



2026 - 2027 NFHS Wrestling Rules

Denis Tallini

dtallini@windstream.net

337-298-7119 c

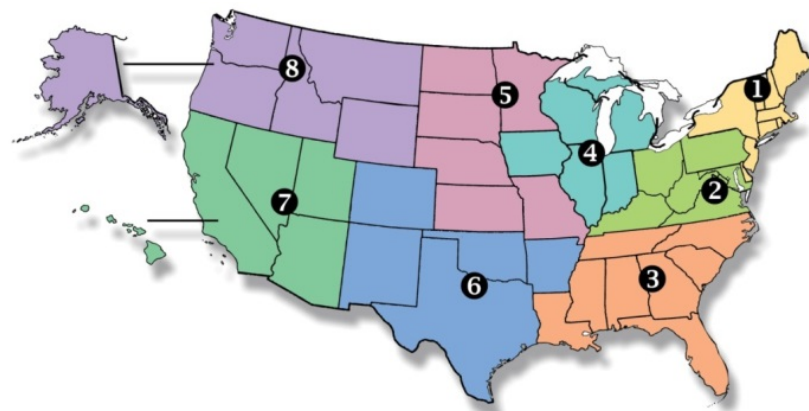
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National Federation of State High School Associations



- NFHS (located in Indianapolis, IN – Est. 1920):
 - National leader and advocate for high school athletics and performing arts programs.
 - Serves 51 state associations, 19,500 high schools and 12 million student participants.
 - Writes playing rules for 18 high school sports for boys and girls.
 - Offers online education courses for high school coaches, officials, parents, students and others.
 - Ensures that students have opportunity to enjoy healthy participation, achievement and good sportsmanship in education-based athletics.



NFHS Rules Review Committee



The NFHS Rules Review Committee is chaired by the executive director and composed of all rules editors. After each committee concludes its deliberations and has adopted its recommended changes for the subsequent year, such revisions will be evaluated by the Rules Review Committee.



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Executive Director



Lindsey Atkinson
Boys & Girls Lacrosse
and Volleyball



Julie Cochran
Cross Country, Soccer and
Track & Field



Bob Colgate
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Football and Sports
Medicine



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Wrestling



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Hockey and Girls
Gymnastics



Dan Schuster
Ice Hockey



Sandy Searcy
Softball, Swimming &
Diving and Water Polo



Chris Paulson
Spirit



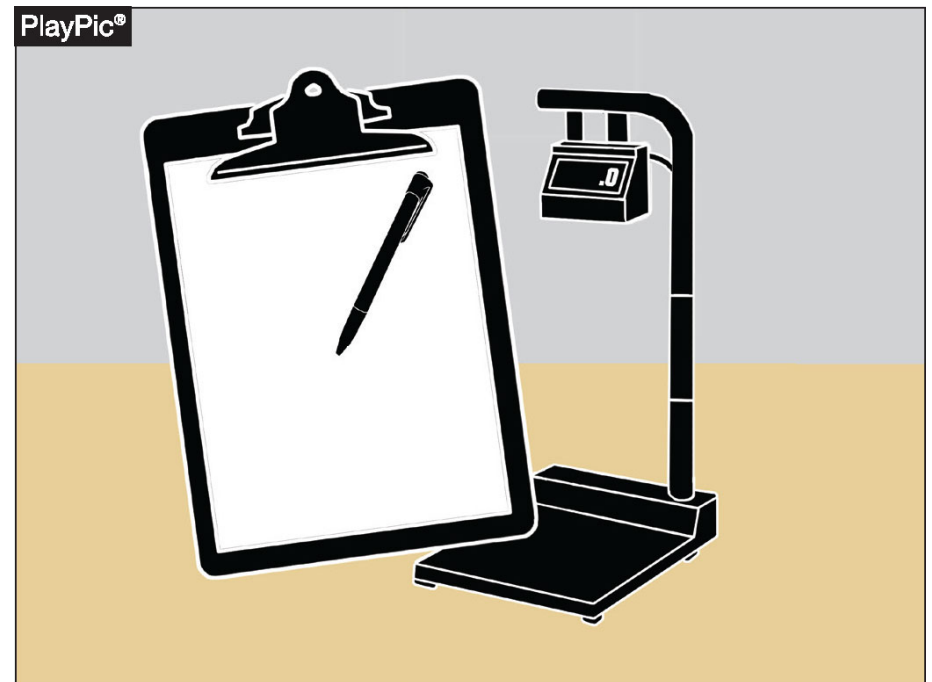
2026 - 2027 NFHS Wrestling Rules Changes

RULES CHANGES

RULES 1-5-1 & 1-5-2 MINIMUM BODY FAT PERCENTAGE



- Minimum body fat percentage for females increases from **12% to 19%**
- Minimum body fat percentage for males remains **7%**
- Any wrestler below the minimum must have a medical clearance
- Medical clearance does not allow competition below the certified minimum weight class
- Monitored descent plan of no more than **1.5% per week remains.**

