

# Alternate Two-Piece Uniform Approved for High School Wrestling

By NFHS on May 02, 2017

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An alternate two-piece uniform consisting of compression shorts or shorts designed for wrestling and a form-fitted compression shirt has been approved for the 2017-18 season in high school wrestling. Wrestlers will have the option of the new two-piece uniform or the traditional one-piece singlet.

This revision to Rule 4-1-1 was one of 11 rules changes recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Wrestling Rules Committee at its April 2-4 meeting in Indianapolis, and all changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

The compression shorts or shorts designed for wrestling shall be school-issued and shall have a minimum 4-inch inseam that does not extend below the knee. The form-fitted compression shirt shall not cover or extend below the elbow and shall have a minimum 3-inch tail. The shirt may be worn under a singlet or with compression shorts or shorts designed for wrestling.

Specific language was developed regarding undergarment requirements for female contestants wearing a one-piece singlet or a form-fitted compression shirt, as well as for male contestants wearing shorts designed for wrestling.

The committee approved use of the alternate two-piece uniform in the hopes of increasing boys and girls participation in the sport after receiving favorable results from experimentation and positive comments from schools, students, coaches and officials.

The committee approved several rules related to minimizing risk of injury in the sport. Rule 4-5-3 now prohibits any activities that promote weight loss or weight gain when an athlete misses weight on his or her first attempt on the scale. In addition to activities that promote dehydration or drinking fluids to gain weight, the rule now prohibits activities such as cutting hair, modifying clothing, etc.

Another change designed to reduce risk of injury was elimination of the straight-back salto, regardless of which body part (head, neck or shoulder) hits the mat first. The straight-back salto in the rear-standing position that brings the defensive wrestler straight back with feet in the air is intended to have the defensive wrestler's head, neck or shoulder(s) hit the mat first, and is now an illegal move.

In addition, added to the list of illegal holds/maneuvers in Rule 7-1-5 was a front flip and/or front hurdle over an opponent in the standing position.

"The attempt to flip or hurdle an opponent from a neutral position is not only an elevated risk to the wrestler attempting the maneuver, it also places the opponent in a disadvantage position as he or she is not only left to counter the scoring attempt, but is placed in a position of responsibility for not reacting in a manner that may cause a slam or unsafe return to the mat of the wrestler who actually initiated the maneuver," said Elliot Hopkins, NFHS director of sports and student services.

The committee approved two changes in Rule 5-11 related to falls and near falls. In 5-11-1, the shoulders or scapula of the offensive wrestler no longer must be inbounds to earn a fall. The committee agreed that wrestling should continue if the offensive wrestler's supporting parts remain inbounds and no body part of the defensive wrestler goes off the mat. In 5-11-5, "unless any part of the shoulders or both scapulae of the defensive wrestler is inbounds" was eliminated. If wrestling is continuing during a match, near falls and falls will be awarded/earned regardless of the out-of-bounds line.

In a related rule, Rule 5-15-2b, c was changed as follows: "Near-fall points or a fall shall be earned while the supporting points of either wrestler are inbounds."

"The committee agreed that offensive wrestling should be rewarded," Hopkins said. "If wrestling is continuing, as allowed by current rules, and points for escapes and reversals are allowed, the ability to earn a fall or near fall should be there as well, with no deference to the out-of-bounds line."

Other changes approved by the committee include the following:

- Rule 5-19-10: The referee no longer may be behind the contestants when starting the wrestlers from the down position, which has led the false starts by one or both wrestlers.
- Rule 6-6-4a(1) and 6-6-5a(1): Errors by the timekeeper, official scorer or referee must be corrected prior to the offended contestant leaving the mat area and before the start of the next match on that mat.
- 7-6-4d: Stalling occurs when the contestant in the advantage position stays behind the opponent while on his/her feet, making no attempt to bring the opponent to the mat.

“The wrestling rules committee did another phenomenal job in taking the necessary strides to promote participation by approving a two-piece alternate uniform to be worn,” Hopkins said. “The committee also continued its commitment to reducing risk by making the straight-back salto and suplay illegal maneuvers, as well as prohibiting weight loss or gain in the weigh-in area. In addition, scoring a fall or near-fall is strengthened by the modifications to the definition and location of fall and near-fall in our rules book.”

Wrestling ranks seventh in popularity among boys at the high school level with 250,653 participants, according to the 2015-16 NFHS Athletics Participation Survey. In addition, 13,496 girls participate in the sport throughout the nation.

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