

## VHSL Weight Control Program

The VHSL Wrestling Weight Control Program involves the determination of the MINIMUM wrestling weight (MWW) at 7% body fat for males and 12% body fat for females. It is ill advised and frequently harmful for high school wrestlers to reduce body fat content below that level. Measurement of skin folds, baseline weight, and assessment of hydration are the ingredients utilized to determining the MWW. The program emphasizes that the MWW and the resultant Minimum Weight Class are not necessarily the optimal or most desirable target. However, the athlete will not be permitted to wrestle at a weight class below that MINIMUM weight class identified by this program. The program also calculates a schedule for safe weight loss to allow a wrestler to gradually reach his desired and allowable weight while wrestling his way down through weight classes during the season.

### BASIC COMPONENTS of VHSL WCP

- **URINE SPECIFIC GRAVITY:** Hydration is a critical component in the calculation of minimum wrestling weight. Hydration is measured by urine specific gravity (Usg). There are two VHSL accepted methods for determining Usg: Refractometer or urine dipstix. Athletes must be within acceptable levels of hydration for body fat testing to proceed. An extensive re-testing and appeals process has been established to assist those athletes experiencing problems achieving adequate hydration.
- **BODY FAT DETERMINATION:** At the start of the wrestling season, every wrestler will be weighed and will have his/her body fat determined using VHSL approved skinfold assessment techniques and procedures. The VHSL program requires that the official body fat analysis be completed no earlier than 1 week prior to and no later than two weeks following the first VHSL official practice date. Urine specific gravity is analyzed to verify normal hydration status, and baseline weight is determined. After establishing baseline weight, skinfold measurements are completed and current body fat is determined.
- **MINIMUM WRESTLING WEIGHT:** Utilizing the wrestler's baseline weight and the body fat determination, the LOWEST weight at which the wrestler is able to compete is calculated. The program incorporates a hydration variance to accommodate athletes whose 7% weight is only marginally above the desired weight class. This number determines the lowest weight class at which the wrestler will be permitted to participate.
- **SCHEDULE OF WEIGHT LOSS:** The VHSL Weight Control Program allows athletes, who have body fat above the 7% for males and 12% for females, to lose a maximum of 1.5% of their baseline body weight per week. Coaches and athletes are provided with a schedule indicating an acceptable weight class for competition each week.
- **STRATEGIES TO REDUCE UNHEALTHY WEIGHT FLUCTUATION (BOUNCING):** Coaches shall maintain a weight chart recording each athlete's weight prior to each practice throughout the season. Weight fluctuation greater than 3% should initiate the coach evaluating the athlete's eating habits and weight loss schedule.
- **NUTRITIONAL PROGRAM:** High School wrestlers are very active and require a healthy balanced diet that provides an adequate amount of energy for healthy growth and development, activities of daily living, and wrestling. Even wrestlers that have an

opportunity to lose some fat in order to reach a desired weight class need calories to satisfy the above-mentioned needs.

**CERTIFIED MEASURERS:** Only VHSL Certified Measurers and Regional Master Testers may perform measurements and provide Coach-Official Team Reports. Health professionals with degrees as listed below are eligible to become official certified measurers upon completion of a VHSL sponsored educational workshop, documentation of experience by performing a minimum number of skin tests and urine specific gravity tests, and passing an examination on the program. Annual updates for all Certified Measurers are required. Criteria to become a certified VHSL Measurer are as follows:

- Have a medically related professional degree (MD, DO, DC, RN, LPN, NP, PT, RD, ATC, PA). Exceptions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis where such qualified professionals are not available. For example, an EMT, based on the individual's education and experience would be considered.
- Have a current professional license/ certificate and be in good standing with your professional governing body
- Have attended, at minimum, one of the VHSL Certified Measurer official workshops since 2002
- Have attended a refresher workshop if your last one attended was prior to January 2002
- Have submitted to VHSL office the "Documentation of experience" Form
- Have successfully completed the "Certified Measurers' Examination"
- Attended a workshop in 2006 or completed the VHSL WCP Online Tutorial Update and received the new CD v906.
- Must follow protocols set forth by the VHSL Weight Control Program and maintain certification standards

