

# OHSAA EARLY SEASON WRESTLING BULLETIN

2023-2024 Bulletin No. 2

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## Uniforms & Undergarments

The following is a paraphrased excerpt from Bulletin No. 1 issued last season (December 14, 2022). Please review the passage as we continue to have issues addressing incidents involving proper uniform decorum. Keep in mind that the first action in enforcing the uniform rules is preventative officiating. We must be vigilant at weigh-ins, skin and grooming checks, and in pre-meet visits to ensure that wrestlers (both male and female) are complying with Rule 4.1.1 (a-c).

“Rule 4-1-1(a), (b) and (c) defines the wrestler’s legal uniform requirements including suitable undergarments. There is no reference to gender, except the notes under Rule 4-1-1(a) & (c) requiring female contestants to wear a sports bra. The undergarment stipulation under Rule 4-1-1(a) & (b) is gender-neutral, requiring both male and female contestants to wear a suitable undergarment that completely covers the buttocks and groin area. An undergarment that does not meet the requirements of Rule 4-1-1(a) & (b) is illegal for both male and female contestants.

Accordingly, during weigh-ins, grooming/skin checks, or during the pre-meet locker room visit with the teams, officials are not to single out a particular gender and focus on the undergarments they should not wear. Let alone warn them about the consequences should they not conform. If the undergarment does not conform to the rule (not completely covering the buttocks and groin area), regardless of gender, there are remedies to discreetly address the situation. The requirements of a legal uniform and undergarments and the consequences for not complying should never be directed to a specific gender in the public domain.

During weigh-ins, if a competitor reports to weigh-ins with no discernable, legal, suitable undergarment, that wrestler regardless of gender shall change into a legal, suitable undergarment before stepping onto the scale to weigh-in (2022-23 Case Book page 12, 4.1.1, Situation C). The issue should be discreetly brought to the attention of the head coach and the competitor allowed to change into a legal, suitable undergarment. If changing into a legal, suitable undergarment requires leaving the designated weigh-in area, Rule 4-5-3 permits contestants to leave the designated weigh-in area if permission is granted by the meet administration (e.g., the on-site official or school administrator). If the contestant is granted permission

to leave the designated weigh-in area, he or she shall be accompanied by a same gender meet administrator or official to ensure no weight loss/weight gain activities take place during the interim.

If an illegal uniform/undergarment is discovered after weigh-ins (assuming weigh-ins were overseen by an authorized person other than the meet official) and during the pre-meet discussion with each team, the issue can be addressed by discreetly informing the head coach of the infraction.

No wrestler should report to the scorer's table with an illegal uniform/undergarment and have the embarrassment of being denied the opportunity to wrestle. If this situation occurs, it is because the official has not carried out the prescribed pre-meet duties during the weigh-ins, grooming & skin checks, and/or locker room pre-meet visitation with each team, or the wrestler and/or coach are defying the official's decision that the uniform/undergarment is illegal. In this case, the contestant will be assessed a technical violation penalty, charged with an injury timeout, and given a maximum of 1½ minutes to correct the situation."

The bottom line is that there are rules and protocols in place allowing the official to enforce and deal with non-compliance issues with the uniform rule. If we ignore preventative officiating followed by the lack of rules enforcement, the message will not be heeded, and surely no lesson learned. These behaviors reinforce non-compliance with the rules. Officials should never be put in a position where a coach states: "Well, they let us do it last week!" We all need to do our jobs by consistently enforcing the rules. Otherwise, we make it difficult for all officials who enforce the rules in a fair and consistent manner.

Several documents relating to general uniform guidelines for girls from an athletic director's, coach's, and official's perspective were posted to the OHSAA wrestling page, as well as to the OWOA website in November 2023. Please take the time to review these documents if you have not done so already.

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