

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

Finish in Backstroke Event Highlights 2014-15
Swimming and Diving Rules Changes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Becky Oakes

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 23, 2014) — A major change in the finish of the backstroke event will occur next year in high school swimming and diving.

Effective with the 2014-15 season, any part of a swimmer's body must be on or above the water at the finish of the backstroke event. Previously, a swimmer in the backstroke could submerge on the turn and/or finish.

This revision in Rule 8-2-1e was one of eight rules changes recommended by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Swimming and Diving Rules Committee during its March 30-April 1 meeting in Indianapolis. These recommendations were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

“There's been a difference of opinion as to what constitutes a finish, and the committee believed it needed to be cleared up,” said Becky Oakes, NFHS director of sports and liaison to the Swimming and Diving Rules Committee.

“Clarification is going to focus on the finish and that the swimmer remains on the surface of the water.”

Three changes were approved in Rule 9 pertaining to diving. First, Rule 9-2-2 now allows an option for reseeding divers going into finals in championship meets. Diving finalists may now be seeded from lowest to highest based on their individual scores through the semifinals. Previously, the diving order used at the beginning of the meet was maintained throughout the competition. The new option for diving finals is decided by the meet director prior to the beginning of the meet.

“Divers in finals can be seeded based on their score, which can change the order from the starting order of divers,” Oakes said. “The committee felt that this option would add excitement to the meet. Divers with higher scores can see their competition.”

The committee also adjusted the scale for judges to score divers by revising five of the seven categories. The new scoring, which is consistent with the NCAA, USA Diving and FINA, is as follows:

- Excellent – 10
- Very Good – 8.5 to 9.5
- Good – 7 to 8
- Satisfactory – 5 to 6.5
- Deficient – 2.5 to 4.5
- Unsatisfactory – 0.5 to 2
- Failed – 0

The final diving revision (Rule 9-2-1) seeks to minimize risk of injury by permitting practice dives during specified warm-up times prior to each diving session. Divers are allowed at least two practice approaches – with or without

water entry – prior to the start of the diving competition. This allows divers an opportunity to warm up after a break in competition.

The committee made additions to Rule 3-6 relating to the penalties for unsporting conduct during a swimming and diving meet. Unsporting conduct results in disqualification from the meet, including previous events in which a competitor qualified for the finals.

New Rule 3-6-3 states that no team personnel or competitor should display unacceptable conduct, including not following the official's directions or using profanity. The penalty is disqualification from the event.

“The committee wanted to separate unsporting conduct from unacceptable conduct. The severity of the penalty needs to match the severity of the unbecoming conduct,” Oakes said. “The new rule separates the two so that each situation is dealt with based on the severity of the action by the competitors or coaches.”

Rule 3-6-2 now deals strictly with spectator conduct and allows the referee to suspend the meet until the meet management resolves the situation. Previously, spectator penalties were included with the penalties for athletes.

Another change dealing with risk minimization was Rule 8-1-5, which states that swimmers no longer may step off the starting platform when the referee says “Stand up.” Referees and starters should direct swimmers to step down only when unusual circumstances occur.

Following are other changes approved by the rules committee:

- Rule 3-3-4: Adhesives are not allowed for swimmers or divers.
- Rule 4-3-1Note: The sounding device shall not be a pistol or closed barreled starter's pistol.

A complete listing of all rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Athletic Activities” in the sidebar menu on the home page, and select “Swimming and Diving.”

According to the 2012-13 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, swimming and diving is the 10th most popular sport for boys with 138,177 participants at 7,001 schools. The sport ranks eighth among girls participants with 163,992 at 7,249 schools.

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This press release was written by Anna Wilson, a 2014 spring intern in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department and a senior at Franklin College studying journalism and studio art.

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 16 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 7.7 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 Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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