



December 3, 2025

## **NFHS Wrestling Weekly Rule Interpretations**

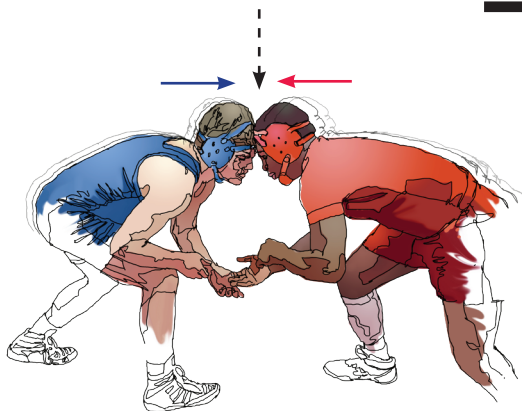
This week's interpretation discusses a very important topic that deals with Head, Neck and Cervical Column and/or Nervous System (HNC) injury protocol. As mentioned before, we will discuss illegal moves (in depth) later this season. HNC is critical because of the body parts that are involved, and the continuance of a wrestler is determined based on the severity of their injury. These illustrations provide guidance in both situations. It is important that as referees, we understand that we have an obligation to observe if a wrestler is exhibiting signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion or injury to the head, neck, cervical column and/or nervous system. The feedback that we are receiving remains positive and encouraging. Thank you for your ongoing support this season.

We hope that the illustrations are helpful and timely for your wrestling referees to discuss and use as talking points during their officials' chapter/board meetings this season and post-season. We are attaching the illustrations as separate documents for your use and for ease of distribution. These resources are excellent conversation starters for first year and seasoned referees alike! Have a wonderful start of the wrestling season.

# Head Neck and Cervical (HNC) Protocols

## NO Appropriate Health Care Professional On Site

A



**Frame 1:**  
**Wrestler A** shoots  
then shows signs of  
a shoulder injury

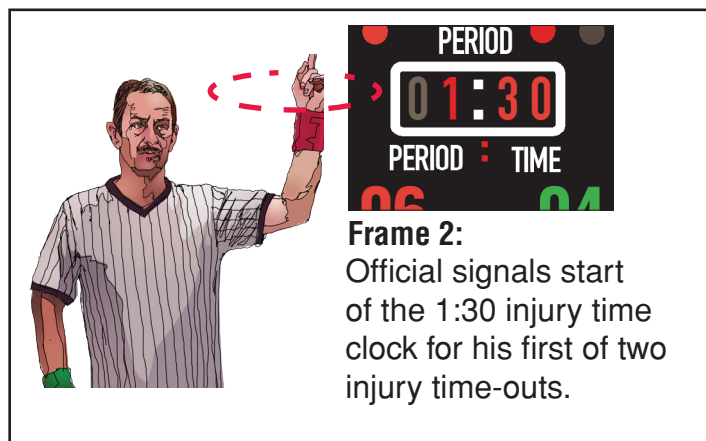
**Rule 6-4-3:** ... If a wrestler is injured due to a legal or illegal action, the referee shall stop the match under these certain conditions: a) injury time; b) blood time; c) recovery time; d) referee's time; e) Head/Neck/Cervical Column (HNC) injury time.

**Rule 8-2-4a:** ... Any contestant who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problem) shall be immediately removed from the match and shall not return to competition until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

**Rule 8-2-4b.1:** ... In the absence of appropriate health-care professional, (physician and/or certified athletic trainer) all injuries to the head and neck involving the cervical column and/or nervous system will be covered by 8-2-4a.

**Rule 8-2-6:** ... During a timeout for injury, blood time, recovery time or head and neck involving the cervical column and /or nervous system time, two team attendants and appropriate health-care professional shall be permitted on the mat with either wrestler. Coaching shall be allowed during injury time, blood time, recovery time, and HNC time-out.

*Please refer to the 2021-22 NFHS Wrestling Rule Book for more information and guidance.*



**Frame 2:**  
Official signals start  
of the 1:30 injury time  
clock for his first of two  
injury time-outs.

**Frame 3:**  
Official directs coach  
to attend to **Wrestler A**.  
After 1:10 **Wrestler A**  
is ready to continue to  
wrestle.

