



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA WRESTLING RULES COMMITTEE
APRIL 10-12, 2017, MEETING**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- **None.**

2. Nonlegislative items. The NCAA Wrestling Rules Committee approved the following rules changes proposals for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 seasons. The committee requests approval from the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP) for the following items:

a. Mat Dimensions (Rule 1.8).

- (1) Recommendation. The matted area shall extend at least five feet from the competition circle. It is recommended any obstruction such as a table, bleacher or wall be an additional three feet from the wrestling mat area.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. The current rule only requires that obstructions be five feet from the competition circle. The committee was concerned with team benches and spectators being too close to the competition area and recommended an additional three-foot buffer zone outside of the mandatory five feet of matted protection.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. Minimal.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Increases safety for student-athletes on the mat.

b. Mat Dimensions (Rule 1.8).

- (1) Recommendation. ~~The entire wrestling area and apron shall be the same thickness, which shall not be more than 4 inches nor less than the thickness of a mat that has the shock absorbing qualities of a 2 inch thick hair felt mat.~~ The entire competition circle and surrounding matted area shall meet the most current ASTM Specification Standard for wrestling mats.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.

- (3) Rationale. The current rules language is outdated and mats are no longer produced under the specifications in the rules book. The ASTM standard is a more appropriate measure for wrestling mats.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. Some. Institutions may not have mats that meet the current ASTM standard and would be required to purchase new mats.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Ensures mats are being produced to the same specifications. This will enhance the safety for student-athletes.

c. Mat Safety and Hygiene (Rule 1.11).

- (1) Recommendation. It is required that all mats be cleaned and disinfected prior to competition and recommended they be cleaned before subsequent rounds of an event.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Provides clarity to tournament committees and competition hosts that disinfecting mats is imperative and must be performed, at a minimum, prior to the start of competition. It will continue to be a recommendation that the mat(s) be cleaned and disinfected between rounds and multiple dual meet events.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Increases health and safety for student-athletes on the mat.

d. Uniforms – Team Uniformity in Clothing (Rule 1.12.2).

- (1) Recommendation. Allow the wrestler's last name, institution's logo or mascot and an American or state flag to be on the competition uniform.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Permits and standardizes additional items that may be placed on the competition uniform. The name or initials of the wrestler's institution, in letters at least two inches high, will continue to be a requirement.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

e. Uniforms – Ear Protection (Rule 1.12.4).

- (1) Recommendation. Remove the requirement that ear protection be worn. The wearing of ear protection is still recommended.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. USA Wrestling only requires the wearing of headgear for the Schoolboy/girl and younger divisions (born after 2003) during regional and national championships. It is recommended in other divisions, but not required. While some individuals may benefit from the use of ear protection, there are individuals that believe the ear protection can cause ear irritation. Keeping ear protection clean can be difficult and some individuals do not respond well to the relatively unclean ear protection constantly rubbing against the skin. Understanding the fact that each individual student-athlete responds differently to the utilization of ear protection, the committee believes student-athletes should have the ability to choose whether to wear the ear protection.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Allows student-athletes to make the decision that best fits their needs on whether to wear ear protection.

f. Appearance (Rule 1.13).

- (1) Recommendation. Allow facial hair that is trimmed to a length so that the skin is visible for medical examinations (<1/2 inch). Facial hair exceeding this length, and/or that doesn't allow a proper medical examination to be performed as determined by the medical professional overseeing medical examinations, must be immediately trimmed to within the guidelines, or covered using a non-abrasive facial hair covering or enclosed within the confines of a full facemask.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. The original intent of the cleanshaven requirement was a historical concept that was outdated and in need of review. For medical examinations, the face needs to be inspected, but that can be sufficiently achieved with a modest amount of facial hair growth. Additionally, some student-athletes are negatively impacted by the constant requirement to shave, which may cause razor burn, folliculitis and other skin conditions that make them further susceptible to infection.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.

- (5) Student-athlete impact. Positive. Student-athletes will not be required to shave as often, which may reduce razor burn, folliculitis and other skin conditions.

g. Scoring Opportunities (Rule 2.6).