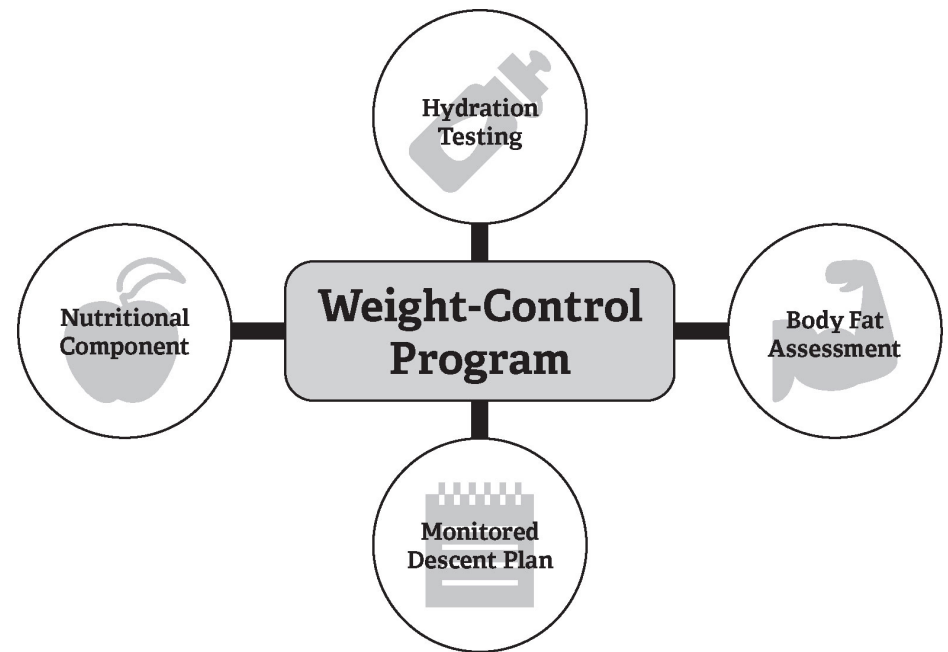


RULES CHANGES

RULES 1-5-1 & 1-5-2 WEIGHT CONTROL PROGRAM REMINDERS



- Each state association develops and administers its own weight-control program
- The program should involve:
 - Wrestler
 - Parents/guardians
 - Appropriate health-care professionals
 - Coach
- An ideal program includes:
 - Hydration testing
 - Body fat assessment
 - Monitored descent plan
 - Nutritional component
- Hydration testing must immediately precede body fat assessment
- Specific gravity may not be greater than **1.025**



RULE 1-5-1 WEIGHT CONTROL PROGRAM



ART. 1 . . . Each individual state high school association shall develop and utilize a specified weight-control program which will discourage excessive weight reduction and/or wide variations in weight, because this may be harmful to the competitor. Such a program should be planned to involve the wrestler, as well as the parents/guardians, appropriate health-care professionals and coach in establishing the minimum certified weight class. An ideal program would be one where an appropriate health-care professional would assist in establishing a minimum weight class through hydration testing, body fat assessment and a monitored descent plan. Minimum body fat should not be lower than seven percent for males or 19 percent for females.

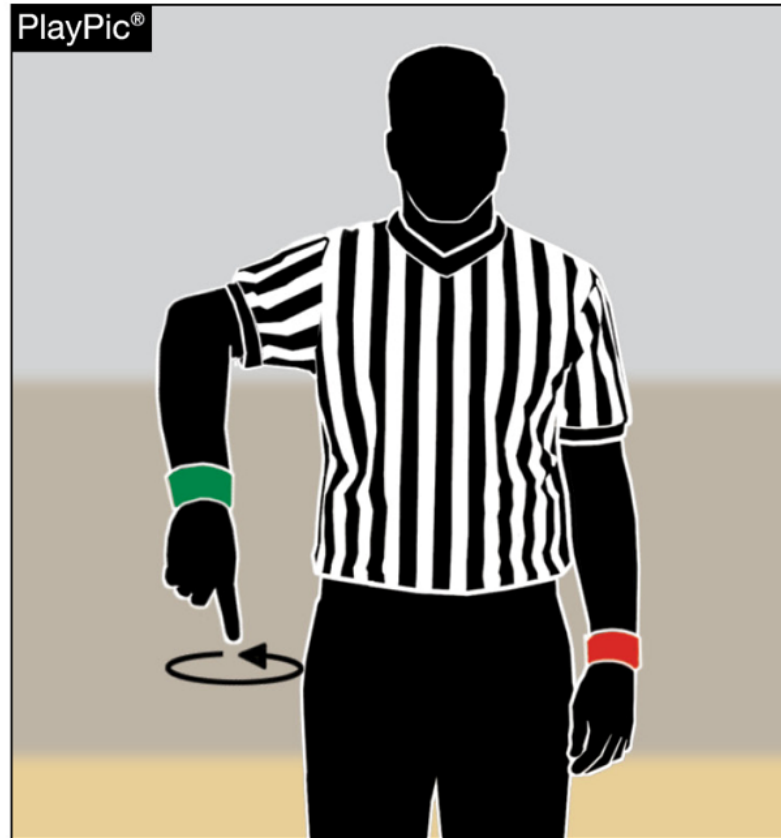
RULE 4-5-1 WRESTLERS' APPEARANCE AND HEALTH



ART. 1 . . . Contestants shall have the opportunity to weigh in, shoulder to shoulder or by team(s) first competition at the start of a dual meet or a team's first competition each day a multiple-dual event is scheduled to begin. When a preliminary meet is followed by a varsity meet, weigh-ins may, by mutual consent, precede the preliminary meet.

RULES CHANGES

RULE 5-28-3b DEFINITION TIME-OUT



RULE 5-28-3b DEFINITION TIME-OUT



ART. 3 . . . Recovery time. If a contestant is injured or bleeding as a result of an illegal hold/maneuver, unnecessary roughness, unsportsmanlike conduct during the match or the result of a false start (by the opponent) in the neutral position, the wrestler is entitled to two minutes of recovery time, which is not deducted from the injured wrestler's injury time allowance nor shall it constitute an HNC time-out.
(8-2-2)