**Injury time must  
be recorded  
on the bout  
sheet. (ex. Injury  
time 1:10)**



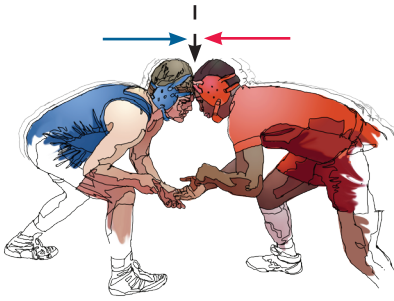
**Frame 4: **Wrestler A****

then sustains an injury,  
this time to the head.

Because there is no  
AHCP, the official stops  
the match due to signs,  
symptoms and  
behaviors consistent  
with a head trauma.

**Wrestler B** wins  
by default.





**Frame 1:**  
Wrestlers shoot and bang heads causing **Wrestler A** to grab his neck and drop to a knee.

**Frame 2:**



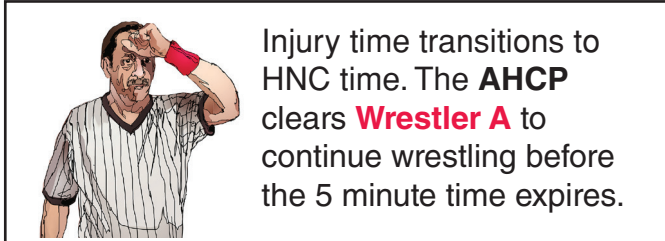
Official starts injury time.

**Frame 3:**



AHCP arrives and requests extended time to evaluate **Wrestler A**. Official signals HNC time.

**Frame 3a:**



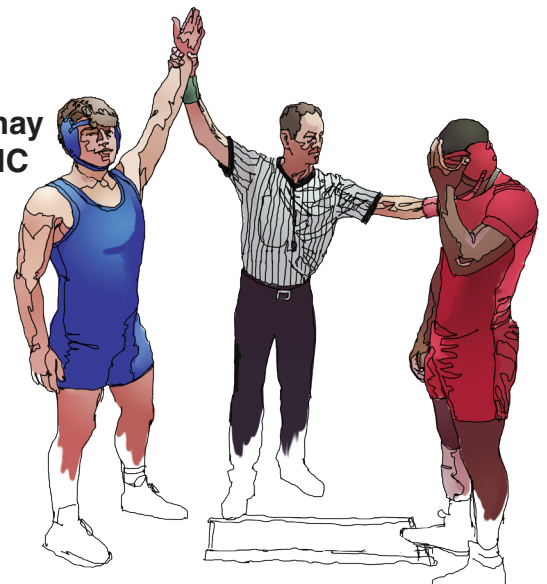
Injury time transitions to HNC time. The **AHCP** clears **Wrestler A** to continue wrestling before the 5 minute time expires.

**Frame 4:**

**Wrestler A** sustains a second injury to his head and the official stops the match.



**Frame 5:**  
Each wrestler may use just one HNC time-out per match. **Wrestler B** wins by default.



**Rule 5-28-6:** ... Head/Neck/Cervical Column (HNC). If a contestant is injured, the onsite AHCP will have up to five (5) minutes (maximum) to evaluate the wrestler's head and neck involving the cervical column and/or nervous system. A second occurrence to the head and neck involving the cervical column and/or nervous system in the same match shall require the wrestler to default the match.

**Rule 6-4-3:** ... If a wrestler is injured due to a legal or illegal action, the referee shall stop the match under these certain conditions: a) injury time; b) blood time; c) recovery time; d) referee's time; e) Head/Neck/Cervical Column (HNC) injury time.

**Rule 8-2-4b.2:** ... When appropriate health-care professional(s) (physician or certified athletic trainer) are present they have jurisdiction to evaluate the injured wrestler for injuries to the head and neck involving the cervical column and/or nervous system only during the allowed time limit (maximum of five (5) minutes). After that evaluation, the wrestler would be required to prepare without delay for continuation or default the match.

**Rule 8-2-4b.3:** ... A second occurrence of injury to the head and neck involving the cervical column and/or nervous system in the same match shall require the wrestler to default the match.

**Rule 8-2-5:** ... A designated, on-site meet, appropriate health care professional who determines a wrestler should not participate, shall not be overruled.

Please refer to the 2021-22 NFHS Wrestling Rule Book for more information and guidance.