

FREE GUIDE

Weight Certification, Explained

For wrestling parents and coaches: what the test measures, what the numbers mean, and six questions to ask before the season.

Oleksandr Foka · sports nutritionist · fokaelite.com

1. What certification decides

Before the season, every high school wrestler takes a hydration test, followed straight away by a body composition assessment. From those two, a minimum wrestling weight is calculated. It is the lowest class the wrestler may enter all season.

The minimum is a limit, and it should never be read as a target. It is a protection, written after the sport learned the hard way what happens without one.

2. The numbers

	High school (NFHS)	College (NCAA)
Hydration test, urine specific gravity	1.025 or lower	1.020 or lower
Body fat floor, boys and men	7 percent	5 percent
Body fat floor, girls and women	19 percent from 2026-27 (it was 12 percent)	17 percent
Descent cap	An average of 1.5 percent of body weight a week	An average of 1.5 percent of body weight a week
Deadline	Set by the state association	1 November, through Trackwrestling

3. The order matters

The hydration test comes first, and it is pass or fail. A wrestler who arrives dehydrated does not get a body fat assessment that day, and has to wait at least 24 hours before testing again. The sequence exists so that a dehydrated wrestler cannot be certified for a class he cannot safely hold.

4. The growth allowance

The NFHS provides for a two-pound growth allowance during the season, from a date each state association sets. Ohio, for example, applies it from 25 December, to wrestlers already certified in that class. It is room on the scale for a body that is getting bigger, and it exists because teenagers grow.

5. When a wrestler does not fit a class

A growing wrestler who does not fit a class enters the class above, and moving up is allowed at any time. Moving down is limited: never below the certified minimum, and the descent to it is capped at an average of 1.5 percent of body weight a week.

The fast methods are prohibited in scholastic wrestling: saunas and steam rooms, rubber or plastic suits, fluid restriction, laxatives, diuretics and vomiting. Any conversation about a young wrestler's weight beyond moving up belongs with a physician rather than a coach.

6. Six questions to ask the coach

Asking whether it is safe does not help, because the honest answer and the reassuring answer sound identical. These six cannot be answered with reassurance.

1. How was this weight class chosen?
2. How much has to come off, and over how many weeks?
3. What happens in the last week?
4. Who else knows about this plan?
5. What happens if he doesn't make weight? This one does the most work, because it asks about consequences rather than intentions.
6. When do we look at this again?

If the answers are poor across several questions rather than one, the problem lies with the club rather than with the plan.

A NOTE FROM ME

None of this existed when I wrestled. I made weight for eighteen years in a system with no hydration test, no floor and no descent limit, and I watched what that did to people, including me. The certification rule is the single best thing that has happened to weight in this sport. Treat it as the protection it is.

7. Where to go next

Minimum weight calculator, 2026-27 floors built in: fokaelite.com/tools/wrestling/

High school weight classes 2026-27: fokaelite.com/blog/high-school-wrestling-weight-classes/

Why wrestling certifies a minimum weight: fokaelite.com/blog/weight-cutting/why-certification-exists/

What a wrestler eats in season: fokaelite.com/blog/camp-nutrition/wrestling-diet/

Oleksandr Foka, sports nutritionist. Educational content, not medical advice. Rules are revised between seasons, and your state association and school hold the version that governs you.