**MONITORING WEIGHT:**

- The goal of this program is to allow for healthy gradual weight loss in those individuals who have body fat to lose and a desire to achieve a lower weight class. Such weight loss can be accomplished most successfully if there is monitoring of progress along the way.
- The program will formulate a weight loss schedule indicating the allowable weight class a wrestler may compete in based on 1.5% of the baseline weight loss per week.
- The responsibility for monitoring this weight loss falls to coach, wrestler, and family. At anytime a coach or parent suspects a wrestler is not following the program and finds him or her to be out of line from where s/he should be, a recalculation of the weight loss schedule should be done to change target dates.
- With the baseline weight and date provided, along with the number of pounds recommended loss per week, the athlete, parents and coach should estimate their target weight each week depending on the overall amount of weight the athlete is scheduled to lose. Understanding that body weight fluctuates daily depending on the time of day and time since the last meal, etc, it is recommended that this target weight be a steady progression of weight loss reflective of fat loss, not fluctuations in hydration. The monitoring of weight required by the VHSL WCP should be taken within the hour prior to the start of wrestling practice daily to maintain a consistent comparison from day to day.

- Daily monitoring of a weight fluctuation of greater than 3 % should be scrutinized by the coach and may lead to a recalculation of the weight loss schedule.
- The Coach-Official Team Report will have two defining sets of numbers for each player:
  - The lowest weight class allowed (Minimum Weight Class)- No wrestler is eligible to wrestle in a lower weight class, at any time.
  - The weight class eligibility on a given date - Based on 1.5% weight loss per week allowed by this plan, the weight class permitted for a given week will be entered into the team sheet. (i.e. If week 1 and week 2 allow 119 and week 3 allows 112, theoretically the wrestler could wrestle at 119 on Saturday and at 112 two days later as the week begins on Sunday. The athlete's actual weight however, should be close to 119 the beginning of the first week, approximately 114 or 115 the 2<sup>nd</sup> week, and 112 the 3<sup>rd</sup> week as they qualify for the 112-weight class. An athlete weighing in at 118.5 late for a match on Saturday of the 2<sup>nd</sup> week is not following the weight loss schedule, and the schedule should be modified to reflect the lack of adequate fat loss during that time.
- In accordance with present VHSL rules, no wrestler may compete more than one weight class above what their weight would allow. (i.e. A wrestler weighing in at 111 could wrestle 112 or 119 but not 125)
- The administrator or the official doing the weigh-ins will need to consult the sheet to see which weight class the wrestler is eligible for and then see if s/he makes weight.

### **Daily Weight Monitoring**

During the 2006-07 season, it is required that all wrestlers weigh in and record their weight before each practice. The VHSL will provide each school with a number of weight charts for this purpose. These charts shall be completed and retained for the season and be available for review by the VHSL upon request. An athlete's weight at the beginning of each week should be consistent with the weight control program. The daily weight monitoring during a given week of practice should be within a 3% gain of the athlete's weight from one day to the next and over a period of a few days. If a wrestler does gain more than 3% of his/her body weight, the coach should take the proper steps to counsel the athlete. For example, if a wrestler has gained 4 -5% his/her body weight, the coach and/or medical professional, such as a licensed athletic trainer or school nurse, should have a discussion with the athlete regarding proper diet and eating habits that will help him/her to avoid "bouncing" in the future. If the athlete has gained more than 5% of his/her body weight the coach should not only discuss proper diet and eating habits, but also consider not allowing the athlete to compete in that week's matches and adjust the weight loss schedule based upon the athlete's current weight.

