

NFHS Swimming & Diving Rules Interpretations 2009

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SITUATION 1: In a race being timed with automatic timing, a swimmer touches the finish end, but not the finish pad, and the timers stop their watches or backup buttons when the timing pad: (a) has moved out of position during the race; (b) has fallen off the gutter during the race; (c) does not cover the width of the lane. **RULING:** (a), (b) and (c) correct procedure. The referee has the discretion to use backup times in these instances. **COMMENT:** It is intended that touch pads should cover the entire width of the lane. If they do not and a swimmer touches the end wall beside the pad, but within the confines of the lane, it is a legal finish. (8-1-7)

SITUATION 2: Following the turn in the breaststroke event, the swimmer's hands separate slightly after the swimmer's feet leave the wall, after which the swimmer does a downward butterfly kick before beginning the arm pull. The swimmer is disqualified. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** Any separation or drifting of the hands/arms prior to the kick constitutes initiation of the arm pull, after which the butterfly kick may occur. After the start and after each turn, any lateral or downward movement of the hands or arms is considered to be the initiation of the first arm pull. (8-2-2)

SITUATION 3: For the backstroke start in a deck-level pool ("rim flow" or "rollout" gutter), the swimmer in lane 4 has his/her toes above the deck after the starting signal is activated, but before leaving the wall. The swimmer is disqualified from the race. **RULING:** Proper procedure. **COMMENT:** Rule 8-1-2 does not permit a swimmer to have his/her toes above the gutter or pool deck. In the case of a deck-level pool, the swimmer's toes must be below the pool edge. (8-1-2)

SITUATION 4: The diver mounts the board and the announcer gives dive 401C Inward Dive Tuck. The diver assumes a set position on the back of the board, takes three steps, approach and hurdle. The diver lands the hurdle at the end of the board, stops, turns around and assumes a set position again and performs dive 401C. **RULING:** Balk, Rule 9-5-5. **COMMENT:** In the diving referee's opinion, it is a balk as the diver assumed the starting position and from that position interrupted the continuous execution of the dive prior to entry into the water. (9-5-5)

NFHS Swimming & Diving Points of Emphasis 2009

1.) Posting and announcing of meet scores - While it is recommended the meet score be posted and announced during meets, it is no longer required. At some meets, there may be no announcer or PA system available and there may be limited personnel helping conduct the meet, which would make posting and announcing the score impractical. Coaches typically keep team scores themselves, but a coach should be able to approach the scorer's table during the meet to inquire about the score. If scores are not posted or announced, the referee may want to periodically ask the scorer for the team score. Whenever practical, the meet score should be posted and/or announced. This will keep coaches and athletes apprised of the progress of the meet, as well as keeping the fans informed and involved with the competition between teams.

2.) Pistol used as sounding device - For all practical purposes, it is inappropriate to use a pistol capable of discharging live ammunition as the sounding device at an education based interscholastic athletic event. Should a pistol be used as the sounding device, it shall be disabled from being able to fire live rounds. Most states, by state law, prohibit firearms on school grounds and school events.

3.) Lead-off swimmers establishing an official time - It has been common practice to accept the time swum by the first swimmer of a relay as an official time for that comparable individual event. This is possible due to the first swimmer being able to execute the swim using a legal start, meet stroke requirements and have a legal finish. Subsequent swimmers in a relay will not meet all three of these requirements for a legal swim as in the comparable individual event. When a relay team is disqualified for a violation by swimmers two, three or four, such as an early start, turn or stroke which results in the relay disqualification, the split time for the lead swimmer shall still be recorded as official. However, should the relay team be disqualified for a conduct violation under Rule 3-5, the split time of the lead swimmer shall be nullified. In high school swimming, proper sporting conduct is paramount and should it become inappropriate by rule, no mark shall stand.

4.) Compliance with entry rules when using electronic meet management software - The use of electronic meet management software has certainly made it more efficient for those managing swim meets. This software has also created some minor issues when implementing NFHS rules related to entry procedures. For swimming, host schools may ask for visiting team rosters in advance of the meet so entries can be entered into the computer. For diving, there is a concern about properly identifying the voluntary dives on the diving scoresheet. State associations, or meet management, should communicate with participating schools on how entries will be submitted when electronic meet management software is used to be within the intent and spirit of the rule. The use of electronic meet management software does not change the rules or time frame in which coaches have for making changes in their entries.

NFHS Swimming & Diving Rules Changes 2009

2-7-9: It is no longer required, but is recommended the meet score be posted and/or announced throughout the meet.

Rationale: There are many meets where it is impractical to announce the score due to lack of a PA system and/or the presence of an announcer. Recommending rather than requiring the announcing and posting accommodates what is already occurring, yet still supports this communication when practical.

3-3-1: Requires the wearing of a one piece competitive suit.

Rationale: The competition suits are manufactured as one piece. The two piece suit option, as originally allowed in the rules, is outdated. This does not prohibit the wearing of multiple one piece suits.

4-1-5: Allows swimming and diving officials to dress uniformly in attire, other than all white, as approved by the state association.

Rationale: Many states have adopted officials uniforms that do not consist of all white. This change clarifies state associations determine the colors of officials uniforms.

4-3-1b New NOTE: Prohibits the use of a pistol capable of discharging live ammunition for use as the sounding device.

Rationale: It is not appropriate to use a pistol capable of discharging live ammunition as the sounding device at an educational event. In most cases, state law prohibits firearms on school grounds and at school events.

8-1-2: Permits the competitor to place his/her feet on the end wall, out of the water at the backstroke start, as long as the feet, including the toes, are not above or curling over the lip of the gutter or pool edge.

Rationale: For risk minimization and to enhance the competitor's consistent execution of his/her start, the feet may now be placed in the same position on the end wall for the start, rather than changing position based on water level from pool to pool. At no time shall a swimmer be permitted to have the feet, including the toes, above or curling over the lip of the gutter or pool edge.

8-1-7: Clarifies how a swimmer legally finishes a race when a touch pad has been dislodged and moved out of its proper position on the end wall.

Rationale: This language addresses the contact required to finish the race when the touch pad is not in the proper position on the end wall.

8-3-5 New NOTE 2: Defines a legal start for the second, third and fourth swimmers of a relay team when an in-water start is used.

Rationale: The rules previously did not define a legal start for the second, third and fourth swimmers of a relay team when an in-water start was used.

8-3 New 8: Establishes the requirements under which the first leg of a relay may be recorded as an official time for that stroke/distance.

Rationale: Sets forth the requirements for the first swimmer in a relay to have his/her time to be recorded as an official time for the comparable individual event, including a relay team disqualification, which previously had not been specifically addressed in the rules.

Major Editorial Changes

3-2-7, 4-1-3 NOTE, Appendix C A-2a

Points of Emphasis

1. Posting and Announcing of Meet Scores
2. Legal Competitive Suits
3. Pistol Used as Sounding Device
4. Lead-off Swimmers Establishing an Official Time
5. Compliance with Entry Rules when Using Electronic Meet Management

NFHS Swimming & Diving Rule Change (3-3-2 New)

3-3-2 NEW Suits worn by swimmers shall be limited to the following requirements:

a. only one swimsuit shall be permitted in competition. (A swimmer with special needs may request customization through his/her school to the state association.)

b. the swimsuit shall be:

1. constructed of a woven/knit textile material;
2. permeable (100 percent to air and water);
3. made so as not to aid in buoyancy and shall not be altered to aid in buoyancy;
4. made with no zippers or other fastening system other than a waist tie for a brief or jammer and elastic material within the casing/ribbing in the terminal ends (straps, leg openings, and waist openings); and
5. constructed so that the style/shape of the suit for males shall not extend above the waist nor below the top of the kneecap and for females shall not extend beyond the shoulders nor below the top of the kneecap, nor cover the neck.

