



FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES LUTTES ASSOCIEES  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATED WRESTLING STYLES

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# INTERNATIONAL TRADITIONAL WRESTLING REGULATIONS



*Updated in January 2012*



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## **SECTION ONE – GENERAL RULES**

### **Article 1 – Philosophy**

In accordance with its Constitution, FILA recognises and unites all forms of traditional wrestling practised around the world in view of promoting their cultural and social values and protecting this world heritage upon which all modern wrestling styles are based.

Countless variations of traditional wrestling can be identified and they should all receive equal attention from the international community. However, common grounds had to be found in order to allow sportsmen from the different regions and countries to compete in official championships and games. The present rules offer a unified competition system that encompasses all major trends of traditional wrestling and make the sport easy to understand by the spectators and media and easy to judge by the referees.

### **Article 2 – Objectives**

The international rules set forth in the present document constitute the framework within which traditional wrestling is conducted and promoted and have as their specific objectives to:

- Establish the competition system, classification, technical points, penalties, eliminations, etc.
- Define and specify the practical and technical conditions under which a match is to take place.
- Determine the value to be assigned to actions and holds.
- List the situations and prohibitions.
- Determine the technical duties of the refereeing body.

### **Article 3 – Application of the Rules and FILA Licence**

The rules defined in the present document shall be in effect for all FILA sanctioned events in order to ensure optimal safety of the athletes and a healthy growth of the discipline.

The FILA licence is mandatory for every international traditional wrestling competition with more than two participating countries. Every international competition must be reported to FILA and added to its official calendar. The FILA insurance will only apply to competitions that appear in the FILA calendar.

### **Article 4 – Anti-Doping and Sanitary conditions**

All athletes participating in FILA sanctioned events agree to submit themselves to the FILA Anti-Doping Regulations and to the World Anti-Doping Code.

Athletes knowingly infected with the HIV/HBV virus are prohibited from participating in traditional wrestling competitions. Medical staff knowingly infected with the same viruses is prohibited from administering healthcare to bleeding athletes.



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## **SECTION TWO – COMPETITION PROCEDURE**

### **Article 5 – Wrestling Styles**

Traditional wrestling, as developed by FILA, is practised on wrestling mats and actions are only allowed in standing position.

Traditional wrestling comes in three variations depending on the use or not of belts:

- Fixed Belt (continuous grabbing of the belt)
- Free Belt (free recourse to the belt)
- No-Belt

All variations allow the use of the legs, while the fixed belt style also comes in a form, which only allows the use of the upper body.

### **Article 6 – Competition System**

The competition system follows the system adopted by FILA for the Olympic competitions based on direct elimination with repechage. The pairing is made in order of the numbers drawn. If the number of wrestlers is not ideal (i.e. 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, etc.), some qualification matches will take place from the bottom of the brackets. The wrestlers who win their matches continue in the brackets until two undefeated wrestlers remain. They will dispute the final for the gold and silver medal. The wrestlers who lost against the two finalists will have repechage matches in two different groups: the first group with the wrestlers who lost against the 1<sup>st</sup> finalist and the second group with the wrestlers who lost against the second finalist. The winners of the two repechage groups will both receive a bronze medal. From the 7<sup>th</sup> place, the wrestlers are ranked according to the following criteria:

- Most victories by fall
- Most victories by points
- Most victories in overtime
- Most victories by decision

*Note: If the place of the wrestlers cannot be determined with the above criteria, they will be ranked ex aequo.*

An absolute contest takes place between the winners of the senior categories to determine the absolute champion of the Continental and World Championships.

In case a category counts less than 6 competitors, the competition will follow the “Nordic system” with each competitor fighting each competitor. The ranking will be made according to the number of victories. In case of a tie, the classification points will part the wrestlers and if they are still equal, the winner of their direct fight will be ranked before the other one.

### **Article 7 – Medical Examination and Uniform Check**

Medical examination shall be conducted the day of the competition in a restricted area near the competition site. It shall last 1 hour and be immediately followed by the weigh-in for the designated weight categories. Separate male and female rooms or times shall be provided. The athletes shall wear shorts or underwear. The medical staff shall examine them for skin infections and medical conditions such as cuts or contagious disease. It has full authority to decide whether athletes are suitable for competition or not.