RULES CHANGES

RULE 5-28-3b DEFINITION TIME-OUT

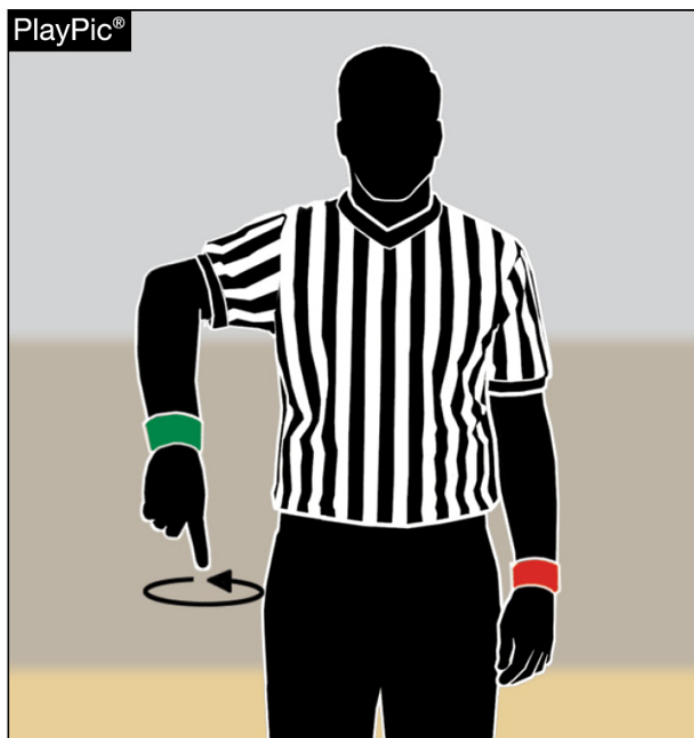


Rationale:

A wrestler who is injured/bleeding because of an illegal hold/maneuver, unnecessary roughness, or unsportsmanlike conduct during the match or the result of a false start (by the opponent) in the neutral position is allowed two minutes to recover before winning the match by default. **A bleeding contestant should not have to bleed for five minutes before being declared the winner if injured because of an illegal hold/maneuver, unnecessary roughness, or unsportsmanlike conduct during the match or the result of a false start (by the opponent) in the neutral position.** This blood time is not deducted from the bleeding wrestler's blood time allowance.

RULES CHANGES

RULE 8-2-7 INJURY



Bleeding Occurs

Was bleeding caused by illegal action, unnecessary roughness, unsportsmanlike conduct or an opponent's neutral-position false start?

No

Use Blood Time

Time-outs remain at referee discretion

If bleeding is not stopped within cumulative 5:00, terminate match

Yes

Use Recovery Time

Wrestler receives 2:00 recovery time

Not charged to blood time

**Cleanup after bleeding is stopped does not count against blood time.*

RULES CHANGES

RULE 5-24-4b DEFINITION STALLING

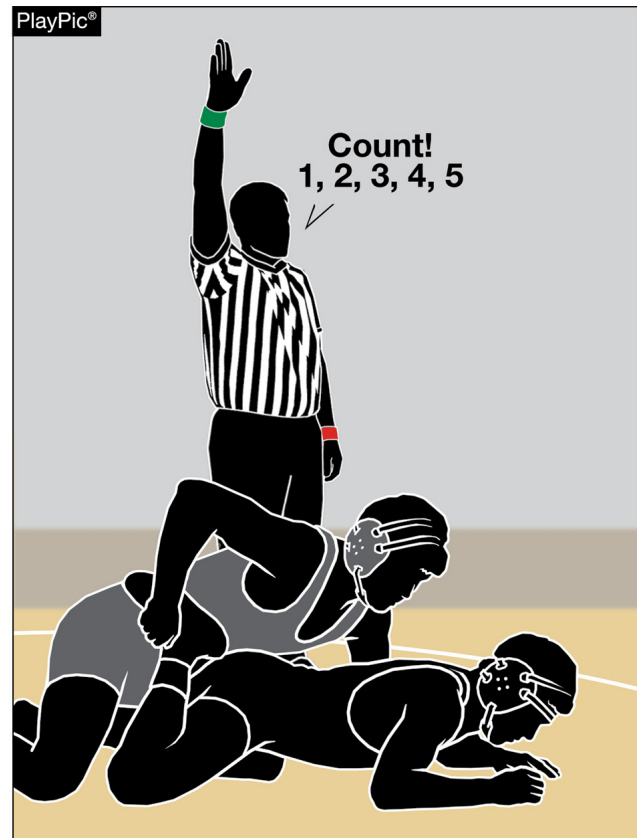


ART. 4 . . .

- a. Remains the same.
- b. legally holds the heel to the buttocks **while the defensive wrestler is broken down** on the mat for more than five seconds. The referee shall signal and vocalize a five - second count; or

RULES CHANGES

RULE 5-24-4b DEFINITION STALLING



RULES CHANGES

RULE 7-6-3g INFRACTIONS STALLING



ART. 3 . . . Sub-articles a-f remain the same.

g. When wrestling is stopped for going out of bounds in the neutral position, one of the following four calls should be made (See Referee's signals):

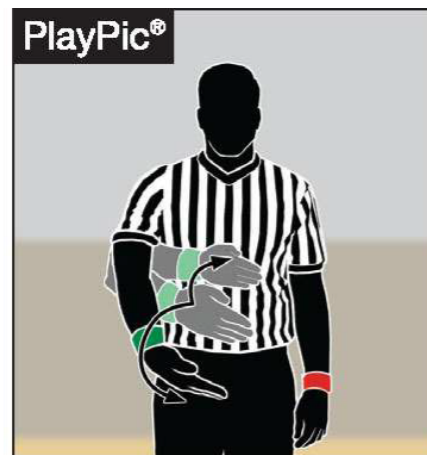
- i. Stalling by one of the wrestlers for leaving the wrestling area.
- ii. Stalling by pushing or pulling the opponent out of bounds.
- iii. Stalling by backing out of the wrestling area; or
- iv. Wrestling action is taking place.

