending wrestler shall be penalized for fleeing the mat. There can be no technical violation of fleeing the mat if near-fall points have been earned.

- Interlocking or overlapping the hands, fingers or arms around the opponent's body (with or without arms included) or both legs by a wrestler in the advantage position, unless the opponent has all the weight supported entirely by the feet or has lifted the opponent off the mat or the opponent has met near-fall criteria. When bringing the opponent to the mat, hands overlapping or interlocking beyond



Grasping of clothing, mat or ear guards to gain or prevent an escape, reversal, takedown, near fall or fall is a technical violation and the penalty points shall be awarded in addition to points earned.

reaction time is a technical violation. Penalty point(s) shall be awarded in addition to points earned.

- Leaving the wrestling area, without first receiving permission to do so from the referee.

- Reporting to the scorer's table, not properly equipped, or not ready to wrestle or any equipment that is

detected as being illegal after the match has started.

There is no warning when a technical violation occurs. Each of the first two technical violations carries a one-point penalty. The third occurrence results in a two-point penalty. The fourth technical violation results in a disqualification. □

CONTROL: THE ESSENCE OF WRESTLING

Control is the very essence of the sport of wrestling. Simply stated control occurs when an individual wrestler has gained control of his opponent in such a way that he or she has restraining power over them.

A wrestler who has control over an opponent is in a position of advantage. Control has three phases, gaining, losing and changing. All three phases allow each wrestler an opportunity to score points.

Wrestling is an extremely quick and fast-moving sport where control is gained, loss or changed in a matter of seconds. It is important that contest officials frequently hone their skills to be able to identify the various phases of control.

This sport boasts specialists in various aspects of the sport. As one example, "takedown specialists" are known to accumulate points for taking

their opponent to the mat frequently, not being able to get a fall or near fall but will use a strategy to outscore their opponent by means of repeated takedowns.

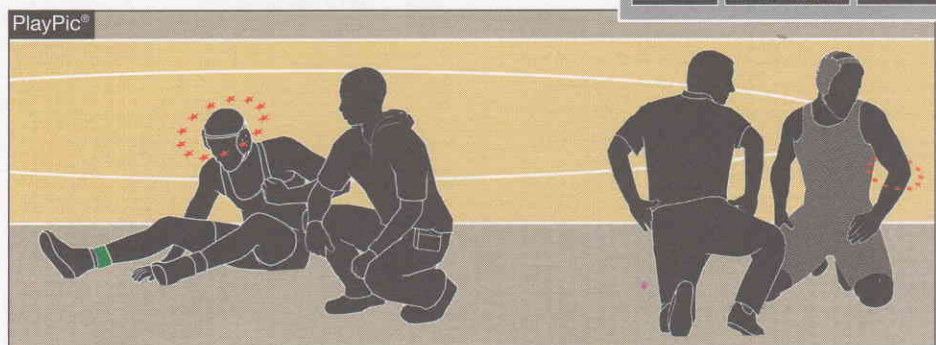
The more familiar an official is with the various moves and maneuvers, the more valuable they will be to the young people they serve in this wonderful sport. □

UNSPORTSMANLIKE PENALTY MAY DETERMINE ADVANCEMENT

According to Rule 10-2-9, if two wrestlers in the championship bracket simultaneously cannot continue a match and the score is tied, the wrestler whose opponent has received an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty at any time during the match will continue in the consolation round.

If neither wrestler received an unsportsmanlike penalty, the previously set criteria will be used to determine advancement to the consolation bracket.

The criterion was implemented to emphasize sportsmanship during competition. □



Wrestlers simultaneously unable to continue. Red wrestler had been penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct. Green wrestler advances to the consolation round.

HERE'S A HEAD'S UP ON HEADLOCKS

Front headlocks, as well as all headlocks, have been legal as long as an arm or leg is included. Referees have always been encouraged to look closely at all headlock situations. However, there has been growing concern over the way some competitors have been using that particular hold that may temporarily cause loss of consciousness for their opponent.

