



November 19, 2025

SITUATION 1: During the 100-yard breaststroke, the meet referee notices that the swimmer's arms are not in the same horizontal plane while executing the initial arm pull after the start. The meet referee disqualifies the swimmer. **RULING:** Incorrect ruling. NFHS rules no longer require that a competitor's arms move in the same horizontal plane while swimming the breaststroke or the butterfly. However, arm movements must still be simultaneous. (8-2-2d)

Coaches: Coaches should instruct swimmers of the appropriate form of the breaststroke. The coach should be able to distinguish the difference between the term "horizontal plane" and simultaneous arm movement.

Officials: The starter/referee must continuously observe the simultaneous movement of the arms in the breaststroke and butterfly.

SITUATION 2: In the 100-yard backstroke, upon the starter's command to "take your marks" the swimmer in Lane 6 curls his toes over the edge of the gutter. The referee instructs the heat to "stand up" and advises Lane 6 of the legal starting position for this event. **Ruling:** Correct procedure. Any foot position violations observed prior to the starting signal should be corrected by the starter/referee before activating the starting signal.

Coaches: Coaches should instruct swimmers in the proper foot position for backstroke starts for all starting methods. The only time a swimmer's toes should be above the water surface is if a flat wall pad is in use that extends above the water surface.

Officials: The starter/referee must continuously observe the foot position of all swimmers using backstroke starts and delay the starting signal until all have complied with the foot position rule. The only time a swimmer would be disqualified for foot position in a backstroke start is if the swimmer moves his/her feet into an incorrect position after the starting signal is given. See 8.1.2 Situation A.

SITUATION 3: A diver performs 301C using an undeclared standing forward takeoff. In the process of performing the dive, the diver hits the board with the diver's toes. Upon completion of the dive, the referee instructs the scorer that the score for the dive is zero. **RULING:** Correct. The diver's undeclared standing forward takeoff reduces the score to a maximum of two points (unsatisfactory dive); hitting the board further reduces the score by two points, resulting in no score. This is NOT considered to be a failed dive for purposes of implementing Rule 9-8-3. **COMMENT:** Other examples of zero-sum dives include a

failure to come out of a somersault after committing a balk, doing a dive clearly in the wrong position on an undeclared standing forward takeoff, failing to come out of a twist with a balk or undeclared standing forward takeoff. (9-3-7)

Coaches: The standing forward takeoff is a unique and seldom used option for divers, but provides flexibility in cases of new divers learning the sport and/or injuries that would cause limited participation. Coaches should study the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Book to become familiar with rules that apply to this situation.

Officials: Officials should review Rule 9 of the NFHS Swimming and Diving rules books to make sure there is clear understanding of differences associated with zero-sum dives and failed dives.

SITUATION 4: By league policy each school may enter two teams in the prelims of each relay event in the league championship meet (3-1-1), with only the faster of the two advancing to finals. One of the swimmers who was declared for and competed on Team B in prelims has an exceptionally fast split, causing the coach to move that swimmer to Team A, which had the fastest overall time, for the finals.

RULING: Improper. **COMMENT:** The swimmer may not move to the new relay team as this would be considered an additional event.

Coaches: Coaches should be familiar with this rule when establishing the entry list. Once a swimmer competes in the event as part of one relay team, the swimmer is limited to that relay team only during that event.

Officials: A swimmer cannot participate in the same event on two different relay teams. The same conclusion would apply if relay entries are identified by listing eight names per team and the same swimmer is listed on both teams.

NFHS Swimming and Diving Resources of the Week:

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

Swimming and Diving Points of Emphasis: <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>