

VHSL SWIM/DIVE RULES CLINIC AGENDA

2009-2010

REGISTRATION

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS 5 MINUTES

PHILOSOPHY OF OFFICIATING 5 MINUTES

VHSL/NFHS POWERPOINT 40 MINUTES

- VHSL SCHEDULE AND POLICIES
- RULE CHANGES
- EDITORIAL CHANGES
- POINTS OF EMPHASIS

THE REFEREE'S ROLE 10 MINUTES

THE STARTER 5 MINUTES

MEET ADMINISTRATION 5 MINUTES

DIVING 10 MINUTES

TESTING PROTOCOLS 5 MINUTES

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS 5 MINUTES

ADJOURN

2009-10 NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Changes

2-7-9 It is no longer required, but is recommended the meet score be posted and/or announced throughout the meet.

Rationale: There are many meets where it is impractical to announce the score due to lack of a PA system and/or the presence of an announcer. Recommending rather than requiring the announcing and posting accommodates what is already occurring, yet still supports this communication when practical.

3-3-1 Requires the wearing of a one piece competitive suit.

Rationale: The competition suits are manufactured as one piece. The two piece suit option, as originally allowed in the rules, is outdated. This does not prohibit the wearing of multiple one piece suits.

3-3-2 NEW Limits suits worn by swimmers during competition to the following requirements:

- a. only one swimsuit shall be permitted in competition. (A swimmer with special needs may request customization through his/her school to the state association.)
- b. the swimsuit shall be:
 1. constructed of a woven/knit textile material;
 2. permeable (100 percent to air and water);
 3. made so as not to aid in buoyancy and shall not be altered to aid in buoyancy;
 4. made with no zippers or other fastening system other than a waist tie for a brief or jammer and elastic material within the casing/ribbing in the terminal ends (straps, leg openings, and waist openings); and
 5. constructed so that the style/shape of the suit for males shall not extend above the waist nor below the top of the kneecap and for females shall not extend beyond the shoulders nor below the top of the kneecap, nor cover the neck.

Penalty (For ART. 2): When an official discovers a competitor wearing an illegal swimsuit by the wearing of two suits or a suit which is of an illegal construction, the official shall:

1. when reporting prior to the start of the heat, notify the competitor to make legal the swimsuit before becoming eligible to compete. If the competitor cannot comply without delaying the start of the heat, the competitor is disqualified from that event and shall not be eligible for further competition until in a legal swimsuit;
2. when the competitor has stepped up on the starting platform but prior to the starting device being activated, direct the competitor to "Step down," disqualify the competitor from that event and he/she shall not be eligible for further competition until in a legal swimsuit;
3. when the starting device has been activated, disqualify the competitor at the completion of the heat; nullify the competitor's performance time and he/she shall not be eligible for further competition until in a legal swimsuit.

Rationale: Technical swimsuits were introduced to the world of swimming approximately two years ago. The advanced technology fundamentally altered the sport, and swimwear became more of a piece of equipment as opposed to a uniform. The rules of swimming have always prohibited the wearing or use of an item that would aid in the swimmer's speed or buoyancy. The technical suits have evolved with little or no regard for these basic rules. In order to preserve the integrity, tradition and heritage of the sport, as well as protect and enhance the interscholastic swimming program, the new requirements and restrictions on swimwear are necessary to promote the educational values of high school athletics by promoting fair play. The immediate implementation date will guarantee fairness in competition throughout the high school swimming seasons and allow the meet officials to fairly and consistently enforce the rule.

4-1-5 Allows swimming and diving officials to dress uniformly in attire, other than all white, as approved by the state association.

Rationale: Many states have adopted officials uniforms that do not consist of all white. This change clarifies state associations determine the colors of officials uniforms. In Virginia, we use white top and navy pants, shorts or skirt.

4-3-1b New NOTE Prohibits the use of a pistol capable of discharging live ammunition for use as the sounding device.

Rationale: It is not appropriate to use a pistol capable of discharging live ammunition as the sounding device at an educational event. In most cases, state law prohibits firearms on school grounds and at school events.

8-1-2 Permits the competitor to place his/her feet on the end wall, out of the water at the backstroke start, as long as the feet, including the toes, are not above or curling over the lip of the gutter or pool edge.

Rationale: For risk minimization and to enhance the competitor's consistent execution of his/her start, the feet may now be placed in the same position on the end wall for the start, rather than changing position based on water level from pool to pool. At no time shall a swimmer be permitted to have the feet, including the toes, above or curling over the lip of the gutter or pool edge.

8-1-7 Clarifies how a swimmer legally finishes a race when a touch pad has been dislodged and moved out of its proper position on the end wall.

Rationale: This language addresses the contact required to finish the race when the touch pad is not in the proper position on the end wall.

8-3-5 New NOTE 2 Defines a legal start for the second, third and fourth swimmers of a relay team when an in-water start is used.

Rationale: The rules previously did not define a legal start for the second, third and fourth swimmers of a relay team when an in-water start was used.

