

2015-16 Swimming and Diving Points of Emphasis

By NFHS on June 24, 2015

1 Uniform responsibilities – making sure you have it right – The ultimate responsibility of ensuring that all athletes are attired in legal and appropriate suits and caps rests with the coach. It may be that the school is purchasing the suits/caps or it could be the individual student has the purchasing responsibility. Regardless, the coach maintains the responsibility for educating the students of what is legal and appropriate. Construction and design is of concern as well as the size and number of the manufacturer's logo, size of any post-construction logo, size of American flag and size and permission for any commemorative patch. For example, suits not manufactured in the United States will many times exceed the allowable size of a manufacturer's logo. Jewelry is no longer prohibited. Religious and medical-alert medals are still legal. The medical alert should be worn so the alert is visible to assist a health-care professional. Coaches and athletes have the responsibility to refrain from wearing jewelry that takes away from the integrity of the sport or poses a high likelihood of coming loose during competition. A review of what is legal and required by rule should be conducted each season by the coach and with his/her athletes each year before the competitive season begins.

2 Focus on risk minimization in development of warm-up procedures – It is very important that each school has an established warm-up procedure that focuses on risk minimization. Likewise, state associations may want to consider establishing a warm-up procedure similar to the suggested procedures located in the front of the NFHS Swimming and Diving Rules Book. Before any contestants enter the water to begin warm-ups, there should be a meeting including head coaches and captains from each participating team. The information to be reviewed should include, but is not limited to, the warm-up procedures for the venue. Coaches should insist that his/her athletes always follow the rules for warm-ups to provide an environment free of unnecessary injuries.

3 Coaching starts and turns can prevent injuries – Coaching the proper techniques for starts and turns plays an important role in preventing the swimmers from incurring an unnecessary injury in addition to assisting in their success in these two components of the race. Coaches should take the time to properly instruct and review with all swimmers. It is important for the coach to observe the individual swimmers to be certain he/she masters the start and the turns for their respective events.

4 **Ensuring the 16.4 yards (15-meter) mark is clearly visible** – The 16.4 yards (15-meter) mark must be clearly visible. It is preferred to be marked on the deck on each side of the pool with a painted mark, bright tape or a bright cone, although it is easy to move a cone unintentionally. The 16.4 yards (15 meters) should also be marked on the lane markers. The mark on the pool deck is the most definitive and should the lane markers not be consistent with the mark on the deck, the deck marking takes priority.

5 **Preparing the lap counter** – Each school has the duty to adequately train individuals to serve as lap counters for their school. The host school is required to provide a visual lap counting system for the visiting teams as well as for their own school. Individuals serving as lap counters shall not enter the water, must remain on deck within the boundaries of their respective lanes and know when to change the visual count. This takes place by changing to the next higher odd number as the competitor makes each turn at the starting end. Once changed, as the swimmer approaches the end wall for the turn, the visual lap counting system is lowered into the water and removed before the swimmer initiates the turn. The solid orange card is shown to indicate the final length of the race. The individual serving as a lap counter may also give a verbal count and is not there to cheer on his/her teammate.