- (1) Recommendation. Create a neutral danger signal (NDS): When in the neutral position, the referee shall announce a NDS anytime a wrestler exposes their shoulders to the mat at a 90-degree angle or less (hereafter called the danger zone). This announcement shall occur anytime the wrestler is voluntarily or involuntarily in the neutral danger zone, beyond reaction time, and will continue until the wrestler is out of the danger zone or a takedown is awarded. The NDS will consist of a verbal announcement of the word danger, followed by an audible 3 count. If the referee reaches the third count and the wrestler is still in the danger zone, control is considered to have been established and a takedown is awarded.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Provides wrestlers a mechanism for which they can demonstrate control in these scramble situations. The implementation of a NDS will minimize stalemates and increase scoring opportunities. The NDS will also provide the referees rules backing for making difficult takedown control calls when wrestlers are on their back and traditional control concepts are not applicable.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Positive. Increases scoring opportunities.

h. Overtime (Rule 3.10).

- (1) Recommendation. In the overtime tiebreaker, each wrestler will have the choice of either top, bottom or neutral.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. The current tiebreaker rule requires a choice of top or bottom only. This conflicts when injury timeouts are called and the wrestler loses his choice to his competitor and referees must adhere to the injury timeout rule which requires giving the choice of top, bottom or neutral. Making this rule change will standardize choices and make it a top, bottom or neutral selection in all instances throughout the match.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

i. Correction of Error (Rule 3.11).

(1) Recommendation. Any wrestling action that occurs after a referee's call has been overturned is considered dead time and must be re-wrestled.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Common practice update. Standardized language to add to the rules book.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

j. Questioning the Referee (Rule 3.12.2).

(1) Recommendation. Change the questioning referee violation sequence from warning, warning, 1 team point, 2 team points, ejection to warning, warning, 1 team point for each subsequent questioning the referee violation.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. The nature of the questioning the referee call is not sufficient to warrant a coaching ejection. The potential loss of multiple team points is sufficient penalty to inhibit this action.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

k. Control of Mat Area – Dual Meets (Rule 3.13.1).

(1) Recommendation. Clarify the restricted zone for coaches during dual meets and makes stepping on the mat or moving into the area in front of the scorer's table for unauthorized reasons by personnel other than participating contestants a control of mat violation.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Current rules regarding allowable coaching areas and restricted zones during competition are vague and difficult for coaches to understand and referees to enforce. This change will provide needed clarity.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

l. Control of Mat Area – Tournaments (Rule 3.13.2).

(1) Recommendation. Allow three credentialed coaches to be in the restricted zone for NCAA Championships finals matches.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. This is the single biggest match for any institution and providing the opportunity for three credentialed coaches to be in the restricted zone allows both the student-athlete and coaching staff to enjoy this tremendous honor and assist the wrestler in the best way possible.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

m. Control of Mat Area – Failure to Comply (Rule 3.13.5).

(1) Recommendation. Change the control of mat violation sequence from warning, 1 team point, 2 team points and ejection to 1st and all subsequent violations will be a 1-team point deduction.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Removing the progressive nature of control of mat violations would allow, in tournaments, team point deductions to be recorded on the bout sheet at the match table and sent to the head scorer. The implementation of this would allow the violation to be immediately executed by the referee instead of sending it to someone at the head table to determine what the penalty should be. This ensures team scores are accurate and all penalties are properly applied as prescribed in the rules book. Additionally, removing the ejection as part of the control of mat violation sequence would make the nature of these penalties more accurate with the actions that typically occur. Flagrant misconduct call and ejection would be reserved for the most serious conduct violations.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

n. Control of Mat Area – Failure to Comply (Rule 3.13.5 and 7.7.7).

(1) Recommendation. Require referees to display the appropriate signal and verbally inform coaches on the mat when they have received a control of mat violation.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. In addition to the previous mandatory referee signal, verbally informing coaches is an additional assurance that the coach will always know when they have received a control of mat violation.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

o. Tournaments – Administration – Match Limit (Rule 3.17).

