

SWIMMING AND DIVING QUESTION INTERPRETATIONS

Adaptations for Special Needs

- Question:** Should officials be asking coaches during the pre-meet meeting about any special needs any of their swimmers/divers may have and appropriate accommodations for that student?
- Interpretation:** Recently, the NFHS has updated regulations like NFHS Rule 3-3-4 to clarify the authority and criteria for the State Association to authorize exceptions to the competition rules to provide a reasonable accommodation to individual participants. It is wise for officials to ask coaches about any students on their team that may require reasonable accommodations, disabilities and/or special needs, as well as those individuals with unique and extenuating circumstances. Coaches will have in their possession a copy of a letter from the WIAA office identifying the accommodations necessary.
- Question:** Can a swimmer with special needs exit the pool using the ladder instead of the side of the pool?
- Interpretation:** National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) Rule 8-3-7, page 55, indicates that the first three members of relay teams shall leave the water by the finish end of their lane promptly after finishing their quarter of the race. For a violation by an individual member of the relay team, the relay team is disqualified from the event. Further, NFHS 8-3-7 Situation B indicates that due to unusual pool construction, relay swimmers are able to leave the pool from the finish end of their assigned lanes. **RULING:** the referee shall designate a permissible alternative point of exit for each lane. WIAA interpretations have also provided that so long as interference does not take place, a swimmer can be allowed to use alternative exit points of the pool following their event.

Use of Tape by a Swimmer

- Question:** Does the WIAA provide a waiver when tape is being used by a swimmer?
- Interpretation:** NFHS Rule 3-3-4 does not allow competitors to wear or use any device to aid their speed, buoyancy or body compression. However, the Note found in this regulation allows State Associations to authorize exceptions to NFHS playing rules to provide reasonable accommodations to individual participants with disabilities and special needs, as well as those individuals with unique and extenuating circumstances. Taping, regardless of the material is not permitted in swimming unless used to treat an injury or cover a wound. The WIAA office can grant a waiver for a swimmer when a physician's written note is presented allowing tape to be used to treat an injury or cover a wound.
- Question:** Can a swimmer wear a "Breathe-Right" strip across their nose while competing in a swimming meet?
- Interpretation:** No, in accordance with NFHS Rule 3-3-4 and per NFHS interpretation, the use of Breathe-Right strips can only be identified as an "aid" and not compliant with the taping rule.
- Question:** Last night I encountered a situation where a swimmer had Kinesio tape applied to her lower back. This was prescribed/recommended by her

chiropractor. My initial reaction was to have the swimmer remove the tape but after consulting with my partner and checking the rule book we concluded that there was no basis for not allowing it and thus allowed her to swim with the tape applied.

Could you please clarify NFHS's position on the use of any tape not used to cover a wound or to protect an injury as long as it doesn't provide a competitive advantage? USA's position is Kinesio tape could provide a swimmer with a competitive advantage.

Interpretation: The NFHS current rule will not permit the wearing or use of any device to aid with body compression. Taping, regardless of the material is not permitted unless used to treat an injury or cover a wound. The use of Kinesio tape by NFHS rules is not illegal just because of the type of tape. At this time the NFHS rules would be more lenient in that Kinesio tape could be worn to treat an injury if it did not become an aid as addressed in Rule 3-3-3. Tape is not something to be worn as prevention such as an ankle brace may be worn in volleyball or a knee brace in football when an actual injury may not exist. If the swimmer is the only swimmer using the tape and has a doctor's recommendation for an injury the tape could be worn provided it is not worn in a way to create a competitive advantage. As with any item worn, the referee would have the final decision unless the school has gone through your office anticipating a question may be raised.

Question: **I would like a clarification on this rule. I have checked with the Athletic Trainer in our school and the tape he is using is not compression tape, but a waterproof tape that protects the injury not enhance. We have been asked twice by officials to remove the tape. According to the rule, the official needs to ask first what the tape is being used for and then make a determination if the tape should be removed. Please advise on this rule and let me know. Thanks.**

Interpretation: NFHS Rule 3-3-3 is the correct rule to follow. It reads: "Competitors shall not wear or use any device to aid their speed, buoyancy or body compression." Coaches are not allowed to determine whether or not the tape needs to be removed, only the referee.

