



December 3, 2025

## NFHS Swimming and Diving Weekly Rule Interpretations

**SITUATION 1:** Nearing completion of the 100-yard butterfly, the referee notices that the swimmer in Lane 3 is dragging one arm across the surface of the water while the other arm is completely above the surface during the recovery. The arms are moving simultaneously but the referee disqualifies the swimmer because the two arms are in different positions in relationship to the water surface. **RULING:** Incorrect. The requirements of the rule are met if both arms are above the surface of the water and are moving simultaneously. There is no requirement that the arms move in the same horizontal plane.

**Coaches:** Careful instruction of swimmers in butterfly includes emphasis upon the arm recovery being above the surface of the water, with arms moving simultaneously. Underwater recovery, especially at turns and the finish, should not occur.

**Officials:** Officials must carefully enforce the two elements of the arm recovery: simultaneous movement and recovery over the water. All references to arms being in the same horizontal plane were previously removed. Underwater recovery, which can assume several forms, may occur both during the race and at the turns/finish. Officials should pay special attention to such recovery especially at the finish.

**SITUATION 2:** In a championship meet with multiple officials, the official opposite the starter notices a female swimmer with a bikini top worn above a folded-down competition tech suit. The official reminds the swimmer that all changing of suits must take place in the designated changing area. Several minutes later, the official sees this swimmer, who is standing behind the timers, pulling the bikini top out from under the competition suit. The official contacts the swimmer's coach, asks for the coach to identify the swimmer, and then disqualifies the swimmer for the remainder of the meet. The official also reports the incident to the state association. **RULING:** Correct procedure. Rule 3-6-1d defines deck changing as unsporting conduct.

**State Association:** State associations may wish to be made aware of any incidents of unsporting conduct that occur in swimming competition. Officials must be instructed on such policies and trained in the appropriate procedure for making any required reports to the state office.

**Coaches:** Prior to the start of the competition season, coaches MUST instruct their swimmers regarding proper meet conduct, including no deck changing. Regular reminders are helpful, and peer oversight can help prevent unnecessary incidents of this unsporting behavior.

**Officials:** Any incidents of deck changing resulting in an athlete being charged with unsporting conduct MUST be directly observed by a designated meet official. Consultation with the coach is a desirable factor to support the coach in monitoring the behavior of athletes. While it is not required by rule, it would be considered a “best practice” for officials to only address deck changing in the presence of the coach, in the same manner as is done for suit coverage issues (3-3).

**SITUATION 3:** The day following competition, the meet referee is contacted by one of the schools to advise that a competitor participated in too many events the preceding day. The meet referee refuses to take action to change the meet results, indicating that since this is not a clerical error, the referee has no authority to alter the outcome. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. Any confusion related to the nature of errors made during or following the competition has been eliminated by removal of the term "clerical"; thus, any errors, regardless of their nature, arising from matters over which the referee has jurisdiction before/during/after the meet are correctable, subject to state association policy. (4-1-4)

**State Association:** This rule was amended at the March 2024 NFHS rules committee meeting and took effect with the publishing of the 2024-25 NFHS Swimming and Diving rules book. The intent of the amendment was to remove unnecessary (perceived) technical limitations on correcting various types of errors encountered during a swimming/diving competition (Cross-reference: 4.2.3 SITUATIONS A & B). It was the intent of the rules committee to adopt an approach here that essentially instructs meet referees and meet administrators to adopt a posture that if there is a problem, it should be fixed. This rule places no limitation on the type of problem or error – indeed, the intent was to eliminate any such perceived limitations – and there is an underlying assumption that State Associations are given full discretion to resolve concerns whenever those might arise.

**Officials:** Officials must be instructed on such policies and trained in the appropriate procedure for making any required reports to the state office.

One Hour: This phrase carries no limitations on the referee’s authority. It is simply intended to instruct referees that finalization of meet results should be done immediately upon completion of competition while timing data and other essential information is readily at hand. In no way does this phrase limit what can be corrected.

48 Hours: Again, this phrase does not limit the nature of correctable errors; it simply places a sensible time frame within which such errors should be noted and brought to the attention of meet officials. State Associations are not hereby restricted.

**SITUATION 4:** A diver is disqualified from a diving competition because: (a) the diver executes a dive other than that given on the scoresheet, then on another dive falls into the water, thus making two infractions (failed dives); (b) fails in the performance of two dives. **RULING:** Correct procedure in (a) and (b). **COMMENT:** A diver is disqualified if the diver fails two dives and shall perform no further dives. In both (a) and (b), the diver is disqualified immediately from competition. (9-7-5a, 9-7-5c, 9-8-3)

**Coaches:** Prior to the start of the competition season, coaches MUST instruct their divers regarding Rule 9-7-5 and the impact of failing two dives during a competition.

**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:**

**Sample Pre-Meet Conference Topics:** <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>

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

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