

RMN RULE EMPHASES & INTERPRETATIONS

Rules Revisions 2017-18: http://www.nfhs.org/articles/alternate-two-piece-uniform-approved-for-high-school-wrestling/?utm_source=delivra&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2017+Wrestling+Rules+Changes&utm_id=482276&dlv-ga-memberid=14185304&utm_term=Wrestling+Rules+Changes&mid=14185304&ml=482276

Tournament Protocol

1. Meeting Times: Officials – 8 am. Coaches – 8:15 am. Head Table, Trainers and Table Help – 8:30-8:45 am.
2. Dress: NFHS standard attire with black pants, socks, and shoes. Shirts should be gray with thin black stripes; in order for us to look consistent, please reserve special tournament shirts – i.e., red/green sleeves – for the events for which they were designed.
3. Vocabulary: The NFHS emphasis is for officials to be verbally directive throughout the match. You are not coaching the athlete; you are encouraging action, promoting safety, and ensuring a result which reflects everyone's best effort. See separate vocabulary page for suggestions.
4. Championship Matches: where possible, use a head and an assistant official (rotate roles).
5. Orientation: The tournament director, Ed Gutierrez, will meet with us before we head out to the event floor. Afterward, go directly to your mat area, figure out your team's rotation, and orient the table workers. Familiarize them with Track Wrestling: Matches – Match (current) – Result – Chat, as well as the drop down arrows to change color and period.
6. Start: Band first competitors by 8:45 am. Clear mat area to enforce 2 in the coaching corner and everyone else BEHIND the table. Prepare for announcements, a prayer, and the national anthem. Have your first wrestlers ready in the center circle for a universal start (all whistles blow simultaneously). Between rotations, support table staff and clear the coaching areas.
7. Wrist bands: For multiple-day events, please leave the identification wrist bands in place. For 1000-2000 competitors, it is very difficult to replace these bands each day. If they become loose or come off, wrestlers or coaches can get replacements from the Head Table.
8. Table Procedure: To help us finish on time, always ask the winner to check with the scorer before s/he records the result and before welcoming the next two competitors. Make sure your table has called for the "on deck" and "in the hole" bouts prior to their matches. If a wrestler or his/her coach is not there, proceed directly to the next match; have the scorer chat with the head table (the microphone symbol next to a wrestler automatically writes the message). Wrestlers competing in 2 weight classes forfeit the 15-minute wait time; however, if they are on another mat, a team representative should inform you that they will be delayed.
9. Team Effort: if your mat finishes, you are not done until every match has concluded! Find others with whom to share the remaining bouts. If you depart before the concluding match, the time missed may be docked from your pay; if you have special travel circumstances, please consult with the head official in advance.
10. Monster Match Only – all 3 periods neutral start (if 2nd injury time, give choice on next stoppage).

Important Rule Updates

- 2018-19 Boundary Clarification: The revised definitions for out of bounds and inbounds eliminate subjectivity with the out-of-bounds call without increasing the out-of-bounds area. The removal of "majority of weight" from the definition will allow officials to focus on inbounds

and out-of-bounds rather than having to make a judgment on where the majority of the wrestler's weight is being supported. The elimination of subjectivity in the out-of-bounds call. Rule 5-10 now provides language stipulating that any combination of two supporting points allows an official to make an inbounds call. (NFHS)

- 2018-19 Stalling Interpretation: Revisions to Rule 5-24-3 will assist officials with making a stalling call. The new criteria establish that stalling in the neutral position also takes place when a wrestler is backing off the mat and out of bounds, as well as when the wrestler is pushing or pulling out-of-bounds. (NFHS)
- 2017-18 Boundaries: Allow wrestling to continue as long as two points of support (either wrestler) remain inbounds, including scoring nearfalls and earning a fall. "Offensive wrestling should be rewarded ... If wrestling is continuing, and points for escapes and reversals are allowed, the ability to earn a fall or nearfall should be there as well, with no deference to the out-of-bounds line." (NFHS)
 - RMN NOTE: Between adjacent mats, allow action to continue, while in communication with that mat's official. With limited safety mat area near the table and floor, officials must verbally encourage wrestling toward the center. In either situation, safety takes priority over the potential to score.
- 2016-17 Potentially Dangerous: arm trap when defensive wrestler stands (7.2.3): CONTINUE: 2-on-1, "keep it safe." STOP: when offensive wrestler lifts, attempts to trip forward, or uses a wing & wrist. (NFHS)
- 2016-17 Illegal hold / violation by defensive wrestler while in pinning situation (5.11.2): don't stop; when out of near fall criteria, stop to award additional near fall point PLUS a penalty point. (NFHS)