8-3 New 8 Establishes the requirements under which the first leg of a relay may be recorded as an official time for that stroke/distance.

Rationale: Sets forth the requirements for the first swimmer in a relay to have his/her time to be recorded as an official time for the comparable individual event, including a relay team disqualification, which previously had not been specifically addressed in the rules.

Major Editorial Changes: 3-2-7, 4-1-3 NOTE, Appendix C A-2a

2009-10 NFHS Swimming and Diving Points of Emphasis

Posting and announcing of meet scores - While it is recommended the meet score be posted and announced during meets, it is no longer required. At some meets, there may be no announcer or PA system available and there may be limited personnel helping conduct the meet, which would make posting and announcing the score impractical. Coaches typically keep team scores themselves, but a coach should be able to approach the scorer's table during the meet to inquire about the score. If scores are not posted or announced, the referee may want to periodically ask the scorer for the team score. Whenever practical, the meet score should be posted and/or announced. This will keep coaches and athletes apprised of the progress of the meet, as well as keeping the fans informed and involved with the competition between teams.

Legal competitive suits - The option to wear a two piece suit has become outdated from a competitive suit manufacturer's standpoint. Competition suits for swimming and diving are

made as one piece. The recreational two piece suit is not appropriate for the interscholastic competition.

Pistol used as sounding device - For all practical purposes, it is inappropriate to use a pistol capable of discharging live ammunition as the sounding device at an education based interscholastic athletic event. Should a pistol be used as the sounding device, it shall be disabled from being able to fire live rounds. Most states, by state law, prohibit firearms on school grounds and school events.

Lead-off swimmers establishing an official time - It has been common practice to accept the time swum by the first swimmer of a relay as an official time for that comparable individual event. This is possible due to the first swimmer being able to execute the swim using a legal start, meet stroke requirements and have a legal finish. Subsequent swimmers in a relay will not meet all three of these requirements for a legal swim as in the comparable individual event. When a relay team is disqualified for a violation by swimmers two, three or four, such as an early start, turn or stroke which results in the relay disqualification, the split time for the lead swimmer shall still be recorded as official. However, should the relay team be disqualified for a conduct violation under Rule 3-5, the split time of the lead swimmer shall be nullified. In high school swimming, proper sporting conduct is paramount and should it become inappropriate by rule, no mark shall stand.

Compliance with entry rules when using electronic meet management software - The use of electronic meet management software has certainly made it more efficient for those managing swim meets. This software has also created some minor issues when implementing NFHS rules related to entry procedures. For swimming, host schools may ask for visiting team rosters in advance of the meet so entries can be entered into the computer. For diving, there is a concern about properly identifying the voluntary dives on the diving score sheet. State associations, or meet management, should communicate with participating schools on how entries will be submitted when electronic meet management software is used to be within the intent and spirit of the rule. The use of electronic meet management software does not change the rules or time frame in which coaches have for making changes in their entries.

2009-10 Swimming and Diving Rules Interpretations

SITUATION 1: In a race being timed with automatic timing, a swimmer touches the finish end, but not the finish pad, and the timers stop their watches or backup buttons when the timing pad: (a) has moved out of position during the race; (b) has fallen off the gutter during the race; (c) does not cover the width of the lane. **RULING:** (a), (b) and (c) correct procedure. The referee has the discretion to use backup times in these instances. **COMMENT:** It is intended that touch pads should cover the entire width of the lane. If they do not and a swimmer touches the end wall beside the pad, but within the confines of the lane, it is a legal finish. (8-1-7)

SITUATION 2: Following the turn in the breaststroke event, the swimmer's hands separate slightly after the swimmer's feet leave the wall, after which the swimmer does a downward butterfly kick before beginning the arm pull. The swimmer is disqualified. **RULING:** Incorrect procedure. **COMMENT:** Any separation or drifting of the hands/arms prior to the kick constitutes initiation of the arm pull, after which the butterfly kick may occur. After the start and after each turn, any lateral or downward movement of the hands or arms is considered to be the initiation of the first arm pull. (8-2-2)

SITUATION 3: For the backstroke start in a deck-level pool ("rim flow" or "rollout" gutter), the swimmer in lane 4 has his/her toes above the deck after the starting signal is activated, but before leaving the wall. The swimmer is disqualified from the race. **RULING:** Proper procedure. **COMMENT:** Rule 8-1-2 does not permit a swimmer to have his/her toes above the gutter or pool deck. In the case of a deck-level pool, the swimmer's toes must be below the pool edge. (8-1-2)

SITUATION 4: The diver mounts the board and the announcer gives dive 401C Inward Dive Tuck. The diver assumes a set position on the back of the board, takes three steps, approach and hurdle. The diver lands the hurdle at the end of the board, stops, turns around and assumes a set position again and performs dive 401C. **RULING:** Balk, Rule 9-5-5. **COMMENT:** In the diving referee's opinion, it is a balk as the diver assumed the starting position and from that position interrupted the continuous execution of the dive prior to entry into the water. (9-5-5)

VHSL COMMON STROKE & TURN DISQUALIFICATIONS

1. **FREESTYLE:**
 - a. Failure to touch at the turn. (NOTE: if touch missed, swimmer may reach back and make a legal touch or may come back if he missed the wall, but **only** in freestyle.)
 - b. Walking on, running on or contacting the bottom of the pool to gain an advantage.
 - c. Swimming in the wrong lane for any portion of the race—applies to all strokes/events.
 - d. Getting artificial assistance (e.g., grasping and pulling on the lane lines; pushing off side walls.)
 - e. Head fails to surface by 15 meters (16.4 yards); but it is OK to re-submerge at finish.
 - f. Failure to swim required distance—swimmer is responsible for distance even if lane counter and/or last lap bell is incorrect

2. **BACKSTROKE:**
 - a. Swimmer submerged after start or turn and head surfacing beyond 15 meters (16.4 yards); but it is OK to re-submerge at finish.
 - b. Turning shoulders past vertical on the turn and, after pulling forward with arm already in motion or simultaneously with both arms, taking additional pulls to bring swimmer closer to the wall before initiating the pulling or somersaulting action. (Note: Independent gliding/kicking is permitted either before or after the arm pull)
 - c. Failure to return to or past vertical toward the back before swimmer leaves the wall on the turn.
 - d. When shoulders have turned past vertical on the turn, swimmer misses touch on the wall after doing a somersault and sculls back to touch.
 - e. Turning shoulders past vertical at the finish.
 - f. Getting artificial assistance (e.g., grasping and pulling on the lane lines to assist forward motion; pulling or pushing off side walls.)
 - g. Toes curling over lip of gutter or deck after the start. Note, toes are no longer required to be below the surface of the water at the start.

3. **BREASTSTROKE:**
 - a. Body not at or past the vertical towards the breast following the start or when the swimmer leaves the wall after a turn.
 - b. At the start or after any turn, head still below the water surface when the arms reach the widest part of the second arm stroke after the start and each turn (8-2-2-c).
 - c. Sculling with the hands at the end of the first arm stroke after start or turn.
 - d. Over-the-water recovery with elbows **out** of the water (except after last stroke prior to turns or at the finish).
 - e. Sidestroke or scissors kick (any alternating movement of the feet or legs).
 - f. Downward butterfly kick or flutter kicks other than a **single** downward dolphin kick **after the first arm pull begins and before the first breaststroke kick** after the start and after each turn.
 - g. Touch not simultaneous; one-hand touch on turns or finish. (Need not be on the same level.)
 - h. Getting artificial assistance (e.g., grasping and pulling on the lane lines; pushing off side walls.).

4. **BUTTERFLY:**
 - a. Alternating kicking movement, such as flutter kicks, where legs are moving in different directions at the same time.
 - b. Scissors or breaststroke kicking movement.
 - c. Failure of head to surface by 15 meters (16.4 yards); but it is OK to re-submerge at finish.
 - d. Arm movements (both stroke and recovery) not simultaneous.
 - e. Arm recovery not over the water after pull; this is especially prevalent into the turn or finish (usually characterized by short pull and an underwater, stabbing touch).
 - f. Touch not simultaneous or one-hand touch on turns or the finish. (Need not be at the same level.)
 - g. Getting artificial assistance (e.g., grasping and pulling on the lane lines; pushing off side walls.)

5. **INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY** (All transition turns are judged by *finish* rules):
 - a. Violation of any rule pertaining to individual strokes. (NOTE: When turning from the butterfly to the backstroke, after a legal touch, the swimmer's shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the back when the swimmer leaves the wall. Also, when finishing the backstroke portion, the swimmer must make a legal touch on the back (rule does not say so explicitly but this should be judged as "at or past the vertical toward the back"). Regardless of how the turn is thereafter executed, the swimmer's shoulders must be at or past the vertical toward the breast before leaving the wall in breaststroke.
 - b. Swimming a legal breaststroke, or butterfly in the freestyle leg (NOTE: in NFHS, *illegal* variations of breaststroke or butterfly that are illegal from the first stroke and remain illegal are permitted in the freestyle leg but **any** stroke done on the back is considered backstroke).
 - c. Swimming the strokes out of order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle

6. **RELAYS:**
 - a. Early take-off (swimmer on the block leaves before incoming swimmer touches the wall).
 - b. Running take-off (the forward start must be used by all relay swimmers other than the lead off of the medley relay); forward start is defined as foot/feet at the front edge of the platform or pool deck.
 - c. Failure to swim proper order of strokes.
 - d. Stroke violation.
 - e. Failure to swim required distance.
 - f. The 1st swimmer of a relay, once called to the starting platform by the referee, shall not change his/her swimming order in the relay event with any teammate. Also, each relay card must indicate, not later than the conclusion of the heat, the actual order of swimmers in that heat.
 - g. Entering the water without permission: whole team is disqualified if any member, other than the swimmer designated to swim, enters the pool before **all other competitors** have finished, **and that individual is disqualified from further competition**. (This is a Referee's call; however, the Stroke & Turn Judge should let the Referee know of violations in this area. If all other competitors have finished, that competitor is disqualified from his/her next scheduled event.)
 - h. Failure to exit the pool promptly after swimming required quarter of race.

7. **OTHER**
 - a. Suits—only one suit may be worn and it must be made of permeable fabric. Men's suits may not extend below the knee or above the waist. Women's suits may not extend below the knee or below the shoulder on the arms nor cover the neck.
 - b. Jewelry—nothing is permitted other than medical or religious medal that is securely taped to the skin. Functional items such as elastic hair ties are not considered jewelry, if worn in the hair. The rule now provides that only the refusal to remove jewelry when directed to do so is a disqualification.
 - c. Pacing devices—no pacing device is permissible. Watches are an example, but are illegal under the jewelry rule as well.
 - d. Logos—the rules severely limit the size and number of commercial logos worn on the suit or cap; swimmers may not wear a suit or cap that displays a logo or name of any team other than the high school team they are representing at the meet. There is no size limit (yet?) on the logo for the school.
 - e. Unsportsmanlike conduct—making insulting or derogatory remarks, gestures or acts including taunting, or showing disgust with officials' decisions or with own or other competitors' performance. (NOTE: This is a referee call, but S & T judges should bring potential violations to referee's attention. The referee may choose to provide a first warning.)
 - f. Entering or re-entering the water without the referee's permission.
 - g. Jumping into water—for backstroke (and any other in-water) starts, rules state that swimmer shall **step** into the water—NO jumping in or cannonballs or flips off the deck or block. Considered a false start.
 - h. Shaving onsite is not permitted, before, during or after the meet.
 - i. Tattoos are not specifically addressed, but if deemed "objectionable" by the referee, could be subject to a conduct violation with swimmer disqualified from further competition in the meet, but covering the tattoo should be considered first.

VHSL TYPICAL STARTING SEQUENCE

NFHS Rules for Whistle Preparatory Commands

REFEREE BLOWS SERIES OF SHORT WHISTLES TO ALERT TIMERS/SWIMMERS TO GET READY

ANNOUNCER (or Starter if no Announcer) ANNOUNCES EVENT NUMBER, EVENT NAME & HEAT NUMBER

REFEREE BLOWS LONG WHISTLE WHICH DIRECTS SWIMMERS TO STEP ONTO THE BLOCKS (for backstroke the long whistle directs swimmers to step into the pool after which a second long whistle directs the swimmers to place their feet) AND TURNS HEAT OVER TO STARTER WITH AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM

1. **"Take your mark"** -- *said conversationally with even or declining pitch*
2. **[Beep]** -- *given only after all swimmers are motionless*

Common Additional Starter Commands

- "Stand up." -- *used when all swimmers do not promptly assume a legal starting position*
- "Please respond promptly to the command" -- *used when swimmer is slow assuming a starting position*
- "Please hold your position motionless." -- *used to correct excessive motion*
- "Place your feet" -- *used optionally on backstroke starts—referee-starter agreement needed*
- "Your toes must be below the lip of the gutter" *(on backstroke starts)*
- "You must have at least one foot at the front of the block" -- *used when swimmer doesn't have at least one foot at the front of the block after the "Take your mark" command*
- "Lane __, please _____." -- *used to correct the action of a single swimmer; should only be used after the entire field has been corrected and the swimmer repeats problem*
- "Step down" -- *used to avoid swimmers standing on the blocks for too long*

NOTE: Whistle start protocols will be used at all district, regional and state championship meets

The use of verbal preparatory commands is **strongly** discouraged, but they may be used in dual meets where the officials working the meet are unfamiliar with the whistle preparatory command protocols and there is a risk that athlete starts might be negatively affected.

For more information, see starting protocols in the 2009-10 NFHS Rules Book on pages 74-75.

