



2023-24 and 2024-25 Wrestling Rules Changes

The following rules changes were approved by the NCAA Wrestling Rules Committee and the Playing Rules Oversight Panel. All rules changes are effective with the 2023-24 season.

Rule	Rules Change and Rationale
1.8.2 Facial Hair	To eliminate the restrictions on facial hair. Rationale: Removing the ½-inch maximum length brings this rule in alignment with the current hair rule that does not have a maximum length restriction associated with it.
2.3.12 Medical Forfeits	To change the medical forfeit rules so that the first medical forfeit is registered as a loss on the wrestler's individual season record form. This will apply in all situations, except when a medical forfeit occurs immediately following an injury default. Rationale: When a wrestler registers for and competes in an event, there should be an assumption that barring injury, the individual will complete the entire event. If a wrestler is injured during competition, they should be allowed to immediately medical forfeit and acknowledge that in all competitions there is a risk of a loss, but they should not be penalized for multiple losses in the single event. This rule change will more accurately reflect the wrestler's true competition record but not overly penalize them for getting injured.
3.13 Mat-Side Video Review	To provide the referee with authority to confirm or overturn all calls or missed calls during a video review challenged sequence. For coach challenges the sequence is described as the time from the alleged error until the match is, or should have been, stopped by the referee. Rationale: Allowing referees or independent reviewers to correct any discovered errors in the review sequence will provide for a more accurate review and also eliminate issues with challenges to points awarded prematurely by the referee, and other variations of gaming the video review challenge rule.
3.13.9d Coach's Video Review Challenge	To eliminate the control of mat violation and team point deduction for a delayed video review request and maintain the loss of the video review as the appropriate penalty. Rationale: Currently, this violation has two penalties – loss of video review and a team point deduction. The change to a single penalty – loss of video review – provides a more appropriate and immediate sanction to video review requests that are not requested immediately.
4.2 4.6	To change the points earned for a takedown from two (2) points to three (3) points.

Rule	Rules Change and Rationale
Takedown Scoring	Rationale: To better reflect the skill and energy required to secure a takedown. Increasing the points awarded will incentivize wrestlers to take additional risk in the neutral position, providing increased opportunities for both offensive and defensive takedowns.
4.2.2 Hand-Touch Takedown	To eliminate the hand-touch takedown. Rationale: To standardize the requirement for demonstrating control beyond reaction time in all takedown situations and to make coaching and refereeing in this situation easier. It also will be an improvement for wrestling fans and media since they are no longer required to understand the one situation in which reaction time is not required to secure a takedown. Finally, this rule eliminates many potential injuries that can occur when wrestlers attempt to defend the takedown by executing dangerous rolls without touching a hand to the mat.
4.5 Near Fall	To allow wrestlers to earn three (3) near fall points when the referee achieves three (3) counts in a near fall situation. Rationale: To provide wrestlers additional opportunities to score points in the near fall position (currently only two (2) and four (4) points may be earned), and also to more easily understand for the average fan that wrestlers earn the same number of points for each of the earned near fall swipes – two-point near fall, three-point near fall and four-point near fall.
4.8.6 Tournament Team Scoring	To modify true placement rules so that any true placement matches conducted shall not alter the final team score of the event. Rationale: To better ensure that all tournament team point totals are calculated equally from one competition to another, and also to provide event hosts the ability to conduct true placement matches only at weight class in which a national qualifying spot is available and not at the other eligible weight classes.
5.1.2f Assessing Match Penalties	To remove the required match stoppage after a wrestler is penalized for an illegal hold when there is no presence of an injury. Rationale: To eliminate the arbitrary and unnecessary match stoppage when the illegal hold point can be easily awarded to an opponent while maintaining continuous wrestling action.
5.7.13 Waist and Ankle Ride Stalling	To expand the current mandatory five second count for the waist and ankle ride to include all situations in which the offensive/advantage wrestler grasps the bottom wrestler’s ankle. Rationale: To allow for the continued use of grasping the ankle to execute legitimate wrestling holds but reduce the ability for stalling in a greater variety of wrestling situations in the offensive/advantage position.
5.7.15a	To add that the offensive wrestler must work toward obtaining near fall points and/or a pin to avoid stalling.

Rule	Rules Change and Rationale
On-the-Mat Stalling Situations	<p>Rationale: To put an equal burden of aggressive wrestling to score points on both the offensive and defensive wrestler. Currently, the offensive wrestler must aggressively attempt to break down the opponent but is not required to work toward earning near fall points or securing the pin.</p>
8.3.1 9.7.1 Weight Certification Procedures	<p>To standardize the weight certification period to not sooner than September 1 and redefine the playing rules season as September 1 until the end of the competition season.</p> <p>Rationale: Currently, institutions may conduct the initial weight certification on the first day of classes, which is when their playing rules season begins. The first day of classes varies greatly within the membership, especially in regard to whether an institution is on the semester or quarter system, so this will allow for a standardized weight certification period and playing rules season for all teams.</p>
9.3.1 Weigh-Ins for Dual, Triangular and Quadrangular Meets	<p>For dual, triangular and quadrangular meets, to allow weigh-ins to be held two hours or sooner before the start time of competition.</p> <p>Rationale: To standardize weigh-in times across all competition types. Currently, dual meet weigh-ins are from one hour or sooner before the start of competition and tournament weigh-ins are two hours or sooner before the start time of competition. Standardizing the weigh-in times will make it easier for wrestlers to develop a consistent pre-match nutrition/hydration protocol, instead of having to plan for a one-hour protocol for dual meets and a two-hour protocol for tournaments. In addition to standardizing pre-match nutrition/hydration protocols, the two-hour weigh-in provides a consistent amount of time for wrestlers to engage in appropriate warmup and warm down routines.</p>