

# Overview of Wrestling Rules (folkstyle)

The following rules apply to the type of wrestling done in the United States in College, High School, Junior High, Middle School, and most youth wrestling. This type of wrestling is often referred to as "folkstyle" wrestling. The rules for "freestyle" and "greco-roman" wrestling, as is done in the Olympics and internationally, are a little different.

The object of the sport of wrestling is to put your opponent on his back -- to pin your opponent.

A pin (or fall) is when you put your opponent on his/her back with any part of both shoulders or both shoulder blades of your opponent in contact with the mat for two seconds. When you pin your opponent, the match is over and you are the winner.

If nobody gets pinned, the winner is the wrestler who has scored the most points during the match.

## There are five ways to score points in a wrestling match:

**1) Takedown** - (2 points) You score two points for taking your opponent down to the mat and controlling him/her.

**2) Escape** - (1 point) You score one point for getting away or getting to a neutral position when your opponent has you down on the mat.

**3) Reversal** - (2 points) You score two points when your opponent has you down on the mat and you come from underneath and gain control of your opponent.

**4) Near Fall (Back Points)** - (2 or 3 points) You get near fall points when you almost but not quite get your opponent pinned. A near fall (near pin) is when...

both shoulders are held for two seconds within four inches of the mat, or...

one shoulder touches the mat and the other shoulder is at a 45 degree angle coming down to the mat, or...

the wrestler is held in a high bridge or back on both elbows.

If a near fall lasts for two seconds, you get 2 points. If a near fall lasts for 5 seconds, you get 3 points.

**5) Penalty Points** - (1 or 2 points) Your opponent is awarded points if you commit the following infractions. ([NFHS penalty chart AT THIS LINK](#))

- **Illegal Holds** - There are several holds that the referee will penalize you for without warning. (There are other holds called "potentially dangerous holds" which the referee might make you let go of but will not penalize you for).
- **Technical Violations**

Going off the mat or forcing your opponent off the mat to avoid wrestling ("fleeing the mat.")

Grabbing clothing, the mat, or the headgear

Locked or overlapped hands: If you are down on the mat in control of your opponent, you cannot lock or overlap your hands, fingers or arms around your opponent's body or both legs unless you have met criteria for a near pin of your opponent, or your opponent stands up and has all his/her weight on two feet, or you have lifted the opponent off the mat.

Leaving the mat during the match without the referee's permission

Reporting to the mat not properly equipped or not ready to wrestle, or equipment that is detected as being illegal after the match has started

- **Unnecessary roughness**
- **Unsportsmanlike conduct**
- **Flagrant Misconduct** (ejection, the match is over)
- **Stalling** (you get one warning before you are penalized and points are awarded).
- **Incorrect starting position or false start** (You get two cautions before points are awarded).

The first and second time you are penalized, your opponent is awarded one point. The third time you are penalized, your opponent is awarded two points. The fourth time you are penalized, you are disqualified. (Except for illegal starting position or false start - you are cautioned twice, then one point awarded for each infraction, but you will not be disqualified. In the event of Flagrant Misconduct, you are ejected from the match on the first offense, you lose the match, and 3 team points are deducted).