(1) Recommendation. Limit the number of matches a wrestler can compete in one day to 6 matches. Forfeits and medical forfeits would not count in this tally, but all other matches would be countable in the 6-match limit.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Competing in more than 6 matches in a day is an unnecessary injury risk for student-athletes. Limiting individuals to 6 matches would increase the quality of those matches and reduce fatigue-related injuries. Additionally, this rule will naturally develop a higher quality open tournament and likely more open tournaments in which teams could choose to compete in since unlimited entries in an event would be difficult to manage with the match limitation. 6 matches is the number needed to complete a 16-competitor bracket.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Positive. Better ensures the health and safety of student-athletes by protecting them from events that require an unreasonable number of matches in order to complete the event.

p. Tournaments – Administration – Scholastic Participation Prohibited (Rule 3.17.1).

- (1) Recommendation. NCAA institutions may hold open events that include prospective student-athletes per Bylaw 13.11.3.1, however, results from matches competed against prospective student-athletes shall not be placed on the Individual Season Record Form (ISRF) and will not be used in calculations for NCAA championship selection purposes.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. This rule previously conflicted with NCAA tryout legislation. This language change now allows for the rule and bylaw to work together.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Matches against prospective student athletes in open events will not count on their individual season record form, which could have a negative impact on their coaches ranking and RPI.

q. Tournaments – Administration – Verification of Entries (Rule 3.17.2).

- (1) Recommendation. Clarify that individuals entered into tournaments after the verification of entry deadline are considered official entrants and may not be substituted. The official list of competitors in the same event are those entrants that have cleared medical exams and successfully weighed in.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Provide clarity for tournaments on who is considered an entrant and at what point they become a competitor. This confirms that being an official entrant into an event is not sufficient enough to be considered a competitor. Competitors in an event must be an official entrant, pass medical exams and make weight at the event.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

r. Tournaments – Administration – Rest Between Matches (Rule 3.17.7).

- (1) Recommendation. Require a mandatory 30-minute rest in between all matches.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Since the current rule is only a rest recommendation, some tournaments do not provide adequate rest between matches. This practice of minimizing or eliminating rest between matches puts student-athletes at unnecessary risk for fatigue-related injuries and lowers the overall quality of the match.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Positive. Ensures the health and safety of student-athletes.

s. Tournaments – Drawings and Optional Bracketing (Rule 3.18).

(1) Recommendation. Allow tournaments to utilize alternate methods for assigning byes in the first round of a tournament, as long as byes and/or resulting first round pigtail matches are distributed randomly and no institution is unfairly helped or harmed by the resulting assignments.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. This provides tournament hosts flexibility to choose the bracket size most appropriate for the competition and the number of competitors.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

t. Mat-Side Video Review (Rule 3.21).

(1) Recommendation. Allow the option of securing a third-party registered official to serve as the sole individual responsible for executing coach requested video review challenges.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. This optional rule provides institutions and tournament hosts the ability to hire a third-party video review official to conduct coaches' challenges, if they believe an independent review is best for their event.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

u. Mat-Side Video Review (Rule 3.21).

- (1) Recommendation. If video review is not being utilized for the entire competition, tournament committees may determine the number of challenges as long as it does not exceed the current allotment outlined in Rule 3.21.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Issued as an interpretation on May 11, 2016. Many events only use video review for selected rounds of a tournament. The original rule allotted video review challenges based on video review being utilized for the entire tournament. This prescribed allotment is excessive when used only for selected rounds of competition.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

v. Mat-Side Video Review – Referee’s Action (Rule 3.21.2.a).

- (1) Recommendation. Remove the requirement that referees review all unsportsmanlike conduct calls.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. The current mandatory review of unsportsmanlike conduct calls is an unnecessary requirement of the referee. Referees are still allowed to use review if they wish to, but mandatory review of unsportsmanlike conduct is an unnecessary match delay. The requirement to review flagrant misconduct calls remains.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

w. Mat-Side Video Review – Coach’s Challenge (Rule 3.21.2.b).

- (1) Recommendation. Replace the video review challenge flags with a foam red and green brick not to exceed 8”x5”x5”, which shall be available in the restricted zone. The brick would be thrown onto the mat away from the wrestling action when a coach is indicating a video review challenge is being requested.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.

