



April 22, 2026

NFHS Swimming and Diving Weekly Rule Interpretations

SITUATION 1: Relay entries for league championships are due two days prior to the actual competition, and the entry is accomplished by listing up to 8 swimmers for each of the relay events. School A's coach lists only four swimmers in each event, using the same four athletes for all three relays. Upon arrival at the competition, the coach attempts to add additional names to each relay entry. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. Once the entry deadline has passed, the relay entry is restricted to those names properly submitted.

Coaches: Coaches should be aware of the extremely limiting aspect of the entry deadline and thus, as a "best practice" always list additional swimmers to cover potential illness/injury or other circumstance that might prohibit an athlete from competing.

Officials: While no rule violation is incurred by listing only the same four swimmers for all three relay events, it is essential that officials ascertain any other events in which those four individuals are entered. Violation of the 4-event entry limit is at risk here, if any of the swimmers are entered in more than one individual event.

SITUATION 2: A diver is wearing a ponytail. During the performance of a dive, the ponytail touches the board. There is no contact with any other part of the body except the hair. The diving referee, under Rule 9-7-4b, declares the dive unsatisfactory with $\frac{1}{2}$ to two points maximum to be awarded the diver based on the hair making contact with the board. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** The diver did not hit the board with a body part. The touch of hair is not considered hitting the board and this insignificant touch should not be the cause of an unsatisfactory dive. The referee does reserve the right to declare an unsatisfactory dive if in the referee's opinion the dive has been performed with the diver's head passing unsafely close to the board.

State Association: State associations should provide information to their schools about resources available to train diving judges. This information should also be made available to officials' organizations for their use in training the officials who will oversee diving competition.

Coaches: Coaches should recognize that successful diving programs require not only skilled athletes and capable coaches but also a cadre of trained judges who will participate in the adjudication of their competition. Coaches should recruit parents and/or school staff and direct them to their state association who can provide information and opportunity to learn and improve their judging skills.

Officials: Officials' organizations must offer adequate training to their members, who will most likely function as diving referees during competition. Utilization of NFHS education resources can provide initial information, and officials' groups must tap into actual diving competition to create on-the-job training opportunities.

SITUATION 3: By league policy each school may enter two teams in the prelims of each relay event in the league championship meet (3-1-1), with only the faster of the two advancing to finals. One of the swimmers who was declared for and competed on Team B in prelims has an exceptionally fast split, causing the coach to move that swimmer to Team A, which had the fastest overall time, for the finals.

RULING: Improper. **COMMENT:** The swimmer may not move to the new relay team as this would be considered an additional event.

Coaches: Coaches should be familiar with this rule when establishing the entry list. Once a swimmer competes in the event as part of one relay team, the swimmer is limited to that relay team only during that event.

Officials: A swimmer cannot participate in the same event on two different relay teams. The same conclusion would apply if relay entries are identified by listing eight names per team and the same swimmer is listed on both teams.

SITUATION 4: The meet committee for the state championships has designated the meet referee to be the official responsible for acquiring full technical information concerning the proposed use of electronic relay takeoff judging equipment. **RULING:** Appropriate. The referee is responsible for overseeing the work of the several meet officials who are responsible for acquiring, utilizing and implementing the data derived from the Relay Judging Platforms (RJP) and for determining how that data will be applied to the meet results (confirming human judge decisions, sole source of determining takeoff violations, etc.).

Coaches: Coaches must be informed of such policies and provided a timeline for backstroke ledge implementation as well as state policies regarding requirements for athlete education.

Officials: In order to properly utilize the RJP equipment, it is necessary to know the manufacturer's starting point for the specific equipment being used (Colorado and Omega use different starting points). The referee must also ensure that deck officials are properly trained to ensure there is no interference with the operation of the RJP system (e.g., swimmers leaning on the starting platforms).

NFHS Swimming and Diving Resource of the Week:

One Meter Diving Table with Video Clips: <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>

Guide for Officiating Swimmers with Disabilities: <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>

NFHS Swimming and Diving Officials Documents and Forms: <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>