

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



2023-24 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 2023-24 high school wrestling season, attention is being called to: Uniform Decorum, Excessive Celebration, Default vs. Forfeit and Concealment of a Communicable Skin Condition. 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.

Uniform Decorum

The proper use of a uniform is paramount in high school wrestling. Cleanliness, color selection, fit and style all go into what constitutes the proper decorum of use by the wrestler. A dirty, poorly sized, unbecoming colored uniform is an impediment that interferes with wrestling. We cannot afford for the wrestler’s attention to be distracted from the business at hand...to wrestle! Keeping the uniform washed and clean reduces risks of transmitting skin disease which protects the opponent, referee and provides comfort for the wearer. When looking to purchase new or replacement uniforms, consider your color selection and placement. Today’s young people do not want to be placed in a situation where a white or light uniform (top or bottom) when wet reveals more of their body than they are comfortable in having exposed. They can become easily embarrassed and self-conscious. With cell phones ever present and everything and/or everybody possibly being the next social media post that goes viral, we want to do our best in avoiding any unfortunate situations. Similarly, it is imperative that a uniform (singlet or two-piece) should be issued to a student that best fits their size, weight and gender. It is disconcerting to have a wrestler wearing a stretched out uniform while wrestling and the back of their uniform is touching the mat during competition. The referee has no other option but to award a fall to their opponent. Whereas, a properly fitted uniform would not have placed the wrestler in jeopardy.

With an increase of more than 30,000 girls entering our sport this last school year and more expected to join our ranks this year, girls being issued a boy’s uniform is no longer practical or reasonable. Obviously, boys and girls have different anatomies and require different types of uniforms. It is highly recommended that girls are issued girls’ cut singlets/ two-piece uniforms. The design of the girls’ cut style uniforms reduces the risk of exposure during wrestling competition. We cannot expect a girl to perform her best if she has to be concerned whether her uniform will support her while she is competing. A sports bra and suitable undergarment that completely covers the groin and buttocks are not just items of modern-day convenience. They are significant in high school wrestling because they are part of the uniform. Proper fit and sizing (to minimize the risk of exposure) should be considered when the female wrestler is on her feet or in various positions during competition. Coaches and

parents/guardians have a collaborative role in helping the wrestler to maintain their modesty with proper fitting undergarments and allow them to compete at their optimum best!

While a wholesale overhaul of your uniform stock is not necessary, you should inspect what you have and if it is financially (or when your school's uniform rotation occurs) feasible replace your inventory with newer and properly fitting uniforms designed for all the wrestlers on your team. It will encourage the morale and confidence of your wrestlers.

Excessive Celebration

Wrestling consists of two similar-sized athletes using their skill, technique, strength and catalogue of moves to control and dominate their opponent. One wrestler always has to win and the other unfortunately will be the loser during that match. We are observing that some of the celebrations have become excessive and over the top. We appreciate the exuberance of a young person winning, and their success is a sense of accomplishment and pride, but not at the expense of their opponent. Embarrassing the opponent does not add to their win. It tarnishes the sport that they have dedicated themselves to and have found success in. High school sports and other activities exist to lift students up, not demean or tear them down. The goal is to treat everyone fairly and treat each other with respect. Any actions, taunts, speech or harassment that is insulting, demeaning or hurtful will and should not be tolerated.

Good sports win with humility, lose with grace and do both with dignity. It takes the efforts of everyone every day to ensure that sportsmanship remains one of the top priorities in education-based activity programs.

Default vs. Forfeit

In the purest and simplest form, a default is awarded when a wrestler is unable to continue wrestling for any reason. The match has started and the wrestler cannot continue to wrestle anywhere during the match. The opponent wins and the defaulting wrestler receives the loss.

A forfeit is when an opponent fails to appear for a match for any reason. With the new rule change, a medical forfeit is now an option. The caveat is that the forfeiting wrestler cannot wrestle due to an injury or illness that occurred during the tournament. The wrestler remains in the tournament if possible (moving down to the consolation bracket) and does not take a loss on their record. This entire transaction is determined by the tournament director after consultation with the on-site appropriate health-care professional and the coach of the injured or ill contestant. Both actions cease wrestling for different reasons and have unique consequences.

Concealment of a Communicable Skin Condition

With the new facial hair rule allowing beards of varying thicknesses and lengths, paying particular attention to more visible skin issues is as important as ever. Covering a communicable skin disease with either make-up or other methods is in direct conflict with the rules of fairness and risk minimization. Concealing or hiding a communicable skin disease is unsporting behavior and in violation of the NFHS Communicable Disease Procedures and makes the wrestler ineligible to participate per rule.