RULES CHANGES

RULE 7-6-3g INFRACTIONS STALLING



16a. Neutral Stalling
Back Out



16b. Neutral Position
Wrestlers Engaged



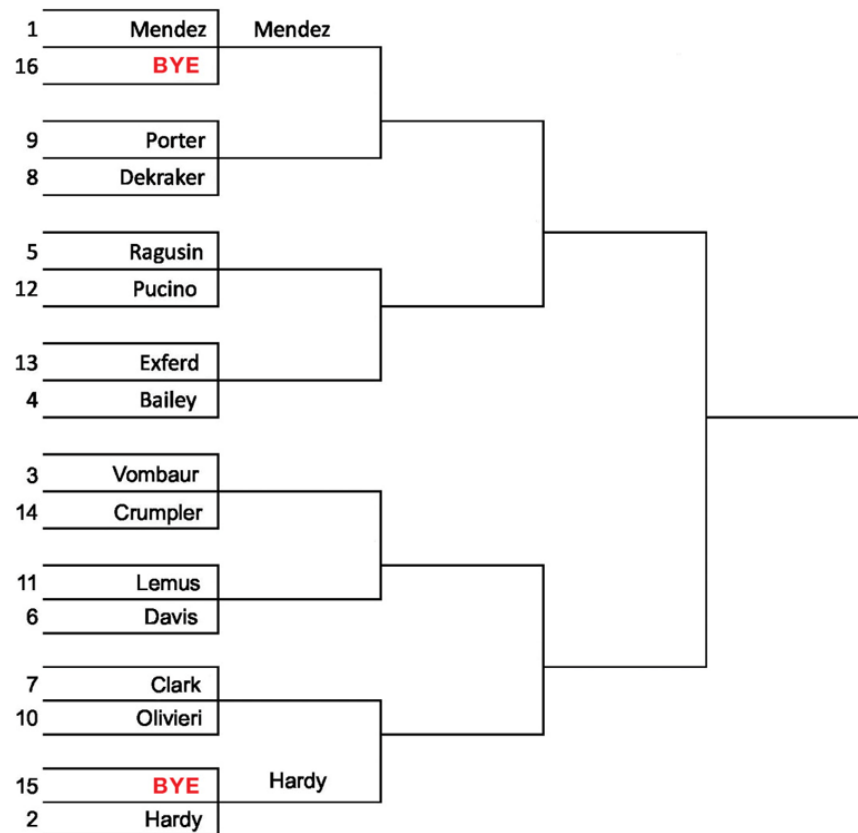
16c. Pulling Opponent
Out-of-Bounds



16d. Pushing Opponent
Out-of-Bounds

RULES CHANGES

RULE 5-3-1 DEFINITION BYES



RULE 5-3-1 DEFINITION BYES



ART. 1 . . . When the number of competitors is not a power of 2, that is 4, 8, 16, 32 and 64, there shall be byes ~~.in the first round~~. The number of byes shall be equal to the difference between the number of competitors and the next higher power of two.

Rationale:

With the use of tournament management software systems (Trackwrestling, USA Bracketing, etc.), the reality is that byes **may** exist after the first round and are scored as such on both championship and consolation sides of the bracket. The addition of more scramble style tournaments, where wrestlers are placed in round robin pools and then advance to a bracket for placement, requires byes to exist after the first round, thus making this wording obsolete in the current form of wrestling.

RULE 5-3-2 DEFINITION BYES



ART. 2 . . . Byes do not count as a match and are not counted towards the maximum number of six matches per day or ten matches over a two-day event. Byes also do not count towards a wrestler's match record.

Rationale:

Same as 5-3-1.

RULES CHANGES

RULE 5-3-3 DEFINITION BYES



ART. 3 . . . When byes are required ~~for the first round~~, individuals receiving byes shall be placed by mutual consent or drawn so they are distributed evenly throughout the bracket.

Rationale:

Same as 5-3-1.

RULE 5-3-4 DEFINITION BYES



ART. 4 . . . No quarter bracket, half bracket or round robin pool, shall have more than one bye in excess of its paired bracket or pool.

Rationale:

With the significant increase in scramble events that divide wrestlers into round robin pools instead of placing them on traditional brackets, adding this language will clarify and give more guidance on this type of individual tournament.

RULE 5-3-5 DEFINITION BYES



ART. 5 . . . After seeded wrestlers have been placed in the bracket or pool and the byes have been placed or drawn, remaining wrestlers shall be placed by draw.

Rationale:

With the significant increase in scramble events that divide wrestlers into round robin pools instead of placing them on traditional brackets, adding this language will clarify and give more guidance on this type of individual tournament.

RULE 10-3-3 TOURNAMENT BYES



ART. 3 . . . When byes are required ~~for the first round~~, individuals receiving byes shall be placed by mutual consent or drawn so they are distributed evenly throughout the bracket.

Rationale:

Same as 10-3-1.

RULE 10-3-5 TOURNAMENT BYES



ART. 5 . . . After seeded wrestlers have been placed in the bracket or pool and the byes have been placed or, drawn, remaining wrestlers shall be placed by draw.

Rationale:

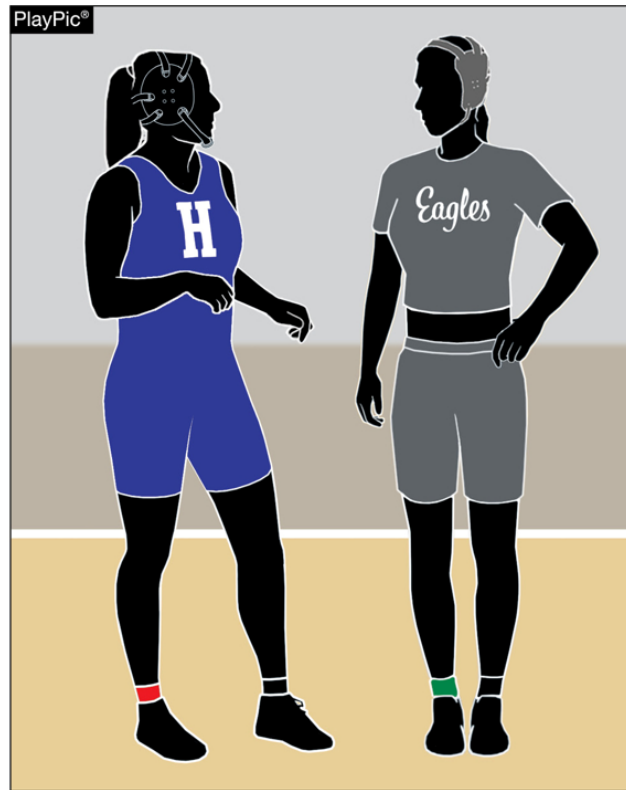
With the significant increase in scramble events that divide wrestlers into round robin pools instead of placing them on traditional brackets, adding this language will clarify and give more guidance on this type of individual tournament.