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Once the medical staff has cleared the athletes, they shall proceed to the uniform check table and have their competition uniforms controlled by the designated referees. In case their uniforms are not compliant with the FILA regulations, the athletes will be given the opportunity to purchase FILA approved gear on the spot.

### **Article 8 – Weigh-In and drawing of lots**

Weigh-in shall be conducted the day of the competition in a restricted area near the competition site. It shall last 1 hour and be concluded 1 hour prior to the scheduled start of the first bout of the designated weigh categories.

Access to the weigh-in room shall be limited to competitors, coaches, referees, and official weigh-in staff. No competitor shall be accepted at the weigh-in if he/she has not undergone the medical examination within the time period stipulated in the competition program. Athletes shall present their FILA licence and accreditation card to the appointed referees in charge of the weigh-in.

Athletes shall wear shorts or underwear and be allowed to check their weight on the scales as many times as they wish within the official weigh-in time frame. No weight tolerance shall be granted at the FILA sanctioned events.

After the athletes have made weight and the weigh-in official has marked their weight on the weigh-in list, they shall draw a lot number which will be used to determine their position in the bracket. The weigh-in officials shall also enter the lot number onto the weigh-in list. The drawing of lots shall be conducted at the weigh-in table next to the scales, either manually or by computer with the official FILA competition software.

*Note: No weigh-in is required for promotional competitions. The participants are divided according to their corpulence in order to quickly obtain an ideal divisible number.*

## **SECTION THREE – MATERIAL STRUCTURE**

### **Article 9 – Age and Weight Divisions**

All contestants shall be able to provide an official document proving their age and nationality. Any athlete found competing in an age group lower than his/her FILA designated age category shall be automatically disqualified from the immediate competition. Those athletes found violating this policy repeatedly may be subject to FILA membership disqualification.

Except for veterans, athletes are allowed to compete in the age division directly above their legal age group, provided that they present a medical certificate at registration.

*Note: If several age divisions are on the program of a FILA sanctioned event, athletes may only compete in one age group.*

#### **Cadets (16-17 years old)**

- Men: 60, 70, +70 kg
- Women: 50, +50 kg

#### **Juniors (18-19 years old)**

- Men: 60, 70, 80, +80 kg
- Women: 50, 60, +60 kg



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#### Seniors (20 and older)

- Men: 70, 80, 90, +90 kg
- Women: 60, 70, +70 kg

#### Veterans (35-60 years old)

- Men: 70, 80, 90, +90 kg
- Women: 60, 70, +70 kg

### **Article 10 – Wrestlers' Uniforms and Appearance**

For all FILA sanctioned events, competition uniforms shall be **FILA Approved**.

#### Fixed Belt

Wrestlers shall appear on the edge of the mat wearing white pants and green/blue tunics made of cotton or similar material and in good condition. The tunics must be longer than the hips, but no longer than the thighs and have 3/4 sleeves. The pants must be of proper size and reach to the ankles in upright position. The pants may not be unusually tight or loose to the point of affecting the opponent's ability to make holds or move. The belts shall be made of red cotton cloth of approximately 120cm width, rolled onto itself and sewed in one piece. The first wrestler called shall wear a green tunic and the second wrestler called a blue tunic.

#### Free Belt

Wrestlers shall appear on the edge of the mat wearing green/blue shorts and white jackets made of cotton or similar material and in good condition. The jackets must be longer than the hips, but no longer than the thighs and have 3/4 sleeves and reinforced slits to secure the belt. It may not be unusually thick or stiff to the point of obstructing the opponent. The first wrestler called shall wear green shorts and the second wrestler called blue shorts. The belts shall be red and tied tight around the waist to secure the jacket.

#### No Belt

Wrestlers shall appear on the edge of the mat wearing green/blue shorts made of cotton or similar material and in good condition. Female competitors shall wear additional white tight-fitting t-shirts or tops. The first wrestler called shall wear green shorts and the second wrestler called shall wear blue shorts.

#### Country's abbreviation

For all Continental and World Championships, the wrestlers shall wear the abbreviation of their country's name on the back of their competition tunic or jackets.

