



September 16, 2026

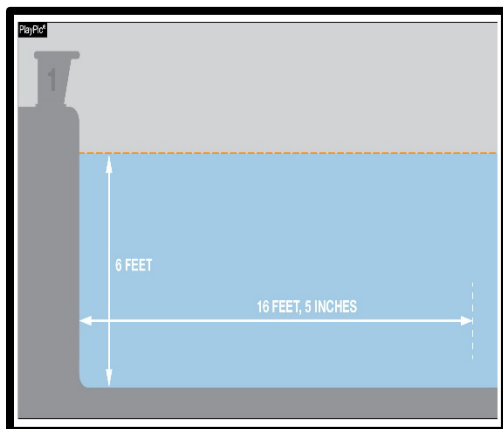
NFHS Swimming and Diving Weekly Rule Interpretations

SITUATION 1: Swimmer in Lane 3 does not want the lap counting device displayed but does want a teammate at the turning end of the pool where the lap counting device would be operated, to cheer her progress and encourage her performance, and provide splits. The referee instructs the operator to leave the turning wall and return to the team area. **RULING:** Incorrect. Rule 3-4 permits one individual to occupy the space defined by Lane 3 on the turning wall throughout the duration of the 500-yard freestyle race. Although the designated individual is not operating the lap counter, there is no rule basis for removing the individual. That person may offer encouragement to the swimmer during the race, including split times, except that the individual may not provide physical assistance to the swimmer. (3.4 SITUATION D)

STATE ASSOCIATION: Appropriate training of meet personnel and officials should emphasize the optional nature of the use of lap counting devices. Unless interference or misconduct of some nature occurs, or direct physical assistance is provided to the swimmer, behavior of lap counting operators should not be sanctioned.

COACHES: Team personnel are expected to always behave appropriately and in all locations on the pool deck. Coaches must instruct their team personnel regarding correct behavior.

OFFICIALS: While only one person is permitted in the position designated by Rule 3-4, officials must recognize that that individual has broad discretion in how s/he performs the duties expected by the swimmer and/or coach.



SITUATION 2: A pool is constructed with a narrow shelf that extends around the entire perimeter of the pool for swimmers to stand on at the end of the swim. It is 4 feet below the water surface. The shelf extends approximately 18 inches horizontally into the pool. For the backstroke event, the referee refuses to allow the use of backstroke starting ledges on the grounds that this feature of the pool's construction generates a violation of the water depth requirement of Rule 2-7-3a. **RULING:** Incorrect. This feature of the pool's design should not be considered in measuring water depth, as it does not establish the bottom of the pool

and is not otherwise a factor in the safety considerations related to the water depth provisions of Rule 2-3-1.

STATE ASSOCIATION: State offices should be prepared to respond to questions arising from pool contractors as well as local school districts with respect to what is required/permitted in design or reconstruction/refurbishment of pool facilities. NFHS Swimming and Diving Rule 2 is the primary source of such information for swimming/diving facilities.

OFFICIALS: Officials must be thoroughly familiar with rules and provisions regarding water depth requirements for high school competition. This includes the provisions of Rule 2 and its interpretations as well as local health/safety code requirements which may supersede NFHS rules.

SITUATION 3: The Southwestern High School Eagles will be refurbishing their pool and plans to paint a large depiction of their mascot on the pool bottom. The school is advised that this would be illegal if the pool is used for high school swimming/diving competitions. **RULING:** Correct. NFHS Rule 2-4-1 states the bottom and walls of pools constructed or refinished shall be white or a light color. The presumption is that this requires a uniform color throughout, except for the required markings identified in Rule 2-4-2. Logos should not be placed on the bottom of the pool.



STATE ASSOCIATION: See Situation 2 above.

SITUATION 4: For an invitational meet, the host school stipulates that for relays each school will submit an event entry and declare its swimmers at the time of competition. One of the invited coaches objects, stating that each team must list up to 8 swimmers to have a proper relay entry under Rule 3-2-3.

RULING: The coach is not correct. There are two acceptable entry procedures for relays permitted under Rule 3-2-3. The two methods of entry are by team with 8 swimmers designated or by team only without swimmers being designated as explained in the note section of Rule 3-2-3.

STATE ASSOCIATION: State associations must determine whether it permits this alternative manner of relay entries under Rule 3-2-3 NOTE.

COACHES: Coaches must be aware of which relay entry method is being used: entry by team with swimmer designation or by team without designating swimmers.

OFFICIALS: Officials must be aware of the method of entry and alert the computer software operator to which method of entry is being used so that the entry limits for the individual swimmer are not exceeded.

NFHS Swimming and Diving Resources of the Week:

Backstroke Ledge Guidance - <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>

One Meter Diving Table with Video Clips - <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>