

OHSAA WRESTLING BULLETIN

2024-2025 Bulletin No. 3

February 17, 2025

As we approach the post-season tournament series, please note that head locks and situations involving pressure across the nose, mouth, throat, and neck (carotid area) have been areas of increasing concern during the last half of the season.

NFHS Rule 7.1.5 (d), (g) & (v) read as follows: “Other **illegal** holds/maneuvers include, but are not limited to...(d) any headlock in which the arms or hands are locked around the opponent’s head without encircling an arm (elbow or above) or leg (except in the guillotine after near-fall criteria has been met or $\frac{3}{4}$ nelson);...(g) holds/maneuvers putting pressure on the throat, and/or carotid artery;...and (v) any hold/maneuver with pressure exerted over the opponent’s mouth, nose, throat or neck that restricts breathing or circulation.”

Illegal headlocks are exemplified in Illustrations 44, 46, 48-52, 55, and 56 on pages 70-72 of the Rule Book. Please review these Illustrations.

- Anytime the head is encircled without the arm of the opponent included constitutes an **illegal** headlock. By encircled is meant that the head or neck of the opponent is encircled by one arm of the wrestler applying the hold with the hand of the encircling arm grasping the hand, wrist, forearm, or upper portion of the opposite arm or opposite shoulder of the wrestler applying the hold (see Illustrations 44, 46, 49, 50, 57, 52, 55, and 56).
- Anytime the head of an opponent is encircled with an arm included below the opponent’s elbow constitutes an **illegal** headlock (see Illustrations 46 and 51).

Legal headlocks are exemplified in Illustrations 47, 52, 53, 57, and 58 on pages 71-72 of the Rule Book. Please review these Illustrations.

- If the neck or head is encircled with the opponent’s arm included at or above the elbow, the headlock is considered **legal** (see Illustration 52).
- If the neck/head of an opponent is circled by one arm of a wrestler applying the hold with the hand of the circling arm grasping the shoulder or upper arm of the opponent and the hand of the opposite arm is grasping the any portion of the opponent’s same arm, the headlock is **legal** because the hands are not locked (see Illustration 47).
- Any **legal** headlock with potential pressure across the mouth, nose throat or neck (carotid area) is **potentially dangerous** – stop the match for a **potentially dangerous** situation before it becomes illegal (see Illustration 48).

- Any **legal** headlock may become **illegal** if pressure is directly applied across the mouth, nose throat or neck (carotid area) – be vigilant and stop the match to penalize (NFHS Rule 7.1.5 (g) & (v).
- Any **legal** headlock may become **illegal** through the action of the opponent. Stop the match for **potentially dangerous** – no penalty (NFHS Rule 7.1.6).
- Circling the neck/head with one arm while grasping the inner thigh with the hand of the circling arm is not **illegal**. This is a **potentially dangerous** situation– stop the match.
- Circling the neck/head of an opponent with one arm, while grasping the singlet with the hand of the circling arm is a **technical violation** – stop the match and penalize the **technical violation**.
- In a guillotine maneuver, once near fall criteria is met, the neck/head of an opponent can be encircled without an arm included without penalty (NFHS Rule 7.1.5. (d).
 - In a guillotine maneuver before near fall criteria is met, the neck/head of an opponent cannot be encircled to place the opponent into near fall criteria – this is **illegal**.

Illegal headlocks and **illegal** pressure exerted over the nose, mouth, throat, or carotid artery that restrict breathing and/or circulation can occur or be applied by contestants in neutral, advantage, or defensive positions.

In any **legal** headlock situation, or in any situation where pressure is exerted over the nose, mouth, throat, or carotid artery to restrict breathing or circulation, it is incumbent on all officials to be vigilant and to immediately stop the match and penalize accordingly. There have been too many instances where young athletes lose consciousness because an official did not recognize that pressure was illegally applied across the nose, mouth, throat, and neck (carotid area) and failed to spot typical symptoms of distress (panic response, tapping the mat, becoming limp, eyes rolling back into the head, etc.). Vigilance includes changing levels to look underneath the action, as well as monitoring the well-being of the wrestlers. Do not be afraid to stop the action for **potentially dangerous** situations, and to promptly penalize **illegal** maneuvers when necessary.

Toby Dunlap

Director of Wrestling Officiating Development

OHSAA

P: 440-487-6308