#### Advertising on clothing

Wrestlers may wear sponsors' names or symbols on their competition uniforms as long as they don't interfere with the identification of the uniforms' color and country's abbreviation.

#### Shoes

No wrestling shoes are allowed in any of the traditional wrestling styles.

#### Appearance and hygiene

Wrestlers are prohibited from wearing bandages on the wrists, arms or ankles except in the case of injury or on doctor's orders. Wrestlers are prohibited from wearing any object that might cause injury to an opponent such as necklaces, bracelets, anklets, toe rings, finger rings, piercing of any kind, prosthesis, etc. Wrestlers' fingers and toenails shall be neatly trimmed with no sharp edges.





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If an athlete's hair is longer than shoulder length and/or bangs extend beyond the ears, the athlete shall wear an athletic hair cover. Wrestlers shall be well groomed and their hair and skin shall be free of any greasy, oily or sticky substance. Wrestlers may not arrive at the mat perspiring for the beginning of the match. The referee may require a wrestler to towel off at any time during the match. In the interest of health, hygiene and a sanitary environment for the athletes, these rules shall be strictly enforced.

At weigh-in, a FILA official shall check that all competitors satisfy the requirements of this article. The athletes must be warned that if their appearance or uniform are not compliant, they will not be allowed to enter the competition. The wrestlers who enter the competition area with an appearance that does not conform to the present regulations will be given 2 minutes to change it; otherwise they will lose the match by default.

### **Article 11 – Competition Area**

All FILA sanctioned events take place on FILA approved 10x10 or 12x12 mats containing a 8 to 10-meter circle. The centre of the mat shall contain a 1-meter circle that will serve as a starting point for the wrestlers. From the edge of the outer circle, a minimum of a 2-meter safety zone shall be provided.

### **Article 12 – Medical Service**

A medical practitioner approved by FILA and the host National Federation shall be assigned to every FILA sanctioned event. He/she shall be an expert in sports medicine and be fully conversant with wrestling techniques and rules. He/she shall have full authority to stop a match at any time if either competitor is deemed to be in danger.

#### **Head Medical Officer's duties:**

- To supervise the medical staff working during the event.
- To conduct all medical examinations prior to the competition and determine whether athletes are medically fit to engage in wrestling matches or not.
- To record the prescribed particulars in the athletes' licence book. If an athlete is denied access to the competition in the interest of health and safety, the decision and rationale shall be recorded in his/her licence book.
- To give medical surveillance during the entire competition and be ready to intervene in the event of an accident or injury or on the central referee's request.
- To determine if an athlete is fit to continue the match and/or competition or not.
- To issue medical certificates and appropriate suspensions to the athletes who must withdraw from the competition.
- To prepare and forward to FILA a complete report of the injuries which occurred during the event for statistical purposes, as well as all recommendations and/or decisions made regarding fighters' suspension.



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## **SECTION FOUR – THE MATCH**

### **Article 13 – Duration of the Matches**

The match consists of 1 period of 4 minutes for all age divisions.

### **Article 14 – Call and Start of the Matches**

Both wrestlers' names shall be called in a loud clear voice. Wrestlers shall be called 3 times with at least a 30-second time interval between each call. If after the third call a wrestler has not checked in at the mat, he/she shall be disqualified for forfeiting the match.

When their name has been called, the wrestlers shall stand in the corner corresponding to their assigned color and wait for the central referee to call them to his/her side. The central referee shall inspect their competition uniform and give them 2 minutes to change them in case they are not compliant with the present regulations. In case an athlete does not come back with a satisfactory uniform or protection gear after 2 minutes, he/she shall lose the match by forfeit. The central referee shall also inspect the wrestlers to make sure that their skin is not covered with any greasy or sticky substance, or with perspiration. After the central referee has completed his/her inspection, the two wrestlers shake hands and begin the match as the referee's whistle.

### **Article 15 – Start and Restart Position**

#### **Fixed Belt**

Neutral position occurs at the beginning of the regular period and after all match interruptions. Both wrestlers stand opposite one another in the centre of the mat with one foot touching the inner circle, touch shoulders, and grab their opponent's belt by placing their hands on his/her sides. Wrestling starts at the referee's whistle.

