

# How to Watch Wrestling

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Our program teaches the Collegiate (or Folkstyle) style of wrestling. This is the same style that is taught in the Merrimack Middle School and High School programs. There are other styles but we won't focus on them.

When you go to see a match, be it MYA, Middle School, or High School, there are a few things you should be aware of in order to understand what you are watching.

A wrestling meet consists of several matches – usually around 14 – 1 match per weight class. Weight classes are set by a governing body. Youth wrestling (our program) does not have weight classes – we simply match the kids up by grade, size, and ability. The Middle and High Schools use weight classes. In a meet, the teams accumulate points based on how many matches they win (see Scoring below). The team with the most points at the end of the meet wins.

Each match consists of 3 periods. In MYA and Middle School matches each period is 1 minute long. In High School matches each period is 2 minutes long. During a match each wrestler tries to score points (see Scoring below). The wrestler with the most points at the end of the match wins. Points are kept on a scoreboard or a flip type scoring mechanism in plain view.

It is common practice for each wrestler to wear an ankle band - one wears green and the other wears red. The referee will wear corresponding red and green wrist bands – one on each wrist. When a wrestler scores points, the referee will hold up the hand with the colored wristband of the wrestler scoring the points and indicate the number of points scored by holding up that many fingers.

In the first period each wrestler starts in the neutral position (standing up). To start the second period, the referee flips a coin and the wrestler who wins the coin flip is given the choice of 1) starting in the neutral position or 2) top or bottom in the referee's position (in this position one wrestler is on hands and knees and the other wrestler kneels beside on one knee grasping the other wrestler's waist and elbow) or 3) the wrestler can defer to the other wrestler and let them decide. To start the third period the other wrestler is given the choice.

The match starts when the referee has both wrestlers come forward from their sides, shake hands, and return to their starting marks (red or green) in the center of the mat. The referee will then signal them to begin wrestling. This is when match time starts

Sometimes during the match the referee will stop the action for various reasons: the wrestler might have gone out of bounds (beyond the large circle); headgear or shoes might have fallen off; etc. In any case, to restart the match, the wrestlers are brought back to the center of the mat. If neither wrestler had control of the other when the match was stopped the wrestlers restart in the neutral position. If one wrestler had control of the other when the match was stopped then the match will be restarted with that wrestler on top in the referee's position. If the referee stops the match for any reason, time is also stopped. Time is restarted when the referee restarts the match.

The match ends when time has expired or one wrestler Pins (see Scoring below) the other or scores a Technical Fall (see Scoring below). Each wrestler will be brought back to the center of the match and the referee will raise the hand of the winner and instruct both wrestlers to shake hands before leaving the mat. It is common practice for each wrestler to also shake the hand of the opposing coach.

In a meet, matches are conducted one at a time and the gym scoreboard is usually used for scoring and sounding a buzzer to end periods. In a tournament there could be several matches going on simultaneously. Therefore, a single scoreboard cannot be used for scoring all the matches at the same time and each match will have its own scoring system. Additionally, the use of buzzers to signal the end of periods would be too confusing – there would be buzzers going off everywhere. So, in tournaments, you will commonly see the use of a bopper (a rolled-up towel, Styrofoam tube, or similar device). A few seconds before the end of a period, someone will go onto the mat with a bopper and, when signaled by the timekeeper, hit the referee with the bopper to signify that the period has ended. Sometimes the timekeeper will simply throw something on the mat to signal the referee that time has expired.

## Scoring

There are several ways for a wrestler to score points in a match:

**Takedown – 2 points –** Accomplished from a neutral position when one wrestler takes the other to the mat and gains control of that wrestler. Many times you'll see the points for a takedown delayed until the referee determines that one wrestler has control.

**Escape – 1 point -** A wrestler that is being controlled by the other wrestler breaks that control.

**Reversal – 2 points -** A wrestler that is being controlled by the other wrestler breaks that control and immediately gains control of the other wrestler.

**Near Fall – 2 or 3 points –** Points are awarded for holding opponents shoulders at 45 degrees or less, to the mat, for two seconds (2 points) or five seconds (3 points).

**Penalty – 1 or 2 points –** Awarded to a wrestler for illegal holds, infractions, technical violations, stalling, or unsportsmanlike conduct committed by the other wrestler. Wrestlers are usually given a warning for the first offense. If the violations continue the referee could disqualify the offender and award the match to the opponent.

Teams score points if their wrestler wins a match. The number of points awarded a team is as follows:

**Decision – 3 team points –** Winning a match by fewer than 8 points.

**Major Decision – 4 team points –** Winning a match by 8 – 14 points.

**Technical Fall –5 team points –** Awarded when one wrestler accumulates at least 15 points more than the other wrestler during a match. The referee will end the match immediately.

**Pin, Disqualification, Forfeit – 6 team points –** A Pin (sometimes called a Fall) occurs when one wrestler holds the other wrestler's shoulders or scapula on the mat for two seconds. The referee signals a pin by slapping the mat and ending the match