



GIRLS WRESTLING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
2025 – 2026 SEASON
April 22, 2026 – 12:00pm

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Colleen Maguire, Executive Director
Michael Raimondi, Ridgefield Park HS AD, Executive Committee representative
Howie O'Neil, Tournament Director
Jack Kinner, Assistant Tournament Director
Ken Rossi, Wrestling Coordinator
Vinnie Russo, State Assignor
Gary Kessel, State Rules Interpreter
Joe Lemke, Jackson Memorial HS Coach
Eric Bollette, Newton HS Coach
Rob Lerner, Delsea HS Coach
Rachel Daddio, East Brunswick HS Coach, President, Girls Wrestling Coaches Association
Mike Lamb, Rancocas Valley HS AD
Billy Snyder, Pennsauken HS AD
Steve Johnston, South Plainfield HS Coach, President, NJ Wrestling Coaches Association

1. Regular Season Review

- Tri-cooperative sport programs – Colleen updated the committee on the pending vote at the upcoming Annual Meeting which will allow schools to enter into tri-ops in the sport of girls wrestling, the proposal includes a roster cap of 30 student-athletes. If the proposal is passed, then Colleen also reminded the committee that staff will try to be flexible with requests prior to the start of the 2026-2027 season; however, after that season, schools will need to adhere to the same deadlines as all other winter sports.
- Elite events – Rachel Daddio requested that the same consideration be provided to two elite events – Beast of the East and Escape the Rock – for the girls as the boys. Both events are growing, competition is increasing and some teams are being impacted by the current rule. The committee unanimously supported recognizing both tournaments as elite events and therefore not subject to rules prohibiting a team from having their student-athletes participate in an elite event and regular season event on the same day. Colleen will seek approval of the Executive Committee – these events will be treated exactly the same as the boys elite events.
- Dual meet status – minimum number of bouts – The committee debated at length whether a dual meet should be defined by the number of bouts. Some committee members had concerns that some coaches were able to manipulate the determination prior to or during a match to their benefit. The committee unanimously agreed that a dual meet will no longer be determined by the minimum number of bouts. Instead, the schools will be required to declare their dual-meet team status on or before December 15, 2026. Schools that declare they will wrestle dual-meets and therefore have team status will be included in the classifications and power point calculations. All events wrestled during the regular season will count as a dual meet and included in the power point calculations,

regardless of the number of bouts wrestled. The committee unanimously supported the move to a team status declaration date.

2. Post-Season Review

- Status of team tournament – Overall, the committee had positive feedback on the first girls team state tournament during the past season. The committee unanimously recommended an increase from 8 teams per section to 12 teams per section – this will allow 8 more teams to qualify for the team state tournament. The state tournament dates will remain unchanged; however, as a result of the 12-team bracket, the sectional semi-finals and sectional finals will be wrestled on the same date (i.e., Thursday). Lastly, the committee supported keeping the minimum of 9 dual meet matches necessary to qualify for the state tournament. Colleen will solicit approval of the Executive Committee to increase the number of teams qualifying for the team state tournament.
- District tournament review – Eric Bollette requested that data start to be accumulated in the same manner as the boys – this will help to ensure the districts are more evenly balanced moving forward. Eric also requested that the district seeding dates be flipped with the boys – moving forward, the boys will seed on Wednesday, and the girls will seed on Thursday. The committee unanimously supported these requests. Ken confirmed that with the expansion to a district tournament, he will start to accumulate data for the girls to track power points and state place winners.

3. Season Dates 2026-2027

Prior to the meeting, Colleen provided 3 date options for future seasons and surveyed coaches and leagues/conferences – this all due to the 5-year contract between the MAAC basketball tournament and Boardwalk Hall. Colleen provided a summary of results from both the coaches survey and leagues/conferences meeting – both of which supported option #2, the individual state tournament will be held the weekend prior to the MAAC tournament and practices will start the same corresponding date as prior seasons.

Colleen also updated the committee on a request from the boys wrestling committee which will allow the 3-day tryout period (prior to Thanksgiving) to count towards the 6-day practice/1-day rest rule – this will allow teams the opportunity to scrimmage prior to the competition start date. The option #2 scheduling model results in two less weeks of regular season competition relative to prior seasons. Colleen commented that this was a reasonable request and that she will discuss it internally before seeking Executive Committee approval.

4. NFHS Rules Changes for 2026-2027

A copy of the NFHS press release was provided to all committee members. Gary Kessel made mention of a rule change which will include bleeding that results of an illegal hold/maneuver, unnecessary roughness, unsportsmanlike conduct as recovery time and will allow two-minutes – bleeding as a result of these circumstances will no longer fall under the five-minute injury time. In addition, Gary noted that the minimum body fat percentage for females has been raised from 12 to 19 percent.

5. Review of Officials/Assignments

Vinnie commented that if the girls regions continue with full wrestle backs, then the officials rate will need to increase to compensate for the additional round, relative to the boys regions. In addition, Vinnie commented that he feels celebrations during the individual state finals have become excessive and unsportsmanlike. Colleen commented that Howie and his staff will better message celebratory expectations prior to the state final rounds with all coaches and participants.

6. Review of Correspondences

The committee reviewed four correspondences received from member schools, which were as follows:

- a. North Brunswick High School – approve freestyle wrestling for girls and allow coaches to coach freestyle wrestling during the out of season period during the transition. Committee members had concerns with moving to freestyle – officials are not trained in freestyle and majority of coaches are still coaching both boys and girls – the different styles could be difficult to accommodate during practice. More importantly, Colleen commented that NFHS rules do not allow freestyle wrestling – NJSIAA follows NFHS rules in every sanctioned sport. The committee did not support the proposal.
- b. Pinelands High School – concerns with district/regions weigh-in protocols. Howie confirmed that there is inconsistency among the sites. Prior to next year’s tournaments, Howie and Colleen will be sure to better message weigh-in procedures and protocols to ensure more consistency.
- c. Raritan High School – consider expanding the girls team tournament by moving to two groups. The committee did expand the tournament by increasing the number of teams qualifying from 16 to 24; however, it does not feel the move to two groups is necessary at this time. The committee will continue to monitor the number of schools wrestling dual meets that also meet the minimum number of 9 matches for qualification before making a recommendation to expand to two groups.
- d. Vernon Township High School – wrestle-back rounds at the girls regions should be the same as the boys. The committee members discussed at length whether full wrestle-backs should continue at the girls regions. Many on the committee felt that full wrestle-backs are in the student-athlete’s best interest as it allows them more opportunity to medal. Several committee members felt the boys regions should also have full wrestle-backs but this warrants further discussion with boys coaches/committee. The committee opted to table this recommendation until next season but agreed that both the boys and girls regions should have consistent wrestle-back rounds moving forward after next season.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Colleen Maguire,
Executive Director