



Observed Swims at High School Meets

Overview

USA Swimming rules provide a means for results at swimming competitions not sanctioned by USA Swimming (i.e. high school) to be submitted for entry into the SWIMS database. These are termed “observed swims” because the rules specify that certified USA Swimming officials must be in attendance to verify compliance of the swims with that part of the USA Swimming rule that differs from the organization’s rule. While other swimming organizations such as high school have very similar rules there are a few differences. Observers ensure that where there are differences a swim confirms to USA Swimming rules. If it does then it is eligible for submission into SWIMS.

The following conditions that must be met for a meet to be observed.

1. The meet must be a season-culminating Championship, e.g., League, Conference, District, Sectional, State, Regional, or be specifically approved by the USA Swimming Program Operations Vice President or designee.
2. An application for observation must be received at least 10 days before the meet.
3. At least two USA Swimming observers, who shall be certified Stroke & Turn Judges assigned or approved by the LSC, must be present on the deck to verify compliance of the swim or swims with that part of the USA Swimming rule that **differs** from the organization’s rule.

How does this affect members of MN Swimming?

Observed Championships

Having "observed" high school championship results in the USA Swimming SWIMS database simplifies the entry process for your club coach. Thus, the club coach should initiate any request for observation of a season-ending championship by submitting [Form B](#) (LSC Request for Observation) to the MN Swimming Times Coordinator, Michael Bougie. If a parent wishes to have their child’s meet to be observed they should work through their club coach.

Ideally, the club coach should collaborate with the high school coaches to have the USA Swimming member ID’s set-up in the high school team’s database. When the import of high school times occurs the swims will automatically tag to the member in the USA Swimming SWIMS database.

It is also recommended that club coach complete [Form C](#) (Request to Load Times) to organize their athlete ID information for email communication to the high school coach and to the MN Swimming Times Coordinator. The MN Swimming Times Coordinator will also see that Form C is used for the high school state meet.



Non-Observed Championships

Currently, published results from a high school swim meet are accepted as proof of entry time for MN Swimming championships. However, they are not accepted for advanced level USA Swimming meets such as Zones, Sectionals, Futures, Pro Swim Series, Junior Nationals, and Nationals unless the meet was observed and the times were accepted into the USA Swimming SWIMS database.

Checklist of Responsibilities and Information for "Observed" High School Championships

The following information is applicable to the "observation" of season-ending high school section championships held within the territory for Minnesota Swimming, as identified by USA Swimming. This includes some of the western counties of Wisconsin. (NOTE: Observation of the Minnesota State High School League State Swimming & Diving Championship is handled by MN Swimming.)

MN Swimming Coaches

1. Initiate the process to have a high school championship (section meet) observed.
2. Complete the [Form B](#) - "LSC Request for Observation" without the names of the observing officials. Form B is available for download from the MN Swimming website under "Documents."
3. Complete [Form C](#) for the high school coach and MN Swimming Times Coordinator. Form C is also available for download from the MN Swimming website under "Documents."
4. Contact the high school coach(es) to have them set-up the USA Swimming member ID's in the high school team's database. Thus, the ID's will embed in the entry file the high school coach sends to a section championship host.
5. No later than 10 days prior to the first day of the meet -- Submit Form B to the MN Swimming Times Coordinator. NOTE: It is possible and acceptable that more than one Form B will get submitted to the MN Swimming Times Coordinator for the same championship meet.
6. Coordinate with the high school coach to ensure that at least two USA Certified Stroke & Turn Judges are in attendance to observe the swims.
7. Within two weeks after an observed meet has concluded check to see if the times appear in the USA Swimming SWIMS database. If they do not, one possibility is the ID's were not accurately entered for the athlete. At that point it is the MN Swimming coach's responsibility (not the parent/guardian) to contact the MN Swimming Times Coordinator with the applicable name(s), ID information, and the championship meet observed. The other possibility is the swim was disqualified by the observer for violating the USA Swimming technical rules that differ from NFHS rules. The MN Swimming Times Coordinator would be aware of those disqualifications reported by the observers.
8. MN Swimming coaches may submit inquiries to the [MN Swimming Times Coordinator](#) via email .



Parents/Guardians

1. Know that requests for observed status may only be submitted through the athlete's MN Swimming coach.
2. Be aware that times from unobserved meets can be used for entry into MN Swimming Championships, however, that is not the case for Zones, Futures, Pro Swim Series, Speedo Sectionals, Junior Nationals, and National meets.
3. You may request collaboration between the MN Swimming coach and their high school coach to have the ID's set-up in the high school team's database. But *step aside* when/if the conversation with the MN Swimming coach has occurred.
4. Understand every effort will be made to observe a meet if a Form B is submitted by the MN Swimming coach. However, the process still requires two MN Swimming certified officials to volunteer and be present at both prelims and finals.
5. If you are a certified USA Swimming Stroke and Turn Judge and are willing to be an observer let your MN Swimming coach know you are available.
6. Be aware the USA Swimming and NFHS stroke rules are almost the same. So if a violation is called by the high school officials it will stand as a disqualified swim and will not go into the SWIMS database.
7. The observers will submit a report to MN Swimming after the meet. Any swims where the observers report a violation where USA Swimming's stroke rules differ from the NFHS rules, the times are not loaded into SWIMS either. You may view the differences between USA Swimming/FINA and NFHS stroke rules at the end of this document.
8. **If you have any questions, please contact your swimmer's MN Swimming coach.**

Checklist of Responsibilities and Information for Stroke & Turn Judges

Attached to this document is an observation report that the Stroke & Turn Judges observing the meet should complete and submit after the meet.

Thank you for being a USA Swimming observer. Please note the following:

- Up to two certified USA Swimming Stroke & Turn Judges are assigned to your meet.
- You must be present on the deck and that should be in a dual role, both as a timer and observer. We recommend you request an outside lane.
- Contact the section meet manager and offer your services as both a timer and observer. You may also want to contact the section meet manager through a warm introduction from your high school coach.
- You are only observing where the USA Swimming technical rules differ from the rules of the organization running the meet. All other violations are handled by the organization's officials. See the attached chart for details.
- Immediately after the meet please complete and send this report Michael Bougie (bougieml@msn.com). The two observers may share a single report.
- **Please watch the Observer Briefing for Swimming Officials to make sure you are fully oriented to this role. The 10-minute video is available on this link:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/eke2vdxuncjypww/observer%20briefing%20v4.mp4?dl=0>



MN Swimming Observation Report

Meet:	
Location:	
Date:	
Name(s):	

Round	Event #	Event Description	Heat	Lane
Swimmer/Team		Violation		
Round	Event #	Event Description	Heat	Lane
Swimmer/Team		Violation		
Round	Event #	Event Description	Heat	Lane
Swimmer/Team		Violation		
Round	Event #	Event Description	Heat	Lane
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Swimmer/Team		Violation		



SWIMMING RULE DIFFERENCES

This chart describes where National Federation of High School (NFHS) technical rules differ from FINA/USA Swimming rules. They are allowed by those organizations but not by FINA/USA Swimming. If you observe them they should be noted in the observation report as a violation.

DIFFERENCES – see specific rule book for exact wording	
	NFHS
Freestyle	
Backstroke	Kick/glide before and after turning action permitted.
Breaststroke	Hands need not be separated when making the touch on the turn or finish.
Butterfly	Hands need not be separated when making the touch on the turn or finish.
IM	See backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly