

IPA WRESTLING

INTERNATIONAL PALĒ ASSOCIATION



OFFICIAL RULES OF PALĒ

Official Competition Ruleset · Version 1.0

Ἄρετή *Aretē* — Excellence · Φιλοτιμία *Philotimia* — Honor · Καλοκαγαθία *Kalokagathia* — Virtue

A living tradition bridging ancient Hellenic culture with the modern era.

708 BCE Olympic Debut · 2,700+ Years of Tradition · 2026 IPA Founded

PREAMBLE & TERMINOLOGY

The International Palē Association's official ruleset is developed through rigorous study of ancient sources and adapted for safe, authentic modern competition. It is offered here as a renewed living tradition — bridging the wrestling of Homer's heroes and the Panhellenic Games with a sport practiced today, in the spirit of aretē, philotimia, and kalokagathia.

All rules and terminology below are the current working ruleset of the IPA (Version 1.0) and remain subject to revision as research and competition experience continue.



Terminology

Μεσολαβεῖν *Mesolabein* — Referee's position: the fighter lifts both hands above the shoulders while the opponent grips them by the side of the waist. Initiated by the referee, generally as a caution or a restart procedure.

Ἐκπαλαίειν *Ekpalaiein* — Disqualification and immediate end of the match.

Ἀπτωτος *Aptōtos* — Special win condition: victory achieved without ever being pinned.

Ἀμεσολάβητος *Amesolabētos* — Special win condition: victory achieved without ever being subjected to Mesolabein.



Black-Figure Skyphos Displaying Mesolabein (Referee's Position)

Greece, 530–500 BC · Musée du Louvre

collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010261470

I THE ARENA

Modern competition is conducted on tatami-style mats at least 5 cm (2 in.) in thickness, ideally spanning 10–20 meters per side in a square or rectangular area.

In keeping with ancient practice, the historic skamma may also be used: pick-worked, softened, loosened, and leveled soil, at least 15–20 cm deep, with all rocks and debris removed and the surface raked smooth.

A malleable bed of fine, raked sand — at least 5–8 cm deep with a worked sub-base — is likewise an accepted competition surface.

II ATTIRE

Competitors wear a rashguard and shorts or pants, or, in the traditional manner, compete shirtless with shorts or pants. No footwear is permitted in either case.

III MATCH STRUCTURE & ROUNDS

No preset time value is assigned to rounds or breaks. For sanctioned tournaments, a 10-minute limit applies to adult divisions and a 6-minute limit to novice and youth divisions.

If a match remains tied when time expires, it is resolved by sudden-death referee's-position challenge: both athletes are placed in Mesolabein, and whoever scores a fall first within 30 seconds is declared the winner.

IV VICTORY & FALLS

Victory is achieved by three falls. There is no points system in Palē — every contest is decided strictly by the falls.

A fall is scored when an opponent is thrown or brought to the ground unsupported by the hands or knees; the back, belly/chest, and either side all count.

Following a fall, both athletes fully restart from a neutral position after a 30-second break.

Groundwork is permitted only for the purpose of creating fall conditions; chokes and joint manipulations are not permitted on the ground.



Special Win Conditions

Ἄπτωτος *Aptōtos* — Awarded to a fighter who wins the match without ever being pinned.

Ἀμεσολάβητος *Amesolabētos* — Awarded to a fighter who wins the match without ever being subjected to Mesolabein.

V

FOULS & PUNISHMENTS

FOUL	PUNISHMENT
Striking — slapping, punching, knees, elbows, headbutts, non-sweep kicks.	Warning / Mesolabein / Ekpalaiein
Joint manipulation, including small-joint manipulations or holds.	Mesolabein / Ekpalaiein
Biting, pulling hair, or pinching.	Mesolabein / Ekpalaiein
Stepping out of bounds, intentionally or under pressure.	Mesolabein; second intentional escape — fall counted + Mesolabein
Intentionally grabbing clothing.	Mesolabein
Stalling, whether during an active exchange or after a fall.	Warning / Mesolabein
Unsportsmanlike conduct. ¹	Warning / Ekpalaiein
Head diving.	Fall counted + Mesolabein / Ekpalaiein
Locking or applying pressure to joints on the ground.	Mesolabein / Ekpalaiein
Turtling or bridging for more than 20 seconds without returning to a Reasonable Neutral Position. ²	Mesolabein
Compressing, cranking, bending, or unnaturally twisting the neck.	Mesolabein / Ekpalaiein
Applying sudden explosive force to any joint.	Mesolabein / Ekpalaiein

¹ *Unsportsmanlike conduct: any behavior or action that goes against the ruleset, the code of ethics of the IPA, or the Olympic ideals.*

² *Reasonable Neutral Position: any position, kneeling or standing, in which neither wrestler holds a clear advantage.*

VI ILLEGAL TECHNIQUES

TECHNIQUE	PUNISHMENT
Scissors or scissor takedowns to the head, neck, or body (e.g. Kani Basami).	Ekpalaiein
Entanglements that trap the leg and twist the knee (e.g. Kawazu Gake).	Mesolabein / Ekpalaiein
Locking and dropping weight onto a joint (e.g. Waki Gatame).	Ekpalaiein
Pressure on the neck or spine via a full or double nelson.	Ekpalaiein
Spiking the head or neck, or driving the opponent headfirst into the mat.	Ekpalaiein
Driving weight or force through the cervical spine.	Ekpalaiein

VII CONTINUATION & BREAK OF ACTION

Continuation of Action

If a competitor drops to the ground while attempting a throw, no fall shall be called against them until a reasonable break of action has occurred.

Exposing one's back in the course of attempting a sacrifice throw, or falling to any position while throwing with reasonable effort to secure the throw, is treated as continuation of action rather than a foul.

Break of Action

A break of action occurs when there is a visible lack of effort to continue a manoeuvre, or to attempt a new one, with intent to score a fall — or when effort is visible but ineffective for more than two seconds.

The timer resets if the fighter stands. Beyond two seconds, the downed fighter is considered grounded, at which point the 20-second timer for Turtling/Bridging begins, and if they do not re-stand Mesolabein is counted against them.

VIII WEIGHT CATEGORIES

WOMEN	MEN
up to 52 kg	up to 61 kg
up to 58 kg	up to 68 kg
up to 65 kg	up to 76 kg
up to 73 kg	up to 85 kg
up to 82 kg	up to 95 kg
up to 92 kg	up to 105 kg
92+ kg	105+ kg

IX WEIGH-IN & ANTI-DOPING

Weigh-ins are held on the day before competition and again on the day of competition, with certification taken while the athlete is hydrated. Athletes may compete within the following tolerances of their certified weight: 3% for competitors under 52 kg (women) / 61 kg (men); 4% for those under 82 kg (women) / 95 kg (men); and 5% for those above 82 kg (women) / 95 kg (men).

Commitment to Clean Sport

The International Palē Association is committed to the protection of clean sport and to the health and integrity of its athletes. The Association affirms its commitment to the principles of the World Anti-Doping Code (WADA Code) and shall adopt and enforce anti-doping regulations consistent with those principles. As a condition of membership, all national member federations and affiliate organizations shall adopt and enforce anti-doping regulations no less stringent than those of the Association.



International Palē Association

All rules and terminology are a work in progress and subject to change.

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This ruleset is provided for informational purposes only. Wrestling is a physical activity that carries a risk of injury, including but not limited to joint injuries, falls, and collisions. Anyone using these rules should train under qualified supervision, use appropriate safety equipment and surfaces, and ensure a controlled environment. By using these rules, participants accept full responsibility for any risks or injuries that may occur.