\*\* "Bouncing" is the act of a wrestler gaining weight by binge eating, usually after a meet, then losing the weight through unsafe techniques such as restriction of food and fluids to get back down to the weight before eating. The practice of eating large amounts of food followed by starving is unhealthy disordered eating. These extra calories taken in can impact the overall weight loss schedule and cause the wrestlers targeted date to reach a certain weight class to change from the Coach Official Team Report. The goal of the weight control program is to allow

the wrestler to follow a normal, healthy diet and lose wanted weight (fat weight) through increased exercise that is normal in a wrestling practice. *A normal healthy diet is one that is consistent, and includes an appropriate balance of nutrients.*

### **MATCH REQUIREMENTS:**

- VHSL WCP Coach-Official Team Report must be offered to the opposing coach(es) at each match and weigh-in for reference and validation of a wrestlers allowable competitive weight.
  - The weigh-in administrator and/or official should verify the athlete's ability to wrestle at a given weight based on the VHSL Coach-Official Team Report and completion of the W-1 Form will validate\* the values from previous W-1 forms and COTR to confirm each athletes eligibility to participate at a specific weight class.
  - W-1 forms must be completed within 24 hours from the time of weigh in by the host schools principal or their designee\*\* (other than the wrestling coach). The host school is responsible to confirm accuracy and compliance of both team W-1 forms.
  - If the appropriateness of a wrestler's weight class is challenged, the match administrator and/or referee will determine eligibility to wrestle at that weight based on Coach-Official Team Report and the previous W-1 Forms.
  - If the coach does not have the appropriate paperwork, the match can take place but, if the W-1 form is completed and verified after the match takes place, (must be within 24 hours from weigh in time), and it finds the wrestler to have participated below the allowable weight class for that date, that match would be forfeited, and fines may be administered.
- \* \*\*Dual Meets Only

### **RULING ON ELIGIBILITY:**

At a match: Administrator or official weighing in for a match is responsible and has the authority to declare the wrestler ineligible for participation based on above considerations.

- Completion of the W-1 form will provide the opportunity to verify the eligibility of all wrestlers. This is to be completed within one school day of the weigh in by a responsible adult acting as a designee of the principal (not a coach).
- No MD, parent, coach, ATC, Certified Measurer, or administrator can overrule the Coach-Official Team Report, or W-1 Form results to allow participation at a lower weight. See appeals within this manual.
- A parent, MD, coach or other qualified person always has the option to choose a higher weight class than the program gives as the "MINIMUM".

### **APPEALS PROCESS**

**In an effort to provide the athlete an opportunity to wrestle at their desired weight class, an appeals process has been established.**

The "FREE HYDRATION RETEST" does not count as an appeal.

If an athlete does not agree with the results of his/her minimum weight class determination:

1. First appeal is to the original certified measurer who can redo the entire testing, or to another certified measurer if the original one is not available in a timely manner.

2. Second appeal is to a Regional Master Tester (RMT). The school is responsible for paying the mileage costs and a fee up to \$10/wrestler to the tester for this appeal, as it requires a trip by the Regional Master Tester into the region.
3. Third appeal would be for underwater weigh-in at an approved site.

The cost of any tests fall to the wrestler or the school

**In all scenarios, the appealed results will be prevailing even if it is less desirable to the wrestler.**

### **TIMING OF APPEALS**

- Appeal must be requested within 2 days of the contested measurement .
- The retest should occur within one week of the request but no sooner than 1 day after the prior test. If the retesting (first appeal) is not possible by the original Certified Measurer, the Regional Master Tester should be contacted for considerations or arrangements to move the process forward. The Regional Master Tester is responsible to conduct the retesting of the **2 nd** appeal.
- The initial testing and the first appeal must be completed during the three week designated window for testing. Therefore, the coach should attempt to have the testing done as early in three-week window as feasible.
- Wrestlers coming out for the team late, for any reason other than participation in a fall sport post season playoff event\*, must be tested within one week of starting practice and before they are allowed to compete in a match. Any appeals must be requested and initiated so the retest can be completed within 10 days of the athletes first day of practice. The athlete's name will need to appear on the Coach-Official Team Report before participation in VHSL competition will be allowed. If the athlete's final test is after December 15th, 2006, they are not eligible for the 1 st growth allowance pound given on January 1 st, 2007. If the athlete's final test is after January 15th, they are not eligible for the 1 st OR 2 nd growth allowances given on January 1 st and February 1 st.

\* Athletes participating in a fall post season playoff event on or after December 15th must be tested within 8 days of the last contest date, and are eligible for the growth allowance pound given on January 1st.