High School Wrestling Rules Illustrations

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This presentation is intended for officials, coaches and fans as a tool to better view the illustrations found in the NFHS rules book. The illustrations do not cover every situation, but they are common situations that referees should recognize. Hopefully the color photos will highlight the situation as opposed to black and white photos. While these photos are not approved by the NFHS, they are similar to those in the current publications or are consistent with the current Rules or Case Manual.

Sources: Some photos/illustrations are from the
- National Federation of High School Association (NFHS)
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)
- Officiating Wrestling Methods Course as part of the NFHS Officials Education program with the American Sport Education Program (ASEP) [Link]

Send any comments to matref@cox.net
1. (4-1-1-) This is an example of a legal uniform and a properly equipped wrestler

2. (4-2-6) Each contestant who has braces or has a special orthodontic device on their teeth, shall be required to wear a tooth and mouth protector

3. (4-2-1) Hair shall not extend below the earlobe on the sides and must be above the top of a normal shirt in the back. The hair, in its natural state, shall not extend below the eyebrows in the front

4. (5-27-1e, 7-3-6) The Red wrestler reported to the table and the mat not in the proper uniform. The Red wrestler will be charged with a Technical Violation (1 Match Point) and injury time will be started to correct his deficiency.

5. (4-1-1) The two-piece uniform is not permitted for High School competition per NFHS Statement in 2005:
http://matref0.tripod.com/Articles/WRESTLING_UNIFORM_ALERT.pdf

6. (3-1-4a) The referee should be conducting skin/health inspections. Conducting inspections will vary per State/Local Associations. Some Associations do not require officials to conduct weight-ins but the inspections still shall be conducted
7. (5-15-1) Contestants are considered to be inbounds if the supporting parts of either wrestler are in side or on the boundary lines. The Green & Red circles indicate each wrestler’s supporting parts.

8. (5-15-1) Inbounds, the supporting parts of the Green wrestler are inbounds even though the Red wrestler is clearly out.

9. (5-15-1) In bounds. Both wrestlers feet are on the boundary line. Any portion of both wrestler’s feet or supporting parts inside or on the boundary line is considered in bounds.

10. (5-15-1) Out of bounds. Two supporting parts of one wrestler must be inbounds. In this picture, both wrestlers have a supporting part (feet) out of bounds.

11. (5-11-2) Inbounds. When any part of both scapulas are inbounds a near fall or fall can be earned. The shoulders in this photo are intended to be over or outside the boundary line.

12. (5-11-2) Inbounds. The shoulders and scapulas are out of bound so a near fall or fall cannot be earned. The referee should allow sufficient time for the offensive wrestler to pull his opponent inbounds.
13 & 14. (5-25-1) A takedown is earned when the feet return to the mat immediately as in the photos above. If the feet do not come down immediately it is an out of bounds situation with no control earned.

15. (5-25-1) This is a takedown. The knees can either be above the mat or on the mat.

16. (5-25-1) A takedown is scored when the defensive wrestler's legs are controlled above or below the knees and the majority of the wrestler's weight is supported by the hands.

17. (5-25-1) When this position is obtained beyond reaction time with one or two hands bearing the weight a takedown shall be awarded.

18. (5-25-1) This is a takedown by the Red wrestler. Also, the Red wrestler has not put his opponent in near fall criteria. Once control is awarded by the referee, the Red wrestler should be allowed reaction time to break his locked hands.
19. (5-25-1) Takedown. The crotch lift by the Green wrestler does not stop the takedown.

20. (5-25-1) Takedown. The double underhook does not stop the takedown.

21. (5-25-1) There is control by the wrestler on top even though the hands of the opponent are locked around a leg. The top wrestler has his opponent off the base and is hip to hip.

22. (5-25-1) This is a takedown.

23. (5-25-1) Takedown. Same move, as photo 22 but at different angle.

24. (5-22) Reversal. Following a shoulder roll, there is change of control (reversal) when the bottom wrestler is concerned about being pinned. The referee should begin looking for the reversal as soon as either a leg or arm are trapped.
25. (6-2-3) Both wrestlers will exchange a traditional handshake (not a slap) prior to the start of a match.

26. (5-20-4) Legal neutral starting position.

27. (5-19-4) Legal neutral starting position.

28. (5-19-4) Illegal neutral starting position. The Red wrestler must have one foot on the starting line.

29. (5-19-4) Legal neutral starting position.

30. (6-2-4) When starting visually handicapped wrestlers in the neutral position, the finger-touch will be used and initial contact made from the front.
31. (5-19-5) Legal starting position. One knee must be down by the top wrestler on the near (elbow) side and the bottom wrestler must have his knees behind the rear starting line and hands in front of the forward starting line.

32. (5-19-5) Legal starting position with both knees down on the near side.

33. (5-19-5) Illegal starting position. The Red wrestler is straddling his opponent.

34. (5-19-5) Illegal starting position. The Red wrestler does not have his hand on his opponent’s elbow.