- (3) Rationale. The flags created numerous problems. First, when a coach walks to the table and is contemplating a video review challenge, the referees might mistake this for a request to stop the match for timing or scoring, and/or to question the referee. Secondly, the time it takes to walk to the table adds to the total length of time that turns into dead time if a review is overturned. Third, throwing the brick is decisive and the coach would be unable to retract that like they can by pulling the flag down. Finally, when only a single referee is calling the match, it is often very difficult to see the flag being raised.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. Minimal. These foam bricks can be purchased for less than \$30 per set.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

x. Team – Tournaments (Rule 4.4).

- (1) Recommendation. For individual team tournament scoring, when more than one wrestler from the same institution competes in a given weight class, only the score for the highest placing competitor shall be used for calculating team points.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Standardizes how team scores are calculated.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

y. Team – Tournaments – Places (Rule 4.4.1).

- (1) Recommendation. When true placement matches are wrestled in an individual team advancement tournament, the team score shall be adjusted only if true placement matches are held at all possible weight classes.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. It is not fair to adjust team scores for true placement matches when true placement matches are only held at selected weight classes and not all possible weight classes. Example: Holding true 2nd place matches in only those weight classifications that have two automatic national qualifiers and not holding them at any other weight class.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

z. Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Rule 5.4).

(1) Recommendation. Disqualify a competitor from that match after they are called for their second unsportsmanlike conduct during a single match (currently it is on the 4th violation). This rule would also remove in-match unsportsmanlike conduct calls from its current penalty sequence and create its own new sequence.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Allowing athletes to engage in four acts of unsportsmanlike conduct, during a single match, before being ejected is an excessively weak penalty sequence. This would also align the rule with the current out-of-match unsportsmanlike conduct calls for non-competing athletes which is ejection after two incidences.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

aa. Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Rule 5.4.1).

(1) Recommendation. Clarify having the uniform straps down within the competition circle and aggressively throwing and/or spiking headgear is unsportsmanlike conduct.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Currently, the ambiguity in this rule results in varying degrees of application by referees, which ends up in either unfair application or a perceived unfair application of the rule.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

bb. Stalling (Rule 5.9.3).

(1) Recommendation. Clarify the offensive wrestler is always responsible for returning the defensive wrestler to the mat in the rear-standing position.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

- (3) Rationale. This ensures that the defensive wrestler, whose obligation is to work up to attempt an escape or reversal, is not penalized for coming to their feet.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

cc. Stalling (Rule 5.9.3).

- (1) Recommendation. When a referee is executing a verbal and visual count for a drop-down, and the defensive wrestler is in the process of scoring, the wrestling action can continue and the defensive wrestler afforded the opportunity to score. Once the scoring opportunity has passed, the stall call can then be issued.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. This allows the defensive wrestler to continue scoring actions and not immediately stop the action on a 5th count. This rule falls into line with current rules for allowing this to occur during locked hands calls.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Positive. Increases scoring opportunities.

dd. Referee Jurisdiction, Control and Matters of Judgment (Rule 7.3.1).

- (1) Recommendation. Extend the authority of the referee from when they sign the scorebook to when they leave the competition site.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Currently, referees have no authority in situations that arise from the time the match is over until they leave the facility. This rule allows them to issue flagrant misconduct violations during the postmatch period.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

ee. Weight Management Program – Weight Certification (Rule 8.1).

- (1) Recommendation. Eliminate the February 15th deadline that requires a wrestler to reach or descend back to their lowest certified weight class. Wrestlers would be required to reach or descend back to their lowest allowable weight class no later than postseason competition.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. The February 15th deadline has become an arbitrary date that has no impact on whether a student-athlete is descending to their weight class appropriately. The very important rule of limiting weight loss to a maximum of 1.5% per week is still in effect and this rule is the key to slow and proper weight descent. The deadline has a negative impact on student-athletes who are injured or not able to compete or train earlier in the season by forcing them to engage in unsafe weight loss practices that will allow them to certify at their lowest allowable weight by the February 15th deadline. Additionally, many teams need the flexibility to have a wrestler compete up a weight class to help the team during important dual meets. The February 15th deadline means that almost no wrestler is allowed to compete in a higher a weight class in the month of February because there is so little time for them to descend back down by the deadline date. Eliminating the February 15th deadline would help teams field full teams throughout the dual meet portion of the season.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Positive. Allows wrestlers the opportunity to help their team and still have time to reach or descend back to their lowest certified weight class before postseason competition.

ff. Weight Management Program – Weight Certification Procedures (Rule 8.3.1).