VHSL TIPS FOR STARTERS

1. Before meet, set up and test starting equipment and check stability of blocks.
2. Very often, referees will assign starters the task of doing the timer briefing. Be prepared to do this.
3. Speak slowly, clearly, and loudly into the microphone—*practice beforehand to get the feel for the microphone and volume levels.*
4. Limit speaking over the microphone to essential commands. Do not add introductory language such as “Swimmers” before your commands.
5. Use full names of events, not abbreviations (“Individual Medley”, not “IM”). Do not put an “s” on the end of “yard.” (e.g., 100 yard_ freestyle)
6. Always ensure fair starts for all swimmers.
7. If too much noise at the start, wait or ask for quiet.
8. If you say the wrong event, simply say, “Correction,” and say proper stroke and distance.
9. Starter should stand reasonably close to the end of pool, but where s/he can see all swimmers at once.
10. Watch the whole field, rather than focusing on specific swimmers.
11. **False starts are not recalled.** A false start is handled like a stroke disqualification and the swimmer is notified at the completion of the race. See the *No-Recall Starting Protocol* on page 75 of the 2009-10 NFHS Rules Book
12. Each swimmer is responsible for his or her own start so if Swimmer B leaves his mark in reaction to Swimmer A’s false start, Swimmer B **must also** be charged with a false start by the starter/referee.
13. If a swimmer leaves his mark in response to “Stand up” command, starter/referee **may** relieve the swimmer of the false start.
14. If you stand a heat up because a swimmer is moving, and that swimmer’s movement takes him into the pool, generally that swimmer should be disqualified.
15. If a heat is stood up a second time, usually it is best to ask swimmers to step off blocks, wait a few seconds, then try again.
16. If you make a mistake or some external factor interferes with a fair start, recall the race and do not disqualify anybody.
17. With starter/referee permission, swimmers may do a forward start from within the water (at least one hand in contact with starting platform/end wall).
18. A swimmer who fails to report for the initial start of his heat is disqualified.
19. For forward start, swimmers no longer have to have a foot at front of block prior to “Take your mark” command.
20. Backstroke start requires swimmers to have feet, including toes, completely below water surface.
21. In 500 yard freestyle, starter must count laps and ring bell for lead swimmer at 450 yards; ring bell from flags into wall and back out to flags. No longer needs to be over the lane of the lead swimmer, but still preferred. Timers are supposed to count laps too.

VHSL REFEREE REMINDERS

The referee should anticipate problems and see potential issues and head them off so that they never become actual problems and do not impact the meet

Be on time and be ready to be flexible—call together coaches and team captains before warm-ups and remind about warm-up and meet safety procedures

During warm-ups, wander about and meet coaches—find out about any unusual circumstances or issues

Jewelry—remind any swimmer you see wearing jewelry that it must be removed before competing

Apparel—only ONE swimsuit is allowed for competition and technical suits are restricted. Also look for potential logo problems and be prepared to solve before the meet

Sportsmanship—equally important to exhibit good sportsmanship as well as avoid bad sportsmanship

“Step into the pool” command means exactly and precisely that. Any jumps, leaps, cannonballs, etc. merit a disqualification which is recorded as a false start

Break after 50 free (typically event 8)—15 minutes or other time agreed to by coaches—get the agreement BEFORE the meet begins

Jumping into any lane before all swimmers in the pool finish race merits a disqualification—referee must continue to watch until ALL lanes are done

Lap Counters—orange at 450y not “69” which is considered offensive by some; the latter is an unsportsmanlike call that not only disqualifies the competitor, but also removes the swimmer doing the counting from the remainder of the meet. [Note in a meter pool, the distance freestyle is 400 meters and while USA Swimming uses neither a lap counters nor a bell lap signal, NFHS rules require both]

Many, but not all high school swimmers swim year-round in programs using the USA Swimming rules. There are some differences—a reminder ahead of time may prevent an unfortunate disqualification

The entry (seed) times for entry into any VHSL sanctioned meet must have been earned by the swimmer or team in actual VHSL competition in the current year.

Referee Motto—*Semper Gumby*—Always flexible

VHSL MEET ADMINISTRATION

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

PRE-MEET POOL ARRANGEMENTS - ATHLETIC DIRECTOR (HOST TEAM)

- DOUBLE CHECK arrangements to ensure the pool is scheduled for meet date (cost, reserve lead time, equipment requests, etc.)
- POOL SET UP—backstroke flags properly placed (have a tape measure so can be verified), lanes numbered correctly, lights, blocks, etc.
- MEET SETUP—seating, drinking water for timers and officials, starting system, PA system for announcing, national anthem, false start rope, lane lines, etc.
- LAP COUNTERS—MUST be provided for visiting team and MUST be in good repair else host team swimmers are disqualified from 500y/400m Free (yes, lap counters **are** required for 400m in NFHS)

PRE-MEET COORDINATION - MEET DIRECTOR (HOST TEAM)

- Schedule officials to include referee, starter, at least two stroke & turn judges plus alternates/relief, sweep judge. Advise all to arrive no less than 30 minutes prior to scheduled start of meet
- Assign head timer to obtain adequate number of timers, check watches for adequate number and working properly
- Assign head scorer to obtain one or two assistants, distribute score sheets as necessary
- Obtain required meet equipment and supplies, including starting system, watches, bell, clipboards and pencils
- Schedule deck marshals for warm-ups as well as locker room marshals if necessary
- Contact visiting team rep: Provide map or directions, agree on equipment to bring (watches, lap counters if necessary), discuss any equipment or deck official/scorer shortages for which you need assistance

PRE-MEET COORDINATION - VISITING TEAM

- Provide maps to parents
- Schedule officials (two stroke & turn plus relief/alternates), sweep judge, timers and scorers. Advise to be at meet at least 30 minutes prior to scheduled start.
- Check watches for adequate number and working properly

