

Report: Winning the Alpha Wars



Enclosed in this report:

- A simple trick to knowing what your safe weight class is, before you get tested.
- How to know exactly what to weigh on Alpha Day
- How to not get tripped up by Alpha and end up forced to wrestle several weight classes above your division at the beginning of the season (along with the simple formula you can use to wrestle where you want, when you want)

What is Alpha Testing?

Those of you who follow me on here, or on my blog, have heard me rant about this before....

Its a whole big pile of useless CYA that doesn't protect *anybody*.

Back when the program was implemented (1998 at the collegiate level), it took University of Iowa less than a year to figure out how to bypass the system to qualify their wrestlers for whatever weight they wanted. Other colleges and high schools followed.

And today, the only teams that **aren't** exploiting the *deep flaws* in this system are the ones who are unaware - and their athletes often suffer the consequences as a result.

Put another way....NO wrestler competing on the top 3 teams in your state is failing to qualify for the lowest weight possible - regardless of the safety implications.

The system was destined from the start to punish those trying to do the right thing, and reward those who know how to exploit it.

Its really become a war between the *awares* and the *unawares*.

I call it the Alpha Wars.

But with this report, I'm going to even the playing field for you.

Let's start with the Alpha Process:

Alpha testing is the process, required by the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA), to determine a high school wrestler's minimum weight class (M.W.C) *while remaining fully hydrated*.

Steps to administering the Alpha

- Athlete must be fully hydrated when taking the test - hydration is thus tested first. Athletes who fail the hydration test cannot continue the process and will have to re-test no sooner than 48 hours afterwards.
- Athlete is weighed
- Body Fat assessment is administered, using a skin folder caliper (like the one in my building).

This Standard is the Standard

The standards:

A male athlete's lowest allowable body fat % is 7%. A female's is 12%.

An athlete also cannot lose more than 1 1/2% of their body weight per week to descend to their weight class.

How to know what your lowest allowable “safe” weight is before you get tested

I recommend athletes visit a Sport Med place to get an analysis ahead of the official alpha test. Your official assessment can differ, but this should give you a ‘ballpark’ of where you will end up.

Here's what Iowa learned in the first year of the assessments

The rule states that, if you are below 7% when you are assessed, you cannot drop any further weight. For example: If you weigh 106.5, and your body fat level is 6.5% (for the sake of argument) - you will NOT be allowed to wrestle 106. Iowa figured this out early on: If you make weight the day of the assessment (for a 106 lber, weigh no more than 106) - no matter your body fat % - you will be able to wrestle 106.

If you're going to be close - weigh in on weight.

Let's talk hydration

The assessment starts with a urine sample being taken, in order to determine that you are hydrated when you take your alpha. Specific gravity of urine: 1.025. That's a number that won't mean much to you, but that is the standard level of hydration required. You want to be as close to that number as you can get. Being over-hydrated means weighing more, which can mess up your numbers on the back end (i.e., your minimum allowed weight). If you are weighing in on weight, the only number that will matter is your weight on the scale - and being hydrated of course.

When you can actually wrestle at your lowest allowable weight class

You are only allowed to lose 1 1/2% of your body weight per week, from the date of the assessment, to your matches. You will be provided a 'weight loss plan' which tells you when you can wrestle at what weight. You are better off planning ahead, though. Here's an example of how it works:

Lets say you weight 110 on the date of your assessment (we are also assuming the alpha test determined you can wrestle 106). Let's also say that your match is 10 days after your assessment. You are allowed to lose 1 1/2% of your body weight per week.
 $1\ 1/2\% \text{ of } 110 = 1.65 \text{ lbs per week.}$

Now, if you want to figure it by the day...divide that 1 1/2% by 7. Then take your starting weight (110), and subtract 1/7 of 1.5%. Your dividing number is: 0.002142857 (aren't you glad I did that for you?). You basically have to do that for each day - subtract that percentage of your starting weight from your starting weight, to get Day 1. Take Day 1's weight, apply the same principle.

Use a spreadsheet - its easier. If you're in my barn and want me to figure it for you, let me know in advance and I'll run through the numbers with you (I'll have the spreadsheet on my phone and can share that with you if you'd like).

Okay, so let's run through the 10 day example for you:

Starting Weight: 110
Day 1 allowed weight: 109.76. (Weight day 1 - (Weight day 1*0.002142857)
Day 2 allowed weight: 109.529
Day 3 allowed weight: 109.29
Day 4 allowed weight: 109.06
Day 5 allowed weight: 108.826
Day 6 allowed weight: 108.593
Day 7 allowed weight: 108.36
Day 8 allowed weight: 108.128
Day 9 allowed weight: 107.897
Day 10 allowed weight: 107.665

As you can see, if you weighed 110 lbs on the assessment day, and your first meet was exactly 10 days later, you would not be allowed to wrestle 106 yet.

I will also be providing you with the Weight Management Guide. It is a separate document that goes into detail on short-term weight reduction, such as setting goal weights and how to know exactly what you are going to weigh, when you step on the scale.