- (1) Recommendation. Change the final weight assessment deadline to establish the wrestler's lowest allowable weight class from not later than the first official practice to not later than the first date of competition for the wrestler each year.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. The rules for weight certification are in place so that an independent review of the wrestler's body composition occurs and an objective decision can be made as to the most appropriate weight class for that individual. The current rule states that the assessment must occur before the student-athlete is allowed to practice. Removing this pre-practice certification requirement would not alter the integrity, rigor or purpose of the weight certification protocols, but rather, provide institutions with the flexibility to execute the weight certification requirements in a way that fits into their unique

academic, training, competition and facility options and/or limitations. With the dramatic differences between training regimes and medical personnel support between NCAA Divisions I, II and III programs, this flexibility is a much-needed accommodation. Regardless of when the certification occurs, student-athletes still must adhere to the 1.5% maximum weight loss descent per week rule and may not compete at their lowest allowable weight class until the date indicated on their weight loss descent plan.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Positive. Allows wrestlers additional time to certify after not training or wrestling in some cases for several months. Makes the weight certification process more equitable for student-athletes who attend institutions that have unique academic and training calendars.

gg. Weight Management Program – Weight Management Violations (New 8.4).

- (1) Recommendation. Establish a fixed penalty structure for violations of the NCAA weight certification rules, protocols and processes.

Violations of the NCAA weight certification rules, protocols and processes, including falsifying weight certification data, urine manipulation and any other action that violates the integrity of the process, are subject to the following:

- Violations shall be reported to the NCAA Wrestling Rules Committee liaison at the NCAA national office at 317-917-6222;
- The NCAA Wrestling Rules Committee will investigate and review violation details;
- A first violation will result in:
 - The student-athlete being suspended from the next eight consecutive dates of competition as per the official team schedule. The student-athlete may not compete unattached during this suspension;
 - The student-athlete being required to re-certify during the suspension period; and
 - A private reprimand to the head coach and director of athletics.
- A second violation will result in:
 - The student-athlete being suspended for one year from the date of the violation; and
 - Additional penalties to the head coach and/or institution to be determined by the rules committee.

The above penalty structure outlines the minimum penalty for weight certification violations that violate the integrity of the process. The rules committee reserves the

right to sanction student-athletes, coaches and institutions if the situation warrants additional action.

- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Violations of this nature are serious and endanger student-athletes as well as impact the integrity of the weight management process. This protocol makes clear that violations of this nature will be handled as very serious rules violations.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Protects the integrity of collegiate wrestling and ensures student-athletes and institutions are complying with the weight management process rules. Provides clarity for student-athletes on the severity of these types of violations.

hh. Weighing In – Subsequent-Day Weigh-Ins (Rule 9.1.3).

- (1) Recommendation. When back-to-back dual, triangular and quadrangular meets occur, all wrestlers shall receive a 1-pound weight allowance on the second day of competition. The 1-pound weight allowance would include those wrestlers on opposing teams that did not compete the day before.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. Current rules allow the 1-pound weight allowance to be provided for multi-day individual and/or team advancement events. Providing this same 1-pound allowance for dual, triangular and quadrangular meets will have no impact on weight loss descent requirements or weight management protocols. All student-athletes will continue to descend to their lowest allowable weight classes by adhering to all descent rules. The insertion of a 1-pound weight allowance for back-to-back dual, triangular and quadrangular meets does provide wrestlers a much needed benefit to accommodate for the travel, academic disruptions and general upheaval that occurs when competing in back-to-back events either home or away. The rule would not apply when dual, triangular and quadrangular meets precede tournaments and would also be capped at a maximum of 1pound.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Positive. Improves the health and safety of student-athletes. Reduces the stress of back-to-back weigh-ins while traveling to compete.

ii. Medical Examinations – Presence of Communicable Skin Disease (Rule 9.6.4).

- (1) Recommendation. For national qualifying events only, individuals that fail medical examinations may still weigh-in and be considered competitors for the event.
- (2) Effective date. Immediately.
- (3) Rationale. This allows individuals that fail medical examinations to still have the opportunity to be selected as an at-large bid for the NCAA Championships.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. Positive. Allows student-athletes who would otherwise be unable to compete the opportunity to still be selected as an at-large bid for the NCAA Championships.

jj. Weighing In, Medical Examination and Prohibited Practices Violations (New Rule 9.7).