Penalty (For ART. 2): When an official discovers a competitor wearing an illegal swimsuit by the wearing of two suits or a suit which is of an illegal construction, the official shall:

1. when reporting prior to the start of the heat, notify the competitor to make legal the swimsuit before becoming eligible to compete. If the competitor cannot comply without delaying the start of the heat, the competitor is disqualified from that event and shall not be eligible for further competition until in a legal swimsuit;
2. when the competitor has stepped up on the starting platform but prior to the starting device being activated, direct the competitor to "Step down," disqualify the competitor from that event and he/she shall not be eligible for further competition until in a legal swimsuit;

3. when the starting device has been activated, disqualify the competitor at the completion of the heat; nullify the competitor's performance time and he/she shall not be eligible for further competition until in a legal swimsuit.

Rationale: Technical swimsuits were introduced to the world of swimming approximately two years ago. The advanced technology fundamentally altered the sport, and swimwear became more of a piece of equipment as opposed to a uniform. The rules of swimming have always prohibited the wearing or use of an item that would aid in the swimmer's speed or buoyancy. The technical suits have evolved with little or no regard for these basic rules. In order to preserve the integrity, tradition and heritage of the sport, as well as protect and enhance the interscholastic swimming program, the new requirements and restrictions on swimwear are necessary to promote the educational values of high school athletics by promoting fair play. The immediate implementation date will guarantee fairness in competition throughout the high school swimming seasons and allow the meet officials to fairly and consistently enforce the rule.

NFHS Swimming and Diving Situations (Rule 3-3-2)

SITUATION: Following completion of the first heat of the 200 IM, with all swimmers out of the pool and the next heat waiting to be called to the starting platform, the coach of Team A approaches the referee to complain that a swimmer from Team B was wearing two suits during his/her participation in the first heat of the 200 IM. No official had observed the swimmer being in two suits. The referee lets the meet continue with no violation by the swimmer from Team B as no official observed a violation. **RULING:** Correct procedure.

SITUATION: As the competitors are reporting to the start of the heat/race, the referee/starter notices the competitor in lane 5 has on a drag suit over a legal swimsuit. The referee/starter informs the competitor only one suit may be worn in competition and if the drag suit can be removed without delay of the start, the competitor may swim. **RULING:** Correct procedure. (3-3-2 Penalty 1)

SITUATION: The swimmers have been called to and are on the starting platforms. The referee/start notices the competitor in lane 5 is wearing two suits. The starter directs the field to stand up and step off the starting platform. The starter then advises the swimmer in lane 5 that he/she is disqualified for wearing two suits in competition and shall not swim the event. The swimmer may swim in later events for which he/she is eligible when wearing a legal suit. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** Following the completion of the heat/race, the coach from the disqualified swimmer's school should be called to the table and notified of the reason for the disqualification. Only one legal, one piece suit shall be worn in competition. (3-3-2 Penalty 2)

SITUATION: The first heat of the 500-yard freestyle is a) completed and as the swimmers are exiting the pool, b) is not yet completed with the last swimmer touching the end wall, and the referee clearly notices a second set of straps extending beyond those of the swimmer's legal suit in lane 3. The referee calls the coach of swimmer in lane 3 to the table and verifies the wearing of the second suit and whether or not there is a letter of approved customization from the state association. With no letter, the coach is instructed in a) that the swimmer is not eligible for further competition until in a legal suit and in b) the swimmer is disqualified from that event and is not eligible for further competition until in a legal suit. **RULING:** Correct procedures. **COMMENT:** Should a situation arise regarding the wearing of a second suit other than the obvious drag/trainers suit, the official should contact a member of the school's coaching staff to verify the wearing of the second item and if there is a letter of authorization before the referee disqualifies the swimmer. (3-3-2 Penalty 3)