In addition, Situation 3-3-3b, page 25 of the NFHS Swim/Dive Rule Book, goes on to review how the use of tape is not allowed in three different situations. The key here is that many new tape manufactures provide a tape that allows swimmers to aid their speed, especially when worn on the shoulders. If a swimmer is the only swimmer using the tape and has a doctor's recommendation for an injury, the tape could be worn provided it is not worn in a way to create a competitive advantage. The tape surface, if a Dr.'s note is presented, does need to be made of a texture identified by the referee as "rougher" than human skin texture. As with any item worn, the referee would have the final decision. Coaches are not involved in making determination of whether or not tape can be worn.

Question: **Can divers use tape, i.e., taping their ankle?**

Interpretation: In diving, there is far less of a concern regarding a competitive advantage. The use of tape in diving is normally for support and further prevention of injury. Common sense rules in these situations and Dr.'s note are not required to allow divers to compete.

Scrimmages & Alumni Meets

Question: Can I schedule a scrimmage for my school's swimming and diving team and allow it to count as a meet for another team?

Interpretation: No, scrimmages can only count as the one scrimmage each school swimming and diving program are allowed. One school cannot count a scrimmage as a scrimmage while another school identifies it as a regular season meet.

WIAA Season Regulations now have a NOTE that reads: If either school counts a scrimmage as a game, it must be counted as a game for both programs, schools or teams.

Question: Can we have more than two school programs attend a scrimmage we are hosting?

Interpretation: Yes, more than two school swimming and diving programs can participate in a scrimmage.

Keep in mind, the scrimmages must be modified and altered so that they do not have the appearance of a meet.

Question: The last edition of the WIAA Bulletin indicated sophomores, juniors and seniors could not delay reporting to the school swimming and diving team. Is this true for a sophomore boy who is going out for swimming for the first time?

Interpretation: No, WIAA Sr. High School Handbook, page 37, Rules of Eligibility, Article VI, Section 1, A., (2), indicates a student who was a member of a school team in a given sport during the previous year may not delay reporting for the school team beyond the school's official opening day of practice in order to continue nonschool training or competition.

Question: Our high school has an alumni swim meet over the Christmas break. It's just a fun meet (T-shirt relays, etc.). My question is: Can current members of the girls HS swim team take part? Our girls' coach is very concerned about any of her swimmers running afoul of the rule that prohibits girls from practicing with the boy's team.

Interpretation: There are a number of issues involved with your question. First, alumni can participate. As a safety precaution, those alumni who are currently swimming for collegiate programs may want to check with their coaches and/or their compliance officers to be certain they are able to participate. I am not familiar with the specifics of NCAA or other collegiate regulations.

Next, alumni meets have to be counted as a part of a school team's 15 allowed meets when members of the boy's team are involved.

In addition, any girls with remaining eligibility in swimming and diving are not allowed to compete as this will mean they have participated in two seasons of swimming and diving during a single school year. Girls with remaining eligibility who participate in this alumni meet will jeopardize their eligibility for future participation in high school athletics.

I encourage you to discuss this meet further with the Athletic Director at your school, as he/she is your direct contact for issues like this.

Question: Are we now allowed to schedule a 15th meet so long as it is an alumni meet?

Interpretation: Yes, this new regulation allowing 15 meets in Swimming and Diving went into effect with the Fall of 2010 Girl's season and the Winter 2010-11 Boy's season.

Shaving On-Site

Question: Today a swimmer from AAA High School was DQ'd from the meet. I, as a father of swimmers from another team, feel that the punishment did not fit the crime. All she did was shave in the locker room. My two swimmers tell me they did not know that was not allowed. I hope you can do something for this girl as she is a senior and this is it for her. She was the number one seed with time to spare in the 100 fly.

Interpretation: National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) Rule 3-5-7 indicates: "No team personnel/competitors shall perform any on-site shaving before, during or after the meet. PENALTY: Team personnel/competitors shall be disqualified from further participation for on-site shaving." This NFHS regulation that has been in place for more than 10 years and is also identified in materials provided to WIAA school swimming and diving teams each year.

Question: When a swimmer is found to have shaven on-site, are they disqualified from the next meet that follows as well as the meet in which the violation was identified?