2026 NFHS Wrestling Points of Emphasis

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

FEMALE WRESTLER UNIFORMS





FEMALE WRESTLER UNIFORMS

The continued growth of girls wrestling places an increased responsibility on schools and coaches to ensure that female wrestlers are provided with **properly fitted, sport-appropriate uniforms**. Appropriate uniform fit is essential to support, **safety, performance and the overall student experience**.

Uniforms shall be worn in a manner that allows for **full range of motion**, remain secure during all phases of competition, and eliminates the need for frequent adjustment. Ill-fitting uniforms whether too loose or too restrictive may create unnecessary distractions and potential safety concerns.

It is also imperative that uniforms provide **appropriate coverage and comfort**, recognizing the physical demands of the sport. When female athletes are confident in the fit and function of their uniform, they are better positioned to focus on competition and perform at their highest level.



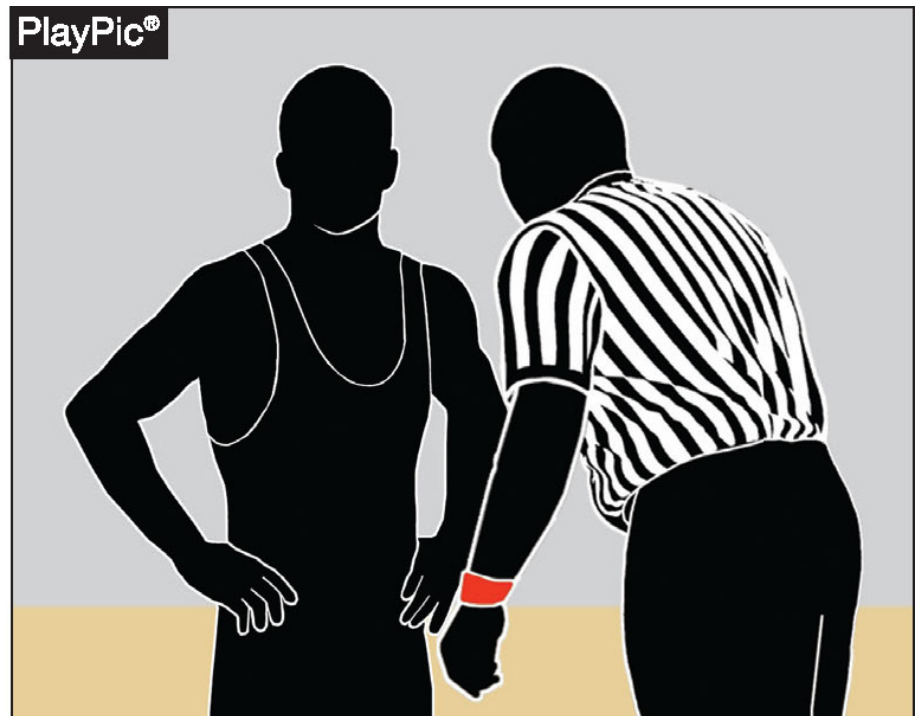
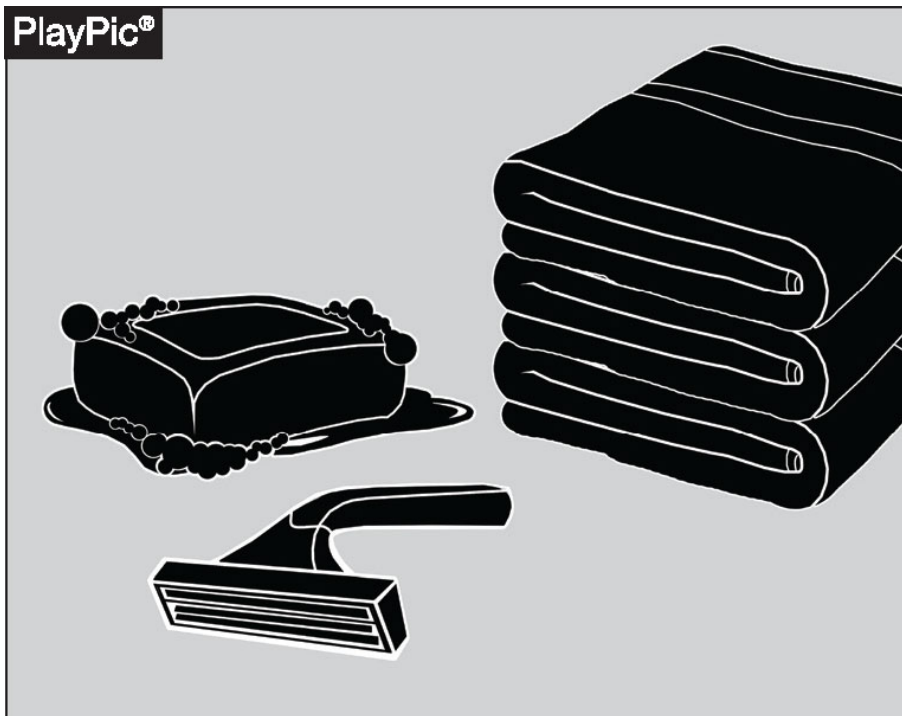
FEMALE WRESTLER UNIFORMS

Schools, parents and coaches are expected to be proactive in addressing uniform needs by ensuring access to a **range of sizes and appropriate uniform options**, including legal undergarments. This approach reflects a commitment to **equity, inclusion, and respect for all participants**. Girls' participation growth is making wrestling one of the fastest growing sports.

Attention to proper uniform fit is not only a matter of compliance with NFHS rules, but also a demonstration of our shared responsibility to provide a **safe, respectful and supportive environment** for the continued growth of girls wrestling.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

IMPORTANCE OF PROPER HYGIENE



IMPORTANCE OF PROPER HYGIENE



The prevention of communicable skin conditions remains a **critical priority in interscholastic wrestling**. Due to the nature of close physical contact inherent in the sport, proper hygiene practices are essential to protect the health and safety of all participants.