COACH-TO-COACH COMMUNICATION

- It is recommended that prior mutual consent between coaches be reached on those items requiring it at least 3 days before the meet.
- One item that may require discussion/decisions is the number of entries per team/number of lanes scored for competition in pools with 8 lanes. Exhibition entries are permitted and may be assigned to fill up additional lanes/heats.
 - Visiting team's coach selects competition lanes (odd or even for use in **preparing entry cards in advance of meet**)
 - Agree on Event numbers (22 events or 24 events depending on how the diving events are considered)
 - Decide on warm-up times/lanes, as necessary
 - Decide on exhibition swims for extra lanes/heats
 - Verify that scoring heat swims FIRST in multiple heat events
 - Describe pool deviations (length, block shape or height)
 - Discuss procedure for inclement weather decisions – Host athletic director/principal decides

PRE-MEET BRIEFING: COACHES, CAPTAINS and REFEREE

- Communicate information on exhibition heats; verify that scoring heat swims FIRST in multiple heat events
- Discuss/decide on 15-minute or shorter (or longer) intermission if no diving
- Verify that swimmers are not wearing jewelry and are properly attired—suggestion: make captains responsible for their team
- Warm-ups Safety Briefing – Swimmers may only enter pool with coach & referee direction; feet first entry from deck unless in designated start/sprint lane (See guidelines in the 2009-10 Rules Book) Ensure that each coach has a copy of the meet warm up procedures prior to the start of warm-ups.

VHSL DIVING HINTS

REFEREE CALLS:

Failed dives, for example:

- Doing a dive other than that on the dive sheet
- Does a forward or reverse dive without a forward approach (from a standing position)
- Twisting 90 degrees more/less than on dive sheet
- Contacting water with something other than head/hands on head-first entry, or feet initially on feet-first entry

Unsatisfactory dives (max. score of 2.0), for example:

- Dive is done in position other than that on dive sheet
- Diver hits the board
- Diver does not attempt to come out of tuck/pike position.

Balks & Violation of Forward Approach (2 points deducted from each score by scorer)—dive judged on its merits as actually performed

JUDGE CALLS:

Deficient dives, for example, when the diver breaks position in flight or lands dive either well inside or well beyond 3 feet from end of board or when a diver enters water with one or both hands above shoulders on feet-first entry or one or both hands below shoulders on head-first entry. Deficient dives should receive a maximum score of 4.0.

Mandatory deductions, (0.5-2.0 from initial score—each judge decides) for such things as:

- Entering to the side of the board
- Excessive oscillation of the board in back/inward approach (4 times is suggested maximum in NFHS Diving Guidelines)
- Feet/foot leaving the board prior to a back/inward takeoff ("crow hop")
- Obviously twisting from the board
- Spreading knees in a tucked position
- Entering water in a position twisted away from the line of the board, but less than 90 degrees

SCORING NOTES:

- Diving is an aesthetic sport—ugly dives should not receive satisfactory scores
- A dive should be scored based on all areas of consideration and the required aspects (see Rules 9-5 and 9-7-1).
- In awarding points, Judges should not hesitate to reward a diver for exceptional performance in these areas.
- Conversely, Judges may score dives in the "Unsatisfactory" range when the Referee does not indicate that it is a mandatory unsatisfactory dive as a result of significant deficiencies in all areas of consideration, none of which individually meet the mandatory requirement, but which collectively make the dive unsatisfactory.

VHSL High School Diving How-To Manual

Welcome to the high school diving season! Many elements of high school diving competition will be familiar, but the brief refresher course that follows may prove helpful.

High school diving differs from other competitive diving in that it comprises two events (women and men) within a swim meet, and is governed by rules adopted by a national association of high school swim coaches. High school rules are very specific as to which dives may be performed, the order in which they must be performed, and the manner of performance.

The primary emphasis of a high school meet will be on the swimming events, but it's important for coaches, parents, and athletes to remember the divers make a valuable contribution to the overall team effort.

The number of official divers permitted to compete for each team must be the same as the number of swimmers competing for each team in a swimming event. With mutual consent of coaches, the referee may permit unofficial divers, but only up to the total number of event entries as determined by the number of lanes in the pool. Thus, in a meet held in a six-lane pool no more than 12 divers would be competing. No team may enter more than three "official" divers in any event, and exhibition divers must be so designated prior to the start of the meet.

Divers need not wear team suits, or even competition-style suits, but must wear suits "of decent appearance." Jewelry, except religious or medical, must be removed. Religious or medical jewelry must be taped to the body. Hair restraints are fine, but they're supposed to be functional rather than decorative. Divers may only be disqualified for violating the appearance provisions only if they refuse to comply after being reminded by the referee.

Organizing the Event

Every team needs to provide officials -- typically five -- to work each meet.

The host team provides two judges (one of whom serves as a referee or, alternatively,

another individual to serve as non-scoring referee), an announcer, and two table workers (a scorekeeper and a tabulator).

