

NFHS Points of Emphasis

1. On-site shaving is prohibited – In an effort to prevent the potential for the transmission of blood-borne diseases, NFHS Rule 3-5-7 prohibits the practice of shaving at swimming competitions. On-site shaving is a health, safety and cleanliness-of-facilities issue. Under the “NFHS Communicable Disease Policy,” athletes in all sports are to refrain from full body shaving. It is very important that coaches counsel their athletes on the danger and inappropriateness of on-site shaving ranging from sharing razors, possible cuts and exchange of body fluid (blood) and spreading communicable disease to cleanliness issues at the facility. Coaches have the responsibility to educate their athletes and enforce this restriction. “On site” includes the pool area, adjoining locker rooms, shower rooms and restrooms within the facility where the competition is being conducted. Penalties include disqualification from further competition under Rule 3-5-7, and by state associations policy, could result in further restrictions for future meets.

2. Swimsuit construction and design – Rule 3-3-2 outlines the requirements and restrictions for a legal swimsuit. Last year, Rule 3-3-2 was modified, prohibiting the so-called high-tech suits. A clear definition for a legal suit design and construction was adopted. To address continued developments in the ongoing evolution of swimsuits, new Rule 3-3-1 states that the FINA logo is not considered a form of advertising, and swimsuits with the logo/barcode will be legal under NFHS rules. A change regarding the placing of a school logo or name is an adjustment to last summer’s major rule change. Rule 3-3-2b(2) now states that the swimsuit worn during competition must be of a textile material and 100% permeable to air and water except for the school name or logo, which may be an area no more than 9 square inches added to the suit after construction. Officials should use reasonable and good judgment in the application of the suit rule. It is not intended that officials become suit inspectors nor should they be expected to verify the legality of each competitor’s swimsuit. The referee should ask each coach during the pre-meet conference to confirm that all competitors will compete in legal swimsuits. During warmups, the officials should also advise the coach of any competitor(s) observed to be wearing an illegal swimsuit or multiple suits and that the suit(s) shall not be permitted during competition. During each race, the officials should watch for competitors wearing more than one swimsuit, in a swimsuit of illegal style, shape or made with zippers or fasteners. When observed during the competition, the appropriate penalty as defined in the rule should be applied. As a reminder, a “drag suit” worn over a regular suit is considered a multiple suit and is not allowed during competition.

3. Automatic timing, judging and integration of times – At meets where automatic timing is utilized, it is easy to fall into the “trap” of letting the machine pick the finish or sort the places out. Officials should always try to be in position to judge race finishes in case the timing system malfunctions, a touch pad fails to activate or does not cover the entire lane and/or becomes dislodged during the race. A pre-meet check of the timing system, the touch pads in all lanes, the starting device and scoreboard should be standard part of an official’s pre-meet duties. It is also critical that officials look at the scoreboard to ensure that it is functioning once a race starts or to instruct the timing equipment operator to report a malfunction immediately. Good protocol calls for the starter to verify with the timing equipment operator that the system is set for the designated distance or race prior to the start of each event. Rule 6-4-1 discusses the integration of backup times and provides tables as to how these times can be calculated when there is a malfunction for a heat or a malfunction for a lane. If places can be determined but qualifying times are needed to advance to the next level of competition, and backup times are not available, the referee could authorize the event to be re-swum. Section 5 of Rule 6 explains how the ballot system is to be implemented as a backup judging system for failure of an automatic or semi-automatic timing system, and as the primary system when only hand-held watches are utilized. Again, it cannot be stressed enough that it is the primary role of an official to be in position to judge a finish, determine legal strokes and turns. Recently developed Swimming and Diving Officials Guidelines Manuals have been published by the NFHS to improve the consistency of officiating high school swimming and diving. These manuals, which will be available July 1, 2010 at www.nfhs.org, are not meant to be another rules book. Rather they have been designed to help all officials better understand their roles in conducting competition as well as to enhance their meet organizational skills along with their mechanics of officiating.

4. Concussions – With swimming and diving being a non-contact sport, the incidence of concussions are rare in comparison to contact sports. Striking the head on the diving board or at end of the pool as well as colliding with another swimmer during a warmup session are instances that could lead to a concussion. It should also be kept in mind that slipping or falling on the deck, in the locker room or shower area could also have the potential for causing a concussion. Proper policies and preparations should be in place to minimize injuries due to these causes. The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee and the Board of Directors adopted the “**SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION IN SPORT**” that outlines symptoms, sideline decision-making and appropriate health-care professional’s clearance to return to participation. The introduction to this document states, “concussions.....have the potential for serious complications if not managed correctly.” Rule 3-2-7 outlines the actions to be taken by the meet official to provide an opportunity for the contestant to receive medical attention. In the event a certified athletic trainer or medical personnel is not on site, the host school would be responsible for implementing their Emergency Action protocols in this situation.

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