Students are expected to maintain **high standards of personal hygiene**, including showering immediately after practices and competitions, washing and wearing clean practice and competition gear, and avoiding the sharing of personal items such as towels, clothing, and equipment. These measures significantly reduce the risk of transmitting skin infections.



IMPORTANCE OF PROPER HYGIENE

Coaches and school personnel play a vital role in reinforcing these expectations by promoting daily hygiene routines and monitoring athletes for any visible skin concerns. **Regular skin checks** should be conducted, and any suspicious lesions must be properly evaluated and managed in accordance with NFHS rules and state association guidelines before participation is permitted.



IMPORTANCE OF PROPER HYGIENE

In addition, schools must ensure that **wrestling mats and equipment are cleaned and disinfected regularly**, particularly before and after use. Maintaining a clean environment is a shared responsibility and a key component in minimizing exposure to infectious conditions.

Failure to adhere to proper hygiene protocols may result in increased transmission of skin conditions, negatively impacting both individual athletes and team participation. A proactive and consistent approach to hygiene helps ensure a **safe, healthy, and competitive environment**.



UNDERSTANDING OF “BAD TIME”

- The accurate administration of match time and scoring is essential to the integrity of interscholastic wrestling. Situations involving “bad time”, when time is incorrectly started, stopped or allowed to run require a clear understanding by officials, coaches, and table personnel to ensure that matches are conducted fairly and within NFHS rules.
- Bad time may occur due to errors such as the clock running during a stoppage, failing to start the clock when action resumes or allowing wrestling to continue beyond the allotted period. When identified, these situations must be corrected in a timely and appropriate manner in accordance with NFHS rules.



UNDERSTANDING OF “BAD “TIME

Officials are responsible for recognizing and correcting bad time, including:

- Adjusting the match clock to reflect the correct amount of time remaining.
- Reconstructing match situations as accurately as possible for fairness and accuracy.
- Ensuring that neither wrestler gains an unfair advantage due to timing errors.

Table personnel and coaches also play an important role by remaining attentive and communicating potential timing discrepancies immediately. Prompt recognition and communication are critical to minimizing the impact of bad time on match outcomes.



Editorial Changes



RULE 1-4-3

ART. 3 . . .

No wrestler shall represent the school in more than one weight class in any meet or wrestler in more than six matches (championship or consolation), excluding forfeits and byes in anyone day of competition.

Rationale:

Editorial.



RULE 8-1-2g Reminder

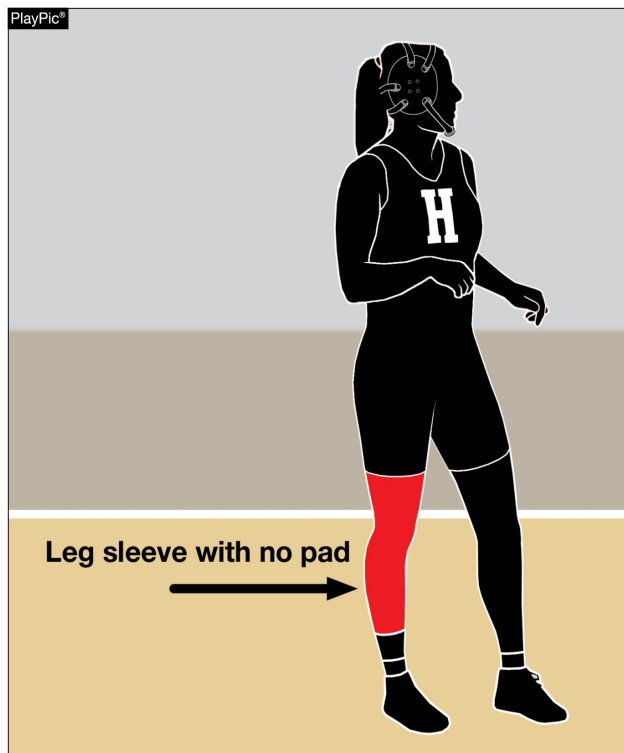
ART. 2 . . .

Sub articles a-f remain the same.

g. Related to stall calls including the two-point stall call, as shown in items a-f above. The match would not be stopped to warn or penalize for stalling, including a two-point stall if the stalling is for any shoes or shoelace violations, during any significant action or imminent scoring situations.

RULES CHANGES

2025 Rule Reminder



- Wrestlers shall not wear wristbands, sweatbands, bicep bands or ~~leg or~~ arm sleeves that do not contain a pad during a match.

Rationale:

We allow wrestlers to wear tights on both legs and that is no different than a sleeve on one leg. Requiring a pad on these sleeves serves no purpose.



2025 Rule Reminder

- **ART. 3 . . .** Interlocking or overlapping the hands, fingers or arms around the opponent's body (with or without an extremity ~~arm~~ 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, is a technical violation and the penalty point(s) shall be awarded in addition to points earned. (When bringing your opponent to the mat, hands overlapping or interlocking beyond reaction time is a technical violation.) (Photos 103-106)

Rationale:

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.



2025 Rule Reminder

- n. leg block (cut-back) when leaving the feet and using the foot or leg to "cut out" an opponent's leg, to include from the rear-standing position.

Rationale:

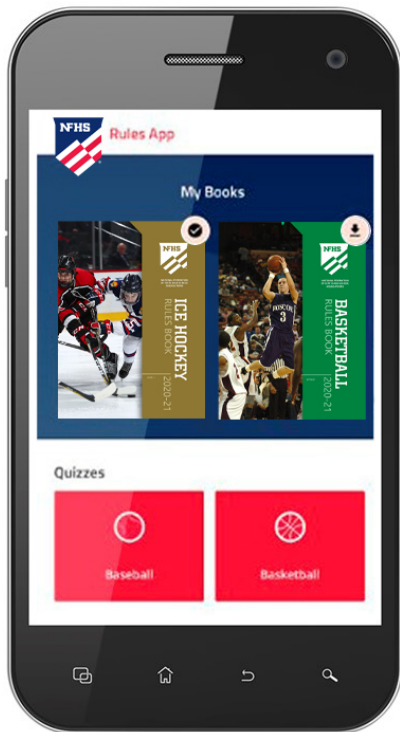
This rule change seeks to clarify language regarding the leg block or "cut-back". When applied the move/maneuver can cause significant injury to the defensive wrestlers' lower extremities. The NFHS is now aligned with other rules codes to clarify this illegal maneuver.