#### **Free Belt and No-Belt**

Neutral position occurs at the beginning of the regular period and after all match interruptions. Both wrestlers stand opposite one another in the centre of the mat with one foot touching the inner circle and wait for the referee's whistle to start wrestling.

### **Article 16 – Scoring for Actions and Holds**

1 point is the awarded to:

- the wrestler who manages to bring any of his opponent's body part to the ground;
- the wrestler who manages to bring any of his opponent's body part out of the competition area;
- the wrestler whose opponent has received a caution for passivity or illegal action.

*Note: the attacker can put a knee (or any other body part) to the ground when executing an action.*

2 points and victory by fall are the awarded to:

- the wrestler who manages to pin his opponent's shoulders to the ground.





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### **Article 17 – Injury and Blood Time**

The referee must stop the match and call for injury time if a wrestler is temporarily injured due to an incidental blow (i.e. eye poke, head collision, etc). Injury/blood time per match cannot exceed 2 minutes per athlete. If the referee feels that a wrestler is feigning injury to avoid an action, he may declare a disqualification.

In the event of a wrestler bleeding, the referee shall stop the match and make the medical staff intervene. Proper cleaning utensils and disinfectant solutions must be readily available at the mat table. It is the Head medical officer's duty to determine whether the bleeding and spread of blood have been effectively stopped and whether or not the athlete may continue competition. The competition cannot resume until all materials used in blood cleanup are properly disposed of and until the medical solution used to clean up the mat has dried. In the case of a bloodied or torn garment that must be replaced, all athletes must have a back up uniform available mat side.

### **Article 18 – Interruptions of the Match**

If for any reason the match must be interrupted (i.e., injury/blood time, referees' consultation, etc.), the two wrestlers shall stand or sit in the centre of the mat facing the referees' table, without talking to anyone or taking liquids, and wait for the referee to call them back and resume the match.

### **Article 19 – Overtime**

Overtime begins at the end of regulation time when the score of the match is tied. All cautions and infractions accumulated during regulation time are carried over to the overtime period. Overtime lasts 30 seconds for all age divisions and the victory is determined by "golden point", meaning that the first wrestler who scores wins the match.

#### **Starting position – Fixed Belt**

Both wrestlers stand opposite one another in the centre of the mat with one foot touching the inner circle, touch shoulders, and grab their opponent's belt by placing their hands on his/her back (the maximum distance between the hands can be one fist).

#### **Starting position – Free Belt and No-Belt**

Both wrestlers stand opposite one another in the centre of the mat in an over-under clinch position with one foot touching the inner circle.

*Note: If no point is scored at the end of overtime, the referees determine the winner according to both wrestlers' manifest activity.*

### **Article 20 – Protest**

No protest may be lodged at the end of the match. Under no circumstances may the result of a match be modified after victory has been declared on the mat. If the FILA President or the Head Referee notes that the refereeing body has abused its power to modify a match result, they can examine the video and, with the agreement of the FILA Bureau, sanction those responsible as laid down in the provisions of the Regulations for the International Refereeing Body.



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## **Article 21 – Types of Victories and Match Classification Points**

The classification points received for their matches will be used to determine their final ranking.

### **Victory by Fall (5 points to the winner – 0 points to the loser)**

A victory by fall is declared when a wrestler manages to pin his/her opponent's shoulders to the mat.

### **Victory by Disqualification (5 points to the winner – 0 points to the loser)**

A victory by disqualification is declared when a wrestler is banned from the match or competition for any reason.

### **Victory by Default (5 points to the winner – 0 points to the loser)**

A victory by default is declared when a wrestler cannot continue the match for any reason or is declared unfit to continue by the Head medical officer.

### **Victory by Forfeit (5 points to the winner – 0 points to the loser)**

A victory by forfeit is declared when a wrestler fails to appear on the mat for the match or does not comply with the present rules as far as competition uniform.

*Note: Wrestlers who forfeit a match without proper medical certificate will not be allowed to proceed throughout the tournament (even in other styles) and be withdrawn from the final ranking.*

### **Victory by Points (4 points to the winner – 0 points to the loser)**

A victory by points is declared after a wrestler has scored 2 points over his/her opponent.