Students or team members not competing in the diving events may work table but may not judge.

Meet equipment includes five diving scorecards, scrap paper, two calculators (make sure the batteries are working), and pencils. Usually the home team provides this equipment.

Chairs should be set up for the judges on either side of the diving well. The scoring table should be located so that the announcer has a clear view of all the judges and can hear easily the referee. Set up five chairs at the scoring table.

All meet sheets (the NFHS sheet is required) should be completed and signed by the divers and turned in to the table by the beginning of the event before the diving event (usually 50 free). This allows the table workers enough time to check the sheets and correct any problems before the event starts. There is no penalty if sheets are corrected prior to the event start. Any later, and the mandatory calls become rather Draconian. Frequently, disqualification is the prescribed penalty.

For 6-dive dual meets:

- The voluntary dive **MUST** be performed first (remember the voluntary dive group changes each week in some districts);
- The remaining dives **MUST** include dives from at least four groups (forward, back, inward, reverse, twisting);
- Every dive listed **MUST** be listed on the table of dives in the high school rule book; and
- The DD assigned to the voluntary dive must not exceed 1.8. (For instance, if 5122D, forward 1 somersault 1 twist free, is used as a voluntary, the sheet would show a DD of 1.8, rather than its actual DD of 1.9.)

Remember the degrees of difficulty assigned to dives under high school rules are not necessarily the same as those used in summer league or USA Diving meets.

After the sheets are checked, a decision should be made on whether to combine the boys' and girls' events. If either event has less than four competitors, it will be more efficient to combine the event. The referee should obtain the consent of both coaches.

Diving order should be assigned to correspond to the swimming lane assignment. For a team swimming in lanes 1, 3, and 5, its divers would compete 1st, 3rd, and 5th in the diving order. In a combined event, boys dive first, and sheets for all competitors should be numbered consecutively. For example, in a combined event with five boys and three girls, the sheets would be numbered 1 through 8, not 1 through 5 and 1 through three, to avoid confusion at the table.

Judging Pointers

The referee should briefly review the rules for the other judges, with emphasis on requirements that are unique to high school competition. These pre-meet instructions are the best way to ensure a fairly judged meet. The observation "Well, I think we all know what we're doing" is not adequate, regardless of how experienced the panel may be.

In high school diving, some flaws mandate a maximum award of two points per judge. This is a referee's call, but a judge should impose this ceiling on his or her own score if the referee does not make the call. These "max 2 point" errors include:

- A dive clearly performed in the wrong position;
- A twisting dive in which the diver tucks, but tuck position is prohibited (tuck is only allowed in 5152, 5221, 5231, 5321, and 5331);
- A dive that hits the board; and
- A dive in which no attempt is made to emerge from tuck (the "cannonball") or pike.

A referee may set a maximum score to be awarded, but may not set a minimum score.

High school rules also provide that a dive is failed if the diver falls into the water, performs a forward or reverse dive from a standing start, neglects to put the written description of the dive on the sheet, performs a dive not listed on the high school table or twists greater or less than 90 degrees from what is written on the score sheet.

A diver may change the position of a dive from the board. Degrees of difficulty should be adjusted downward, but never upward. (e.g., if the dive listed is 201 back dive pike, 1.6, changing to tuck would require adjusting the DD to 1.5. Changing to straight would leave the DD at 1.6.) In championship meets, the true DD of the voluntary dives cannot exceed 9.0 so changes to a position with a higher DD need to be carefully monitored.

Explicit pre-meet instructions by the referee are particularly important in high school meets because many of the judges have limited judging experience. In addition to covering the special points listed above, the referee should review the generally accepted standards for judging diving competitions:

1. Draw the difference between the dives. To the extent the divers give you the ability to do so, use the entire range of scores. Judge all divers according to the same scale. Don't have one set of standards for experienced divers and a different set for those less skilled. They're all competing in the same event.

2. Disregard difficulty. Apply the same standards to a forward 2 1/2 somersault that you would to a front dive tuck.

3. Dives end when the body passes through the water. Stop judging the flight and position when the diver makes first contact with the water.

4. Judge the entire dive. Weight the approach, the takeoff, the flight, and the entry equally. It's easy, but wrong, to judge a dive based on the size of the splash it generates.

Awards from 4 1/2 to 5 1/2 indicate a satisfactory

dive. It's balanced and controlled on the board, has a vertical takeoff, a flight that includes all the elements (right number of spins and twists), and lands more or less vertically, approximately three feet from the board.

If a dive, or pieces of the dive, exceed "satisfactory" your score should be 6 or above.

If one of more of the flaws listed below is present, your score will likely be a 4 or below:

- Distance is too close or too far from board (deduct on a sliding scale);
- Break in position (deduct on a sliding scale depending on the severity and duration of the break);
- Split tuck (deduct 1/2 to 2 points);
- Crow hop (deduct 1/2 to 2 points);
- Over-twisting, under-twisting, or twisting at all in dives that shouldn't include twist (deduct on a sliding scale, depending on degree of twist—over or under by 90 degrees or more is a failed dive); or
- A dive in which the hands are below the shoulders on a head-first entry or above the shoulders on a feet-first entry—hands must enter the water before the shoulders (deduct 1-2 points, but maximum score of 4).

