



NEWS RELEASE

Key Change in High School Wrestling Rules Focuses on Reducing Injury Risk

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elliot Hopkins

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (May 2, 2025) — In an effort to minimize risk of injury in high school wrestling, a revision in the leg block or cut-back maneuver was recommended by the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee at its April 6-8 meeting in Indianapolis.

This revision to Rule 7-1-5n of the NFHS Wrestling Rules Book was one of eight changes recommended by the committee – all of which were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Although the leg block/cut-back maneuver already was an illegal move, the committee added “when leaving the feet and using the foot or leg to ‘cut out’ an opponent’s leg, to include from the rear-standing position.”

Elliot Hopkins, director of sports and student services and editor of the NFHS wrestling rules, said the committee added language about leaving the feet to help ensure that this move is not attempted because of the significant risk of injury.

In other rules changes, near-fall criteria language was added to the Technical Fall section in Rule 5-11. In Rules 5-11-2c and 5-11-4b, the following statement was approved: “If the near fall creates a 15-point advantage, the match shall continue until the near-fall criteria is no longer met. Conclusion of the near-fall criteria is immediate.”

“This change defines when a technical fall shall be awarded and eliminate any confusion between a pinning situation and near-fall criteria,” Hopkins said. “It also will make the technical fall consistent with the takedown or reversal that creates the 15-point advantage.”

Two changes were approved regarding equipment and uniforms. While wrestlers cannot wear wristbands, sweatbands, bicep bands or arm sleeves that do not contain a pad, they now will be able to wear leg sleeves that do not contain a pad. Since wrestlers are allowed to wear tights on both legs, the committee agreed that wearing leg sleeves would be no different.

In addition, effective July 1, 2027, the school's name, school nickname, school logo, school mascot, weight classification and/or the wrestler's name are permitted on the uniform top and/or bottom. Aside from the wrestling-specific terms, this is standard language approved for all NFHS sports rules publications.

The final changes approved by the committee included another option for conducting dual meets and a revision in the Technical Violation section. In Rule 1-2-2 regarding dual meets, the committee approved an option of conducting dual meets in order of lowest weight classes to the heaviest classes.

In Rule 7-3-3 regarding technical violations, "arm" was replaced with "extremity." The committee noted that locking hands and including a leg in the clasp around the trunk of the body is the same as locking hands with an arm included.

A complete listing of the wrestling rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on the "Activities & Sports" at the top of the home page and select "Wrestling." The print version of the 2025-26 Wrestling Spirit Rules Book will be available for purchase in July at www.NFHS.com, and the digital version will be available in the same timeframe via NFHS Digital at www.NFHS.org.

According to the most recent NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, spirit is the sixth-most popular sport for boys with 291,874 participants in 11,149 schools nationwide. In addition, 64,257 girls are now competing in the sport at 7,138 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 18 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 19,800 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 8 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.

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