### **Victory in Overtime (3 points to the winner – 0 points to the loser)**

A victory in overtime is declared after a wrestler has scored 1 point during the overtime period.

### **Victory by Decision (2 points to the winner – 0 points to the loser)**

A victory by decision occurs when the score is tied after the overtime period and the refereeing body has determined the winner.

*Note: For victories by Points, Overtime, and Decision, 1 match classification point will be awarded to the loser if he managed to score 1 or more technical points during the match.*



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## **SECTION FIVE – TECHNICAL INFRACTIONS**

### **Article 22 – Passivity**

It is the wrestlers' duty to maintain action through the match. When the central referee feels that a wrestler is exhibiting passivity or stalling, he shall attempt to stimulate him/her by verbal commands ("Green/Blue Open" or "Green/Blue Action") without interrupting the match. If the wrestler continues to remain passive after the verbal commands have been issued, the central referee shall indicate the passive wrestler by raising the arm bearing the right colour band and give him/her a caution. Every caution must be reported on the score sheet.

The first warning for passivity is verbal and bears no consequences, the following cautions award 1 point to the opponent up to a total of 2 points, which results in the disqualification of the passive wrestler.

#### **Passivity includes:**

- Holding on in an attempt to neutralize or prohibit action or advancement.
- Delaying action by communicating with coach/corner
- Leaving the mat without permission
- Taking too much time to go back to the centre of the mat for restarts
- Incorrect restart position
- False start (i.e., starting wrestling before the whistle blows)

### **Article 23 – Illegal Holds and Actions**

All offenses fall under the central referee's authority. If a wrestler violates the FILA Code of Ethics in a blatant and unsportsmanlike manner, the central referee shall disqualify him/her from the match or from the competition. If a wrestler is injured by an illegal hold and cannot continue the match, the athlete who caused the injury shall lose the match by disqualification.

Cautions for illegal actions award 1 point to the opponent up to a total of 2 points, which results in the disqualification of the wrestler at fault.

#### **Illegal actions include:**

- Ground wrestling
- Holds causing dislocations
- Neck cranks
- Biting, punching, kicking, head butts, malicious cross faces
- Eye, ear, or nose gouging, fish hooking
- Pulling of hair, nose, ears, or attacking the groin
- Standing throws onto the head or neck (spikes)
- Coating the skin with any kind of greasy or slippery substance
- Stopping the match for any reason
- Pretense of injury



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### Article 24 – Ejection Procedures

In accordance with its Code of Ethics, FILA strongly condemns any form of brutality, violence or harassment on the competition site. If an athlete, coach, or spectator goes beyond the acceptable in his/her words, gestures, or actions, it is the central referees' responsibility to judge if that behaviour is deemed as a conduct violation and issue a yellow card to the individual at fault as a warning prior to being ejected. A yellow card will deduct 1 classification point to the team the individual is representing. If the violation continues, a red card will be issued and the individual at fault will be ejected from the competition. A red card will cause 2 classification points to the team. If the central referees feel that the behaviour goes well beyond the normal violation, they may skip the yellow card and directly issue a red card.

#### Examples of conduct violations:

- Agreeing on the match result
- Cursing during the match
- Being aggressive towards the referees
- Threatening the referees
- Entering into physical contact with the referees
- Throwing objects
- Arguing and interrupting the match
- Refusing to stay on the mat for the winner's declaration



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## **SECTION SIX – REFEREEING BODY**

### **Article 25 – Composition**

All matches shall be refereed by a central referee and a mat judge. Category-III referees are eligible for international tournaments, Category-II referees are eligible for Continental and World Championships, and Category-I referees are eligible for multisport games. In major competitions, the members of the refereeing body shall in no case be of the same nationality or officiate in matches involving compatriot wrestlers.

### **Article 26 – Uniform**

The central referees and the mat judges shall wear a classic navy jacket with FILA badge and pin (no other badge will be tolerated), grey trousers (no turn-ups) with a black belt, long or short sleeved light blue shirt with FILA logo on the left chest, black sock, and black plimsolls. In addition, they shall wear a whistle around their neck and a green band on their left wrist and a blue band on their right wrist.

