



January 21, 2026

NFHS Swimming and Diving Weekly Rule Interpretations

SITUATION 1: The State Association stipulates that relay entries for the state championships shall be accomplished by each school entering one relay team per event by (a) providing a list of up to 8 competitors who will compete in that event, or (b) providing a statement that the school will enter a relay team to compete in that event. **RULING:** Either is acceptable. Rule 3-2-3 (third paragraph) and 3-2-3 NOTE provide two possibilities for relay entries. Entries via a listing of up to 8 swimmers' names is the default; state associations may choose an initial school-only entry with subsequent submission of the names of swimmers designated to swim in the event.

State Association: Two methods of accomplishing relay entries in a multi-team competition are available. The state association is free to choose either method and may adopt option (b) above – see Rule 3-2-3 NOTE. It is important that the method to be utilized is clearly specified in pre-meet information. Schools throughout the state should be aware that either method is available in all multi-team competitions, including invitational and league/conference championships.

Coaches: Awareness of which method of entry is in use for EACH multi-team meet is critical, as the expectations differ for subsequent action during competition. Coaches must be aware of when and how they are to declare competing swimmers for each relay event.

Officials: Officials should be mindful of the fact that an individual swimmer may be listed in all relay events in a multi-team meet but is only charged with participation in a relay event if the swimmer is actually designated to participate and then does compete. Swimmers entered in two individual events in the same meet may be listed in all three relays without violation of the entry limitation rule. See Rule 3-2-3, third paragraph and NOTE.

Meet management must maintain careful oversight of the process to make sure participants in each relay event are accurately listed as having competed AND to assure that no swimmer exceeds the four-event limitation imposed by Rule 3-2-1.

SITUATION 2: In the consolation finals of the 100 free, the backplate/starting wedge detached from the platform at the start, clearly affecting the start of the swimmer in that lane. The referee determines that sufficient unfairness occurred and orders all competitors in that heat to re-swim the race at a later point in the competition. **RULING:** Correct procedure. In the championship round, it would NOT be appropriate to have only the affected swimmer re-swim and then insert her/his time into the final array; at that point, head-to-head competition is essential. However, if this incident had occurred during

qualifying rounds, some other type of re-swim could be appropriate. Of course, all swimmers must be given ample rest time (25 minutes minimum) on either side of a re-swim. (4-2-2p)

Officials: In any heats/finals format competition, officials MUST be familiar with the NFHS Swimming and Diving rules pertaining to 4-2-2p in order to provide a fair and equitable opportunity for high school student athletes.

SITUATION 3: 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 4: In a league championship meet with prelims and finals, the league rules and the state association have given participating teams the latitude to enter multiple relays in an event. One team entered an A team and a B team. In the prelims a swimmer on the B team (Andrew) swims faster than some swimmers on the A team, so the coach decides to move Andrew from the B Team on to the A Team during finals. Andrew is listed on the relay card for both relays. The swimmer that was replaced on the A team does not swim on the B team. The fourth swimmer on the B team is a swimmer who was listed on the entry card. **RULING:** The A team is disqualified, because Andrew swam on two relays. Prelims and Finals are one meet and a swimmer cannot compete on two different relays in the same event. The B team is not disqualified because they did not have a swimmer that swam on another relay.

NFHS Swimming and Diving Resource of the Week:

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

Swimming and Diving Points of Emphasis: <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>