



September 30, 2026

NFHS Swimming and Diving Weekly Rule Interpretations

Diving Format Modification, Diving Wedges, Relay Judging Equipment

Rules References: 2-7-2b, 4-2-1d, 4-6, 9-4, 9-4-2 NOTE, 9-4-3, 9-5, 9-7, 9-8, and APPENDIX D

Diving Format for State Championship Competition: By state association adoption states may alter the number of dives for its state championship series of meets. The initial intention for this rule change was to permit state associations to encourage diving participation by permitting a state championship event to consist of fewer than the 11 dives defined by rule. States that choose to modify the diving format should consider the following: the number of dives to be performed, which dives should be performed, if dives will be categorized (voluntary, optional), if restrictions will be imposed on the total degree of difficulty that is performed, and if divers will be given total discretion or will specific requirements be placed upon stages of the competition?

SITUATION 1: Utilizing its authority granted by Rule 9-4-2 NOTE, the state association has determined that in all diving competition for its state championships, the competition shall consist of any six dives selected by the participants, provided there is no repetition of dives. **RULNG:** Incorrect. While state associations are free to choose any number of dives for their state championship competitions, NFHS rules require that in championship meets, all five dive groups must be represented (9-4-2).

COMMENT: The new rule provides a degree of flexibility to state associations to structure their championships in a fashion that is consistent with encouraging participation as well as convenience for the diving event. However, within that flexibility, states must carefully follow existing NFHS rules with respect to the conduct of any diving competition. The requirements of Rules 9-4-2, 9-4-3, 9-5, 9-7 and 9-8 are particularly relevant to accomplish that objective.

Diving Wedges: Track style starting blocks with wedges are permitted for competition. The referee should conduct a pre-meet conference with the starter, a captain and a coach from each team to review meet procedures, special instructions and any unusual pool conditions. A sample of pre-meet topics are provided in the Swimming and Diving Guidelines Manual and on the NFHS Swimming and Diving Resources page: <https://nfhs.org/sports/swimming-diving/resources>.

SITUATION 2: On the 200 free relay the wedge in lane one cannot be removed from the block but the wedges in the other lanes can be removed. The official runs the heat with the defective block being used. **RULING:** Incorrect. Since the wedge in lane one cannot be removed then all lanes must conform to this standard to maintain equitable conditions across all lanes. The fact that the competitors in lane one

may not wish to remove the wedge should not be considered. Officials must maintain equal conditions for all teams. Having all teams start from the deck would also be a possible solution. **COMMENT:** State associations should remind schools to properly maintain the facility. Equipment should be properly maintained to prevent injuries. Coaches should make note of faulty equipment and work to have it repaired in a timely manner. Officials should check the facility before the start of the competition. Checking the starting blocks is an important part of the facility check. Any issues should be addressed to the host team immediately and remediation should take place before the competition or alternate competition methods should be established. Any issue should be discussed at the pre-meet conference.

Relay Judging Equipment: Information related to Relay Judging Equipment protocol is located in APPENDIX D in the 2026-27 NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Book.

SITUATION 3: At an invitational meet where relay judging pads (RJPs) are being used, no human takeoff judges are assigned to observe the relay exchanges. Meet management relies solely on the electronic data to ascertain the legality of all relay exchanges. **RULING:** Incorrect. The presence of electronic judging equipment does not remove the requirements for judging relay exchanges provided in Rule 4-6. Human judges must be functioning properly as outlined in the rule. **COMMENT:** The state association should establish a policy for use of RJP equipment that applies uniformly for all meets conducted in the state. Appendix D of the NFHS Swimming/Diving Rules Book provides one protocol, but that approach is not binding on the state. Coaches should be aware how RJP equipment is being used and stay current on the state policy regarding the device. Officials' organizations must communicate the state's policy to members as part of pre-season training. Officials must be sure they fully understand what the state's policy requires and be prepared to administer that policy under all circumstances that may arise in the context of actual competition.