

## 2020-2021 Wrestling Officials' Covid-19 Competition Protocol Guidance Update

**As a follow up to the Sunday January 31, 2021 Zoom meeting with Chapter Interpreters and Presidents on the subject of Covid-19 protocol for the 2020-2021 wrestling season and after consulting with Todd Nelson at the NYSPHSAA the following information is being provided.**

New York State officials DO NOT have jurisdiction in regard to whether entire teams and/or individuals are to be wearing masks. Wrestlers reporting to the table with or without a mask does not interfere with determining whether a wrestler is legally equipped.

If a wrestler reports without a face covering, the referee is safe to assume that a mask exemption has been granted due to intolerance of a face covering (no questions asked).

**Question:** If a wrestler is presented on the mat without a mask during a dual meet and the other team refuses to wrestle that person, what happens?

**Answer:** Team A sends a wrestler out to wrestle who can't tolerate a mask at the 145 weight class, and Team B refuses to wrestle the athlete with the exemption, then Team B forfeits that bout at 145 and the Team A wrestler gets a forfeit (and Team A gets the points toward the team score).

If Team B was obligated to report first based on the pre-meet disc toss sends a wrestler out to report and then withdraws the wrestler (for any reason), Team A would get the points toward the team score and then that Team B wrestler is disqualified for being withdrawn from the bout. By NFHS rules the wrestler from Team B that reported and was withdrawn is no longer eligible to compete in that contest. (cannot wrestle up a weight class since they withdrew).

The disqualified wrestler is eligible for the next contest wrestled by the school (disqualification is not for unsportsmanlike or flagrant misconduct), but not for the remainder of the current contest.

Communicating well in advance of the matches/contests is critical in all instances.

During a dual meet if a team becomes aware that one or some of the opposing wrestlers will not be wearing a face covering due to the inability to tolerate a face covering, the schools must communicate prior to the dual meet and determine what is agreed upon ahead of time regarding mask wearing and whether or not they will wrestle the match.

**Example:** If Team A has an athlete with an exemption to not wear the mask, that should be communicated in advance to Team B. If they agree not to wrestle the dual meet due to this, then it is considered No Contest.

**Question:** What type of mask is legal/acceptable?

**Answer:** DOH defines the face covering as cloth that covers the mouth and nose. Surgical masks and Gaiters will both be considered legal. To be consistent with NFHS Rules a bandana will NOT be considered legal.

**Note:** Because masks are not considered required equipment by NFHS rules they will be considered special equipment and could be ruled illegal if found to be dangerous to the wrestler and/or their opponent.

**Example:** Surgical masks may have wire that is found to be sharp and easily pokes through.

Referees will follow the special equipment rules in determining the legality of all equipment including face masks.

NFHS rules does not require special equipment to be unadorned nor does it limit the number or size of manufacturer's logo/trademark or promotional reference. However; adornments that are offensive or are meant to taunt or intimidate your opponent are considered unsportsmanlike conduct.

**Question:** Is a protective wrestling mask with covering over the mouth opening acceptable?

**Answer:** No.

The Face covering must fix snugly against the side of your face and fully cover both your nose and mouth.

**Question:** Does a face mask have to be attached to the headgear? (following hair covering rule)

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** Is a wrestler allowed to take a timeout to change masks due to becoming too wet?

**Answer:** Yes, Any equipment that becomes illegal or inoperative during competition can be corrected by taking an official's time out. It would only be considered part of injury timeout if deemed excessive, meaning done multiple times for a competitive advantage.

**Question:** May a wrestler start a bout wearing a mask and remove it during a stoppage?

**Answer:** Yes.

**We will follow identical procedures as when an ear guard becomes displaced. If the mask is displaced, the referee is authorized to stop the match as follows:**

In the neutral position, when no takedown is in progress, the match may be stopped as soon as the mask is displaced;

If the wrestler is being placed at a disadvantage because the displaced mask is covering the eyes, nose, mouth or is causing choking, the match shall be stopped so that the proper adjustment may be made; or

In all other situations, the referee shall stop the match only when there is no significant action taking place. It shall be restarted as following an out of bounds.

**It could be difficult to see a bloody nose or mouth of a wrestler wearing a mask.**

An official cannot call what is not viewed or otherwise seen. Once viewed, the official is to treat the situation identically to any blood situation.

The same consideration would be given to face coverings that have excessive blood on them as the rule that allows for a wrestler to change their uniform for excessive blood. This is treated as cleanup time, provided that the bleeding has been controlled.

According to NYS Department of Health regulations states that if you have a health problem that makes you unable to tolerate a face covering you do not need to wear one. Contestants with asthma or that have braces on their teeth and are required to wear a mouth guard should request this exemption.