



WRESTLING

***2025-26 AND 2026-27
MEN'S CASE BOOK***

2025-26 and 2026-27 NCAA MEN'S WRESTLING CASE BOOK

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THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 6222
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46206-6222
317-917-6222
WWW.NCAA.ORG
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Manuscript Prepared By: Jimmy Chung, *Secretary-Rules Editor, NCAA Men's Wrestling Playing Rules.*

Edited By: Connor Lancashire, *Assistant Director of Playing Rules and Officiating.*

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Table of Contents

Preface.....	4
Editorial Changes.....	5
Rule 1—Mats, Uniforms and Equipment	6
Rule 2—Definitions of Wrestling Terms	7
Rule 3—Conduct of Meets and Tournaments.....	11
Rule 4—Scoring Meets and Matches	19
Rule 5—Infractions	22
Rule 6—Injuries, Timeouts and Match Stoppages	35
Rule 7—Referees and Other Personnel	38
Rule 8—Weight Management	39
Rule 9—Medical Exams, Weigh-Ins and ISRF.....	40

Preface

This document contains approved rulings to rules questions requiring further interpretation in order for them to be applied properly. Each approved ruling is to be implemented with the same authority as the rules found in the official NCAA Men's Wrestling Rules Book.

The format of the book follows the official NCAA Men's Wrestling Rules Book, with interpretations listed rule by rule. The NCAA DI Men's Wrestling Rules Subcommittee and DII and DIII Men's Wrestling Rules Committee believe this case book will greatly assist officials, coaches, wrestlers and spectators to better apply and appreciate the rules of wrestling.

— **Jimmy Chung, secretary-rules editor**
NCAA Men's Wrestling Playing Rules

Editorial Changes

These changes reflect additions, clarifications or deletions to approved interpretations that are intended to illustrate the wrestling rules. Approved Rulings that illustrate new/edited case plays since the last edition are indicated by a shaded background.

NEW/EDITED APPROVED RULINGS

5-44

PREVIOUSLY EDITED APPROVED RULINGS

2-9, 3-11, 3-12, 3-13, 3-18, 4-7, 4-9, 4-10, 5.2, 5-11, 5-41, 5-42, 5-43, 5-45, 6-8, 6-9 9-3 and 9-4

RULE 1

Mats, Uniforms and Equipment

SHOES

A.R. 1-1. While wrestling, Wrestler A's shoelaces are tied but their shoe comes off as they try to kick out from their opponent's grasp. The referee calls a delay of match and, therefore, a stalling violation against Wrestler A. Does this rule apply since Wrestler A's shoelaces were tied?

RULING: Yes. The wrestling shoes shall reach above the ankle and be tightly secured so they do not come off during competition. The referee shall assess a delay of match and, therefore, a stalling violation to Wrestler A.

(Rule 1.5.3 and 5.7.16)

RULE 2

Definitions of Wrestling Terms

OFFENSIVE STARTING POSITION

A.R. 2-1. Is there an offensive starting position called the reverse referee position? Example: If the top wrestler is starting on the right-hand side of the defensive wrestler, the top man would be facing backwards, placing their right arm around the waist, their left palm on the defensive wrestler's right elbow and one or both of their knees down on the opponent's right side. Is this starting position legal?

RULING: Yes, this starting position can be considered legal as long as the following rules requirements are adhered to:

- (1) The palm on the near side is on the elbow;
- (2) The hand around the waist is placed loosely around the waist and on the navel of the opponent;
- (3) One or both knees, on the near side, are down on the mat; and
- (4) The head of the offensive wrestler is on the defensive wrestler's back at the midline or above.

If a wrestler attempts to utilize this starting position and all four of those requirements are met, the starting position is correct. As in the case with all starting position violations, if one or more of the requirements is/are not adhered to, the wrestler is issued a caution.

(Rules 2.1.4, 2.2.1 and Penalty Table)

TECHNICAL FALL

A.R. 2-2. If a wrestler is winning by 14 points and takes the opponent down to their back and into near fall criteria, do the rules require you to stop the match when the takedown is awarded, since this resulted in the 15-point margin of advantage?

RULING: No. If a wrestler in the neutral position is awarded a takedown while also meeting a near-fall criterion, wrestling shall continue until a fall or near-fall points are awarded. This interpretation is in concert with Rule 3.16.2 winning in sudden victory.

(Rule 2.3.6)

A.R. 2-3. When do the rules require you to stop the match for the technical fall if a wrestler is winning by 14 points and turns their opponent to their back and into near fall criteria?

RULING: Per Rule 2.3.6, matches are not stopped for a technical fall until the points are awarded by the referee. Near fall points are awarded using Rule 4.5.2, which states, "The referee shall not signal the score for a near fall until the hold used to secure the near-fall criterion is completely released." Understanding the two rules noted above, it is a referee's judgment as to when the hold used to secure the near fall criteria is completely released. This could be in variety of angles or positions that are not able to be defined in text. The near fall points shall not be awarded, and the match stopped for the technical fall, until the referee believes that Rule 4.5.2 is satisfied.

(Rule 2.3.6)

A.R. 2-4. During a match, Wrestler A, the top wrestler, is winning by a score of 11-0 and turns their opponent onto their back using a side headlock. The referee counts four near-fall points but does not award them as Wrestler B is still in near fall criterion. Wrestler A, attempting to secure a fall, adjusts their position but loses the defensive wrestler's arm and the headlock becomes illegal, and the referee stops the match. How should points be awarded and does Wrestler A win the match by technical fall?

RULING: A technical fall cannot be earned until the points are awarded by the referee. In this situation, Wrestler A would be awarded four points for near-fall and Wrestler B would be awarded one point due to the illegal hold and the match score would be Wrestler A – 15, Wrestler B – 1. Although the near fall situation occurred prior to the illegal hold, the awarding of the near fall points and the penalty point are awarded simultaneously and consequently, Wrestler A does not win the match by technical fall.

(Rule 2.3.6)

A.R. 2-5. Early in the second period, Wrestler A is the offensive wrestler and is winning their match by a score of 13-0. Wrestler A then uses a wrist and arm bar tilt to take their opponent into near-fall criteria and earns a four-point near fall. Ten seconds later, Wrestler B is able to belly out although Wrestler A still has the wrist and arm secured and the referee is still holding the four near-fall points. Does the official stop the match at this point and award the four near-fall points (thus awarding Wrestler A with a technical fall) or should wrestling be allowed to continue?

RULING: Wrestling should be allowed to continue. Although a technical fall occurs when a wrestler has earned a 15-point advantage over their opponent, matches shall not be stopped for a win by technical fall until the points are awarded by the referee. In this situation, while Wrestler A has earned more than a 15-point advantage over their opponent, the referee has not yet awarded the near fall points since Wrestler A still has the wrist and arm secured. The awarding of near fall points would only occur when the defensive wrestler (Wrestler B) is both out of danger and able to defend their position. Until this occurs, wrestling should continue and give Wrestler A the opportunity to score a fall.

(Rule 2.3.6)

DEFAULT — INJURY

A.R. 2-6. During an individual advancement tournament both wrestlers are injured simultaneously and must default. Which wrestler will drop into the wrestle-back round?

RULING: If both wrestlers are subsequently cleared to compete by medical personnel, they will complete the match beginning where stoppage occurred. The completion of the match will take place at the beginning of the next session. The winner will advance to the wrestle-back bracket. If only one wrestler is cleared for competition, that wrestler will advance to the wrestle-backs by either a medical forfeit or forfeit. If neither wrestler is able to continue, the opponent in the wrestle-back round will advance by receiving a medical forfeit or forfeit.

(Rule 2.3.9)

MEDICAL FORFEITS

A.R. 2-7. During a tournament, two wrestlers from the same team are slated to wrestle one another in the semifinals. Per Rule 9.6.4, matches between teammates are not to be counted on the Individual Season Record Form (ISRF). Wrestler B is injured, however, and decides to medically forfeit. Per Rule 2.3.12.b, unless this was preceded by an injury default in Wrestler B's prior match, the first medical forfeit would be counted as a loss on the ISRF for Wrestler B and Wrestler A would be credited with a win. How should the medical forfeit be recorded?

RULING: In a tournament, if two wrestlers from the same team are slated to compete and one wrestler elects to medical forfeit, this will not be charged as a loss on the medically forfeiting wrestler's individual season record form (See Rule 2.3.12.b), as this match was non-allowable for the ISRF (See Rule 9.6.4). The other wrestler will be credited with a win for the purposes of advancement only and the win shall not be counted on the ISRF.

(Rules 2.3.12b and 9.6.4)

A.R. 2-8. During the first round of a tournament, Wrestler B applies an illegal chicken wing on their opponent and applies forward pressure, parallel to the long axis. Wrestler A screams out in pain and the referee immediately stops the match, calls an illegal hold on Wrestler B and awards one point to Wrestler A. The referee also starts recovery time for Wrestler A. After the two minutes for recovery time elapses, the athletic trainer states that Wrestler A needs additional medical attention and will not be able to continue. The referee disqualifies Wrestler B and Wrestler A is declared the winner. Wrestler A is unable to continue in the tournament and the coach of Wrestler A informs the tournament committee that Wrestler A will be medically forfeiting their remaining matches. Will Wrestler A's next match (one that they will medically forfeit) count as a loss on their ISRF (individual season record form) since it was not preceded by an injury default?

RULING: No. Although medical forfeits must still be recorded on the season record form, this would not be charged as a loss for Wrestler A

as they were injured and are unable to continue because of an illegal action.

(Rule 2.3.12b)

TECHNICAL FALLS

A.R. 2-9. In the third period, both wrestlers are in the neutral position and Wrestler A is winning by a score of 12-0. Wrestler A locks up their opponent in a bear hug and takes Wrestler B directly to the mat. Wrestler B ends up on their back and is close to but not in near fall criteria. The referee awards a takedown to Wrestler A. Since Wrestler B is close to being in near fall criteria, does the referee allow Wrestler A the opportunity to score a fall, or is the match over?

RULING: The match is over, and Wrestler A would win by technical fall, 15-0. Rule 2.3.6 states, “A technical fall terminates the match and occurs when a wrestler has earned a 15-point advantage over the opponent.” Since the referee awarded Wrestler A three points for the takedown, the score is 15-0, and the match would be terminated.

Note: The interpretation would be different if Wrestler B was taken down and in near fall criteria (please reference Case Book A.R. 2-5).

(Rule 2.3.6)

RULE 3

Conduct of Meets and Tournaments

EXTRA MATCHES ALONGSIDE A DUAL MEET

A.R. 3-1. May extra matches be wrestled before a dual meet or tournament?

RULING: Yes, but the extra matches shall not delay the start of the event. In addition, all dual meets and tournaments shall start no later than two hours after weigh-in.

(Rules 3.1.5c, 9.3.1 and 9.4.2)

A.R. 3-2. If two wrestlers are tentatively scheduled to compete in an extra match with one another and one of the wrestlers does not show up for the match, does the other wrestler receive a forfeit?

RULING: No, if the match never began then it is considered to have never been scheduled and the wrestler shall not receive either a forfeit or medical forfeit. If the match officially begins, then either wrestler may win by disqualification and/or injury default.

(Rules 3.1.5c, 2.3.11 and 2.3.12)

A.R. 3-3. May wrestlers bump up a weight class in order to compete in an extra match?

RULING: Yes, but any shift in weight class must follow Rule 3.7 Shifts in Weight Class – Dual Meets.

(Rule 3.7)

A.R. 3-4. May a wrestler who has competed in a dual meet or tournament also engage in an extra match?

RULING: Yes, this is allowed but the wrestler must receive the mandatory 30-minute rest required by Rule 3.22.17 and they may not compete in more than six matches per day, as per Rule 3.22.5.

(Rules 3.22.17 and 3.22.5)

A.R. 3-5. How will Rule 3.19.2 Questioning a Rules Application and 3.20 Control of Mat Area be handled when conducting extra matches?

RULING: Referees may penalize coaches with unsportsmanlike conduct (Rule 5.2) when/if an institution reaches the team point deduction level for either of these violations during an extra match. Per Rule 5.2.6, two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties for an institution will result in the individual who receives the second

violation to be ejected from the event. (Per previous secretary-rules editor guidance given for this issue at open tournaments.)

(Rules 3.19.2 and 3.20)

MAT-SIDE VIDEO REVIEW

A.R. 3-6. Red and green wrestlers are in the second overtime. Red is in control of green when the red wrestler drops down on green and the referee does not start the mandatory verbal count. Three seconds later, the green wrestler escapes. Can the red coach video review challenge that the referee did not start their verbal count? If so, would the escape be nullified?

RULING: Yes. The red coach can video review challenge this call. The referee would need to be certain there was enough time remaining on the clock so that had the count been started properly it would/could have resulted in a 5th count, which would require the match be stopped to indicate the stall warning. If, per the video review, there was sufficient time to achieve the 5th count, then this is basis for overturning the call, nullifying the escape point and re-wrestling that portion of the match. If, on the other hand for example, there were only four seconds on the clock at the point of the drop down, then this would indicate no substantive error occurred on the part of the referee. The lack of a count in and of itself would not warrant a reversal of this call because even if the count had begun, there was not enough time to reach a 5th count and the escape would stand.

(Rule 3.13.4)

A.R. 3-7. Wrestlers A and B are scrambling in the neutral position and the lead official awards three points to Wrestler A for a takedown right before the wrestlers go out of bounds. The second official, uncertain about the takedown awarded, goes to the lead official to confer but at the same time, the coach of Wrestler B throws a challenge brick to contest the takedown. After the officials confer, they decide to conduct a referee's video review and after looking at the sequence, the takedown awarded to Wrestler A is confirmed. What happens to the video review challenge initiated by the coach of Wrestler B?

RULING: The coach of Wrestler B would retain their video review challenge but only at events that do not utilize an independent reviewer (*See below for interpretation for events that utilize an independent reviewer(s)).

By rule, referee video reviews occur before any coach-requested review (Rules 3.13.8b and 3.13.9f). Since all reviews now involve the entire wrestling sequence (defined in Rule 3.13.4a), the coach of Wrestler B would not be allowed, per Rule 3.13.9i, to challenge a previously made ruling (in this case, the outcome of the referee's video review) without being penalized for a control of mat violation. Consequently, the coach of Wrestler B would retain their video review challenge without penalty. However, in this situation, if the referees confer but do not initiate a referee video review, the coach must then exercise their video review challenge.

Referee(s) are reminded that if they need to discuss or conference with one another, they should do so immediately after wrestling action has

stopped and ensure that any referee video reviews are initiated in a timely manner and of their own volition without outside influence.

Coaches are reminded that if they wish to initiate a video review challenge, they must do so by immediately throwing the foam brick into the competition circle, indicating their intent to challenge a call on the mat (Rule 3.13.9d). Since the mat-side video review process operates under the assumption that the ruling on the mat is correct (Rule 3.13.4b), any hesitation or delay in throwing the challenge brick will result in the referee(s) determining that the challenge was not made in a timely manner and the loss of the video review challenge. Coaches are also cautioned against making overt attempts to induce a referee video review.

***For events that utilize an independent reviewer(s):** At events that utilize an independent reviewer, the challenge process would remain the same. However, the coach of Wrestler B would retain their video review challenge only if the call on the mat is overturned by either the on-mat officials (via conference or referee video review) or the independent reviewer.

Referee video reviews would occur before review by the independent reviewer(s); if the call on the mat is unchanged, the referees shall then ask the coach of Wrestler B what they would like to challenge and the independent reviewer(s) would then review the sequence.

(Rules 3.13.4b, 3.13.8b, 3.13.9d and 3.13.9f)

A.R. 3-8. From the neutral position, Wrestler A locks up a bear hug and takes Wrestler B to the mat. Wrestler A keeps their hands locked but the referee does not award a takedown as the wrestlers are still scrambling while on the mat. Five seconds later, the two wrestlers go out of bounds and the referee stops the match. The coach of Wrestler A throws a challenge brick, stating that Wrestler A scored a takedown.

The referees review the sequence and determine that Wrestler A did secure a takedown when the two wrestlers hit the mat. The referees also note after the takedown was secured, Wrestler A kept their hands locked although Wrestler B was not in near fall criteria. What corrections need to be made to this wrestling sequence?

RULING: Wrestler A should be awarded three points for a takedown. Although the intent of the wrestling sequence in the video review process is to account for all wrestling action that occurred, the sequence ends (as outlined in Rule 3.13.4a) when the match “should have been stopped by the referee.” In this situation, a locked hands violation would warrant stopping a match. Wrestler A, however, would not be penalized for locked hands since they were not aware they had established control. The referees should declare dead time at the point that the locked hands call would have been made, adjust the time clock accordingly and restart the match with Wrestler A on top. Wrestler A would not accumulate any riding time in this scenario as no advantage can be gained because of a technical violation or illegal hold.

(Rule 3.13.4a)

A.R. 3-9. From the neutral position, Wrestler A shoots a double-leg and Wrestler B sprawls; both wrestlers then scramble to the mat. Wrestler A, attempting to secure the takedown, moves off the legs and locks their hands around the waist of Wrestler B. The referee still does not award a takedown when ten seconds later, Wrestler B then locks their hands around the waist of Wrestler A and completes a roll-through, putting Wrestler A onto their back. The referee awards a takedown to Wrestler B and then counts three near fall points before the wrestlers go out of bounds.

The coach of Wrestler A throws the challenge brick, stating that a takedown should have been awarded to Wrestler A. The referees review the sequence and confirm that Wrestler A did indeed score a takedown after locking their hands around the waist of Wrestler B. The second referee points out that when Wrestler A secured the takedown, they still had their hands locked (a technical violation).

What corrections need to be made to the sequence in question? Does Wrestler A get penalized for locked hands? Does dead time apply? What about the points scored by Wrestler B?

RULING: Rule 3.13.4a alters the video review process for the 2023-24 wrestling season with the addition of a sequence, defined as the time from the alleged error, as stated by the challenging coach, until the match was stopped (or should have been stopped) by the referee. There are several issues to address in this scenario, all of which must be accounted for in the video review process.

- Wrestler A would be awarded three points for the takedown – this is confirmed during the video review.
- Wrestler A would not be penalized for locked hands, however, since Wrestler A never knew they were in control (the referee did not initially award the takedown). Note also that Wrestler A would not accumulate any riding time as no advantage can be gained because of a technical violation or illegal hold.
- Because Wrestler B scored during the wrestling sequence, Wrestler B would be awarded two points for a reversal and three near fall points (the initial takedown awarded would be changed to a reversal as on review, Wrestler A had control).

Although a locked hands call would ordinarily require a match to be stopped (sans imminent scoring), keep in mind that in this scenario, Wrestler A is not being penalized for locked hands. As a result, all wrestling action that took place can and needs to be accounted for in the wrestling sequence.

(Rules 3.13.4a and 3.13.4b)

A.R. 3-10. Wrestler A is the defensive wrestler and gets turned by Wrestler B and pinned. The coach of Wrestler B, however, throws a challenge brick, stating that Wrestler A locked his hands while on the mat and before the defensive wrestler was in near fall criterion. The referees review the challenged sequence and determine that Wrestler A did in fact lock their hands before Wrestler B was in near fall criterion. What correction needs to be made?

RULING: The challenged sequence is defined by the start of the alleged error, as stated by the challenging coach, until the match was stopped (or should have been stopped) by the referee. In this case, the sequence begins at the point Wrestler A locked his hands. Since the match should have been stopped at that point, the challenged sequence ends there. Any wrestling that subsequently took place is negated and should be declared dead time.

(Rule 3.13.4a)

A.R. 3-11. During the 125-pound bout, Team A throws a challenge brick, stating that their wrestler scored a takedown. The video review system, however, is not working and the officials cannot conduct a video review. Team A would retain their challenge and Team B would not be permitted to initiate any video review challenges for the remainder of the 125-pound bout. Are referees permitted to initiate an official's review later in the 125-pound bout if the system is operational?

RULING: Yes. Referee video reviews are initiated at the discretion of the official(s) when there is reasonable certainty that an error may have been made regarding timing, scoring and/or the proper positioning of wrestlers with the sole intent of getting the wrestling sequence correct. The referee-initiated reviews stand independent of team challenges and are therefore permitted, regardless of any technical difficulties in prior video review sequences.

Referees are reminded that coaches should not solicit or coerce the official into a review, particularly when they are not permitted to challenge.

(Rule 3.13.11)

A.R. 3-12. If the video review system is not working during an individual match (e.g., 157-pound match), neither team would be permitted to initiate a video review challenge for the remainder of that bout. Does the video review system need to be operable within a specific time frame or may teams initiate challenges once the system is functional?

RULING: The video review system must be corrected and fully operational before the conclusion of the match in which the failure occurred. If the video review system has not been corrected, it shall be suspended from use for the remainder of the event.

(Rule 3.13.11)

A.R. 3-13. During the second period, Team A throws the challenge brick and states that their wrestler earned 2 near fall points. The officials start the review, but the second official is blocking the camera and the challenged call in question (near fall) cannot be seen. Ten seconds later in the sequence, however, the officials see that the offensive wrestler locked their hands while on the mat. What is the correct ruling?

RULING: Rule 3.13.12 states that any obstruction of the view on the video screen that does not allow for a confirmed ruling shall result in no review. Consequently, even though the offensive wrestler locked

their hands, they could not be penalized and Team A would retain their challenge.

(Rule 3.13.12)

OVERTIME — IN BETWEEN PERIODS

A.R. 3-14. Wrestlers A and B are tied at the end of regulation, 4-4. Neither wrestler scores during the sudden victory period. Immediately after the sudden victory period ends, Wrestler B calls for their second injury timeout. Since this is Wrestler B's second nonbleeding timeout, the referee awards one point to Wrestler A, making the score 5-4. Do the two 30-second tiebreaker periods need to be wrestled?

RULING: No, the match is over, and Wrestler A shall be declared the winner. Rule 3.16.3 states, "If no winner is declared at the end of the two-minute sudden victory period, two 30-second tiebreaker periods shall be wrestled." In this situation, while the match was tied, 4-4, and no winner was declared at the end of the sudden victory period, Rule 3.15.1 states that, "...all points, penalties, cautions, warnings, timeouts and injury time accumulated during regulation shall carry over to overtime." Since a second nonbleeding timeout results in a match point being awarded to the opponent and the score is no longer tied, the wrestling of tiebreaker periods is unnecessary.

A match is concluded when any match points awarded before the start of any overtime period (sudden victory or the first tiebreaker period) breaks a tie score. The only exception would occur before the start of the second 30-second tiebreaker period as both 30-second tiebreaker periods need to be wrestled in their entirety.

(Rule 3.16.3)

CHOICE OF POSITIONS

A.R. 3-15. The first period ends with neither wrestler able to score (0-0). Wrestler A rides the entire second period accumulating two minutes of advantage time. In the third period, Wrestler A selects the bottom position and escapes immediately. Wrestler A is also awarded a point as Wrestler B locked their hands while on the mat in the top position. With the escape and the technical violation, Wrestler A leads, 2-0. With six seconds remaining, Wrestler B secures a takedown. The regulation match ends with the score 3-2 in favor of Wrestler B. The referee goes to the table and awards Wrestler A one point for time advantage. The score is now tied, 3-3. Which wrestler will have the choice of position in the first tiebreaker period?

RULING: Wrestler B. The takedown resulted in the first offensive points scored in the match. Time advantage, although earned, cannot be awarded until the conclusion of the regulation match.

(Rules 3.14.3a and 4.5.11)

QUESTIONING TIMING, SCORING OR RULES APPLICATION

A.R. 3-16. What is the proper way to request the timing and/or scoring for a match be reviewed?

RULING: When the coach wishes to request a review of timing and/or scoring, they shall approach the scorer's table and indicate to the scorer they would like to have the match stopped for timing and scoring review. The individuals working the scorer's table will then notify the referee(s) to stop the bout. Once the bout is stopped and the referee approaches the score table, the coach may state their concern, and return to their appropriate corner so the scorer and the referee can execute the review. Once the review is completed, the referee shall indicate to each corner whether there was a change or no change in the score or time. The scorer's table will make the appropriate changes to the score clock.

(Rule 3.19.1)

BREAKING TIES IN DUAL MEETS AND TEAM-

A.R. 3-17. This example demonstrates the correct method to break ties.

	Team A	Team B
125 - Cochran (Team A) Decision, Chester (Team B), 6-3	3	0
133 - Jones (Team A) Major Decision, Smith (Team B), 10-2	7	0
141 - Hoopes (Team B) Decision, Scott (Team A), 7-4	7	3
149 - Howes (Team A) Fall, Morter (Team B), 4:23	13	3
157 - Letcher (Team B) Decision, Larrick (Team A) 10-3	13	6
165 - Painter (Team B) Major Decision, Gregg (Team A), 14-5	13	10
174 - Kwait (Team B) Technical Fall, Musgrave (Team A), 16-1	13	15
184 - Raber (Team A) Technical Fall, Lonsway (Team B), 18-2	18	15
197 - Pawlitz (Team A) Decision, Daniels (Team B), 8-6	21	15
285 - Lovejoy (Team B) Forfeit, (Team A)	21	21

RULING: Team B wins the dual meet via Rule 3.21c. See below for the details in determining this winner.

(1) Greater number of victories.

Note: Forfeits, defaults and disqualifications count toward total number of victories.

Team A	Team B
5	5

(Rule 3.21a)

(2) Combined total of falls, forfeits, defaults and disqualifications.

Team A	Team B
1	1

Team A (1): Fall @ 149 Team B (1): Forfeit @ 285

(Rule 3.21b)

(3) Total match points scored only from decisions, major decisions and technical falls.

Team A	Team B
55	60

Team B 22, Team A 21.

(Rule 3.21c)

VIDEO REVIEW - OPERATOR/SYSTEM ERROR

A.R. 3-18. From the neutral position, Wrestler A shoots a blast double and wrestling action takes the wrestlers to the edge of the mat. Wrestler A appears to secure the takedown immediately before they go out of bounds and the referee awards three points. The coach of Wrestler B immediately throws the challenge brick, stating that the wrestlers were out of bounds before control was established. When reviewing the sequence, the referee(s) see that the camera operator failed to follow and capture the wrestling action on the edge until after the wrestlers were out of bounds and cannot determine whether the takedown was scored while in bounds. Does Coach B retain their video review challenge?

RULING: Yes. If the wrestling sequence fails to capture necessary and/or essential video footage for the referee(s) or independent reviewer to make a ruling, the challenging coach shall retain their challenge due to operator error. In this case, the takedown call awarded would be upheld.

(Rule 3.13.11)

RULE 4

Scoring Meets and Matches

NEUTRAL DANGER ZONE

A.R. 4-1. Is a wrestler able to score near fall points while holding their opponent in the neutral danger zone?

RULING: No, near fall may only be scored once a takedown is awarded. By rule, the NDZ and the NDS are only applicable when in the neutral position.

(Rules 4.2.2 and 4.2.3)

A.R. 4-2. If two wrestlers are tangled up in the neutral position and unable to progress, and one of those wrestlers is in the NDZ, would a stalemate be called?

RULING: No, regardless of whether a wrestler is unwilling or unable to get out of the NDZ, a takedown will be awarded to the other wrestler if the opponent is still in the NDZ at the completion of the danger signal.

(Rule 4.2.2)

A.R. 4-3. Wrestler A and Wrestler B are scrambling in the neutral position with ankle locks on each other. Wrestler A comes up slightly and puts Wrestler B in the neutral danger zone (NDZ). After the three count, Wrestler A is awarded a takedown. After the takedown, Wrestler B scrambles and puts Wrestler A in the same situation. Since it is the same situation, would Wrestler B be awarded a reversal?

RULING: The rules currently only prescribe what takedown control is in one instance: The neutral danger zone takedown. In all other scoring situations, the referee is charged with determining whether control has been established, lost or changed. In this example, the initial takedown was awarded utilizing the NDZ rule. After the takedown was awarded and Wrestler B put their opponent into the same situation, it would be up to the referee to determine if an escape or a reversal should be awarded. Since escapes, reversals, and traditional takedowns do not have a prescribed method for determining control (or loss or change of control), the awarding of points in the situation is not automatic and not situationally dependent but rather up to the judgment of the referee.

(Rule 4.2.2)

A.R. 4-4. Wrestler A hits Wrestler B with a Peterson roll and sits Wrestler B to their butt. While making an adjustment to get the takedown and near fall, wrestler A puts themselves at 60 degrees and gives up a danger takedown. In this situation by rule, the referee will award a takedown to Wrestler B even though

Wrestler B is on their butt locked up in a Peterson roll and about to get scored on.

RULING: The neutral danger zone rule utilizes near fall criteria and substitutes 90 degrees for 45 degrees. Also, if a wrestler's body is in between the shoulder blades and the mat then near fall criteria is not established (not within four inches of the mat). If in fact after executing this Peterson roll the referee did believe Wrestler A was in the danger zone, they would warn Wrestler A of that by issuing the neutral danger signal (NDS). This announcement of "danger" indicates that the wrestler needs to progress immediately out of this situation. If the wrestler hears the danger signal and subsequently cannot secure the traditional takedown, or get themselves out of the danger zone, then they must be restrained in that situation and a takedown would be awarded to Wrestler B. If after that takedown is awarded, additional scoring action occurs it would be awarded appropriately.

(Rule 4.2.2)

A.R. 4-5. If a wrestler is in the neutral danger zone and the referee begins issuing the neutral danger signal (NDS), and the wrestler in the danger zone immediately rolls out of the danger zone and then back into the danger zone, would a new danger signal be issued?

RULING: Yes, anytime a wrestler moves out of the neutral danger zone (NDZ), the danger signal stops and should be restarted, if the wrestler re-enters the danger zone. If, however, the referee has started the NDS and the wrestler is flopping around within the danger zone, the signal should continue.

(Rule 4.2.3)

A.R. 4-6. If the red wrestler has the green wrestler in the danger zone and while in the danger zone the green wrestler screams out because of an injury, should the red wrestler receive a takedown?

RULING: For the purposes of Rule 2.2.4 on imminent scoring, the issuance of a neutral danger signal (NDS) will not impact the application of points that should be awarded when an opponent indicates injury and scoring was imminent. Regardless of whether the referee is watching a traditional takedown take place or if they are issuing a NDS, when a wrestler indicates injury by yelling out, the referee will ask themselves if scoring was imminent. If scoring was imminent, then the points should be awarded, if scoring was not imminent points should not be awarded.

(Rule 4.2.3)

RIDING TIME IN REAR STANDING POSITION

A.R. 4-7. In the second period, Wrestler B, the defensive wrestler, stands up and Wrestler A follows. Wrestler A, however, makes no attempt to return Wrestler B to the mat and the referee warns Wrestler A for stalling, stopping riding time concurrently. At what point would Wrestler A start to accumulate riding time?

RULING: In this situation, Wrestler A would need to return Wrestler B to the mat for riding time to start again. An attempt alone to return their opponent to the mat would be insufficient for riding time to restart; a successful mat return must be completed for Wrestler A to begin accumulating riding time.

(Rules 4.5.13 and 5.1.4)

NEAR FALL

A.R. 4-8. Wrestler A is the defensive wrestler. At the 3:45 minute mark in the match, Wrestler A is charged with a first non-bleeding injury timeout. After the injury timeout ends, Wrestler B is given the choice of position by the referee and chooses the defensive position. How is this recorded on the match scoresheet?

RULING: In Wrestler A's row on the sheet in the second period, the scorer uses the abbreviation INJ(1)3:45 and follows it by an arrow indicating Wrestler A's new starting position. In this case, use an arrow with its head pointing upward. INJ(1)3:45↑. If Wrestler B chose the neutral position, it would be recorded INJ(1)3:45↔.

(Rule 4.10)

OFFENSIVE WRESTLER STALLING IN REAR STANDING POSITION

A.R. 4-9. At the start of the second period, Wrestler B, the defensive wrestler, stands up and Wrestler A follows and locks their hands around the waist of Wrestler B. Wrestler A fails to initiate a mat return and eight seconds later, the referee penalizes Wrestler B for stalling and clasps their wrist to indicate that riding time shall stop. When would riding time start again?

RULING: Riding time would restart when either the offensive wrestler returns their opponent to the mat beyond reaction time or wrestling action brings both wrestlers back to the mat beyond reaction time. After being penalized for stalling in the rear-standing position, an attempt to return their opponent to the mat alone would not be sufficient to restart riding time.

(Rules 4.5.13, 5.1.4 and 5.7.15c)

A.R. 4-10. While in the rear-standing position, Wrestler B is warned for stalling. The official signals stalling and clenches their wrist to stop riding time. As the match continues, Wrestler A initiates a dive roll underneath to grab Wrestler B's ankle, and a scramble ensues with both wrestlers now on the mat. At this point, would riding time start again for Wrestler B?

RULING: Yes. Once the wrestlers return to the mat beyond reaction time, riding time shall restart. It does not matter which wrestler initiated the action to bring them back to the mat.

(Rules 4.5.13, 5.1.4 and 5.7.15c)

RULE 5

Infractions

ASSESSING MATCH PENALTIES

A.R. 5-1. Utilizing a hammerlock, Wrestler A has their opponent in a pinning situation. Wrestler A adjusts their position and takes Wrestler B's arm off the back momentarily, creating an illegal hold, but quickly moves Wrestler B's arm back into a legal position. Since the presence of injury no longer exists, does the referee allow wrestling to continue?

RULING: No. Although Rule 5.1.2.f states that a match shall not be stopped during scoring situations unless necessary to prevent injury, no advantage can be gained as the result of an illegal act. In this situation, while the presence of an injury may not exist, allowing the near fall situation to continue after Wrestler A used an illegal hold would constitute an unfair advantage. The referee should stop the match, award any earned near fall points to Wrestler A (prior to the illegal hold), one penalty point to Wrestler B, start recovery time (if applicable) and then restart wrestling with Wrestler A in the top position.

(Rule 5.1.2)

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

A.R. 5-2. At the conclusion of the match, Wrestler A takes off his headgear, places it on the mat and proceeds to take off his anklets before shaking hands with their opponent. Wrestler A then picks up their headgear and walks off the mat. Per Rule 5.2.1, is this unsportsmanlike conduct?

RULING: No. Rule 5.2.1 emphasizes that any equipment is to stay in the possession of the wrestler until they leave the competition circle.

(Rule 5.2.1)

A.R. 5-3. If a wrestler receives an unsportsmanlike conduct violation in the second period of a match and then subsequently receives a second unsportsmanlike conduct violation immediately after the third period concludes, would this wrestler be disqualified?

RULING: No, per rule a wrestler is only disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct when the violations are received within the match itself (start of match to the end of the third period or after a fall, technical fall, default or disqualification). When time expired in the third period, it immediately went into the postmatch period which has its own penalty sequence on the penalty table.

(Rules 5.2.4 and 5.2.5)

RECOVERY TIME/INJURY TIME AND BLOOD

A.R. 5-4. In the first period, Wrestler A applies an overly forceful cross-face to their opponent resulting in Wrestler B's neck being twisted awkwardly. Wrestler B's nose also begins to bleed heavily. The referee stops the match, penalizes Wrestler A for unnecessary roughness and then awards one point to Wrestler B. The offended wrestler is provided recovery time when an unnecessary roughness violation occurs but since Wrestler B is also bleeding, what is the proper protocol for the official? Does the bleeding timeout get addressed first or does recovery time start immediately or can the bleeding timeout occur simultaneously with recovery time?

RULING: The bleeding timeout would be addressed first, followed by recovery time, if needed. To allow the medical staff to properly assess the potentially injured wrestler, coupled with the potential risk of bloodborne pathogens, the bleeding timeout shall be addressed first. When the bleeding timeout has been properly attended to, the referee shall then start recovery time, if necessary, and the offended wrestler would be allowed a maximum of two minutes of recovery time to be ready to wrestle.

(Rules 5.3, 6.1.23 and 6.1.24)

FLAGRANT MISCONDUCT

A.R. 5-5. The referee raises Wrestler A's hand at the end of the match. Wrestler A subsequently punches Wrestler B, and the referee calls flagrant misconduct. What is the penalty and what effect does it have on the match?

RULING: Flagrant misconduct by the winner during the post-match period shall result in Wrestler A being disqualified, the deduction of one team point, the removal of the disqualified wrestler from the premises and Wrestler B being declared the winner.

(Rules 5.5.2 and 5.5.3)

A.R. 5-6. During the 165-pound match, the referee calls Wrestler A for flagrant misconduct and Wrestler A is disqualified. After the meet ends (that is, after four subsequent matches) the coach of Wrestler A persuades the referee to reverse their call of flagrant misconduct in the 165-pound match, and reduce it to unsportsmanlike conduct. The referee agrees and informs the table, but not Wrestler B's coach. Can the referee reverse their earlier call?

RULING: No. Once a flagrant misconduct violation has been assessed, it shall not be changed after the subsequent match begins in a dual meet and once the bout sheet leaves the table in a tournament.

(Rule 5.5.8)

ILLEGAL HOLD-HANDS TO THE FACE

A.R. 5-7. Why is a wrestler being called for an illegal hold when they place their hand on the opponent's face without using excessive force?

RULING: Because of the low amount of force needed to cause injury to a wrestler's eye, placing the hand(s) in on or around the eyes nose or mouth as a hold, tactic, defense or any other purposeful

technique, regardless of the force used, is considered deliberate and is illegal.

(Rule 5.6.1 and 5.6.12)

A.R. 5-8. What is the official interpretation of when hands to the face is illegal?

RULING: Any wrestling action in which the wrestler deliberately places their hand in, on, or around the eyes nose and mouth is considered an illegal hold. The hand is considered to be any part of the base of the palm of the hand, the palm of the hand itself or any of the fingers or thumb.

(Rule 5.6.12)

A.R. 5-9. Will a wrestler be called for an illegal hold if they are in a scramble situation or normal wrestling action (i.e. hand fighting) and their hand inadvertently hits the other wrestler's face or eyes?

RULING: If a wrestler's hand comes into contact with their opponent's face inadvertently and not because of the use of a purposeful hold or tactic then this is not considered illegal hands to the face.

(Rule 5.6.12)

GRABBING FINGERS

A.R. 5-10. From referee's position, Wrestler B, the defensive wrestler, stands up and Wrestler A goes to lock their hands around Wrestler B's waist. Before Wrestler A can lock their hands, Wrestler B grabs the index and middle finger of Wrestler B. Is this permissible?

RULING: Wrestlers may grasp one, two, three or all four fingers to break a hold, but pulling back the thumb or one, two or three fingers is illegal.

(Rule 5.6.2)

REAR DOUBLE KNEE KICKBACK

A.R. 5-11. On a restart from referee's position, Wrestler B, the defensive wrestler, stands up and Wrestler A, the offensive wrestler, quickly follows and ends up in the rear standing position. Wrestler B leans forward into a quad-pod position (both hands are on the mat although the knees are not) at which point Wrestler A leaves their feet and uses their lower leg(s) to kick behind Wrestler B's knees in an attempt to bring them to the mat. Is this legal?

RULING: No. Rule 5.6.9 states that the rear double knee kickback is illegal from the rear standing position. In this situation, even though the wrestlers are not in rear standing position (because the defensive wrestler's hands are on the mat), the potential for injury to the defensive wrestler still exists. The spirit and intent of the rule is to protect the defensive wrestler's knees from injury and contact behind both of the defensive wrestler's knees in this position is illegal.

(Rule 5.6.9)

STALLING

A.R. 5-12. Defensive Wrestler A, who is attempting to escape, cuts back and faces Wrestler B while going completely out of bounds. Wrestler B is entirely in bounds. The referee awards an escape to Wrestler A. Should the referee use the neutral out of bounds stalling rule to call a stalling violation on Wrestler A for going out of bounds?

RULING: No. Rule 5.7.5 does not apply when the referee awards an escape for loss of control on the out of bounds line, or if the wrestler who escapes is partially out of bounds when the escape point is awarded. A neutral out of bounds stalling call would only apply if the wrestler secured the escape in bounds and was balanced and positioned within the competition circle and then backed out of bounds.

(Rule 5.7.5)

A.R. 5-13. How do you determine who was stalling when two wrestlers go out of bounds in the neutral position?

RULING: If Wrestler A is pursuing Wrestler B to compete, and Wrestler B backs out of bounds with minimal to no effort to circle back into the competition area, Wrestler B is considered stalling. The threshold of minimal to no effort applies in all standing neutral wrestling situations, regardless of the hold or lack of a hold one wrestler has on another; any wrestler on the out of bounds line must make substantial effort to circle back into the competition area. If both wrestlers are straddling the out of bounds line and they go out of bounds simultaneously, then they are equally responsible for not circling back into the competition area and they will both be called for out of bounds neutral stalling. The neutral position stalling criteria applies after the referee awards an escape point. However, an escape that is awarded and is immediately followed by an out of bounds call will not warrant a stalling call.

(Rule 5.7.5a)

A.R. 5-14. How do you determine if a wrestler was pushing the opponent out of bounds or just wrestling aggressively?

RULING: If Wrestler A is on or near the out of bounds line and actively trying to circle into the competition area, and Wrestler A is met by their opponent, Wrestler B, who is pushing, simply to impede, inhibit or block Wrestler A's attempts to circle in bounds, and this pushing action results in an out of bounds call, then this is considered neutral out of bounds stalling by pushing on opponent (B). Out of bounds stalling by pushing can occur in any wrestling hold or position in which the wrestlers are in the standing neutral position.

(Rule 5.7.5b)

A.R. 5-15. How do you determine if a wrestler was pulling the opponent out of bounds?

RULING: Pulling an opponent out of bounds to avoid being scored on, and/or to unnecessarily force a restart, is considered neutral out of bounds stalling by pushing. Out of bounds stalling by pulling can occur

in any wrestling hold or position in which the athletes are in the standing neutral position.

(Rule 5.7.5b)

A.R. 5-16. How are you able to identify if wrestling action is taking place?

RULING: Action calls are indicated when there is aggressive wrestling by both wrestlers with the out of bounds line playing little to no role in the wrestlers' actions or decisions. Wrestlers actively executing a wrestling maneuver, or working aggressively to score or not be scored on, characterize aggressive wrestling.

(Rule 5.7.5c)

A.R. 5-17. Is it a mandatory stall call when a wrestler kicks out from a lower leg hold?

RULING: No. A wrestler who stays in bounds while kicking out of a lower leg hold in either the neutral or down position, should not be called for stalling unless the referee believes Rule 5.7.1 (avoiding wrestling as an offensive or defensive strategy) applies. If, however, a kick out by a wrestler results in an out of bounds call being made by the referee, then the wrestler kicking out shall be called for stalling

(Rule 5.7.8)

A.R. 5-18 . In referee position, the offensive wrestler moves both hands down below the buttocks of the defensive wrestler onto one or both leg(s). After the referee has started their five-second verbal count, the offensive wrestler moves their hands back up above the defensive wrestler's buttocks before the referee reaches the fifth count, the offensive wrestler waits to hear the referee stop their count and then he immediately positions both hands back down below the buttocks.

RULING: If the offensive wrestler attempts a series of dropping down below the buttocks, moving back up and quickly attempting to initiate action and then dropping back down below the buttocks and moving up above the buttocks again, the referee has the option to determine that this is a stalling tactic and can immediately call the offensive wrestler for stalling.

(Rule 5.7.12)

A.R. 5-19. In referee position, the offensive wrestler moves one or both hands down below the buttocks and onto the ankle of the defensive wrestler. The defensive wrestler then pushes the head of the offensive wrestler down toward the mat and ankle and holds the head in that position so the offensive wrestler is unable to move up. Does the referee continue the five-second verbal count.

RULING: Yes. When an offensive wrestler initiates the action and executes a drop-down technique, they bear the responsibility to work themselves back up above the waist prior to the stalling violation been issued.

(Rule 5.7.12)

A.R. 5-20. In referee position, the offensive wrestler moves one or both hands down below the buttocks of the defensive wrestler onto one or both leg(s). The

referee has started their five-second verbal count when the offensive wrestler moves both hands up above the buttocks, at which point the referee stops their count. The offensive wrestler then applies a side headlock to the defensive wrestler.

RULING: In this situation, the offensive wrestler has moved back up above the buttocks, and the referee has stopped the count. When the offensive wrestler applies the side headlock to the defensive wrestler, the referee shall begin a new five-second count.

(Rules 5.7.12 and 5.7.14)

A.R. 5-21. In the neutral position, Wrestler A takes Wrestler B down from behind. Wrestler A finishes the takedown with both hands wrapped around the ankles of Wrestler B and does not immediately work up to above the buttocks. Does the referee immediately begin the five-second verbal count?

RULING: No, the referee is required to give the offensive wrestler an opportunity to work up from the position before starting a mandatory count.

(Rule 5.7.12)

A.R. 5-22. In the neutral position, Wrestler A shoots a high-crotch on Wrestler B. Wrestler B cracks down onto their hip and locks his hands around the buttocks of Wrestler A. Wrestler A is awarded the takedown after securing their arms around both legs of Wrestler B. Wrestler B is able to block Wrestler A from moving their hand(s) up around the buttocks of Wrestler B. Does the referee begin the five-second verbal count for Wrestler A?

RULING: No, in this situation Wrestler A has secured the takedown but Wrestler B is blocking Wrestler A from moving up above the buttocks. Therefore, the referee shall call a stalemate and restart the wrestlers in the center of the mat.

(Rule 5.7.12a)

A.R. 5-23. If a wrestler is awarded a takedown and then moves into a hand-turk situation (bottom leg cradle), should a mandatory five-second verbal count occur?

RULING: No, the hand-turk, or bottom leg cradle situation, is not a position in which the mandatory count should be utilized or continued. Referees should allow this action to continue and if it becomes apparent the wrestler is using the technique as a stalling tactic, then the wrestler can be called for stalling using Rule 5.7.1.

(Rule 5.7.12)

A.R. 5-24. If wrestler A drops down to a lower leg hold on wrestler B and while the referee is issuing the verbal five-second count Wrestler A releases the leg before the fifth count but does not move up above wrestler A's waist. In this situation does the referee stop the count?

RULING: Yes, per rule 5.7.12 releasing the hold is sufficient to stop the mandatory count. However, the rules and interpretations regarding gaming this rule are very strict. If a wrestler releases the hold to stop the count there is an automatic stalling call if at any

time in that situation they re-grasp the lower leg. This immediate stall call is because the individual is gaming the drop down rule, which is not allowed.

(Rule 5.7.12)

A.R. 5-25. If, from the offensive position or after a takedown, a wrestler begins utilizing a navy ride, would this initiate a mandatory verbal five-second count? (Note: Navy ride is similar to a bottom leg cradle, except that the wrestler applying the hold is on the side opposite of the opponent's leg that is being grasped. If you have questions, contact the secretary-rules editor).

RULING: No. This situation is similar to previous interpretations where a count is not initiated, such as, utilizing a bottom leg cradle or hand-turk after a takedown and also in the offensive position when a wrestler reaches between the crotch to secure a ball and chain technique. The navy ride is considered the same type of technique and would not initiate a mandatory drop down count.

(Rule 5.7.12)

A.R. 5-26. Do you have to restart the mandatory verbal count when a wrestler goes immediately from a waist an ankle to a drop-down, or vice versa?

RULING: No, neither a waist and ankle ride that turns into a drop-down position nor a drop-down position that turns into a waist and ankle ride require a restart of the referees mandatory count.

(Rules 5.7.12 and 5.7.13)

A.R. 5-27. Wrestler A, the offensive wrestler, drops to the lower leg of Wrestler B while on the mat and the referee begins a five-second count. Wrestler B stands up and Wrestler A attempts to follow but his knees are still on the mat. Does the five-second count continue?

RULING: When dropped to a lower leg, there is no mandatory count when both the offensive and defensive wrestlers are in the rear-standing position. The mandatory count also stops if the defensive wrestler is on their feet while the offensive wrestler is still on the mat.

(Rules 5.7.12b)

A.R. 5-28. Should an offensive wrestler who brings one hand to the opponent's waist and with the other hand reach between the legs of their opponent to secure their wrist receive a mandatory verbal count for executing a drop down?

RULING: No, if the offensive wrestler has one arm around the waist and the other arm through the crotch of the defensive wrestler, and has a clear grasp on the defensive wrestler's wrist (ball and chain type technique), a mandatory count is not required.

(Rule 5.7.13)

A.R. 5-29. In referee position, the offensive wrestler has a leg ride and side headlock secured. Can the referee call the offensive wrestler for stalling if they repeatedly release and reapply the side headlock, never allowing the referee to reach the 5th count?

RULING: Yes. When the wrestler repeatedly releases and re-grasps the side headlock in order to avoid a 5th count, the referee can immediately call the offensive wrestler for stalling.

(Rule 5.7.14)

A.R. 5-30. Wrestler A is in the offensive position and places a side headlock on Wrestler B that encircles the head and arm of their opponent but closes the loop of the side headlock by using the opponent's wrist. Would this be considered a side headlock and receive a mandatory verbal count?

RULING: Yes. Wrestlers may not use their opponent's wrist to close the circle on a side headlock. This technique would require a mandatory count.

(Rules 5.7.14)

A.R. 5-31. If Wrestler A is in the offensive rear standing position with Wrestler B, and Wrestler A has a leg ride in on Wrestler B, is Wrestler A obligated to make an attempt to return Wrestler B to the mat?

RULING: Yes, regardless of the situation Wrestler A finds themselves in, they must make an attempt to return their opponent to the mat or risk being called for stalling.

(Rule 5.7.15c)

A.R. 5-32. Wrestler A, the offensive wrestler, applies a bow and arrow to the defensive wrestler and begins to work for a turn. Is the referee required to immediately start a five-second count?

RULING: No. If the offensive wrestler makes an attempt to put their opponent in a near fall situation (defined as on their back or in a near fall criterion), the five-second count should not be initiated. An attempt is defined as a position where, in the sole judgment of the referee, the offensive wrestler is actively progressing and/or advancing toward a near fall situation.

The referee should, without coaching, utilize appropriate verbal commands (i.e., "improve") to ensure that the offensive wrestler is improving their position. If, however, the referee determines the offensive wrestler is no longer actively progressing and/or advancing toward a near fall situation, the five-second count shall immediately be initiated. If the referee reaches the fifth count before the offensive wrestler moves their arm(s)/hand(s) back up above the buttocks of the defensive wrestler, releases the hold or initiates another attempt, then the offensive wrestler shall be called for stalling.

Referees must recognize active progression and/or advancement towards a near fall situation to avoid penalizing the offensive wrestler unfairly. Conversely, referees must also exercise sound judgment and immediately initiate a five-second count when, after verbal commands have gone unheeded, and active progression toward a near fall situation is no longer present.

(Rule 5.7.13)

A.R. 5-33. From referee's position, Wrestler A, the offensive wrestler, works out to the side in an effort to turn their opponent onto their back and then grabs the defensive wrestler's ankle. The referee begins the mandatory five-second count. Three seconds later, Wrestler A turns Wrestler B onto his back but is still holding onto the ankle. Does the count continue?

RULING: No, the count should stop. Like the side headlock rule (Rule 5.7.14), if the offensive wrestler fails to release the ankle or place his opponent in a near fall situation (defined as on their back or in near fall criterion) before the referee reaches their fifth count, the offensive wrestler shall be called for stalling. Since Wrestler B has been turned onto their back, the count shall stop.

(Rule 5.7.13)

A.R. 5-34. Wrestler A, the offensive wrestler, has turned their opponent onto his back. Wrestler B starts to bridge when Wrestler A then grabs Wrestler B's ankle. Does the referee need to start a five-second count?

RULING: No. The intent of the five-second count is to prevent the offensive wrestler from stalling. In this situation, since Wrestler A has their opponent in a potential pinning situation, wrestling should continue without a five-second count.

(Rule 5.7.13)

A.R. 5-35. Wrestler A is in control and after breaking their opponent to the mat applies a bent leg turk. To counter the turk, Wrestler B begins to crawl forward when Wrestler A reaches back and grabs the ankle of the turked leg. Is the referee required to immediately start a five-second count?

RULING: No. Mirroring the interpretation for the bow and arrow (Case Book A.R. 5-3), if the offensive wrestler (Wrestler A) attempts to put their opponent in a near fall situation (defined as on their back or in a near fall criterion), the five-second count should not be initiated. An attempt is defined as a position where, in the sole judgment of the referee, the offensive wrestler is actively progressing and/or advancing toward a near fall situation.

The referee should, without coaching, utilize appropriate verbal commands (i.e., "improve") to ensure that the offensive wrestler is improving their position. If, however, the referee determines the offensive wrestler is no longer actively progressing and/or advancing toward a near fall situation, the five-second count shall immediately be initiated.

(Rule 5.7.13)

INTERLOCKING HANDS

A.R. 5-36. Wrestler A is on the bottom, stands up to both feet and turns into Wrestler B. Wrestler B's knees are on the mat and are supporting their weight. Wrestler B locks hands around both legs of Wrestler A in a double-leg situation with no loss of control. Wrestler B then lifts Wrestler A, brings Wrestler A to the mat, unlocks hands and moves up. Should Wrestler B be called for locked hands?

RULING: No. The defensive wrestler was supported by both feet only, which allows the offensive wrestler to lock hands and execute a mat return.

(Rule 5.8.2)

A.R. 5-37. The offensive wrestler applies a bear hug on the defensive wrestler, who is in a sitting position facing the offensive wrestler. After the bear hug is applied, the offensive wrestler attempts to pin the opponent. Is this considered a technical violation for locked hands?

RULING: Yes. Locking hands around the body by the offensive wrestler while in a control position on the mat is a technical violation. In a control position, a wrestler cannot lock hands around the opponent and then take the opponent to a pinning situation. Once a near-fall criterion has been met, it is permissible to lock hands.

(Rule 5.8.2)

A.R. 5-38. From the neutral position, Wrestler A locks up a bear hug on Wrestler B and takes them down to the mat directly into near fall criteria. After a near-fall count of two, Wrestler B comes out of near-fall criteria but is still on their back (shoulders are breaking 90 degrees) but Wrestler A still has their hands locked. Should Wrestler A be called for a locked-hands technical violation?

RULING: Rule 5.8.2 allows for reaction time for interlocking hands in all areas except for the locked hands call down on the mat. In this situation, however, since Wrestler A used a legal hold to take their opponent to the mat into near-fall criteria, kept their hands locked legally (while their opponent was in near-fall criteria) but may have been unaware of the fact that their opponent came out of near-fall criteria, a reasonable allowance must be made.

The referee shall verbally communicate to the offensive wrestler that they are no longer in near fall criteria and allow reaction time for the offensive wrestler to unlock their hands. If the offensive wrestler does not unlock their hands after the referee gives reaction time, a technical violation for locked hands shall be called.

(Rule 5.8.2)

LEAVING MAT WITHOUT PERMISSION

A.R. 5-39. The referee is asked to come to the scorer's table at the request of Coach B. The referee instructs the wrestlers to remain in the center of the mat. Wrestler A walks to the edge of the mat to talk to A's coach. What is the ruling?

RULING: The wrestler would be penalized for a technical violation of leaving the mat without permission.

(Rule 5.8.3)

GRASPING CLOTHING OR EQUIPMENT

A.R. 5-40. During a scramble situation, Wrestler A, the offensive wrestler, gets two fingers stuck inside Wrestler B's left wrestling shoe and pulls on the shoe. Is this permissible and what call, if any, should the referee make?

RULING: Rule 5.8.6 states that the grasping of equipment is a technical violation. In this situation, the referee should stop the match, penalize Wrestler A for a technical violation (grasping equipment) and award one point to Wrestler B. It should be noted that the pulling action on the shoe makes this a violation, not the fact that the fingers were inside the shoe. Whenever possible, the referee should utilize both verbal commands and, if warranted, stop the match to prevent illegal holds and/or technical violations from occurring.

(Rule 5.8.5)

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

A.R. 5-41. At the end of the second period, Wrestler A, who is in the middle of the mat, takes off their ear protection and throws it to their coach and says, "I need another one." What is the correct call?

RULING: Rule 5.2.1 states that the "...throwing, tossing, sliding or spiking ear protection or any other piece of equipment (regardless of anger, excitement or ebullience)..." shall be considered unsportsmanlike conduct. Since this occurred during the match, a penalty point should be awarded to Wrestler B.

(Rule 5.2.1)

A.R. 5-42. With the wrestlers in neutral and the match tied, 6-6, in the third period, Wrestler A is awarded a takedown at the buzzer (end of the period). Wrestler A, in their excitement, slams their ear protection into the mat and immediately gets penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct by the referee, who deducts a team point from Team A. The coach of Team B, however, throws the challenge brick immediately after the takedown was awarded, arguing that the takedown did not occur until after time expired. The referee(s) reviews the wrestling sequence and confirms that the takedown was not secured until after the period ended and negates the takedown awarded to Wrestler A. What happens to the unsportsmanlike conduct call against Wrestler A?

RULING: There are two possible outcomes in this scenario.

- If the takedown is confirmed on video review; Wrestler A wins the match, 9-6, but also will lose a team point for unsportsmanlike conduct (post-match penalty).
- If the takedown awarded is overturned on video review; the match score would still be tied, 6-6, and the match would then head into sudden victory. The unsportsmanlike conduct call against Wrestler A, however, would no longer be a post-match penalty but an in-match unsportsmanlike conduct call which would result in Wrestler B being awarded one penalty point, and Wrestler B would be declared the winner, 7-6.

Please refer to A.R. 3-14 in the 2025-26 and 2026-27 NCAA Men's Wrestling Case Book for further clarification on the in between period in overtime.

(Rule 5.2.1)

RIDING TIME

A.R. 5-43. From referee's position, Wrestler B, the defensive wrestler, stands up and Wrestler A follows and locks their hands around the waist of Wrestler B. Wrestler B separates Wrestler A's hands and begins to get away when Wrestler A changes off to a single leg and is still in control. Wrestler A, however, fails to initiate a mat return and eight seconds later, the referee penalizes Wrestler A for stalling. Does riding time stop even though the wrestlers are no longer in rear standing position?

RULING: Yes. Although the wrestlers are no longer in rear standing position, no advantage shall be gained after an infraction and consequently, riding time shall stop. In this situation, wrestling action would continue but the referee should clasp their wrist when penalizing Wrestler A to stop riding time. Riding time would restart when the offensive wrestler either returns their opponent to the mat beyond reaction time or wrestling action brings both wrestlers back to the mat beyond reaction time. After being penalized for stalling in this position, an attempt to return their opponent to the mat alone would not be sufficient to restart riding time.

(Rules 4.5.13, 5.1.4 and 5.7.15c)

EAR PROTECTION - UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

A.R. 5-44. Scenario One: Both wrestlers are in the neutral position and tie up momentarily before the wrestlers separate. Wrestler A's right hand comes across the top of Wrestler B's head and gets caught on Wrestler B's headgear, causing it to fall off Wrestler B's head. The referee stops the match and calls an official's timeout to allow for the faulty equipment to be repaired. Wrestler B tosses their headgear to their coach and asks for a replacement. Per Rule 5.2.1, should this be penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct?

Scenario Two: While the wrestlers are hand-fighting in the neutral position, Wrestler A's headgear becomes dislodged and starts to fall off. Wrestler B grabs the headgear and tosses it to the side before the official can stop the match. Per Rule 5.2.1, should this be penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct?

RULING: No in both scenarios. Rule 5.2.1, as it relates to the tossing or throwing of equipment, is primarily intended to address demonstrative unsportsmanlike behavior, particularly conduct associated with frustration, disrespect, or actions occurring at or following the conclusion of a match. It is not intended to penalize reasonable actions involving equipment that becomes dislodged or requires repair or replacement during wrestling action. In Scenario One, Wrestler B's tossing of the headgear to the coach for the purpose of obtaining a replacement is part of the equipment repair process and should not be considered unsportsmanlike conduct. In Scenario Two, Wrestler B's tossing of the dislodged headgear to the side during ongoing wrestling action likewise should not, by itself, result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. In either situation, if the equipment is thrown, spiked, or otherwise handled in a demonstrative, disrespectful, or taunting manner, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty may be warranted. Reasonable

exceptions for in-match equipment malfunctions, repairs, and replacements are consistent with the spirit and intent of the rule.

(Rule 5.2.1)

STALLING - DROPPING TO A KNEE(S) IN NEUTRAL POSITION

A.R. 5-45. From the neutral position, Wrestler A drops to one knee and remains in that position for several seconds while initiating no contact with their opponent. Is this an automatic stalling penalty?

RULING: No, this is not an automatic stall call. However, this tactic could be construed as stalling, when used to avoid wrestling action, particularly if repeated or when the wrestler fails to advance toward their opponent or initiate any attacks against their opponent. If, in the judgement of the official, the wrestler drops to their knee(s) to avoid wrestling, it shall be penalized as stalling.

(Rules 5.7.1 and 5.7.5)

RULE 6

Injuries, Timeouts and Match Stoppages

FIRST NON-BLEEDING INJURY TIMEOUT

A.R. 6-1. If the first non-bleeding injury timeout is taken by Wrestler A between the end of the third period and the beginning of the sudden-victory period, Rule 6.1.15 states that Wrestler B will have the choice of top, bottom or neutral at the beginning of the sudden-victory period. Wrestler B chooses the top position and rides Wrestler A for the entire two-minute sudden-victory period. Does Wrestler B win the match?

RULING: Yes. Wrestler B has accrued one minute of time advantage and is awarded one point. (See Rule 4.5.13.)

(Rule 6.1.15)

A.R. 6-2. Wrestler A takes a first non-bleeding timeout between the first and second tiebreaker periods. Wrestler B had a choice of positions in the first tiebreaker period. Does Wrestler B have choice again as Wrestler A has taken their first non-bleeding timeout?

RULING: Yes.

(Rule 6.1.15)

A.R. 6-3. Wrestler A takes top position at the beginning of the sudden-victory period because of a first non-bleeding injury timeout charged to the opponent between the regulation periods and sudden victory, and rides the opponent for 31 seconds before being charged with a non-bleeding injury timeout. Does Wrestler B have choice at the restart?

RULING: Yes.

(Rule 6.1.15)

A.R. 6-4. Wrestler A takes a first non-bleeding injury timeout in the sudden-victory period of the second round of overtime, and at the restart, Wrestler B chooses the offensive position and accrues 20 seconds of riding time at the end of the sudden victory period. Does the 20 seconds carryover and possibly determine the winner?

RULING: Yes.

(Rule 6.1.15)

A.R. 6-5. During the second period of a match, Wrestler A indicates to the referee that they are hurt and requests an injury timeout. The referee stops the match and notices that Wrestler A is bleeding underneath their eye. Does the injury clock start as soon as medical personnel arrive on the mat or does the

bleeding timeout get addressed first or can the injury and bleeding timeouts occur simultaneously?

