



August 26, 2026

NFHS Swimming and Diving Weekly Rule Interpretations

SITUATION 1: A team is wearing suits obtained from a well-known manufacturer. All suits bear the World Aquatics tag and the USA Swimming checkmark. However, the size of the manufacturer's logo is outside the parameter of what the rule book allows. The referee declares the suits legal because they bear World Aquatics/USA Swimming approval. **RULING:** The referee is incorrect. While Rule 3-3-3 NOTE provides exemption for the World Aquatics and USA Swimming designations, the rule also imposes the requirement that the suits must be legal per Rule 3-3-3c with respect to any display of manufacturer's information, whether in verbal or symbolic form. The requirement is that there be no more than one such display not to exceed 2.25 square inches. The displays described in the situation clearly would exceed that dimensions, thus the swimmers should be disqualified.

STATE ASSOCIATION: State associations should be cognizant of the context: neither World Aquatics/USA Swimming nor NCAA impose size restrictions on manufacturer's displays, nor does World Aquatics impose the single-display restriction. Suits that DO NOT meet NFHS specifications are widely available and can be readily obtained.

COACHES: Coaches and athletic department personnel should carefully examine uniforms prior to placing any orders, ensuring that items are legal for high school competition. Individual swimmers should be made aware of NFHS requirements.

OFFICIALS: The mere presence of World Aquatics /USA Swimming tags does NOT make a suit legal under NFHS rules. Officials must understand the requirements regarding manufacture displays. Permissible size of the display is to be determined when the suit is examined in unstretched condition. When worn, a legal display will likely exceed the 2.25 inch limit. (See 3.3.3 SITUATION D)

SITUATION 2: A swimmer is wearing a wearable health and fitness tracking device during a race. At the completion of the race, the referee disqualifies the swimmer under Rule 3-5 for using an improper electronic device. **RULING:** Incorrect. Unless the device is clearly an electronic transmitting/receiving device, the typical wearable health and fitness tracking device is considered simple jewelry, the wearing of which is permitted under NFHS rules. The usual version of this device is something that responds to contact with human skin and/or external conditions and changes color to reflect current context. However, if the device is providing information (sound, vibration, change of visual appearance, etc.) to the swimmer, it is not permitted under Rule 3-5 and the referee will apply the appropriate sanctions under that rule.

STATE ASSOCIATION: The state association office will likely be required to assist local schools and officials in determining permissible use, if any, and whether the device performs actions that violate rule 3-5.

COACHES: Coaches are responsible for careful monitoring of their swimmers and what devices they may be using and should seek state association input for all devices their swimmers may be using in competition.

OFFICIALS: Officials should consult with the state office in any situation where electronic devices are used and are suspected of violating the rule.

SITUATION 3: A swimmer steps onto the starting block following the long whistle and a) is wearing a suit that has a large manufacturer's logo along the leg (4 inches by 7 inches), or b) a suit containing five manufacturer's logos on each side. **RULING:** a) and b) are illegal. Since the suit violations were not seen until after the long whistle the race should proceed and the swimmer disqualified at the conclusion of the race. The swimmer is ineligible for further competition until the uniform violation is corrected.

COACHES: Coaches should educate swimmers regarding proper uniforms. It is not necessary that all swimmers wear a team uniform, but the suit must meet the requirements outlined in Rules 3-3-3 and 3-3-4 with regard to construction, logos, permeability, buoyancy and coverage.

OFFICIALS: Officials should be aware of uniform violations and attempt to mitigate such situations prior to competition. The event begins with the long whistle. Since the violation was noticed after the long whistle, allow the swimmer to compete and disqualify the swimmer at the completion of the heat. Notify the coach to provide assistance to the athlete in correcting the violation for future events.

SITUATION 4: The Northridge High School swimming and diving team has suits with a team mascot that is approximately 8 inches by 10 inches in size and sublimated into the material. The official disqualifies the swimmers because it exceeds the 9 square inch size limitation. **RULING:** Incorrect. Rule 3-3-4b allows limits to the size of a post construction team logo that is not permeable to 9 square inches. The mascot is not post construction and is permeable to water so it is acceptable.

COACHES: Coaches should read the rulebook carefully prior to ordering team suits to make sure that they are legal according to Rules 3-3-3 and 3-3-4.

OFFICIALS: Officials should read carefully and make sure they understand and properly apply the uniform Rules 3-3-3 and 3-3-4. Careful observation prior to the meet will help the official address any issues prior to the start of competition.

SITUATION 5: The official notices a female swimmer exiting the water at the completion of an event. The back of the suit is fastened by a hook that connects a strap going across the swimmer's back. The official disqualifies the swimmer and notifies the coach so the uniform violation can be corrected prior to the swimmer's next event. **RULING:** Correct the procedure. The hook is considered a fastening system Rule 3-3-4b(4). The swimmer must correct the violation prior to returning to competition.

COACHES: Coaches must be aware of the uniform rules included in Rule 3 and educate the athletes in order avoid violations.

OFFICIALS: Officials should read carefully and make sure they understand and properly apply the uniform Rules 3-3-3 and 3-3-4. Careful observation prior to the meet will help the official address any issues prior to the start of competition.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY

Uniform compliance should be included as a regular topic in all pre-meet coaches'/captains' conferences. Suits must provide adequate bodily coverage. Further, review of the manufacturer's logo policy is a reminder that often generates inquiries. Athletes should be encouraged to bring their uniform compliance questions to the official prior to the start of the meet.

NFHS Swimming and Diving Resources of the Week:

NFHS Swimming & Diving Officials Documents and Forms-<https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>

Sample Pre-Meet Conference Topics - <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>