



January 7, 2026

NFHS Swimming and Diving Weekly Rule Interpretations

SITUATION 1: In the preliminaries of a championship meet the relay from Beach City High School finishes the 400-yard freestyle relay. After some time has elapsed the team jumps in the water to celebrate. The team from Sac City High School has not yet completed the race. The official disqualifies the Beach City High School relay team. The meet committee convenes; because the Beach City High School swimmers are seniors and really good kids, the committee decides to overturn the disqualification and allow the team from Beach City High School to swim in the finals. **RULING:** Rule 3-6-4 PEN 2b is the applicable rule here; recission of the application of that rule would not be within the meet committee's jurisdiction/authority – see Rule 4-1-2. The re-entry during event prohibition is a critical part of protecting athlete safety as well as non-interference with the conduct of any particular race. In this instance, 3.6.4 SITUATION C would not apply even if all teams had completed the race, because there is a subsequent round of competition in this (championship) meet. Rule 4-1-2 "In championship meets, a meet committee and a meet director shall assume responsibility for all aspects of meet management. The meet committee shall make decisions on matters not specifically covered by the rules or on the misapplication of a rule during a meet. Judgment calls of officials are not subject to review by this committee. The decisions of the meet committee are final. **COMMENT:** Rule 4-1-2 allows for the creation of a meet committee. However, the meet committee does not have the authority to overturn the judgement call of the referee. The violation described in this Situation is specifically covered by the rules and the sanction is not a misapplication of a rule; there is no need for the meet committee to intervene.

Coaches: Training their relays to remain out of the water upon completion of the race is one item that should be placed high on a coach's curriculum, especially prior to major meets or situations where closely contested races are likely.

Officials: Officials should be especially observant at the completion of hotly contested relay events and make provision for swimmers to re-enter as quickly as possible after the last team finishes.

State Association: The state association should educate the hosts of championship meet and ensure that the meet committee understands the authority that can and cannot be used.

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: 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.

NFHS Swimming and Diving Resource of the Week:

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

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