With twisting dives, remember that the legality of the dive is determined by the degree of twist at first contact with the water. A legal dive is not necessarily a good, or even satisfactory, dive.

Running the Event

Generally, a *brief* warm-up is allowed immediately before the event starts. In a combined event, all divers warm up; otherwise only boys warm up before their event and girls are provided a separate warm-up. Divers are entitled under the rules to only one practice bounce or one entry, but, from a practical standpoint, let the divers remain on the boards until the judges and the table are ready to start. On the other hand, do not allow coaches to insist on warm-ups beyond the "one entry" if the officials are ready to start.

The announcer should call for the judges to assemble no later than the time the swimmers from the preceding event clear the water. Ideally, this announcement is made prior to 50 free, to allow the referee adequate time to instruct the judges.

The announcer should then review the sheets to be sure they are legible and the names pronounceable. Any questions or concerns about the sheets should be directed to the referee.

At the scoring table:

- The **announcer** reads the name of the diver, the dive, the DD, and the next diver. He or she announces the judges' scores and relays any instructions from the referee. When an electronic scoreboard is used, the announcer need not announce the individual awards. After Round 1, the announcement of each dive should be abridged. For instance, in Round 1, the announcer would say, "Joe Croft of Langley will perform 101, forward dive, pike, degree of difficulty 1.5. Matt Bower on deck." By the second round, the announcement format should be shortened to "Joe, 201, back dive straight, 1.7; Matt". This may seem a minor point, but it will make the event run more quickly. Remember that only the referee, not the announcer, can declare a balk or failed dive.
- The **scorekeepers** write down the scores as they are announced, cross off the high and low if five judges are being used, and add the remaining three scores. One scorekeeper writes on the dive sheet, the other on scrap paper, so arithmetic can be done simultaneously and compared.
- The **tabulators** multiply the total score by the degree of difficulty and keep a running total of those results. One does the initial calculation, the second checks the work, and has the added responsibility of ensuring the sheets remain in order and are passed back to the announcer in a timely fashion.

Concluding the event

As the last round is completed, the second tabulator places the sheets in order of finish rather than returning them to the announcer, and writes the finish place in the appropriate section of the dive sheet. Unofficial divers are not included in the final order regardless of how well they did. The sheets are placed in reverse order of finish (1st place face-up on the bottom) and returned to the diving announcer so they can be read to the competitors and spectators.

At the conclusion of the event, the sheets are returned to the swim scoring table so that scores can be recorded and team points allocated. Don't return any sheets to divers or coaches.

Championship Meets

The championship meets that typically are held at the end of the season are the most angst-laden elements of the high school season.

These meets require performance of an 11-dive list. During these meets, the judging standards should remain the same as those for dual meets, but the conduct of the meet is complicated by other factors, especially the dive sheet requirements.

The order in which dives must be performed is very specific. The requirements are intended to ensure divers have demonstrated comparable skills at each point in the competition at which cuts are made. An unfortunate side effect is that clerical skills may influence some outcomes more than athletic skills.

A legal list consists of five preliminary dives, three semifinal dives, and three final dives:

- Prelims — Two voluntaries, three optionals
- Semis — Two voluntaries, one optional
- Finals — One voluntary, two optionals.

Additionally, voluntaries must be clearly designated on the sheet by circling both the number and the DD of the dive, the combined

DD of the voluntaries may not exceed 9.0, all five diving groups must be touched in the first eight dives, and no optional group may be touched twice until finals.

Exceeding the DD limit on voluntaries results in the last voluntary dive performed (the one that causes the limit to be exceeded) being declared a failed dive. Touching an optional group twice in the first eight dives causes the second optional to be declared a failed dive. Failure to complete the official dive description results in a failed dive.

Most other illegalities result in the diver being disqualified from competition. These include: four or less dives designated "voluntary"; four or less groups listed in first eight dives; five or less dives designated as "optional." Any diver who fails two dives is disqualified. High school rules provide no latitude on this point.

Sheets may not be changed after the meet starts, even if an error is discovered prior to performance of the dive that would render the list illegal.

Correct sheets are the responsibility of the divers and coaches. Any sheet checking done at the table is a courtesy.

In championship meets, the number of places being scored in the overall swim meet determines how many divers compete in the diving finals.

If 16 places are scored, cuts would be made after five dives to 20 divers, and after eight dives to 16 divers. The meet host may (but is not required to) make cuts after three dives to reduce the number of competitors to 32. If there is a tie for the last qualifying place, both divers advance to the next round.

If a diver (or divers) withdraws from the contest at the conclusion of prelims or semi-finals, other competitors shall be added, in the order determined by their point standings, to make up a full complement of competitors.