

## **2018-19 Swimming and Diving Points of Emphasis**

### **Suit Coverage**

Rule 3-3-1 states all suits shall be of one piece and competitors shall not be permitted to participate wearing a suit that is not of decent appearance. Boys shall wear suits which cover the buttocks while girls shall wear suits which cover the buttocks and breasts. If individuals or teams are in violation of this rule, officials are encouraged to contact the head coach of the offending team, rather than the student, requesting that all team members be appropriately equipped with uniforms that meet specified standards. School administrators and coaches are also asked to be proactive in monitoring their athletes' compliance with this rule. If the athlete cannot or will not comply with the suit coverage rule, they will be disqualified from events until they are in legal attire. Coaches are encouraged to select team suits that provide appropriate coverage as it pertains to NFHS rules.

### **Guidelines on Handling Contests During Lightning or Thunder Disturbances**

The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) convened in March 2018 and revised its "Guidelines on Handling Practices and Contests During Lightning or Thunder Disturbances" (see Appendix H). These revised guidelines provide a model policy for consideration by those responsible or sharing duties for making decisions concerning the suspension and restarting of practices and contests based on the presence of lightning or thunder.

Even though large, substantial buildings containing electrical wiring and plumbing are generally considered as safe, there may still be a potential risk of lightning injury in certain situations indoors. Lightning can enter a building through electrical or telephone wiring and plumbing, which makes locker-room shower areas, swimming pools (indoor and outdoor), landline telephones, and electrical appliances unsafe during thunderstorms because of the potential contact injury. Even if the building is customarily grounded for electricity, lightning is often fast enough and powerful enough to spread and injure someone before the ground fault interrupters or other systems are triggered to protect the person touching any of these systems. Indoor swimming pools are just as dangerous as outdoor pools because lighting, heating, plumbing, and drains used in indoor pools ultimately connect to materials outside the building that can be used to transmit the lightning energy into the building or pool. If people cannot reach a safer location when thunderstorms are in their area, they should at least avoid the riskiest locations and activities, including elevated places, open areas, tall isolated objects, and being in, on, or at the edge of large bodies of water, including swimming pools, as all of these locations are not lightning safe!

Remember, The NFHS Guidelines state that activities should be suspended at the first sound of thunder or sighting of lightning and should not be resumed until 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is seen. Host management should have a plan in place regarding inclement weather that includes assignment of a staff member to monitor local weather conditions, development of an evacuation plan, and development of criteria for suspension and resumption of play. The lightning safety policy should be reviewed annually with all administrators, coaches, officials, and meet personnel. Student-athletes and their parents should be informed of the lightning policy at the start of each sports season. A lightning safety policy is only effective if it is enforced. Everyone should be aware of lightning as a threat, and those who oversee participants, whether they are responsible for

health care, are coaches, or meet officials, should be proactive in vacating all student-athletes and spectators to a safer location.

### **Scratches/Declared False Starts/Failing to Compete**

Scratches, declared false starts, and the penalty for failing to compete are applied differently to championship and non-championship meets. Competitors, once officially entered, shall compete in all races. In championship meets:

- a. A scratch is the withdrawal of a competitor from the remainder of his/her events in the meet. (1-4-10)
- b. A declared false start is the withdrawal of a competitor from a specific event (1-4-11). A competitor may withdraw from a preliminary event or final with a declared false start, if submitted to the referee/designee at the specified time and place. The time and place could be during a pre-competition coaches meeting, at some point prior to the start of the meet, or prior to the start of that specific event. The designated time and place must be specified in the meet announcement (1-4-7). The event shall still count as an entry, although it does not disqualify the competitor from further competition. When a relay team withdraws by a declared false start, the coach shall designate which four swimmers from among the potential participants in the event are charged with an entry.
- c. By state association adoption, an alternate qualifier is one of the next two fastest swimmers/relays after the finalists are designated with the faster of the two being the first alternate qualifier and the next being second alternate qualifier. If a finalist cannot participate, an alternate qualifier may be called to take his/her place. The process and procedures for moving alternate qualifiers into finals and consolation finals must be specified in the meet announcement. (1-4-7)
- d. A competitor who fails to compete in an event in which he/she has officially entered, shall be disqualified from further competition unless the failure to compete is due to a medical reason certified by an appropriate medical professional and declared to the referee in advance of the event. The competitor shall not be disqualified from events for which he/she has previously qualified. (3-2-2 PENALTY 3)

In non-championship meets:

A competitor who fails to compete in an event in which he/she has officially entered, shall be disqualified from that event only. (3-2-2 PENALTY 2)

### **Officials Recruitment and Retention**

High school swimming needs dedicated men and women to become involved so that the sport can continue to prosper for years to come. Administrators, coaches, and officials are encouraged to reach out to local graduating seniors, area college students, retiring coaches, and/or officials who are licensed in other sports to recruit new individuals as prospective swimming and diving officials.