



2025-26 and 2026-27 Men's Wrestling Rules Changes

The following rules changes were approved by the NCAA Men's Wrestling Rules Committee and the NCAA Playing Rules Oversight Panel. All rules changes are effective with the 2025-26 season and will be incorporated into the 2025-26 and 2026-27 Men's Wrestling Rules Book.

Rule	Rules Change and Rationale
2.1.1, 2.1.3 and 2.1.4	To eliminate the requirement that the referee say "Set" from all three starting positions before blowing the whistle. Rationale: The pause is unnecessary once the wrestlers are on the starting line (neutral position) or in referee's position (defense/offense). The rule is inconsistently applied by officials and even when used, the word "set" is often inaudible. This creates confusion for the wrestlers, referee-induced false starts and disrupts the flow and progress of the match.
3.13.3 and 3.13.9	To allow the third-party video review official(s) to consult with the on-mat official(s) to obtain pertinent information. Rationale: To ensure a complete and accurate video review, the third-party video reviewer may communicate with the official(s) on the mat to obtain pertinent information (e.g., time and score). No matters of judgment or editorialization would be permitted during the communications.
3.13.11	If the video review system is inoperable during an individual match (e.g., 125-lb bout), it shall not be used for the remainder of that match/bout. Rationale: Neither coach should be permitted to initiate a video review challenge if at any point during the individual match the video review system is inoperable. This would ensure fairness to both competitors and reduce the opportunity for manipulation.
3.13.12	To allow a coach to retain their video review challenge if an obstruction of the view on the video screen caused by participants, coaches, referees or tournament personnel on the mat does not allow for a complete review. A video challenge would also be retained if the entire wrestling sequence is not viewable on the video screen. Rationale: It is unfair that a coach would lose their video review challenge, which in a dual meet is only one, due to circumstances beyond their control. Obstructions during wrestling sequences that are not viewable would not be able to be reviewed, and the challenging coach should be permitted to retain their video review challenge.
4.5.13 and 5.1.4	The riding time shall stop when, in the rear standing position, the offensive wrestler is penalized for stalling while wrestling action continues.

	Rationale: Riding time stops in other offensive stalling situations (e.g., the drop-down count) and the rule change is to align with these situations. No riding time should be accumulated after an infraction has incurred (in this case, stalling).
5.2.1	To clarify tossing, throwing, sliding or spiking any piece of equipment shall be called unsportsmanlike conduct. Rationale: To clarify that all equipment is to remain in the possession of the wrestlers until they leave the mat. The current rule only addresses “aggressively throwing ear protection” which is ambiguous and left to each individual official’s interpretation that has consequently resulted in inconsistent enforcement of the rule.
New 5.5.11	If a wrestler receives flagrant misconduct and illegally participates in any event: (1) the original term of suspension for the wrestler shall be doubled, and (2) the head coach shall also serve the same suspension of the player. If a head coach receives flagrant misconduct and illegally participates in any event, the original term of suspension for the head coach shall be doubled. Rationale: In response to the directive from the Playing Rules Oversight Panel (PROP), to implement a penalty for illegal participation by a player or coach who received flagrant misconduct.
New 5.5.12	To allow a post competition review of flagrant misconduct. The request to review, including video of the incident, must be filed within 48 hours of the completion of the event and be submitted by the conference office or conference coordinator of officials. A committee consisting of the NCAA Wrestling Secretary-Rules Editor, NCAA National Coordinator of Officials and one other individual, who is not affiliated with the team or conference, will consider the review and render a decision. Rationale: To provide institutions and conferences with an avenue to ensure suspensions are appropriate and fair based on the rules.
5.6.1	To eliminate the mat return from the broomstick position (when the offensive wrestler leaves both feet and makes contact with the back of the defensive wrestler’s leg(s) in the broomstick position) from Illegal Holds. Rationale: This move is currently being called illegal by application (when the second foot/leg of the offensive wrestler makes contact with any part of the back leg of the defensive wrestler). This can occur very quickly and is challenging for officials to ascertain in real time but more significantly, the defensive wrestler can be safely returned to the mat in this position with minimal risk of injury.
5.8.1	To eliminate the Interlocking Fingers in Neutral Position infraction.

	Rationale: This situation can naturally occur during a wrestling match and the referee is currently tasked with calling a stalemate on the first offense and then penalizing a wrestler for stalling for subsequent violations. It is both challenging and difficult, if not impossible, for the referee to ascertain which wrestler initiated this position and with the current rule, may result in a wrestler being unfairly penalized.
9.3.2	To expand the use of the 1-pound weight allowance for all dual meets held within a 48-hour window. Rationale: Currently, only teams that compete on consecutive days receive a 1-pound weight allowance. This change would expand the 1-pound weight allowance for teams that compete in separate dual meets within a 48-hour window. (Example: Team A wrestles a Friday evening dual; travels Saturday; competes in a Sunday afternoon dual – the 1-pound allowance would be granted for Sunday's dual).