

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



## NEWS RELEASE

### Pre-Match Requirements for Referees Clarified in High School Wrestling

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bob Colgate

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 27, 2015) — A more standardized pre-match procedure requiring referees to perform skin checks or verify that skin checks had been completed on-site by an appropriate health-care professional was approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Wrestling Rules Committee at its April 8-10 meeting in Indianapolis.

This clarification of the skin-check rule for dual meets and tournaments, along with one other change recommended by the committee for the 2015-16 season, were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Under Rule 3-1-4a, the new pre-match procedure further clarifies the duties of wrestling referees before a dual meet begins. A new rule (3-1-5) will add the same inspection requirements before tournaments. The actual requirements were not changed, only written in clearer, more specific language.

"The skin-check rule has always been in the NFHS Wrestling Rules Book, but the committee felt it needed to be clarified and specified that this needed to be done," said Bob Colgate, NFHS director of sports and sports medicine and liaison to the NFHS Wrestling Rules Committee.

Alan Beste, executive director of the Iowa High School Athletic Association and chair of the Wrestling Rules Committee, said there continues to be national concern about communicable skin conditions in wrestling. Some of those conditions can pose significant health risks that may have lifelong effects.

“The two major rules changes reflect the committee’s feeling that it is important to emphasize this concern and give referees, who are the impartial parties at every competition, more responsibility in determining a wrestler’s readiness to compete safely,” Beste said.

The other rule change was to Rule 10-2-9, regarding a situation where two wrestlers in the championship bracket simultaneously cannot continue a match and the score is tied. A new criterion was added to the rule. The new criteria states, “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, then the previously set criteria will be used to determine advancement to the consolation bracket. The committee added this new criterion to emphasize sportsmanship during competition.

“I think it’s a good change,” Colgate said. “It puts more emphasis on sportsmanship in wrestling, which the committee feels is very important.”

A complete listing of the wrestling rules changes is available on the NFHS website at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org). Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page, and select “Wrestling.”

According to the 2013-14 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, wrestling is the sixth-most popular boys sport nationwide with 269,514 participants. There were 9,904 girls who participated in the sport as well.

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This press release was written by Ben Sieck, a spring semester intern in the NFHS Publications and Communications Department and a junior at Butler University.

### 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 16 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 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.7 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](http://www.nfhs.org).

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