### **Article 27 – General Duties**

The refereeing body shall perform all the duties set forth in the regulations governing traditional wrestling competitions and in any special provision that might be established for the organization of a particular competition. The central referee and the mat judge are required to use the basic FILA terminology and signals appropriate to their respective roles when conducting the matches. The central referee's main duty consists in starting and interrupting the match, awarding the points, and imposing the penalties in order to determine the legitimate winner and loser.

The central referee's decisions prevail, but in case of doubt he may consult the mat judge. In case no agreement can be reached, the Head Referee in charge of the competition will have the final say. The central referee and the mat judge are forbidden to speak to anyone during the match, except amongst themselves when they must consult so as to perform their tasks properly.

All the points shall be announced to the public by the mat judge, either by hand signal, by means of bats or by an electronic/manual scoreboard. The mat judge's score sheets are used to tally all the holds executed by the two opponents, including the points, cautions, and warnings for passivity which shall be recorded with the greatest accuracy in the order corresponding to the various phases of the match. At the end of the match, the central referee and the mat judge shall sign the score sheet.

### **Article 28 – The Central Referee**

The central referee is responsible for the orderly conduct of the match that he shall direct according to the official FILA rules. He shall command the respect of the contestants and exercise full authority over them so that they immediately obey his orders and instructions. Similarly, he shall conduct the match without tolerating any irregular and outside interventions. His whistle shall begin, interrupt and end the match. After the execution of an action, he shall indicate the point by raising the hand corresponding to the color of the wrestler who scored.



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#### Central referee's specific duties:

- Shake the wrestlers' hand when they enter the mat and before they leave it.
- Inspect the wrestlers' competition uniform and require them to change them within 2 minutes in case they are not compliant with the present regulations.
- Inspect the wrestlers' skin for perspiration or any greasy or sticky substance.
- Be able to change position from one moment to the next, on the mat or around it.
- Not obstruct the mat judge's view by standing so close to the wrestlers.
- Not turn the back to the competitors at any point and risk to lose control over the situation.
- Stimulate a passive wrestler without interrupting the match and give the necessary cautions.
- Ensure that the wrestlers do not rest during the match on the pretense of wiping their bodies, blowing their nose, feigning injury, etc. In such case, the central referee shall stop the match and ask for a caution to be issued to the wrestler at fault and 1 point to the opponent.
- Brush off a wrestler's hand or give a verbal warning if he/she is pulling the opponent's uniform.
- Uphold penalties for violations of the rules or for brutality.
- Break action and bring the wrestlers back into starting position when the action goes to the ground.
- Break action and bring the wrestlers back into starting position when the action goes out of bounds.
- Interrupt the match and proclaim victory by fall when a wrestler brings his/her opponent's shoulder to the ground.
- Interrupt the match and proclaim victory by points when a wrestler has scored 2 points.
- Ensure that the wrestlers remain on the mat until the result of the match is announced.
- Proclaim the winner by raising his/her hand after agreement with the mat judge.

#### Article 30 – The Mat Judge

The mat judge shall follow the course of the match very closely without allowing himself to be distracted in any way. Following each action and on the basis of the central referee's indications, he shall write the corresponding points on the score sheet.

#### Mat judge's specific duties:

- Assist in maintaining the proper score and time.
- Confirm the points to the public by means hand signals, bats, or electronic scoreboards.
- Make the central referee aware of any possible infractions.
- Declare overtime in case of a tie in points
- Confirm the winner to the central referee and the classification points to the scorekeeper
- Sign the score sheet at the end of the match





FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES LUTTES ASSOCIEES  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATED WRESTLING STYLES

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## **SECTION SEVEN – FINAL PROVISIONS**

The present Rules were approved by FILA and can be modified at any time if slight improvements are deemed necessary.

In case of a dispute regarding their interpretation and application, it is specified that the French version prevails.

The contestants in traditional wrestling events agree not to bring a dispute to civil court. Every disagreement will be settled by the World Traditional Wrestling Committee (WTWC), the organ of appeal being the FILA Executive Committee. If no settlement is established, the parties can bring the case, at their own expense, to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), located in Lausanne, Switzerland.