

NFHS Swimming / Diving

Positioning for Two Swimming Officials

Thursday, August 05, 2010

The recently published Swimming Officials' Guidelines Manual by the National Federation of State High School Associations (www.nfhs.org) states that the key to positioning of officials is to focus on the swimmers in scoring position without losing contact with the other competitors in the pool. This does not mean that exhibition or sixth place swimmers are to be ignored, but simply that the officials should devote the majority of their attention toward the competitors who project to score in a given race. The manual further states that any adopted positioning protocol should provide for consistent viewing of turns, strokes and finishes in all lanes.

With many states currently employing a two person officiating crew for high school dual meets and perhaps other states moving in this direction due to budget constraints, the following thoughts as well as suggestions are passed on to maximize pool coverage and to standardize positioning by officials during the high school swimming season.

Start of Events: The starter will be on one side of the pool and the referee on the opposite side. The starter should be positioned parallel to or in a location no more than three yards out from the starting platforms. The referee should be in a position two to five yards out from the starting platforms.

Relay Events: Be in position at the starting end of the pool for dual confirmation on all relay takeoffs. While observing relay takeoffs in events other than freestyle relays, both officials should also observe the finish touch of the stroke being completed and that the proper stroke is being swum after the next swimmers enter the water.

Finish of Events: Be in position to independently determine the order of finish for all lanes prior to the conclusion of the race. *Note:* If the field is sufficiently spread out toward the conclusion of a race one official should remain in the vicinity of the opposite end of the pool as long as feasible to ensure that legal turns are executed by the remaining competitors, but also be ready to quickly move toward the finish end when a close race for a place appears imminent.

Freestyle Events: After the start of the event, the referee should proceed to the opposite end of the pool and be in position to confirm turn touches for all lanes. In addition, the referee ensures that Rule 3-4 procedures are followed during the 500yd/400m Freestyle event. During sprint freestyle events, the referee should walk at least half way toward the opposite end to view as many turns as possible, but most importantly should be in a position to assist the starter with the order of finish. The starter should remain at the starting end of the pool throughout all freestyle events.

100-yard Stroke Events and the 200-yard Individual Medley: Each official should divide the pool in half length wise and assume stroke and turn responsibility for the lanes in their respective sectors during the first length of the race. In most dual meets, the swimmers will begin to separate on the second length of the event. When this occurs, it is advisable either by a hand signal or by a pre-meet arrangement, for the pool to now be divided width wise into 12.5 yard sectors. (See below.) This is analogous to the lead and trail official configuration that is utilized in basketball, soccer, lacrosse and field hockey. The starter will be responsible for violations in all lanes from the starting end to the 12.5 yard mark. The referee will assume responsibilities for all competitors at the half way mark, into the turns and until they return back to the to the 12.5 yard mark. At this point the starter will pick up and assume responsibility for all swimmers while they are in this sector. This procedure will be repeated throughout the race.

RATIONALE: In many dual meets, varying abilities result in the swimmers separating by a considerable margin as the event progresses. This protocol provides for consistent viewing of turns and strokes for all lanes throughout the entire race. In addition, it may also minimize the need to walk the entire length in facilities that may have limited deck space on one side of the pool.

The fourth item in the 2010-11 Points of Emphasis published by the National Federation Rules Committee includes the following statement“again it cannot be stressed enough that it is the primary role of an official to be in position to judge a finish as well as to determine legal strokes and turns”. Hopefully a pre-meet conference by the two dual meet officials will establish what type of positioning will provide the best pool coverage for each event, what type of hand signals will be utilized to achieve this coverage, and who will assume the lead or trail role as a race unfolds.

Printed from ArbiterSports.com
 © 2009 ArbiterSports

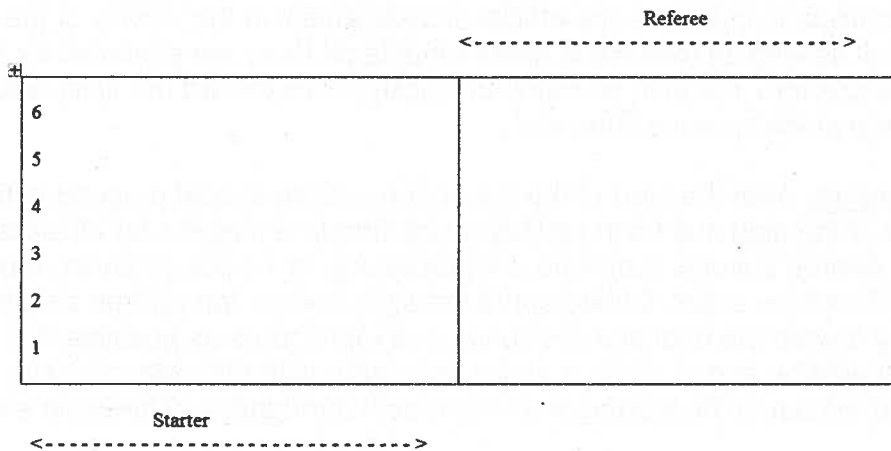


Figure 1