2025 Rule Reminder

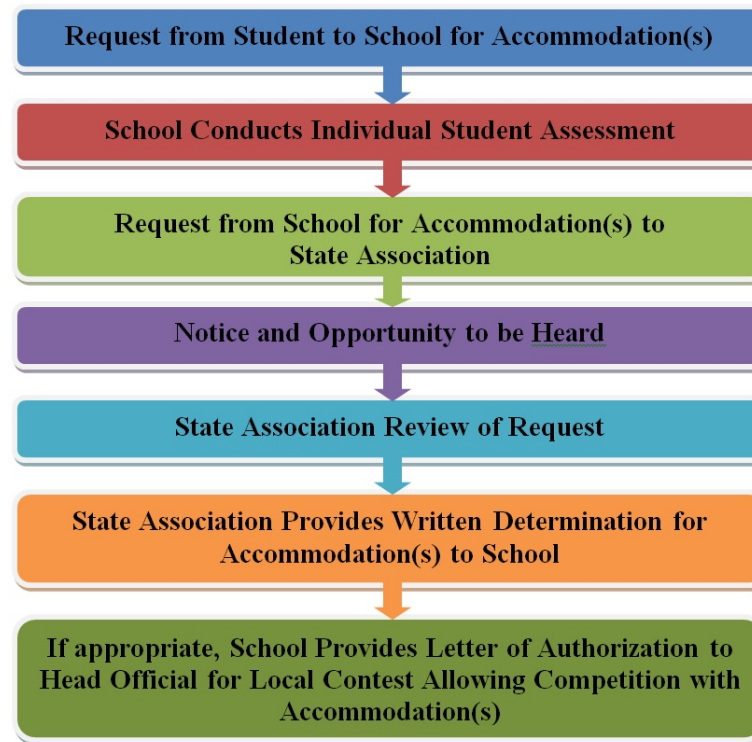
- **ART. 2 . . .** A near fall occurs when the offensive wrestler has control of the opponent in a pinning situation and near-fall criteria are met for a period of two seconds or longer. (Photos 5-6)
- a.- b. Remain the same.
- c. A near fall is ended when the defensive wrestler gets out of a pinning situation. The referee must not signal the score for a near fall until the situation is ended and only one near fall shall be scored in each pinning situation, regardless of number of times the offensive wrestler places an opponent in the near-fall position criteria during the pinning situation. 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.
- d.- i. Remain the same.

NFHS Rules App



- Rules App features:
 - Searchable
 - Highlight notes
 - Bookmarks
 - Easy navigation
 - Immediate availability
 - Free to paid members of the NFHS Coaches and Officials Associations
 - <https://support.nfhsdigital.org/> for more information

Guidelines for Schools and state associations for consideration of accommodations





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*Fundamentals of
Coaching*



*Concussion in
Sports*



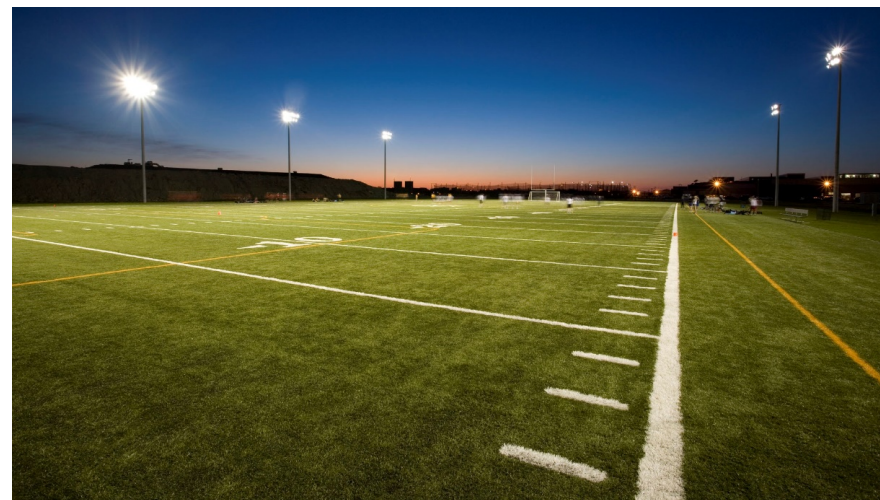
*Sudden Cardiac
Arrest*



*Protecting Students
from Abuse*

NFHS Network

- In 2026, every high school sporting event in America will be streamed live.
- The NFHS Network will be THE DESTINATION for fans to view these broadcasts.
- 28 Different Sports and Activities



www.NFHSnetwork.com

28,000 LIVE BROADCASTS



Weight Management Program



- GIAA website: wrestling page
- The GIAA does not advocate that an athlete's established minimum weight is his/her best weight, but simply the lowest weight at which the athlete will be allowed to compete.
- GIAA wrestlers will follow a weight control program which is based on the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Rule 1-5. This program includes:
 - Establishment of a minimum weight class through hydration testing & body fat assessment
 - a monitored weekly weight loss plan



Weight Management Program

- Mandatory: any athlete competing on JV/Varsity
- Assessment done and test data entered before competing
- Testing dates: 10/10/26 - 12/20/26 (late period 1/3/27-1/10/27)
- Schedule assessments with **assigned testing site**
- Assessment Fee: \$10/athlete; payable at time of test
- Weight descent plan: 1.5% per week
- Weight descent plan ends: 3/1/27
- Growth allowance: 2 lbs. on 12/25/26
- National Prep: Weight recalculation pg 6, Growth Allowance pg 7

National Prep: Weight Descent Recalculation (pg 6)



- Wrestler A has an established minimum weight class of 113 pounds according to the assessment and he is descending toward that weight. Wrestler A's descent plan for a match shows a projected weight of 116.0 but he weighs in at 118.0 and wrestles in the 120-pound class. When the actual weigh-in weight of 116.0 is entered into the OPC, the Individual Weight Loss Plan will not recalculate. **The athlete may weigh up to 119.9 and still remain on the same weight descent plan. If the athlete weighs 120.0 or more, the weight loss plan will then recalculate.**

National Prep: Growth Allowance

(pg 7)



- If a wrestler's MWW (minimum wrestling weight) determined at the time of testing is 134 their lowest eligible weight class is 138 prior to the growth allowance. After the 2 lb. growth allowance is granted on December 25, the weight classes change and 132 now becomes 134 so, **as long as the athletes' weight descent plan allows** the athlete to be 134, he/she may wrestle in that weight class.