Interpretation: No, disqualifying a swimmer for shaving on site results in disqualification of the swimmer for only the meet in which the violation occurred. This NFHS regulation is considered to be part of the NFHS's Communicable Disease Policy. It is not a flagrant or unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

Towels on Starting Blocks

Question: At our recent swimming sectional, there was some discussion regarding the use of towels on the starting blocks. Currently, our school does not allow the use of towels on the blocks. It is my understanding that if a visiting school has a letter from their athletic department/school district allowing the use of towels, then that team may use a towel at any swim meet (home or away). Is this correct and does it also apply to the Sectional meet? Also, would the same towel policy apply to a deck start?

Interpretation: NFHS situation 2-7-2 allows the use of towels on starting platforms so long as the facility manager allows them. If the facility manager does not allow use of towels, then they are not allowed.

During the WIAA tournament series, we do not allow towels to be used per WIAA language found in the materials provided to each swimming school.

Use of towels on a deck for a deck start are not encouraged for use by the WIAA as there is a high risk of the towel slipping.

Diving

Question: I don't recall seeing or reading anything on the use of these signatures. On the one hand it is nice to have the facsimile signatures because they are legible but on the other hand it makes me doubt whether the coach and diver have actually consulted each other on the dives chosen, the position and order. Though I don't see any

reason to disallow these signatures I think I would like to have handwritten initialization by the diver and the coach to verify that both diver and coach have reviewed the entry. I have a concern, as do other officials that these facsimile forms are mass-produced and may or may not be reviewed and discussed by both the diver and coach. I would be interested in hearing your thoughts and if this has been an issue or discussed at the state or national level.

Interpretation: I am assuming with the new signature regulation, coaches and divers are providing officials with a copy of the dive sheet already signed, so as to save time and effort on their part. These facsimile signatures are acceptable so long as the signature of the diver and coach are the actual competitor and coach of the competitor. The signature, whether facsimile or actual, is verification that the diver is capable of performing all the dives listed on the diving scoresheet and confirms the accuracy of the submitted scoresheet (i.e., dive number, position and dive order).

Non-School Competition

Question: **Can a swimmer compete in a YMCA meet in an “exhibition” event?**

Interpretation: No, WIAA Sr. High School Handbook, page 37, Article VI, Section 1, A., “It is the philosophy of this Association that a student owes loyalty and allegiance to the school and team of which he/she is a member during the season of a given sport. A student becomes ineligible in a sport for the remainder of the season for competing in nonschool game, meet, or contest in the same sport during the season of practice and competition established by the school.”

Participating in an “exhibition” event in a nonschool meet can only be identified as “competing.” Therefore, participating in an exhibition can only be viewed as a violation.

Amateur Status Regulations

Question: **Can a swimmer purchase a new suit for a discounted price?**

Interpretation: No, WIAA Amateur Status regulations, B., 3) indicates: “A student shall be determined to be in violation if he/she: Receives compensation or benefit, directly or indirectly, for the use of name, picture, and/or personal appearance, as an athlete. This includes but is not limited to: receiving free and/or reduced rates on equipment, apparel, camps/clinics/instruction and competitive opportunities that are not identical for all other participants.”

Simply put, a swimmer jeopardizes their high school eligibility if he/she purchases any swimming suit at a discounted price.

Question: **Can a coach purchase swimming suits using funds from his/her budget for the school team at discounted prices?**

Interpretation: Yes, school administrators and coaches have a duty to their school to find the best prices possible for apparel and other purchases. Once purchased by the school, the school has responsibility for the swimming suits and can distribute them as they wish.

- Question:** Can a school team have a fundraiser that raises money to purchase swimming suits?
- Interpretation:** Yes, there is a way that fundraisers can be used to raise money for the purchase of swimming suits, equipment or for other purposes. The key to these purchases is that money must be donated to the school program and the school can then purchase the suits or other items.
- Every school has or should have a gift acceptance policy for receiving donations from the community. Utilize this process in accepting donations of any kind prior to using the donation.
- Question:** Can a booster club purchase swimming suits for a school team?
- Interpretation:** No, a booster club may not purchase suits and then provide them to individuals or a group of swimmers. Money raised by any booster club for use by a school team needs to be donated to the school, through the school's gift acceptance protocols. Once it is accepted, these funds or the gift can then be applied to budget accounts by the school administration.
- Question:** I have a question for you regarding eligibility.
We have a senior boy who transferred to our school from School BBB this year. It seems the School BBB swim program has a fun holiday event where alumni come and swim with the current team. They have asked this swimmer to join the event this year and swim with the alumni since he is no longer a student there. Evidently after the swim, there is a dinner/picnic for families and friends. I want to get your approval prior to having him attend.
- Interpretation:** First, as far as allowing him to attend and be involved in the dinner/picnic, WIAA regulations do not prevent this. He is able to attend the alumni event and the dinner/picnic without consequence to his eligibility.
- However, since he is now participating with another school swimming and diving team and this event is during the WIAA Swimming and Diving season, participation in the event must be monitored. If it is an event where there will be competition of any kind, he may not compete. Best for him to not even consider getting in the water.
- If this is an event where alumni are getting together, it is open to anyone to use the pool, swim and have some fun, there are no races, events, etc., just open swimming, then it is OK for him to participate. Remind him to be careful if he decides to attend this event. It is situations like this that are often brought to the attention of the WIAA office during the tournament series. We are required to investigate. Situations like these can be very distracting to student-athletes during the tournaments.

