



January 28, 2026

## **NFHS Wrestling Weekly Rule Interpretations**

This week's interpretation continues to address some of the holds and maneuvers that are meant to punish an opponent. The Neck Wrench (Standing and on the mat), Salto, Suplay, and Interlacing Fingers can be applied to hurt the opposing wrestler. As we enter regional and sectional post-season wrestling for many state associations, it is essential to have a clear understanding of what is permitted when the head, neck and cervical column is involved. The feedback we have received all wrestling season so far has been positive and encouraging. Thank you for your continued support and professionalism throughout the season.

This will be the last installment for the regular wrestling season. We hope that the illustrations have been 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 post season and a phenomenal state championship!



## Standing Neck Wrench—Illegal

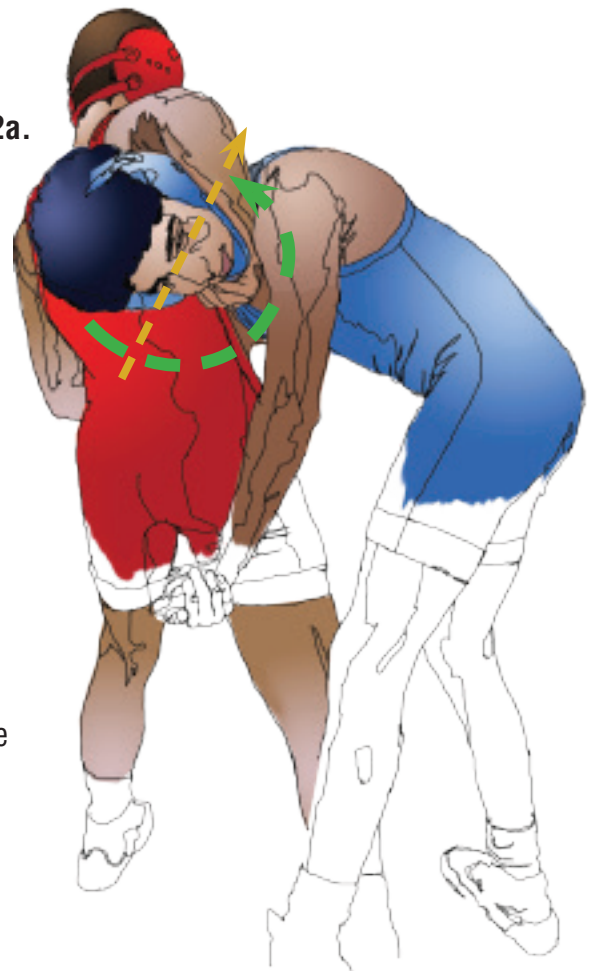
A

2.



**Frame 1.** Setn uo: **Wrestler A** grasps and locks the chin of **Wrestler B** tight against her upper thigh. This is **LEGAL** to hold and post against the thigh.

2a.



**Frame 2-2a** **Wrestler A** may step in as he/she pulls the chin of **Wrestler B** to twist it on his axis. Any twisting of the head on this axis is **ILLEGAL**. Stop and penalize immediately.

**NOTE:** Grasping the chin should be visbled for official to see. Rotating oressure of the cervical spine is dangerous and is **ILLEGAL**.

## Near Side neck Wrench—Illegal

B

**Frame 1.** Set up: **Wrestler A** to start a bow and arrow cradle reaches across the back of the neck to grasp the chin of **Wrestler B**. Watch the chin and neck of **Wrestler B**, as it may be a neck wrench at this point.



Grabbing chin is **LEGAL**

**Frame 2.** **Wrestler A** may have his forearm posted across the neck of **Wrestler B**. If the chin is pulled and head twists it is an **ILLEGAL** chin/neck wrench. Stop and penalize immediately.

**NOTE:** Action at the head and neck of **Wrestler B** should be visible to the official. Observe the chin and head forcefully twisting on axis. Stop and penalize immediately.



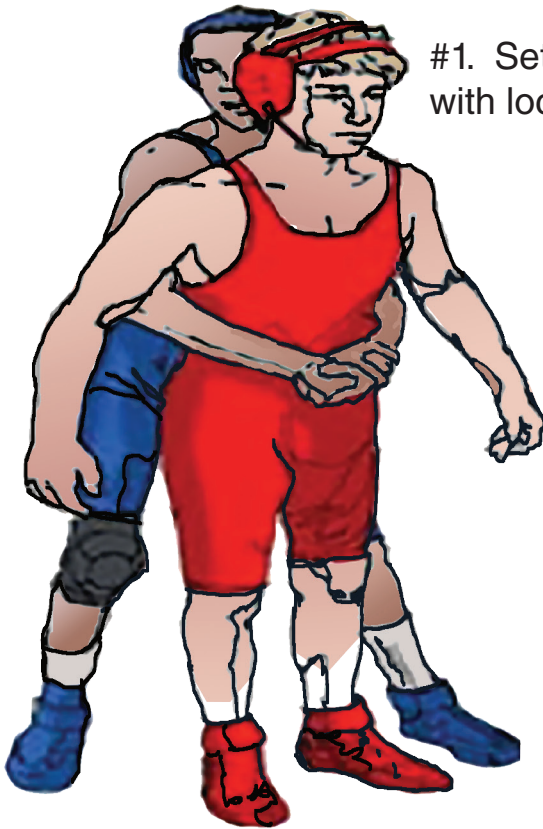
head in side of **Wrestler B** prevents her spine from turning properly, creating risk to neck and spine.