Rule 7 speaks, in no uncertain terms, about cautioning competitors and instructing referees to be very cautious when utilizing and officiating those situations.

Wrestlers are admonished not to:

- Apply any hold or maneuver with pressure exerted over the opponent's mouth, nose, throat or neck that restricts breathing or circulation; and
- Turn a potentially dangerous hold or maneuver into an illegal hold or maneuver. The rule also states that wrestlers should know the dangers of hold or maneuver. There is an obligation placed on the coach not to teach or condone a hold or move that may injure either wrestler.

Wrestling moves and maneuvers executed properly and legally increase

an athlete's chance at victory. It is not ethically acceptable to teach or use a hold/move that has a risk of injury, which sometimes may cause permanent damage. There is no place for that in wrestling.

Referees must:

- Recognize and anticipate any hold or maneuver, especially a front headlock, as it can become illegal — quickly;
- Stop any hold or maneuver that becomes illegal immediately;
- Utilize the potentially dangerous hold or maneuver call without hesitation to protect the wrestler. If a mistake is made, it is far better to "err on the side of safety" when it comes to a wrestler's health;
- In front headlock situations, move to a position where the pressure can be seen; and
- Not let the hold or maneuver run without additional action taking place. That only allows the offensive wrestler more time to tighten the hold or maneuver and greatly increase the potential for injury.

The following are clues that referees and coaches might use to evaluate the

front headlock situation. If the defensive wrestler demonstrates:

- Redness in the face;
- Being up on the toes to avoid pressure;
- A trapped arm being limp.

Any one of those clues should give rise to a concern that pressure is being applied and the action should more than likely cease.

Again, a front headlock situation is not a hold or maneuver that needs to run for a period of time. The offensive wrestler needs to continue with action beyond the lock up and progress with the attempt at a takedown or other control. □

QUICK TIP

Think about how you coach yourself. While a greater positive emphasis is usually more beneficial than negative, try being very task-directive rather than general and attacking your confidence. For example, instead of that voice saying, "Stop blowing the whistle so early," practice controlling that voice to say, "Take a deep breath; next time let the action finish before blowing the whistle."



HOW FOCUS MAKES YOU A BETTER REFEREE

Every match matters to the wrestlers. So it's important referees bring their best to every meet or tournament. Making that a reality is easier said than done, however.

Those who strive to excel in officiating are truly professionals. What sets them apart? How do they maintain focus and concentration when the circumstances are pulling them in the opposite direction?

The great thing about officiating is that it is a set period of time to focus solely on the match, shut the rest of the world out and live truly in the moment. Don't let anything rob you of that bliss!

In order to solve a problem, it must first be identified, which means knowing yourself and the external circumstances which cause you to lose focus. Did you have a crazy day at your other job? Did you leave the family that morning arguing about who will pick up the milk so the kids don't starve?

Whatever category of distraction is your Achilles' heel, you have to know it first to fight against it. Life is hard.

Work, family and everyday life can creep into your focus, but it must be stopped. Leave the phone in the car or in the locker room. Know that you have committed yourself to the meet or tournament, and there is nothing that can be done in that time window to alter your other reality.

