



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

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Water depth minimum for starting platforms remains at 4 feet in high school swimming

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS, IN (April 19, 2002) — At its April 7-8 meeting in Indianapolis, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Swimming and Diving Rules Committee reaffirmed its decision of last November to require a water depth of 4 feet or more to use 18-inch starting platforms. Last year, the committee eliminated the option to use starting platforms in pools with water depth from 3½ to less than 4 feet. The 4-foot minimum requirement for starting platforms will continue in effect for the 2002-03 high school swimming season.

Of the 13 swimming and diving rules revisions made by the committee, the change in Rule 8-1-2 eliminating the stand-up start in the backstroke event perhaps will be the most noticeable during the coming season. Prior to the command, “take your mark,” and until the feet leave the wall at the starting signal, the swimmers’ feet, including toes, have to be completely under the surface of the water. As an additional precaution, Rule 8-2-2c will prohibit swimmers from standing on or in the gutter or curling the toes over the lip of the gutter immediately after the start of the backstroke.

Although not officially a rules change, the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Committee issued a clarification of Rule 8-1-1 regarding the forward start. The revised language states that in the forward start prior to the starting command, “take your mark,” it no longer is necessary to place one’s foot/feet on the front edge of the starting platform or pool deck.

With the increase in the number of schools using deck starts, the committee revised Rule 8-3-5, which requires the second, third and fourth swimmers to use the forward start with at least one foot at the edge of the deck. In Rule 8-3-6, the first three swimmers of a relay team must contact the finish end at the conclusion of his or her leg of the relay; however, the final swimmer is required to contact the finish pad. This clarifies that the final swimmer must touch the finish pad – not just the end of the pool – during a relay.

Three changes were made in Rule 2 regarding “Pool, Lane and Equipment Specifications.” Rule 2-3-1 recommends that end walls be finished with a nonslip surface that extends no less than eight-tenths of a meter (2 feet, 7½ inches) below the water surface.

“With the movement of starting platforms and the utilization of bulkheads, this gives clarity for parameters at the starting end of the pool,” said Cynthia Doyle, NFHS assistant director and liaison to the Swimming and Diving Rules Committee.

Changes in the marking of lanes were made in Rule 2-4-2, which will make US Swimming/Olympic pools legal for high schools. In Rule 2-7-5, a visual lap-counting system for the 500 yard/meter freestyle event will be required for each visiting swimmer’s lane.

In other swimming rules changes, Rule 3-2-2 will require each relay card to indicate, not later than at the conclusion of the heat, the actual order of swimmers in that heat. Each state may designate when and who reports the order of the relay. Rule 6-3-3 and 6-3-4 were rewritten to establish procedures to follow when automatic timing fails.

Four diving rules were revised by the committee, including 9-2-1, which will ensure that every diver has one warm up. In other diving changes, the diving table in Rule 9-3 was revised, and Rule 9-7-4d states that if a diver does not come out of the tuck or pike position, he or she is not making an attempt and a penalty will be assessed.

The final diving change involves Rule 9-8-2b, which states that each diving judge shall deduct ½ to two points for a foot or feet leaving the board prior to a back/inward takeoff. This clarifies that the deduction includes one foot or both feet leaving the board prior to the back/inward takeoff.

A total of 139,601 girls in 5,733 high schools participated in swimming and diving during the 2000-01 school year, according to the 2001 High School Athletics Participation Survey conducted by the NFHS. On the boys side, 88,811 competed in the sport in 5,396 high schools.

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