National Federation of State High School Associations

2015-16 Swimming Rule Changes

3-3-5, 6: The prohibition of wearing jewelry has been removed from the rules for swimming and diving competition. As in previous years, the wearing of a medical alert with the alert visible continues and is encouraged for the purposes of risk minimization.
Rationale: The prohibition of jewelry is not necessary in swimming and diving. The wearing of jewelry ordinarily presents little risk of injury to either the competitor or opponents. Elimination of the rule allows officials to focus on meet administration directly related to competition. Coaches continue to have the obligation to see that competitors are properly equipped.

4-1-7: Requires swimming and diving officials dress in the same uniform attire as approved by the state association and no longer considers white as the default uniform.
Rationale: Due to the many variations in the officials' uniform, it is more practical that the state association determine the appropriate swimming and diving uniform for officials.

4-3-1a, b: The starter may designate another individual to sound a device for the lead swimmer during the 500-yard/400-meter freestyle when the lead swimmer has two lengths plus 5 yards remaining in the race.
Rationale: During the 500-yard/400-meter freestyle event, the starter may have multiple tasks occurring at the same time. The starter may designate another individual to sound a device for the lead swimmer during the 500-yard/400-meter freestyle with two lengths plus 5 yards remaining to swim in the race.

2015-16 Swimming and Diving Editorial Changes

Suggested Meet Warm-up Procedures, 2-NOTES, 2-7-3 NOTE, 3-3-2d

National Federation of State High School Associations

2015-16 Comments on the Swimming Rule Changes

3-3-5, 6 – The prohibition of jewelry is no longer required in swimming and diving as it was deemed unnecessary. The wearing of jewelry ordinarily presents little risk of injury to either the competitor or opponents. Elimination of the rule allows officials to focus on meet administration directly related to competition. It continues to be recommended a medical alert item should be worn with the alert visible to assist in care by health-care professionals in case of an injury or illness. Coaches have the obligation to see that competitors are properly equipped in legal caps and suits. Should jewelry become unreasonable, the coach should have it removed before competition.

4-1-7 – Due to the many variations in the official's uniform, it is more practical that the state association determine the appropriate swimming and diving uniform for officials. All officials should adhere to the state uniform as a matter of compliance and professionalism.

4-3-1a, b – During the 500-yard/400-meter freestyle event, the starter may have multiple tasks occurring at the same time. The starter may designate another individual to sound a device for the lead swimmer during the 500-yard/400-meter freestyle with two lengths plus 5 yards remaining to swim in the race.

National Federation of State High School Associations

2015-16 Swimming Points of Emphasis

1. **Uniform responsibilities** – making sure you have it right – The ultimate responsibility of ensuring that all athletes are attired in legal and appropriate suits and caps rests with the coach. It may be that the school is purchasing the suits/caps or it could be the individual student has the purchasing responsibility. Regardless, the coach maintains the responsibility for educating the students of what is legal and appropriate. Construction and design is of concern as well as the size and number of the manufacturer's logo, size of any post-construction logo, size of American flag and size and permission for any commemorative patch. For example, suits not manufactured in the United States will many times exceed the allowable size of a manufacturer's logo. Jewelry is no longer prohibited. Religious and medical-alert medals are still legal. The medical alert should be worn so the alert is visible to assist a health-care professional. Coaches and athletes have the responsibility to refrain from wearing jewelry that takes away from the integrity of the sport or poses a high likelihood of coming loose during competition. A review of what is legal and required by rule should be conducted each season by the coach and with his/her athletes each year before the competitive season begins.

2. **Focus on risk minimization in development of warm-up procedures** – It is very important that each school has an established warm-up procedure that focuses on risk minimization. Likewise, state associations may want to consider establishing a warm-up procedure similar to the suggested procedures located in the front of the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Book. Before any contestants enter the water to begin warm-ups, there should be a meeting including head coaches and captains from each participating team. The information to be reviewed should include, but is not limited to, the warm-up procedures for the venue. Coaches should insist that his/her athletes always follow the rules for warm-ups to provide an environment free of unnecessary injuries.

3. **Coaching starts and turns can prevent injuries** – Coaching the proper techniques for starts and turns plays an important role in preventing the swimmers from incurring an unnecessary injury in addition to assisting in their success in these two components of the race. Coaches should take the time to properly instruct and review with all swimmers. It is important for the coach to observe the individual swimmers to be certain he/she masters the start and the turns for their respective events.