Weight Management Program



- Form 1: Individual Profile (complete top box and bring to testing)
- Form 4: Medical Clearance: <7% boys or <19% girls
- Form 5B: Weight Appeal, Boys
- Form 5G: Weight Appeal, Girls
- Alpha Roster/Weight descent plans
- Weigh In roster/posting weigh ins (consecutive day events)
- Scale certification pg. 3

Weight Management Program

Optimal Performance Calculator (OPC)



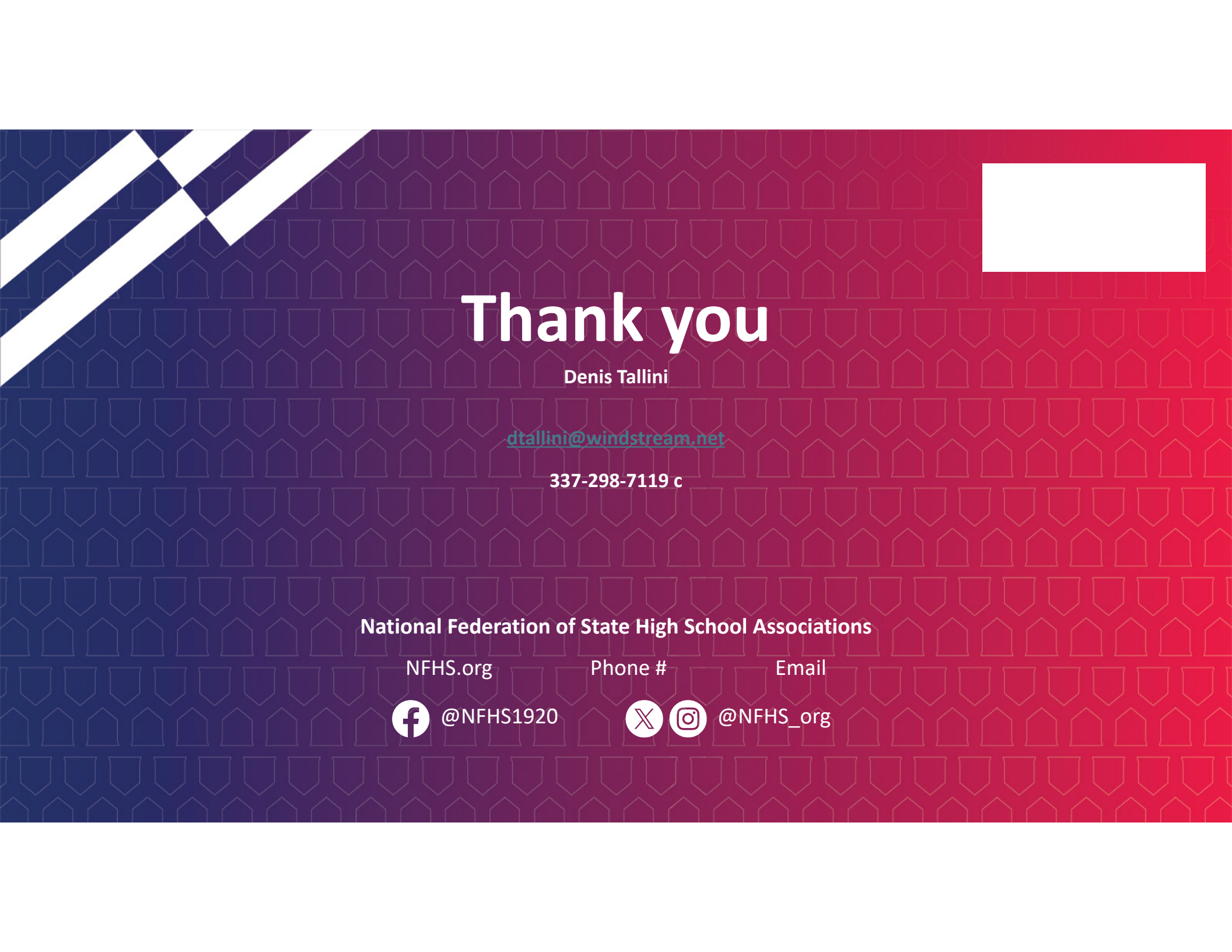
- Login email from noreply@trackwrestling.com sent to coach and AD
 - Activate: click on blue "Sign In" tab
 - Update account info, use given password or make new, then save
 - Acknowledge message/confirm email address
 - OPC access (boys and girls on same roster) plus Nat Prep fee
 - **Statistics program is optional**
 - General instructions: www.trackwrestling.com--Get Help/FAQ's; or Coach Handbook
- § Rosters: import last year's and/or manually add/delete (add DOB) before testing date

Weight Management Program

Optimal Performance Calculator (OPC)



- **Logging in:**
 - Go to trackwrestling.com
 - **OPC tab**
 - Click on boys season
 - Input your user name and password. If you do not know your account information, click 'Forgot Password'
 - Hit enter or click the arrow to proceed



Thank you

Denis Tallini

dtallini@windstream.net

337-298-7119 c

National Federation of State High School Associations

NFHS.org

Phone #

Email



@NFHS1920



@NFHS_org