RULING: Mirroring the interpretation of bleeding and recovery time, the bleeding timeout would be addressed first. Once the bleeding timeout has been attended to, the referee shall then start injury time for Wrestler A. Per Rule 6.1.24, timeout for bleeding shall not count against the wrestler's 1½ minutes of injury time. Note that if after the bleeding timeout, Wrestler A indicates they are ready to return to the match before the injury time clock begins, the referee shall charge Wrestler A with a timeout and ensure that one second of injury time is recorded.

(Rules 6.1.23, 6.1.24 and 6.3.5)

CONCUSSION EVALUATIONS

A.R. 6-6. If the athletic trainer is conducting a concussion evaluation, may they engage in other medical treatments on the wrestler during that time?

RULING: An athletic trainer that conducts a concussion evaluation does this according to their own institution's protocol. Since protocols may be different from school to school, it is not under the referee's purview to question concussion evaluation practices. However, since referees are required to enforce recovery time (Rule 6.3.5) and injury time (Rule 6.1.7), if an athletic trainer asks whether an additional medical procedure may be conducted during a concussion evaluation, it is prudent for the referee to ask if they are finished with the concussion evaluation. If the athletic trainer indicates they are finished with the concussion evaluation and the wrestler can continue, the referee can approve the continued treatment and will start either recovery time or injury time, depending on the situation.

(Rules 6.1.7, 6.2.5 and 6.3.5)

RECOVERY TIME/CONCUSSION EVALUATION TIMEOUTS

A.R. 6-7. Wrestler A shoots a double-leg takedown and lifts their opponent off the mat. In the process of bringing their opponent to the mat, Wrestler A slams Wrestler B, who lands on the side of their neck. The referee immediately calls a slam, awards one penalty point to Wrestler B and starts recovery time. Shortly after the athletic trainer begins treating Wrestler B, the athletic trainer requests that a concussion evaluation be conducted. What is the proper protocol for recovery time and concussion evaluation?

RULING: This situation would mirror Rule 6.2.6 (Injury Timeout Converted to Concussion Evaluation Timeout). This should be handled only as a concussion evaluation timeout and any recovery time used up to that point shall not count toward the two minutes of recovery time. If Wrestler B is cleared to continue after the concussion evaluation timeout, the referee may start recovery time at that point and Wrestler B would be entitled to the full two minutes. If Wrestler B is unable to continue at the end of recovery time, Wrestler A would be disqualified, and Wrestler B would be declared the winner.

(Rules 6.2.6, 6.2.5 and 6.3.5)

IMMINENT SCORING - NEUTRAL DANGER TAKEDOWN

A.R. 6-8. From the neutral position, both wrestlers are in a scramble situation. Wrestler A (the green wrestler) is then placed in the neutral danger zone, and the referee verbally announces, “Danger – Green,” and then begins their verbal count. After the verbal first count, Wrestler A indicates that they are injured and the referee stops the match and signals for an injury timeout. Can Wrestler B be awarded a neutral danger takedown if the referee believes scoring was imminent?

RULING: Yes. Although wrestlers can come out of the neutral danger zone, if the referee firmly believes that Wrestler A would have been unable to do so before the third verbal count, a neutral danger zone takedown may be awarded. Additionally, since Wrestler A was charged with an injury timeout, Wrestler B would also be given choice of position at the restart.

(Rule 6.1.14)

CONCURRENT TIMEOUTS - BLOOD, INJURY, CONCUSSION EVALUATION

A.R. 6-9. From the neutral position during a takedown attempt, both wrestlers inadvertently butt heads and fall to the mat. The official immediately stops the match and both wrestlers ask for injury time. The injury clock starts for both wrestlers when medical personnel arrive on the mat but shortly after treatment begins, the athletic trainer for Wrestler A states that their wrestler is bleeding, so the referee stops and negates injury time for Wrestler A. After treatment, both wrestlers are ready to resume wrestling. Since Wrestler B was the only wrestler to be charged with an injury timeout, would Wrestler A have choice of position on the restart

RULING: No. Although Rule 6.1.15 states that Wrestler A (who was ultimately not charged with an injury timeout because of blood) would be granted choice of position, the match stoppage occurred at the same time and both wrestlers required medical attention. If a match is stopped and both wrestlers require medical attention (including bleeding, concussion evaluation or injury time), neither wrestler would receive choice of position and wrestling shall resume in the position in which it was stopped

(Rules 6.1.14 and 6.1.15)

RULE 7

Referees and Other Personnel

REFEREE JURISDICTION, CONTROL AND MATTERS OF JUDGMENT

A.R. 7-1. During a match in a tournament, the referee and second referee are at the table with their backs to the wrestlers, who are at the center of the mat. One wrestler commits an unsportsmanlike act that is observed by a tournament referee not involved in the match. What should the nonworking referee do?

RULING: Similar to the proper mechanics used by a second referee, the nonworking referee shall inform the referee who is in control of the match, who shall render a decision. The match referee is responsible for the match, but other referees involved with the competition can offer assistance and report violations.

(Rule 7.5.6)

RULE 8

Weight Management

NO CURRENT A.R.S.

RULE 9

Medical Exams, Weigh-Ins and ISRF

WEIGH-INS

A.R. 9-1. If a wrestler violates Rule 9.2.15 by showing up late to medical exams or engaging in weight loss activities during medical exams, how is this violation executed?

RULING: The penalty for not reporting on time, or for engaging in weight loss activity after the reporting time, is disqualification*. A disqualification in a dual meet setting is carried out by the offending wrestler's coach, when the opposing coach has logged a complaint regarding a violation. In a tournament, a violation and subsequent disqualification is reported to and handled by the members of the tournament committee. Complaints about violations not carried out properly should be reported to the Secretary-Rules Editor.

*Wrestlers who are flagged by the medical personnel executing skin checks for having facial hair that does not allow a proper skin evaluation shall be allowed to trim the facial hair prior to proceeding to weigh-ins. These wrestlers shall not be disqualified unless the trimming of the facial hair exceeds the length of time allowed to medically examine and weigh-in all other entrants.

(Rule 9.2.15)

ONE-POUND WEIGHT ALLOWANCE

A.R. 9-2a. Team A is competing in a dual meet on Friday evening but is also planning on sending several of their wrestlers not competing in the dual to an open tournament on the following day (Saturday). Both events appear on Team A's wrestling schedule. Are the wrestlers competing in the open Team A is attending eligible for the one-pound weight allowance on Saturday?

RULING: No. The spirit and intent of the rule for the one-pound allowance is to provide relief for wrestlers that are competing on consecutive days. Since none of the wrestlers competing in the event on Saturday are competing in the dual meet on Friday, Team A would not be eligible to trigger the one-pound allowance for all those competing in the open tournament.

A.R. 9-2b. Continuing with the scenario, if three of Team A's wrestlers competing in the Friday evening dual were also going to compete in Saturday's open tournament, would Team A trigger the one-pound allowance for the event?

RULING: Rule 9.3.2 in the Wrestling Rules Book states, "In order for the 1-pound weight allowance to be utilized, all back-to-back

competitions must be an official team date of competition as per NCAA bylaws.” An official team date of competition requires a minimum of 7 wrestlers competing for Division I institutions and a minimum of 6 wrestlers competing for Divisions II and III.

Therefore, for the one-pound weight allowance to be granted, a minimum of 7 wrestlers (DI) or 6 wrestlers (DII & DIII) that competed in Friday’s dual meet must also be registered to compete in Saturday’s tournament. If a team fails to register the minimum threshold of (eligible) wrestlers for the second day event, the one-pound weight allowance shall not be granted.

(Rule 9.3.2)

INDIVIDUAL SEASON RECORD FORM

A.R. 9-3. Wrestler A, who is deemed ineligible, will not officially be joining their team until January 1, two months after the official start of the men’s wrestling season. The coach of Team A is aware of Wrestler A’s situation but plans to have Wrestler A compete unattached in open tournaments during November and December. Per Rule 9.6.6, would the matches wrestled while ineligible automatically be placed on Wrestler A’s Individual Season Record Form (ISRF) once Wrestler A officially joins the team on January 1 and becomes eligible?

RULING: No. Because the weight certification process serves as a critical safeguard in men’s wrestling, only matches wrestled after their weight certification has been completed will count on a wrestler’s ISRF.

(Rules 8.1.1, 8.2.1 and 9.6.6)

ONE-POUND WEIGHT ALLOWANCE

A.R. 9-4. Team A wrestles a dual against Team B on Thursday evening at 7 p.m. Team A is then scheduled to wrestle at an eight-team dual event on Saturday (10 a.m. start time) although they will only be wrestling against three teams (Teams 1, 2, and 3). Do Teams 4, 5, 6, and 7 (i.e., the teams not competing against Team A) receive the one-pound weight allowance?

RULING: Yes. Rule 9.3.2 expands the one-pound weight allowance for dual competitions held within a 48-hour window. Although several teams competing on Saturday may not compete directly against Team A, the one-pound allowance is granted to all opposing teams that did not compete the day (or within the 48-hour window) before.

(Rule 9.3.2)



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