Points of Emphasis

- SAFETY IS PRIORITY #1: The safe execution of a move or hold always takes precedence over its potential to score. Win or lose, it is our responsibility to ensure that a wrestler can continue to compete in this tournament and the next one. Potentially dangerous is our friend. Look for compromise to breathing, an inability to communicate, or the risk to limb or joint.
- QUALIFY BUT DO NOT DISQUALIFY: Our responsibility is to facilitate advancement for those wrestlers who have earned the right to participate in the next round or earn their deserved places. If you have a situation which warrants consideration for disqualification for unsportsmanslike conduct or flagrant misconduct, please consult first with the head official before making that determination.
 - Disqualification by any means – penalty points, UNC, or FMC – must be reported to the Head Table prior to the next match; if necessary, ask the head or an available official to take the next bout. In the event of a bite, the initial confirmation is made by the medical staff; if confirmed, call for the head official to make a final decision.
- EQUIPMENT: Headgear is required through 18-&-Under; optional in Open only. Hairnet and mouthguard are *recommended but not required*. (Ask the wrestler if s/he has one; if so, ask him/her to use it.) Proactively request shoelaces to be secured before the wrestlers come on the mat; only penalize if they come undone repeatedly or impede with the match progress.
- BOUNDARIES: We will use the new interpretation which allows more wrestling at the boundary line. However, with smaller circles and limited safety mats, you need to constantly verbalize commands. Continue action if there is the potential to score and it is safe to do so; immediately return to center if safety is compromised or no action is occurring. *Make it your priority to maintain safety by encouraging wrestling action to occur in the center of the mat!*

- **STALLING:** Be consistent throughout the match. If the wrestlers are not creating action, then through your directive raise the bar. Youth competition uses shorter periods, thus it is imperative that we encourage active wrestling; if there is no score in the first period, at least one wrestler should end the period with a warning. Action or inaction without a score needs to be facilitated by repeated calls for improvement or action. Be quick to stalemate unprogressive situations; repeated stalemates by the same wrestler is the same as stalling. Set the tone in the 1st & 2nd period, then calls made in the 3rd period have greater significance.
- **INJURIES:** If the presence of a trainer is required, begin injury or blood time when the trainer arrives. Follow the trainer's lead with regard to safe return to action. Learn the concussion protocol as explained in the rules document. If a trainer is called for a concussion evaluation, start & stop the injury clock. Injury time will not be in effect during this process in order to ensure a complete and safe return or to declare a default. Blood clean-up is by the athlete or coach.
- **LOWER YOUR LEVEL:** Especially with younger & smaller competitors, be at their level while starting and stopping action, when looking for potentially dangerous and illegal holds, and while respecting their background / region / experience.
- **DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?** ... Teach coaches how and when to phrase a challenge.