# Straight-Back Suplay to the Head and Shoulders—ILLEGAL <sup>A</sup>

## Rule 7-1-2

A full, straight-back suplay  
and straight-back Salto,  
**ILLEGAL**

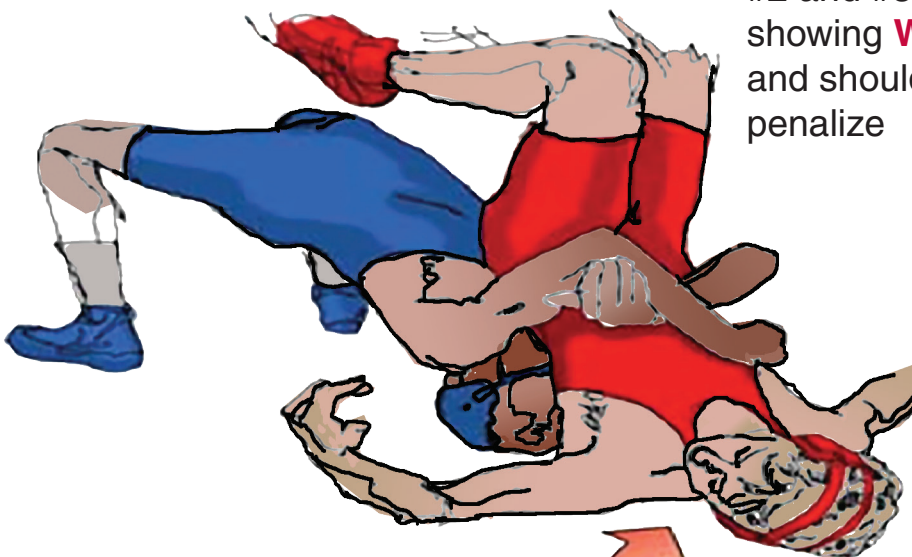


#1. Set-up, chest to back  
with locked hands...



#2. **WRESTLER B** initiates  
move by stepping inw/tight  
hips to back of **WRESTLER A**  
and arches back and lifts  
straight back over the top.

#3. **WRESTLER A** is defenseless in  
this throw and cannot protect  
himself...



#2 and #3 viewed from two angles.each  
showing **WRESTLER A's** head, neck  
and shoulders hitting first. **ILLEGAL**  
penalize

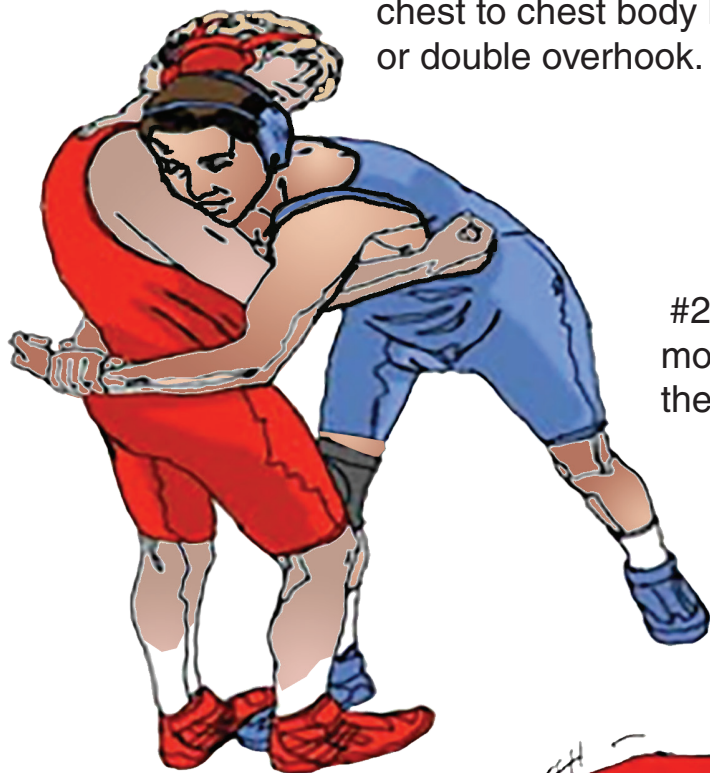
**NOTE:** Also places **WRESTLER A**  
in **POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS**  
peril.