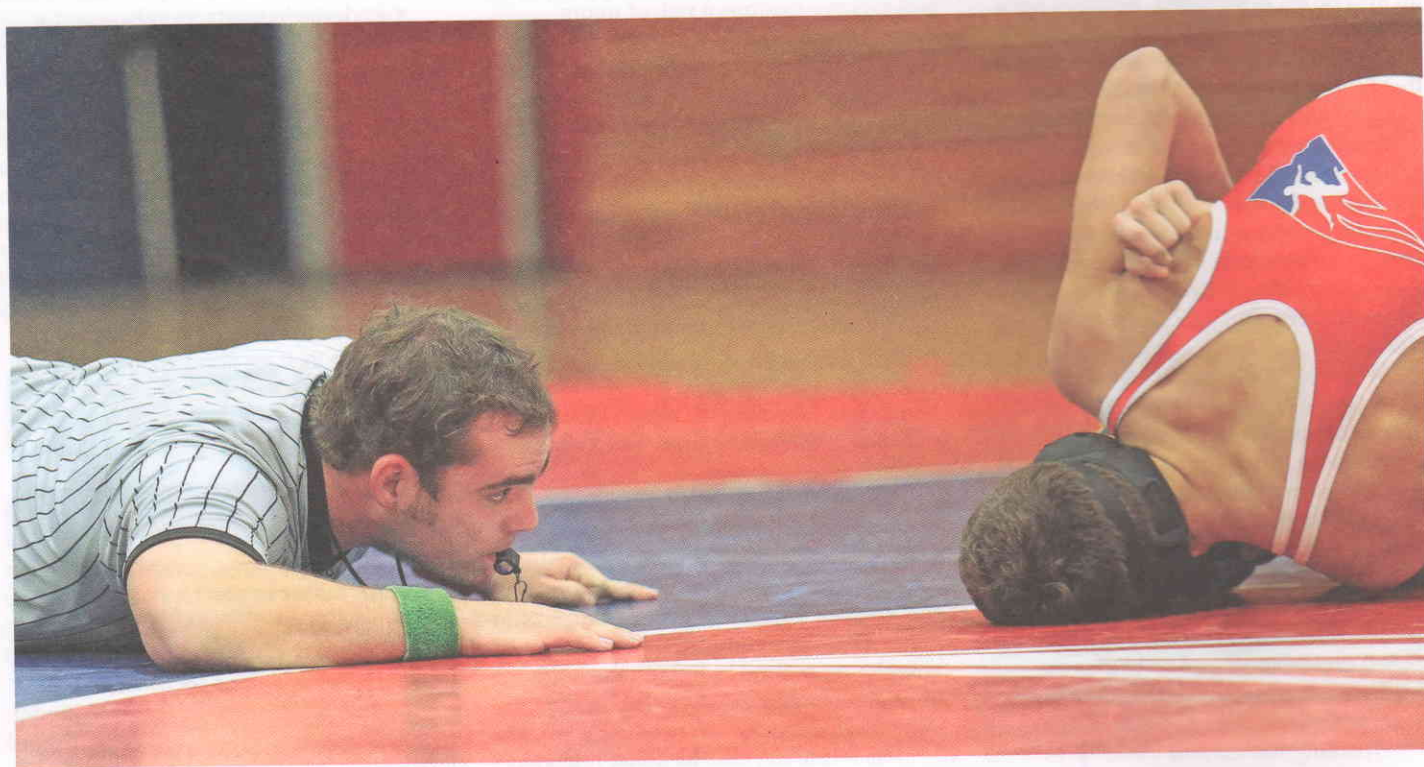
How many times have you allowed yourself to shut the world out, only to come back to life finding that there were issues, and since you were not available other people stepped up to solve them? If the problem still exists, you always have the car ride home to attempt to get ahead on other fronts. A demanding meet that brings you into complete focus is the challenge that referees live for. Unfortunately or fortunately, not every meet is a tough one. Some are completely one-sided, some are contentious in effort but terrible in skill, some are terrible in skill and pretty evenly matched.

Think of those meets as opportunities. Instead of making your mental grocery list or thinking about

weekend plans, use that match to hone your craft. Referees are all working on some aspect of our officiating. Those meets offer the best opportunities to work on mechanics.

A lower level match is going to afford you the opportunity to think about your mechanics. What can you improve? Can you ask other referees to bring some awareness to it and give you feedback after the match? Those meets are mini clinics. A slower-paced meet also offers the chance to work on match knowledge and anticipation. If you didn't wrestle, chances are you are sometimes lost on general moves and strategies. A one-sided meet (in which the better team is running a "clinic") can help you better understand what happens on the mat.

Can you anticipate the progression of moves? Does one team favor certain holds or maneuvers? If you can pick up on those details, you will referee that match better, and you'll better develop the skill of understanding the sport. □



Christian Ipock, New Bern N.C., checks for a pin.