- (1) Recommendation. Establish a fixed penalty structure for violations of the NCAA weigh in, medical examinations and prohibited practices rules.

Committing a weigh-in or medical examination violation, or for engaging in any of the prohibited practices (e.g., utilizing a rubber suit, using intravenous rehydration, avoiding skin checks, wrestling with an infectious skin condition, etc.) are subject to the following penalties:

- For tournaments, violations shall be reported to the tournament committee. For dual meets, violations shall be reported to host game management personnel. For violations outside competition dates, violations shall be reported to the NCAA Wrestling Rules Committee liaison at the NCAA national office at 317-917-6222.
- The tournament committee or game management personnel will disqualify the individual from that event. The tournament committee or game management personnel shall notify the NCAA Wrestling Rules Committee liaison at the NCAA national office at 317-917-6222 of the violation and relevant details.
- The NCAA Wrestling Rules Committee will investigate and review violation details;
- A first violation will result in:
 - The student-athlete being suspended from the next eight consecutive dates of competition as per the official team schedule. The student-athlete may not compete unattached during this suspension;
 - The student-athlete being required to re-certify during the suspension period; and

- A private reprimand to the head coach and director of athletics.
- A second violation will result in:
 - The student-athlete being suspended for one year from the date of the violation; and
 - Additional penalties to the head coach and/or institution to be determined by the rules committee.

The above penalty structure outlines the minimum penalty for weigh-in, medical examination or prohibited practices violations. The rules committee reserves the right to impose additional penalties to student-athletes, coaches and institutions if the situation warrants additional action.

(2) Effective date. Immediately.

(3) Rationale. Violations of this nature are serious and endanger the health and wellness of the student-athletes as well as impact the integrity of the weigh-in and medical examination process. This protocol makes clear that violations of this nature will be handled as very serious rules violations.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. Provides clarity to student athletes regarding the severity of these types of violations.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements.** The chair welcomed the committee and thanked them for their time. Committee members introduced themselves and provided a brief overview of their background.
- 2. Review Schedule, Agenda and Committee Operations Manual.** The meeting schedule and agenda were reviewed. The committee reviewed the Committee Operations Manual, which included the NCAA conflict of interest policy, guidance for committee members regarding meeting reports, notes and email, voting procedures, principles for rules writing, and experimental playing rules guidelines.
- 3. Approval of February 14, Teleconference Report.** The committee approved the February 14, teleconference report as written.
- 4. Review Reports.** The committee heard reports on the following topics:

- a. Injury Surveillance Program.** Erin Wasserman from the Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention presented to the committee on various aspects of injuries in wrestling. Only four institutions reported injury data during the 2015-16 academic year, however, Datalys believes nine schools are reporting for 2016-17. According to the collected data, the majority of injuries occurred to the knee and head/face. Additional injuries reported are categorized as “Other,” which includes skin infections. Player contact was the most common cause of injury with takedowns as the most common injury activity. Injuries were fairly evenly distributed across weight classes, with sprains being the most common injury. The small sample size did show concussion rates were high in wrestling, however, the committee was concerned with both the extremely small number of institutions submitting data as well as how the data is being calculated. One committee member noted his conference conducted an injury survey and found similar alarming concussion rates, but after further review realized tournaments were being counted as one exposure instead of each individual competition within a tournament being counted as an exposure. Ms. Wasserman was unsure how tournaments were being counted in the system and agreed to do further research on this point. Skin infections were most prevalent at the beginning of the season, taper off during the middle of the season, and escalate at the end of the season. The committee noted this is consistent with the stress level of wrestlers during a typical wrestling season.
- b. Playing Rules Oversight Panel.** NCAA staff presented the experimental rules guidelines to the committee noting PROP requested each rules committee review and provide feedback. The rules committee did not have a strong feeling that experimental rules be included in the comment period, however, they did establish an August 15 deadline for any experimental rule requests for the subsequent season. The committee noted the majority of experimental rules come directly from the rules committee during the annual meeting and therefore are included in the comment period. NCAA staff also reported on a request from the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports (CSMAS) to PROP that each rules committee review the appropriateness of any playing rule that might discourage a student-athlete from reporting an injury or illness for fear of not being allowed to re-enter or continue with the contest if they are removed for medical evaluation purposes. The committee reviewed Rule 6.1.3, which outlines the injury timeout procedure. This rule could allow an injured or ill wrestler to call an injury timeout up to a maximum of 90 seconds. Once the injury timeout has expired, the noninjured wrestler is given choice of top, bottom or neutral position on the restart. It was noted this could be perceived as a disadvantage or a reason to discourage a wrestler for calling a timeout if injured or ill. The committee strongly believed this rule is adequate and appropriate and should not be changed. It was noted there are multiple people watching two wrestlers (e.g., at least one official, two coaches, etc.) that could stop the match if it appears a wrestler is injured or ill. This is a unique aspect of wrestling and may be a bigger issue for those sports with more student-athletes competing at one time.