**ILLEGAL** due to head/neck (spine) and  
shoulder forcefully landing



# Straight-Back Salto to the Head and Shoulders—ILLEGAL <sup>B</sup>

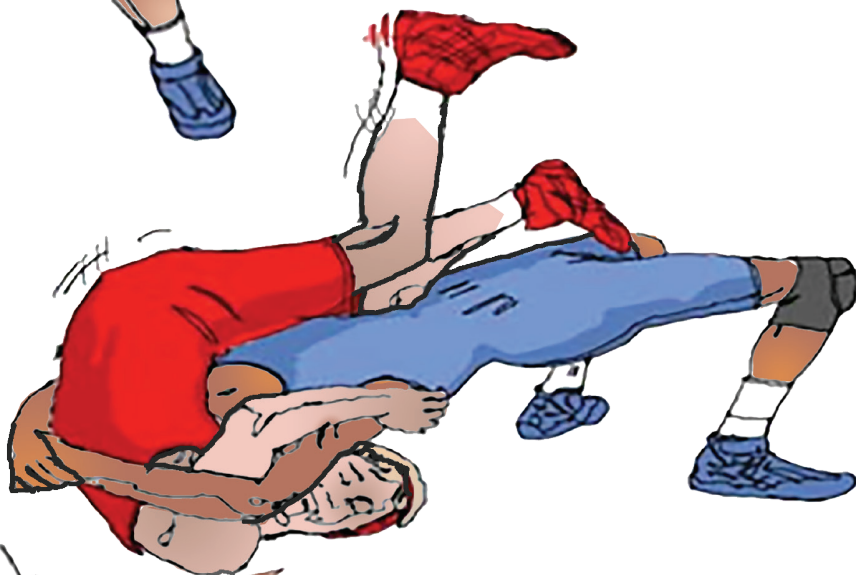
#1. Set-up, face to face  
chest to chest body lock  
or double overhook.



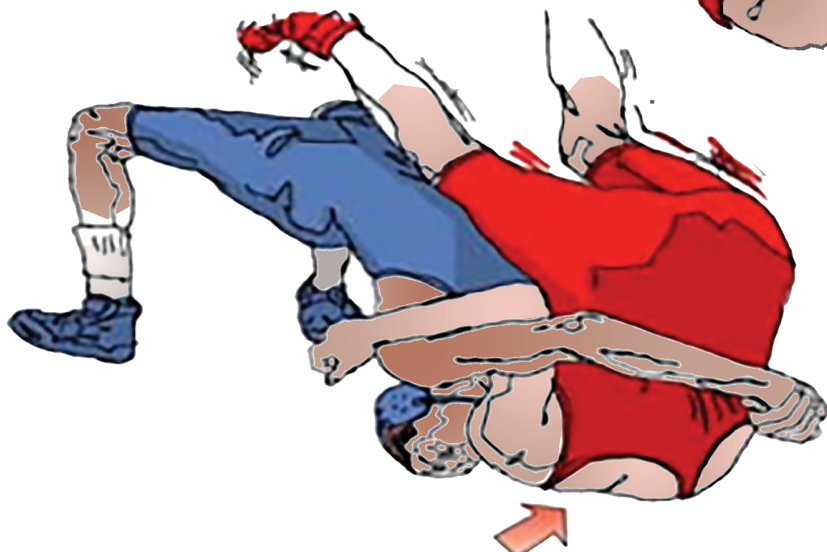
**Rule 7-1-2**

**A full, straight-back suplay  
and straight-back Salto,  
ILLEGAL**

#2. **WRESTLER B** initiates  
move by stepping in w/tight hips  
then arches back over the top.



#3. **WRESTLER A** is  
defenseless in this throw  
and cannot protect



#2 and #3 viewed from two angles.  
Both showing **WRESTLER A's** head/  
neck and shoulders  
hitting first.

**NOTE:** Also places **Wrestler A** in  
**POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS**  
peril.

**ILLEGAL** due to head/neck (spine) and  
shoulder forcefully landing

## Strikes to Back of Head or Neck / Illegal

**Rule 7-1-5 u:** any hold/maneuver used for punishment is **illegal**

**Rule 7-4-1: unnecessary roughness** involves any physical acts which **exceed normal aggressiveness** ... which includes a **forceful forearm or elbow** used in a punishing way, such as, **on the spine or back of head or neck**.

**Rule 7-4-3: flagrant misconduct** includes **physical or no-physical acts** which the **referee considers serious enough to disqualify the contestant**. These include striking, butting, elbowing, biting, etc.

**FRAME 1: Wrestler A** drives a forcefull elbow or forearm to back of head or neck of **Wrestler B**. Stop and penalize immediately. **illegal / unnecessary roughness**.



### KEYS TO WATCH:

Having arm back or high elbow **does not mean illegal**, but is an **indicator**. The official's position and judgment is important.

**Frame 2-2a: Blows to the head, neck and spinal areas** may cause **serious injury, concussion or worse**. Hard competition is expected, but **intentional acts to harm/injure one's opponent** is a **flagrant** act and should be penalized accordingly.

Frame 2



Frame 2a

