



April 15, 2026

NFHS Swimming and Diving Weekly Rule Interpretations

SITUATION 1: The referee disqualifies a relay team because the four swimmers did not swim in the order in which they were listed on the relay declaration. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. There is no rules requirement that swimmers must compete in a particular order, except (a) correct stroke order in medley relay and (b) leadoff swimmer must be indicated at some point by the coach – See Rule 3-2-5.

COMMENT: Listing four swimmers on a declaration or entry card does not impose a requirement that they compete in that order.

Coaches: Coaches are to be given maximum flexibility in use of their declared swimmers in a relay event, including adjusting the order during actual competition.

Officials: Once the race is started (long whistle), the official has in essence designated the leadoff swimmer by having that individual step into the water or onto the blocks. At that point, no other swimmer may trade places with the leadoff individual. See Rule 8-3-3. Otherwise, there is no requirement imposed for swimmers competing in a specific order.

SITUATION 2: The day following competition, the meet referee is contacted by one of the schools to advise that a competitor participated in too many events the preceding day. The meet referee refuses to take action to change the meet results, indicating that since this is not a clerical error, the referee has no authority to alter the outcome. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. Any confusion related to the nature of errors made during or following the competition has been eliminated by removal of the term "clerical"; thus, any errors, regardless of their nature, arising from matters over which the referee has jurisdiction before/during/after the meet are correctable, subject to state association policy. (4-1-4)

State Association: This rule was amended at the March 2024 NFHS rules committee meeting and took effect with the publishing of the 2024-25 NFHS Swimming and Diving rules book. The intent of the amendment was to remove unnecessary (perceived) technical limitations on correcting various types of errors encountered during a swimming/diving competition (cross-reference: 4.2.3 SITUATIONS A & B). It was the intent of the rules committee to adopt an approach here that essentially instructs meet referees and meet administrators to adopt a posture that if there is a problem, it should be fixed. This rule places no limitation on the type of problem or error – indeed, the intent was to eliminate any such perceived limitations – and there is an underlying assumption that State Associations are given full discretion to resolve concerns whenever those might arise.

Officials: Officials must be instructed on such policies and trained in the appropriate procedure for making any required reports to the state office.

One Hour: This phrase carries no limitations on the referee's authority. It is simply intended to instruct referees that finalization of meet results should be done immediately upon completion of competition while timing data and other essential information is readily at hand. In no way does this phrase limit what can be corrected.

48 Hours: Again, this phrase does not limit the nature of correctible errors; it simply places a sensible time frame within which such errors should be noted and brought to the attention of meet officials. State Associations are not hereby restricted.

SITUATION 3: Following completion of the third round of diving in a dual meet, a diver informs the diving referee that she is taking a declared false start for the dive she has listed for the fourth round. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. Use of the DFS in the diving event is only for the purpose of removing the diver from that specific competition without being further penalized for non-participation. It is NOT to be used to avoid performing a specific dive on the dive list. A diver using the DFS procedure is charged with the event against the total events permitted under Rule 3-2-1. (3-2-3)

State Association: Instruction should be provided to coaches and officials on how the DFS should be adjudicated in diving. Diving entries must be consolidated with swimming entries to verify the entry limit for each participating athlete.

Coaches: Coaches must remember that diving is an individual event in a swimming competition.

Officials: When reviewing entries, be sure to regard the diving event as one of the individual events for an athlete.

SITUATION 4: A diving invitational uses an electronic on-line entry system by which each diver provides his/her dive list for the meet. On the day of the meet, each diver and his/her coach is required to sign a form confirming the dive list before the diver is permitted on the boards to warm up. **RULING:** Appropriate procedure. If an electronic entry does not provide for signatures by diver and coach, that requirement (see rule 9-3-3c) must be met with an alternative. This signature requirement is essential both to confirm the accuracy of the diver's submitted list and the coach's verification that the diver is capable of performing all the dives listed.

State Association: The state office may establish a uniform system for all meets to address this requirement when electronic entries are utilized.

Coaches: Coaches are required to sign the diver's list in order to verify the diver's capability to perform each dive as listed.

Officials: Because of the essential nature of the signature requirement in supporting athlete safety, officials must insure that the signature requirement is being met in appropriate fashion.

NFHS Swimming and Diving Resources of the Week:

Diving Judge and Diving Referee Calls: <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>

Swimming and Diving Comments on the Rules: <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>

Swimming and Diving Rule Interpretations 2025-26: <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>