- c. Secretary-Rules Editor and Weight Management Liaison.** The secretary-rules editor and weight management liaison recapped the 2016-17 season. He noted communication with the membership, officials, and media greatly improved this season and he's continuing to look for ways to improve moving forward. He answered 20-25 questions during the season, including eight official interpretations, and posted 12 updates on the Center Mat website. While not as many head coaches registered with Center Mat this year, he believes we will be back close to 100% next year since the new rules changes will be issued. Additionally, he outlined rules that caused the most questions and concerns and noted these are included in the list of proposals the committee will discuss later in the meeting. As for the weight management program, he has done a review of those rules and noted a lot of inconsistencies with what is outlined in the rules book and how those rules are being applied. These are also included in the rules proposals. There was one serious weight management violation that the committee discussed previously on a teleconference and subsequently issued a one-year suspension to that student-athlete. The committee discussed one other self-reported violation that occurred during a conference championship. The committee will issue a private reprimand and \$100 fine, which is consistent with how violations have been penalized in the past. The secretary-rules editor/weight management liaison will present several points of emphasis and best practices during his presentation of new rules changes at the coaches' association convention.
- d. National Coordinator of Officials.** The national coordinator recapped the 2016-17 season from his perspective. He noted his working relationship with the secretary-rules editor is going extremely well and they have collaborated on many issues during the season. For the first time, he hired a Director of Evaluations that oversaw the officials' evaluation process to help provide consistency in how evaluations are executed. Additionally, the national coordinator attended clinics for a number of conferences and noted out of the 440 Center Mat-registered officials, over 300 attended one of the clinics. His focus over the next year will be on education for second referees and traveling to observe all postseason selected officials during the regular season. One other topic for next season will be a standardized evaluation for coaches to submit to the Director of Evaluations within 48-72 hours after the completion of the event.
- e. National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA).** The NATA liaison recapped the season and noted there were very few injuries during the Division I Championships. He provided his thoughts and opinions on various rules proposals during the committee's discussions, particularly the ear protection and facial hair proposals.
- f. Active Official.** The active official reported to the committee highlights from the season, including increased transparency and collaboration from the national coordinator and secretary-rules editor. He noted officials understand the secretary-rules editor should be contacted on any interpretation request and this has been working well. The active official believes the Center Mat website has been beneficial for officials related to education and

communication. He encouraged its continued use and possibly using social media more frequently. He inquired as to why referees don't have a vote on the rules committee and NCAA staff explained the history behind adding the active official position to rules committees many years ago.

- g. National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).** The committee heard a report from the NFHS, including the rules changes for high school and concerns over a continued decrease in participation numbers. The NFHS continues to be concerned about skin infections and noted 75% of skin infections are contracted while wrestling away from the home facility. The NFHS rules committee discussed removing a weight class, but took no action because of the risk of losing an additional 20,000 student-athletes.
- h. Sport Science Institute.** The committee voiced concerns to the NCAA Sport Science Institute staff related to Rules 8 and 9 and whether the rules book is the appropriate place for weight management, weighing in and medical examination rules. It was noted playing rules usually cover what happens on the mat, field, court, etc. when officials have jurisdiction.