35. (5-19-5) Illegal starting position. The Red wrestler is splitting his opponent’s feet and are in contact with the defensive wrestler.
36. (5-19-8) The offensive wrestler must signal the intent to the referee when using the optional star.

37. (5-19-7) When using the optional start the hands must be on the back with the thumbs touching.

38. (5-20-7) Legal optional start position.

39. (5-19-7) Legal optional start position. The leg can be forward of the rear line but not forward of the front line.

40. (5-19-7) Illegal optional start position. The Red wrestler is straddling his opponent.
41. (5-10, 5-19-3) When neither wrestler is in control, they are neutral (no advantage)

42. (5-10, 5-19-3) The wrestler in the blue singlet is still in control with his body lock from a previous takedown or reversal

43. (5-10, 5-19-3) When the bottom wrestler (red) is able to stand, turn, break the locked hands and separate them to the point that they cross the midline of the back, control is lost and an escape shall be awarded

“An escape is when the defensive wrestler gains a neutral position and the opponent has lost control, beyond reaction time, while the supporting points of either wrestler are inbounds.” (5-10)
46. (5-11-1) This rear view shows an example of a wrestler’s pinning area. Both shoulders or both scapulas must touch the mat for two seconds while inbounds for a fall to be earned.

47. (5-11-2) A near fall may be scored when the defensive wrestler is held on both elbows.

48. (5-11-2) A near fall may be scored when the defensive wrestler is held in a high bridge.

49. (5-11-2) A near fall may be scored when the defensive wrestler is held with one shoulder or scapula on the mat and the other at an angle of 45 degrees or less or both shoulders or scapulas held four inches from the mat.

50, 51 & 52 (5-14-2) When the defensive wrestler in a pinning situation and illegally/unnecessarily rough puts pressure over the opponent’s mouth, nose, eyes, throat or neck, it shall be penalized when the situation ends.
Infractions (Illegal Holds/Maneuvers)

53 & 54. (7-1-5a) This double underhook snap back from the standing position is an illegal hold/maneuver.

55. (7-1-5b) It is illegal to apply pressure against the joint or away from the body in a hammerlock.

56. (7-1-5b) It is illegal to bend the arm in a hammerlock above 90 degrees.

57. (7-1-5c) It is illegal to bring the arm off the back and twist in a hammerlock.

58. (7-1-5d) This headlock is illegal since the Green wrestler does not have an arm encircled.
59. (7-1-5d) This is a legal move by the defensive wrestler which places pressure on the head, similar to the ¾ nelson.

60. (7-1-5d) This headlock is illegal since the Red wrestler does not have an arm encircled.

61. (7-1-5d) This headlock is illegal since the lock is above the elbow.

62. (7-1-5d) This front headlock is illegal since the wrestler in the blue singlet does not have an arm encircled. This headlock is often missed because the official is on the wrong side of the lock.

63. (7-1-5d) This headlock is legal since an arm is encircled and the lock is below the elbow.

64. (7-1-5d) This headlock is illegal since an arm is not encircled placing undue pressure on the throat, neck and carotid artery.
Infractions (Illegal Holds/Maneuvers)

65 & 65. (7-1-5d) When the guillotine is applied, it is legal to lock the hands around the head without an arm, once *near fall criteria have been met*

67. (7-21-5e) The straight scissors on the head is illegal

68. (7-1-5r) The figure four on the head from any position is illegal

69. (7-1-5f) The full nelson is an illegal hold

70. (7-1-5f) This full nelson is illegal even though the hands are not touching or overlapping
71. (7-1-5f) The ¾ nelson is legal even if coming under both arms

72. (7-1-5f) The full nelson from the front is an illegal hold

73. (7-1-5h) Illegal twisting knee lock. Pressure is against normal movement

74. (7-1-5i) The key-lock is an illegal hold

75. (7-1-5j) The overhead double arm bar is illegal either with one or two arms

76. (7-1-5j) Illegal double arm bar from the front, with hands locked on the back, either on the mat or on the feet
77. (7-1-5j) Legal double arm bar from the front, hands are locked on the side or under the armpit

78. (7-1-5l) Illegal neck wrench. This shall be stopped immediately

79. (7-1-5l) Illegal neck wrench. This shall be stopped immediately

80. (7-1-5n) This is a legal leg block. The arm is used to block the leg prior to going to the mat. The opponent’s leg cannot be “cut out” by a kick

81. (7-1-5n) Illegal “cut back” by kicking the leg

82. (7-1-5m) The front quarter nelson with the chin will cause undue pressure on the neck and is illegal
Infractions (Illegal Holds/Maneuvers)

83. (7-1-5r) The figure four around one leg is legal

84. (7-1-5r) The figure four around the body, the head or both legs is an illegal hold/maneuver

85. (7-1-5r) The figure 4 around the body, the head or both legs is an illegal hold/maneuver

86. (7-1-5r) The scissors on the body is legal as long as it is not used for punishing the opponent

