

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NFHS & USA SWIMMING RULES

General

- Must swim entire race in assigned lane (USA only requires starting/finishing in assigned lane, without interference)
- Race “begins” when event/heat is called to the blocks and “ends” when last swimmer touches wall legally
- If using touchpads, entire legal finish touch must be made on touchpad if “they cover the width of the lane,” i.e., both hands if 2-hand touch required; on relays, the 4th swimmer must touch the pad at the finish
- Once entered, a swimmer must compete unless excused by Referee for medical reasons; may also use declared false start, but counts as an event
- DQs are to be declared and teams notified in a timely manner, preferably before next event
- No visible jewelry except medical or religious which is securely taped to skin—must be removed if directed by officials and failure to comply results in DQ; competing wearing jewelry by itself is not a DQ. This includes watches which are also considered pacing devices; hair ‘scrunchies’ are not jewelry when in hair
- No team logo/name on suit or cap other than HS team of which a member
 - Commercial logos must be small (2¼” square) and limited to one per suit and cap
- Unsportsmanlike conduct is a much broader concept in High School
 - No taunting/mocking of officials or competitors
 - No public display of disgust with performance or with officials' calls
- Relay swimmer names must be on relay card by the end of the race and only the lead off swimmer must be noted in the order.
- Meets without diving integrated into the events contain an intermission of 15 minutes with 10 minutes warmup in water where the diving event(s) would have fallen, unless coaches verbally agree to shorten the time—it can also be lengthened by mutual consent
- Individual entry limitations must be followed. A swimmer may be entered in four events, no more than two of which can be individual events.
- Host team must provide lap counters (at minimum for visiting team lanes) for 500 Free, but swimmers not required to use them; when used the count must be ascending

Starts

- Either whistle start protocol or the “old” USA Swimming verbal command protocol may be used; VHSL strongly recommends the whistle preparatory command protocol

Strokes

- Breaststroke
 - No differences
- Butterfly
 - No differences
- Backstroke
 - At turns, may roll toward the breast after head passes backstroke flags—independent kicking and gliding is OK
 - No requirement for continuous turning action
- Freestyle
 - No differences
- Individual Medley
 - No differences