Records and Seed Times

- Question:** Can you tell me if there are any guidelines as to whether or not a school can give a school or pool record to a swimmer based on a relay split when they were not the lead off?
- Interpretation:** National Federation (NFHS) and WIAA language remains silent regarding record recognition. Determination of records is a local matter allowing schools to determine records they wish to recognize.

Question: Is there a rule about whether or not relay splits can be used as seed times if they were not the lead off on the relay?

Interpretation: NFHS Rule 8-3-8 is a new regulation which indicates: "The lead-off swimmer on a relay may be credited with an official time for his/her relay leg provided all requirements of the start, stroke and finish are legal.

- a. A leadoff time remains valid if the relay team is disqualified due to a violation (other than conduct) by one of the subsequent relay competitors.
- b. A leadoff time shall be nullified should the relay team be disqualified for Conduct, under Rule 3-5.

Question: Can you tell me what the consequences are if a relay split that is not a lead split is entered as a seed time?

Interpretation: If a seed time/relay split (non-lead split) were challenged at a WIAA Sectional Coaches Meeting and found to be a non-lead split, the meet manager would ask the coach of the student-athlete involved to provide a new seed time that the coach is able to verify or that the other coaches are in agreement would be a more accurate time. It is possible the heat/event might have to be reseeded. Emphasis for WIAA events is placed on finding a way for student-athletes to be allowed to compete in the Sectional Meet.

Dual Confirmation

Question: In a non-championship meet, is it necessary for dual confirmation of a false start to be made in order to disqualify a swimmer?

Interpretation: Yes, WIAA Season Regulations, page 33, 15., g., indicates: In all meets (championship and nonchampionship) there must be dual confirmation of a false start by the referee and starter before a school swimmer or relay team is disqualified.

Fundraisers

Question: I was told to contact you regarding a potential fundraiser for our school's swimming team. The idea of the fundraiser is to solicit individuals to pledge at least a dollar for every meet the varsity gets over the 14 meet regular season. The team wins 10 meets that translate into a 10 dollar donation. This is much like a free throw a thon only instead of paying per free throw made they are paying for each win. The reason I like the idea is because I am in a smaller community and they are hit with many fundraisers and get products they do not need. This is a unique idea that the community would have fun following. The negative is if we win no games then we have no money in our account. I am prepared for all scenarios.

My question to you is if this is legal according to the WIAA?

Interpretation: In simplest terms - "no".

The WIAA's Board of Control and the other advisory committees which guide the Board, have taken a clear, firm position opposing any/all fundraisers which are based either on performance within a competition and/or based upon the outcome of a competition.

Both from the sportsmanship perspective as well as for the "flavor" of "gaming/gambling" which accompany fundraisers based on performance in competition/outcomes of games... our membership has zero interest in embracing this style of fund raiser.

Fund raisers based on - yards rushed, takedowns, shots on goal...freethrows/assists, etc., ...etc., any/all of these (and others) are not acceptable/appropriate school/program fundraisers when connected to performance in a competition with another school.

Heat/Lane Malfunction Procedures

Question: We experienced a meet with a timing dispute. The automatic timing system failed in a lane. As officials we picked the team in the failed lane as the winner; however, when we calculated their time following NFHS Rule 6-4-1, the time calculated was slower than another team's. The referee identified the other team as the winning team. Were we correct in our deliberations?

Interpretation: Yes, NFHS Rule 6-3, 4 and 5 identify the order used to determine the actual time and place when an automatic timing system fails is:

1. Integrated Backup Timing Calculation (6-4-1)
2. Backup Judging System—Ballot System (6-5-1)