

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

2008-09 High School Swimming and Diving Rules Changes Announced

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Becky Oakes

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 25, 2008) — A new penalty for wearing jewelry and/or illegal attire was one of the seven rules changes approved by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Swimming and Diving Rules Committee at its March 30 meeting in Indianapolis. These revisions were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Rule 3-3-4 was revised to penalize a competitor for a subsequent violation of wearing jewelry and/or illegal attire through “disqualification in the heat/round and ineligibility for the remainder of the meet if not corrected.”

According to Becky Oakes, liaison to the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Committee, the new penalty is more appropriate for the severity of the violation.

“The previous penalty was considered unsporting conduct, with the punishment being more severe than the violation,” Oakes said. “The committee wanted to allow some flexibility in addressing something that was not an everyday occurrence, but at the same time create a structured penalty and emphasize accountability of the coach and athlete to adhere to competition rules.”

The committee also clarified Rule 6-3-4 to state “there must now be a difference of more than 0.3 seconds between automatic and backup times” in order to consider a potential timing system malfunction. Current meet administration software and timing systems now recognize a potential timing malfunction with more than a 0.3 difference and the revision allows officials to utilize current technology for efficient meet administration.

Other rules changes made by the committee:

- Rule 2-4-3 was revised to state that when practical, the numbering of lanes should be from right to left as the swimmer stands facing the course.
- Rule 2-7-4 now requires a “recall device” for recall races, but no longer specifies a recall rope since this is just one of several recall devices.
- In Rule 4-2-2, clarified that when there is dual confirmation, it is not proper mechanics for the officials to raise their hand for a violation for relay takeoffs and the no-recall false start.
- Rule 8-1-2 clarifies that a backstroke competitor shall become stationary immediately after the starting command, “Take your mark.”
- In diving, Rule 9-1-1 clarifies the water depth at any point 2 to 5 feet in front of the end of the board is 12 feet, with an exception of 10 feet for any pool constructed prior to January 1987.

In addition, the committee, in editorial action, changed the term “motionless” to “stationary” in directions to officials for starts. Oakes said this revision was made to reflect more accurately what officials should observe at the start.

“By using the term stationary, a competitor cannot be disqualified by a twitching hamstring, something he or she can’t control, but continues to not allow movement by the swimmers once in the starting position,” Oakes said.

The committee also adopted four points of emphasis for the upcoming season. The identified topics include starting regulations and protocols, use of referee/starter position when one person is handling both responsibilities, exhibition swims and accommodations for competitors with a disability.

According to the NFHS 2006-07 High School Athletics Participation Survey, 6,358 schools sponsor a competitive boys swimming and diving team with 106,738 boys participating, while 6,708 schools sponsor a girls team with 143,639 girls participating.

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This press release was written by Jennifer Searcy, a spring semester intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department and a junior at Franklin (Indiana) College.

About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and fine arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and fine arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and Rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing Rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 18,500 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; produces publications for high school coaches, officials and athletic directors; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, spirit coaches, speech and debate coaches and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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