4. **Ensuring the 16.4 yards (15-meter) mark is clearly visible** – The 16.4 yards (15-meter) mark must be clearly visible. It is preferred to be marked on the deck on each side of the pool with a painted mark,

bright tape or a bright cone, although it is easy to move a cone unintentionally. The 16.4 yards (15 meters) should also be marked on the lane markers. The mark on the pool deck is the most definitive and should the lane markers not be consistent with the mark on the deck, the deck marking takes priority.

5. **Preparing the lap counter** – Each school has the duty to adequately train individuals to serve as lap counters for their school. The host school is required to provide a visual lap counting system for the visiting teams as well as for their own school. Individuals serving as lap counters shall not enter the water, must remain on deck within the boundaries of their respective lanes and know when to change the visual count. This takes place by changing to the next higher odd number as the competitor makes each turn at the starting end. Once changed, as the swimmer approaches the end wall for the turn, the visual lap counting system is lowered into the water and removed before the swimmer initiates the turn. The solid orange card is shown to indicate the final length of the race. The individual serving as a lap counter may also give a verbal count and is not there to cheer on his/her teammate.

2015-16 NFHS SWIMMING AND DIVING RULES INTERPRETATIONS

Publisher's Note: The National Federation of State High School Associations is the only source of official high school interpretations. They do not set aside nor modify any rule. They are made and published by the NFHS in response to situations presented.

Robert B. Gardner, Publisher, NFHS Publications © 2015

CORRECTIONS TO RULES BOOK: (Underlining shows additions; ~~strikethrough~~ shows deletions.)

Page 36, **4-1-7**, It is ~~recommended~~ required that the officials dress uniformly… ; Page 40, 4-3-1 NOTE: " . . .~~capable of discharging live ammunition. . .~~"

SITUATION 1: The visiting team's coach is concerned that the host school has more restrictive warm-up guidelines than those listed in the NFHS Suggested Meet Warm-up Procedures. The coach addresses the concern with the meet director. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENTS:** It is very important that a warm-up procedure is in place for all meets with a significant focus on risk minimization. However, the NFHS Suggested Meet Warm-up Procedures are just guidelines, and an individual school or state association may have other policies in place. (NFHS Suggested Meet Warm-up Procedures)

SITUATION 2: The first two competitors for Team A report for their events sporting an American flag on their suits. The flag is no larger than 2x3 inches. The referee requests a letter of authorization from the coach for permission to wear the flag. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** Only commemorative or memorial patches must have approval from the state association to be worn on the suit or cap. The American flag requires no permission as long as it does not exceed the size requirements. (3-3-2d)

SITUATION 3: The meet referee has announced that no jewelry shall be permitted to be worn without penalty of disqualification from the event of the competitor. The coach of Team A requests the referee rescind this prohibition as the NFHS rules no longer prohibit the wearing of jewelry and there is no state association policy that prohibits. The referee rescinds this statement. **RULING:** Correct procedure, wearing of jewelry is no longer prohibited. (3-3-5)

SITUATION 4: An official moves into a new state and registers as a swimming and diving official. In preparation for the season, the individual notices the officials' uniform consists of khaki pants and blue shirt. The official contacts the state association office to confirm the officials' uniform is not all white. The uniform is confirmed as khaki and blue. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The default uniform is no longer white, but those colors specified by the state association. (4-1-7)

SITUATION 5: At the swimming and diving conference meet, the referee and starter agree it would be best to have the starter designate an individual on deck to sound the designated device in the 500-yard freestyle. The starter confirms the designee and reviews that the device is sounded when the lead swimmer has two lengths plus 5 yards remaining in the race. **RULING:** Correct procedure. (4-3-1b)

SITUATION 6: At the state championship meet, during the coaches meeting, the meet director confirms there shall be a seven judge panel for diving and the diving referee is separate from the panel. **RULING:** Correct procedure. **COMMENT:** The diving referee may or may not be a part of the judging panel. (9-6-1)

SITUATION 7: During the 500-yard freestyle, the meet referee notices the lap counters provided by the host school appear to be unprepared for their responsibilities. At the end of the meet, the referee discusses this matter with the head coach of the host school who believed any training was to come from the referee. The referee explains it is the responsibility of the school coach to arrange for thorough training of the individuals to serve as lap counters. **RULING:** Correct procedure. (Points of Emphasis)