 - (1) Rules 8 and 9.** The committee discussed Rules 8 and 9 with NCAA Sport Science Institute Staff, including concerns about whether a time limit should be placed on concussion evaluations or a limit on the number of concussion timeouts permitted on one student-athlete during a day of competition. The committee also discussed the possibility of conducting a webinar or teleconference with athletic trainers in late August or early September each year to review health and safety, concussion and injury-related rules. The session would be coordinated by the rules committee NATA representative and executed in conjunction with CSMAS.
 - (2) Use of Saunas.** The committee had concerns about rules that seem to be outside of the scope of the playing rules, specifically the prohibited practices section in Rule 9. The rules state, "The use of a sauna is prohibited at any time and for any purpose, on or off campus," however, the committee was concerned who is responsible for ensuring this is being adhered to since officials are not present most of the time this would happen. NCAA Sport Science Institute staff stated the ultimate responsibility rests with the head coaches and athletic trainers.
- 5. Review and Approve Interpretations.** The committee reviewed the eight interpretations issued during the 2016-17 season. All were approved and some will be incorporated into the rules book, if approved by PROP.
- 6. Review of 2017 Rules Survey.** The committee reviewed the 2017 rules survey and were pleased to see 80 percent of coaches responded to the survey, which was up from 73 percent last year. All of the surveyed previous rules changes and current issues received favorable or

no opinion feedback from coaches, commissioners and officials. The committee reviewed the new discussion topics during its review of the rules proposals.

7. Discussion of 2017-18 and 2018-19 Rules Proposals and Rules Book Reorganization. The committee reviewed over 100 rules proposals, and approved 36 major rules changes for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 seasons, as noted above in the Action Items section. Eight of the major changes are health and safety-related, which will be sent to CSMAS to consider during its June annual meeting. The committee will convene via teleconference to review CSMAS' feedback before the two-week comment period is distributed to the membership. The committee also approved editorial changes, including a reorganization of some rules.

8. Review Products.

a. Mercado Headgear. The committee reviewed the Mercado Headgear as requested by the manufacturer. The headgear meets current rules.

b. Grappz Gloves. The committee reviewed the Grappz Gloves as requested by the manufacturer. As per the rules, the gloves are considered "special equipment" and legality will be determined by officials at the site of competition.

9. Finalize Future Teleconference and Meeting Dates. The committee scheduled a teleconference for June 12 at noon Eastern time to discuss the feedback from CSMAS. The committee also scheduled a teleconference for June 28 at noon Eastern time to review the two-week comment period results. The committee will resume monthly teleconferences beginning in July and scheduled the 2018 annual meeting for April 9-11 in Indianapolis.

10. Selection of Chair. The committee re-elected Mark Branch, head wrestling coach at University of Wyoming, as chair for the 2017-18 academic year.

11. Other Business. The committee had no other business.

12. Adjournment. The committee adjourned at 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 12.

Committee Chair: Mark Branch, University of Wyoming, Big 12 Conference.

Staff Liaison(s): Ashlee Follis, Championships and Alliances.

NCAA Wrestling Rules Committee April 10-12, 2017, Meeting
Attendees:
Chuck Barbee, secretary-rules editor and weight management liaison.

Mark Branch, University of Wyoming; Big 12 Conference.
Brad Bruhn, State University of New York at Cortland; Empire College Wrestling Conference.
Jason Coomer, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville; Southern Conference.
Lars Jensen, San Francisco State University; California Collegiate Athletic Association.
Kevin Jackson, Iowa State University; Big 12 Conference.
Lonnie Morris, Johnson & Wales University (RI); New England College Wrestling Association.
Matt Valenti, University of Pennsylvania; The Ivy League.
Jason Warthan, University of Indianapolis; Independent.
Absentees:
None.
Guests in Attendance:
Elliot Hopkins, National Federation of State High School Associations.
Tim Shiels, national coordinator of officials.
Matt Sorochinsky, active official.
Jim Thornton, athletic trainer liaison.
Erin Wasserman, Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention.
NCAA Staff Support in Attendance:
Ashlee Follis, Championships and Alliances.
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:
Dan Calandro, Championships and Alliances.
Greg Johnson, Communications.
John Parsons, Sport Science Institute.