



September 17, 2025

SITUATION ONE: In the 100-yard freestyle event, Swimmer A in Lane 4 swims the entire race with a legal butterfly stroke. At the completion of the meet, Swimmer A's coach requests the referee's verification for the 100-yard butterfly time.

Ruling: Incorrect request. Time verification must reflect the event in which the time was achieved. In freestyle events, the times achieved are considered for the freestyle and no other strokes.

State Association: Since verifications often involve times to be used for subsequent competition in a state championship series, the state association must be sure to clarify the conditions under which a verified qualifying time may be achieved.

Coaches: Training materials for coaches must also emphasize that verification of a time achieved in an event must be for that event/stroke. The stroke indicated in the event description is the only stroke for which verification may occur.

Officials: Officials must be extremely careful to verify times only for the event contested.

SITUATION TWO: In the breaststroke, a swimmer's left leg is kicking further below the water surface than the right leg. The right leg bends and the foot is turned out with the foot outside of the knee and the left leg bends and the foot is turned out with the foot inside the knee. All movements are simultaneous and correct foot position is maintained. The referee takes no action to penalize the swimmer.

Ruling: Correct. The references to arms/legs operating in the same horizontal plane have been removed from the rules. This kick would be legal provided all other aspects of leg/foot position are fulfilled. (8-2-2e)

State Association: This concept should be integrated into the training curriculum for officials. Movements of the legs and feet in breaststroke should be simultaneous but need not be symmetrical.

Coaches: While coaches may train athletes to perfect a symmetrical kick, the rule only penalized non-simultaneous motion of the legs.

Officials: Simultaneous movement of both legs is still required, and the swimmer's feet must be turned outward during the propulsive phase of the kick.

SITUATION THREE: 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 FOUR: Just prior to the start of the medley relay event, the referee blows a series of short whistles to indicate to the swimmers that the event is about to begin. The swimmers in both Lanes 2 and 5 enter the water upon hearing these whistles, and the referee disqualifies those relay teams for illegal (early) entry.

Ruling: Incorrect. NOTE: While Rule 3-6-4 and 3.6.4 SITUATION A would appear to require disqualification for entering the water early (prior to the long whistle), the specific context described here, and the fact that starting protocols are not part of the Rules (see below) would strongly suggest that officials treat this “violation” similarly to the circumstances described in 3.6.4 SITUATION B, that is, as a swimmer mistake but not a rule violation. Often, officials’ short whistles are indistinguishable from their long whistles; athletes should not be penalized under such circumstances.

State Association: State associations should specify to their officials which starting protocol (verbal or whistle) is to be used in the State during the season – see Appendix A, pp. 103-104.

Coaches: Coaches should train their athletes, prior to the start of the season, in the starting protocol to be used during the season.

Officials: Appendix A contains starting protocol descriptions which are technically not part of the rules. Although it is beneficial to follow these guidelines, not all athletes are sufficiently trained in them and thus should not be penalized for failure to follow them. When athletes make a mistake implementing some part of the starting protocol, they should be corrected but not penalized.

SITUATION FIVE: The state association announces the state championships will be held at the facility of the state university located in the same city as the state association office, and that facility utilizes electronic relay takeoff judging pads. The state swimming administrator advises the meet referee and designated timing system operator for the meet that they will be responsible for ascertaining the technical information necessary to use the RJPs appropriately in the upcoming state championships.

Ruling: Appropriate action. There are various RJP systems available, and operational aspects vary from one system to another. Meet officials must be thoroughly familiar with those aspects in order to utilize the information derived from the RJPs in a fair and appropriate and accurate manner.

State Association: State associations must be confident that equipment used in the state championships is utilized correctly and appropriately, by whatever means that can be accomplished. Likewise, meet hosts using RJPs should provide information to teams/coaches in advance of the meet to assure such equipment is used effectively.

Coaches: Coaches should be aware of the pending use of RJPs and instruct their swimmers in proper relay starts.

Officials: It is important to be aware that some RJPs register vertical pressure on the top surface of the starting platform, while others measure horizontal pressure at the front edge of the platform. In either instance, it is possible that data can be affected by other sources of contact with the platform/RJP, such as might occur from other relay team members surrounding the platform. Therefore, it is essential that officials (starter/referee, lane timers/judges) monitor the presence of other relay team members and remind them to refrain from coming in contact with the platform during the race but prior to their start. The meet referee, in consultation with the state association, prior to the meet will establish what protocols will be used to disqualify a team for an exchange violation, including a timely and time-sensitive procedure for acquiring and utilizing RJP data.

NFHS Swimming and Diving Resource of the Week:

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>