

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

Swimming and Diving Rules Changes Address Risk Minimization, Championship Meet Policy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 19, 2017) — Among the changes to high school swimming and diving rules for 2017-18 are ones that address risk minimization and requirements for use of the championship meet format.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Swimming and Diving Rules Committee recommended seven rules changes at its March 19-21 meeting in Indianapolis, and all changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Rule 1-3-12 now requires state associations to identify culminating meets, which require use of the championship format. Due to the variations in conference, league and postseason championships within states, the committee believes it is appropriate for the respective state association to determine which meets shall be considered culminating meets.

“The championship meet format features preliminaries and finals rounds, which are thought to provide athletes the best opportunity to excel in their events,” said Sandy Searcy, NFHS director of sports and liaison to the Swimming and Diving Rules Committee. “However, the format also prescribes specific rules associated with team and individual entries, dual confirmation, declared false starts and applicable penalties for violation of these rules.

“The committee agreed that state associations are in the best position to determine which competitions must adhere to the championship meet format. The language also allows non-championship meets to be conducted using the championship meet format.”

An addition to Rule 8-3-5c specifies where a second, third and fourth swimmer’s feet must be when a relay exchange occurs. One foot must be in contact with the surface of the starting platform in front of the starting block wedge during takeoff to minimize risk during relay exchanges.

Rule 3-6 was reorganized to provide clarity regarding the potential conduct issues within a meet. As a result, the committee believes these issues are now easier to compare and categorize for appropriate action and/or penalty. Rule 4-1-8 was also affected by this rule change and now includes language regarding appropriate conduct for meet officials.

Other rules changes include:

- Rule 9-5-2, which addresses the approach and hurdle requirements in diving. This clarifies the intent for hops, leaps and/or jumps to count toward the three-step forward approach requirement.
- Rule 3-3-2a, which provides consistency for all NFHS sports regarding what school and competitor information is permitted on the uniform which, in swimming and diving, consists of the suit and swim cap.
- Rule 4-6-4, which requires dual confirmation for relay exchanges during championship meets. The referee and the starter may serve as the relay takeoff judges.
- Rule 3-4, which provides competitors more flexibility when competing in 500-yard events to count either up or down with visual lap counters. This practice permits flexibility for the competitor, and is in keeping with current trends in the sport.

“The Swimming and Diving Rules Committee was intentional in deliberation of this year’s rules proposals,” Searcy said. “Its main focus this year was to minimize risk but also clarify existing rules.”

Swimming and diving ranks ninth in popularity among girls with 166,747 participants and 10th among boys with 133,470 participants, according to the 2015-16 NFHS Athletics Participation Survey.

This press release was written by Bryce Woodall, an intern in the publications/communications department at the NFHS. He is a senior at Franklin (Indiana) College studying public relations.

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 performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing 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 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.8 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, 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 website at www.nfhs.org.

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