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| Folkstyle vs Freestyle Wrestling  "Folkstyle" wrestling is the style used in high school and college wrestling competition in the United States. "Freestyle" wrestling refers to the style seen in international competition (the Olympics). The two styles are very similar. The main differences relate to how points are awarded to the wrestlers during the match, and how the matches are structured (length and number of rounds in each match). [Click here for a printable reference guide for how folkstyle matches are scored](http://helenawrestling.com/joomla1.5/FolkStyleWrestlingScoring.pdf). Greco-Roman is a third, less well-known style, that is best thought of as a type of freestyle wrestling that restricts attacking the opponent's legs. More detail about that can be found here: <http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greco-Roman_wrestling>  In folkstyle wrestling, matches consist of three periods. Periods can vary in length from one minute in duration for younger age groups, to as long as three minutes for college wrestling. Either wrestler can win the match at any time if they are able to pin their opponent or develop a lead of more than 14 points. Otherwise, the wrestler that can accumulate the most points by the end of the third period (or after overtime in the case of a tie) wins the match. There are only two positions from which referees start, or continue a match. The first is neutral position, with both wrestlers standing and facing each other. The other is the referee's position, where one wrestler starts on his hands and knees down on the mat, and the other starts on top, behind and in control. The first period always begins in the neutral position. Each wrestler has their choice in one of the remaining periods, to choose to start from top or bottom referee's position, or in the neutral position. If the action must be stopped before the end of a period, the referee restarts the wrestlers in the starting position that best reflects the position the wrestlers were in when the action was stopped.  The follstyle scoring system is rather simple. Takedowns (when from a neutral position one wrestler is able to bring the other to the mat and gain control) are worth two points. Escapes (when the bottom wrestler is able to break free from the top wrestler and revert back to a neutral position) are worth one point. Reversals, (when a wrestler on the bottom is able to reverse the control so that the opponent is on the bottom) are worth two points. Back points (also called near fall) are awarded when one wrestler comes close to pinning the other (i.e. exposing the other wrestler's back) and are worth two or three points depending on the length of time that the opponent's back is exposed. In addition, penalty points can be awarded when the opposing wrestler performs illegal moves or is penalized for excessive stalling.  Competition is conducted in a manner as to promote and require good sportsmanship. Competitors are expected to show respect to opponents, officials and coaches regardless of the outcome of their match. Both wrestlers are required to shake hands before and after the match. It is also common practice for each wrestler to shake the hand of their opponent's coach after the match.  Freestyle and Greco-Roman Wrestling:  The primary objective in freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling is much the same as with folkstyle, except that other factors are taken into account such as the skill with which moves are executed, and the type of holds that is used. Match Basics Freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling matches are condensed into one or two periods, depending on the age group. Younger groups typically, wrestle two ninety-second periods. Older groups wrestle one continuous five-minute period. Periods always begin with both wrestlers in the neutral position. As with folkstyle wrestling, the match can be stopped short of the time limit if either wrestler scores a pin or achieves technical superiority, which in folkstyle and Greco-Roman wrestling is a lead of ten or more points. After a takedown situation in which both wrestlers continue to wrestle down on the mat, known as the "par tarre" position, the bottom wrestler is not obligated to work for an escape or reverse as with folkstyle wrestling. Instead, it is the responsibility of the top wrestler to work diligently to execute a hold that will expose their opponent's back. If the top wrestler is not immediately (officials allow about fifteen seconds) successful in doing this, the official will stop the match and re-start the wrestlers on their feet in a neutral position. Scoring Control of one's opponent is less of a concern in freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling. Back points are awarded more freely in that it is only necessary to turn your opponent's back within 90 degrees of the mat. Takedowns, escapes and reversals are awarded one point, unless there is exposure of the back, in which additional points are awarded. Unlike folkstyle wrestling, it is not necessary to have control in order to score back points. A wrestler in a defensive situation can be awarded back points if their opponent's back makes contact with the mat in executing an offensive move. Other variations from folkstyle scoring include the additional points that can be awarded for takedowns that result in back exposure. "Grand Amplitude" holds, in which an opponent is lifted from the mat and brought from a standing position directly to his or her back are good for five points. Sportsmanship As with folkstyle wrestling, both freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling mandates sportsman-like conduct. In international competition, wrestlers are required to shake hands with their opponent and with the referee before and after the bout. Officials Officiating in freestyle and Greco-Roman is performed in teams of one, two or three officials. When possible three officials are used. The referee who stands on the mat and controls the action with his/her whistle is assisted by a judge and a mat chairperson seated on opposite sides of the mat. All scoring must be agreed upon by two of the three officials. Equipment FILA permits, but does not require, the use of headgear in international freestyle and Greco-Roman competition. In addition, wrestlers are required to wear either red or blue singlets, depending on their match pairing. Other than that, the equipment is identical to that used with folkstyle wrestling.  ABOUT THE AUTHOR Bill Campbell is an avid wrestling fan and coach, and president of Young Champions, a youth wrestling organization located in Wauconda, Illinois. |