87. (7-1-5o) The overscissors is illegal as shown when the pressure is applied against the joint causing hyperextension

88. (7-1-5r) The figure four around the head is an illegal hold/maneuver; even from the neutral position
Infractions (Illegal Holds/Maneuvers)

89. (7-1-5p) The head pry is illegal

90. (7-1-5d) Legal head pry. The top wrestler can use this pry as long as it includes the arm or shoulder

91. (7-1-5p) Applying pressure to the elbow as shown is illegal

92. (7-1-5p) The chicken wing is illegal when the pressure is parallel to the long axis

93. (7-1-5) The draping head scissors is legal since there is minimal pressure on the neck or head

94. (7-1-5e) The scissors on the head is illegal
Infractions (Illegal Holds/Maneuvers)

95. (7-1-5p) The double wrist lock is illegal when the force is parallel to the long axis of the opponent’s body. It is legal when kept perpendicular

96. (7-1-5q) The back bow is illegal by application, whether the defensive wrestler is on his/her stomach or hip

97 & 98. The leg cradle is legal in high school

99. (7-1-5w) A back flip from the standing position is an illegal maneuver

100. (7-1-5x) Illegal rear-standing, double-knee kickoff. The offensive wrestler shall not use this maneuver in an attempt to bring the opponent to the mat

See link for video of a back flip from the standing position:
http://matref0.tripod.com/Flip.wmv
Infractions (Technical Violations)

101, 102 & 103. (7-3-3) Locked hands around the body is a technical violation by the offensive wrestler when the contestants are on the mat. It is a technical violation either with or without one or both arms. It is not locked hands when the defensive wrestler is supporting all his weigh by his feet/legs.

104. (7-3-3) When the defensive wrestler pyramids, the offensive wrestler cannot lock hands. Technical violation by the offensive wrestler.

105. (7-3-3) The chest cradle is locked hands around the body and is a technical violation.

106. (7-3-3) Interlocking of hands around both legs by the offensive wrestler is a technical violation.
107. (7-2-2) This headlock is potentially dangerous if additional action is not made quickly. The left hand of the defender shows distress. Even though the head lock is legal, the pressure on the neck and throat can make it illegal.

108. (7-2-2) The chicken wing is potentially dangerous but allowed as long as the pressure is not towards the long axis.

109. (7-2-2) The grasping of the chin in this duck under does not involve a twisting motion, therefore, it is potentially dangerous.

110. (7-2-2) This head and arm series is very similar to the front headlock from the standing position. This hold is potentially dangerous and should be stopped immediately.

111. (7-2-2) This front bridge is potentially dangerous because of the possibility of injury. It must be broken immediately. Same for the back bridge.
112. (7-2-2) The double arm bar into a stack is a potentially dangerous situation. The offensive wrestler shall be cautioned against bringing it to an illegal position.

113. (7-2-2) The split scissor (banana split) is potentially dangerous. The referee may break it to prevent injury.

114. (7-2-2) This is a potentially dangerous arm bar when the far arm is blocked and the bottom wrestler is unable to turn.

115 & 116 (7-2-2) In this arm bar/tight waist, and arm bar and ½ nelson the defensive wrestler is defenseless if taken to the mat. If the official feels there is potential for injury, then the match must be stopped to protect the defensive wrestler.
117. (3-1-1) The official shall be dressed with a regulation shirt (with association patches), Black Slacks, Black Belt, Black Shoes and Red (Left Hand) and Green (Right Hand) Wrist Bands. The referee should also have a Red/Green Flip Disk, Black Whistle with Lanyard and a Random Draw Kit.

118. (3-1-1) Example-Random Draw Kit
http://matref0.tripod.com/Articles/Random_Draw_Kit.pdf

119. (3-1-1) Example-Red/Green flip disk

120, 121 & 122. (3-1-1) The referees shall wear the traditional black and white shirt, the pinstriped shirt (Check your State or Local Association) or an event provided shirt common to all referees at that event.
Official’s Wrestling Signals

1. Starting the Match
2. Stopping the Match
3. Time Out
4. Start Injury Clock
5. Start Blood Clock
6. Stop Injury/Blood/Recovery Clock
7. Neutral Position
8. Indicates No Control
9. Out-of-Bounds
10. Indicates Wrestler in Control Left/Right Hand
11. Defer Choice
12. Potentially Dangerous Left/Right Hand
13. Stalemate
14. Caution-False Start or Incorrect Starting Procedure
15. Stalling Left/Right Hand
16. Interlocking Hands or Grasping Clothing
17. Reversal
18. Technical Violation
19. Illegal Hold
20. Near-Fall: 2, 3 or 4 Points
21. Awarding Points Left/Right Hand
22. Unsportsmanlike Conduct Left/Right Hand
23. Flagrant Misconduct Left/Right Hand
24. Coach Misconduct (HS) or Control Of Mat Area (College) Left/Right Hand

New Beginning in 2014-15