Roles & Responsibilities

1. **HEAD / ASST/ HEAD:** There will be at least one overall assistant head official. Look for first for the head official; in the event that he is unavailable, bring any concerns to your group head or the assistant head official. Where necessary, he will consult with the head official as well.
2. **SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY:** Each official is considered to be a leader and is therefore welcome to make recommendations in the best interest of the entire officiating team. If you have an interest in being considered as an assistant head, let us know; our aim is to rotate this responsibility as much as possible among officials who have demonstrated they are ready to assume this role and who have not had this experience during the current tournament season.
3. **RELIEF:** Bill will serve both as head official and a rotating relief official; if either a designated relief official or Bill relieves you, please rejoin the rotation on the same mat where you were relieved. Insure that each official in your group has adequate break time and food. Snacks and water will be at the head table, with lunch available around 12 pm and dinner at approximately 6 pm.
4. **ROTATION:** Be respectful of your workmates in honoring a solid rotation (first open mat or in mat order sitting out 1-2 matches), while maintaining a time frame and direct return from the restroom or lunch. Rotate mats within your group so that you experience different wrestlers and coaches throughout the day. Transition your team through ALL the mats in your section, with the lead official moving people to the next mat, so that individuals stay fresh and experience different levels, coaches, parents, and wrestlers. In our experience, leaving officials on the same mat creates familiarity and thus increases the likelihood of conflict. During the course of the day, we may also need to resituate someone in another rotation in order to create a new perspective or to avoid further conflict.

Our Mutual Roles in Working Together

1. **SUPPORT:** The Head's role is to support what you are doing, run interference with coaches, and offer my perspective. If he is at matside while you are officiating, consider consulting with him in certain situations, just as you would with an assistant official. Likewise, if he calls you aside to review a situation, it is only to raise a point for your consideration, while deferring to your judgement. You are the mat official – you make the final call.

2. CONFERENCE: Take your role seriously, but not yourself. Putting ego aside, our job is to get the call right. If a coach respectfully asks a conference at the table, it is our expectation that you grant it. *Listen first, respond second.* Seek to de-escalate the situation. Please respect the coach's right to have the assistant head or head official come to the mat. If the coach requests the presence of a head official, the expectation is that you will hold action or keep wrestlers on the mat until either the assistant head or head official can confer with you. A conference is our assurance to the coach that he was heard and that we reconsidered the situation (even when we do not change the decision).
3. HEAD OFFICIAL: If the initial conference is with the assistant head and the situation is still not resolved, call for the Head Official before going to video review (final option). When you and the Head Official conference with one another, it is to reaffirm your ruling and/or offer a fresh perspective; overall, the goal is to make the right call and to do what is best for the wrestler(s). Ultimately, as mat official, the final decision is yours; however, it lends credence to our final determination when the coaches know that we dialogue about such situations.
4. VIDEO REVIEW: (Be familiar with the full explanation of the protest procedure.) If a coach still wants to protest beyond the conference with the head official, and s/he has secured a protest flag in advance, we will conduct a video review. For obvious time and tournament management reasons, we do not encourage (or suggest) the use of video review. While we would prefer that the review is conducted only in later, more competitive rounds, ultimately it is the coach's decision in the event that the official and coach cannot agree.
 - a. Though the majority of calls are confirmed by the video review, those calls that we miss are important to get right. Video review is also an option for you as an official; if you are uncertain of your call in a potentially decisive or mat-deciding moment, you are welcome to take yourself to the head table under the guidance of the Head Official.

Perspective

On and off the mat, consider yourself a representative of what is best in the sport of wrestling. Remember that you are both a learner and an educator: we must constantly desire to improve ourselves and our knowledge, and we have an obligation to educate those less knowledgeable in a manner where they can hear what we are saying. As ambassadors of wrestling, we embrace character, recognize sportsmanship, encourage best effort, and ultimately serve as rules arbiters.

Hearing begins with listening first before we speak – you will resolve many issues just through listening to and attempting to understand the coach's or athlete's point of view. With a participating audience who may be relatively unacquainted with certain aspects and rules, RMN's perspective is one where we seek to educate before (and after) we resolve to punish infractions.

While we will do our best to explain policy and procedures, each tournament and environs creates its own parameters. Thus we cannot explain every nuance or variation. Instead, we rely upon independent thinkers who are flexible and capable of making the necessary adjustments as they are required. The need for flexibility is especially true in that every one of the 16 RMN tournaments has a different referee crew who each come from diverse state and national wrestling associations.

Thus we do our best to meld our interpretations, ultimately meeting somewhere in the middle. Officiating is at its best a negotiation, not a science, a process which is best accomplished without compromising essential values. As a work in progress, not a defined product, we are inclined to value the principles as much as the rules. Our job is to make it right by the best means possible.